

The Revelation

A Short Exposition

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By

A BIBLE STUDENT

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Abbreviations used in this book :-

- R.V. - Revised Version.
- Diag. - The Emphatic Diaglott Translation of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson
- Roth. - Rotherman's Translation of the New Testament.
- Weym. - Weymouth's New Testament in Modern Speech.

Revelation

There are certain details relating to the plan of God which our Lord tells us that even He did not understand when in the flesh : for instance, the time of His second advent (Mark 13 : 32) ; and among these would doubtless be the things pictured by the visions recorded in the book of Revelation ; which we are told the Father gave to Him (Revelation 1:1).

This further revelation of truth consists of the wonderful things that were to transpire in that part of the earth called Christendom, where the larger number of the true Church would be found and gathered out between Pentecost and the setting up of the Kingdom. That this revelation of events that were to " shortly come to pass " from the first advent onward, was given to our Lord after His resurrection is implied in several statements in Chapter One as well as in subsequent chapters. It was then "the Lamb took the book" in the very fullest sense of the word, and its holy writings began to sing the new song as never before (Revelation 5:6-8).

During the past few centuries there have arisen three schools of interpreters of Revelation ; the Preterist which says that the whole of Revelation has been fulfilled in the past, round about the time it was written : the Futurist,* saying that its fulfillment is still in the future ; the distant future at, what some are pleased to call the end of the world : the third, viz., the Historical view is that the

book is a record of things that were 11 shortly to come to pass " from John's day onward (Rev. i : i), that it pictures important happenings in Church and State down through the nineteen centuries of the Gospel Age and then carries us on into the Millennial Age right down to its close, where we are shown man's final testing through the loosing of Satan, and the destruction of the incorrigibly wicked.

One ventures to suggest that all the more enlightened of God's servants have taken this Historical view of the Revelation. Indeed it is the only one that can possibly be fitted in with the divine plan as now revealed.

As the Revelation when given was a symbolic prophecy of future events, John and the angel who reveals these things to him must be understood symbolically and prophetically as well.

In harmony with the thoughts held by those walking in the light of Present Truth during the past half century or more, John symbolizes the true Church, specially at the end of the Age, when the visions of the Revelation are due to be unfolded. Jesus' words seem to imply this when he said of John, " If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" And the disciples came to the conclusion that John would live until the time of the return of the Master (John 21:22, 23).

interesting to note that the Futurist view was first propounded by a Spanish priest, it is thought, to offset the application by the Reformers of some of the prophetic pictures of the great system with which he was identified.

John, of course did not do this, but he specially represents the Church who have tarried in the flesh down to the presence of the Son of Man in the early years of the great day of the Lord ; the Millennial day, that Bible Chronology shows began in A.D 1874 (Revelation 1:10).

The " Angel " who calls John's attention to the various visions symbolizes the Seventh Messenger, - that servant," Pastor Russell who so faithfully unfolded Present Truth to the Church. This servant tells John that he is a " fellow servant and (one " of the brethren " (Revelation 19:10) we must however, in some pictures also think of him as ihe first and principal member of the John Class, who writes to and passes on the " meat in due season " to the other members of the Lord's household (Revelation 1:4; Matthew 24:45-47). This divinely provided key unlocks the various visions of this book and helps us to see that we are indeed living in the day when so many of them have come to pass.

CHAPTER 1

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Revelation 1:1 " The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him (after his ascension to the Father-Revelation 5:6-8) to show unto his servants (the truths of this book are specially for the fully consecrated servants of God) things which must shortly come to pass (this fulfillment began in the first period or stage of the Christian Church, symbolized by Ephesus-Revelation 2:1-7), and he sent and signified it (told it in symbols) by his angel unto (for the benefit of) his servant John : " representing the true Church of Christ at the end of the age.

Revelation 1:2. " Who bare record of (called attention to the things written in) the word of God (the Old Testament-John 17:17), and of the testimony of Jesus Christ (the further revelation sent through Jesus and his apostles) of all things he saw." None can bear faithful testimony except to the things they have "seen" with the eyes of their understanding.

Revelation 1:3. " Blessed is he that readeth (correctly interprets the symbols) and they that hear the words of this prophecy (understand the correct interpretation 'when given) and keep those things which are written therein (the Seventh Messenger and the fellow members of the body of Christ seem to be here clearly referred to) : for "the time is at hand." The time for the culmination of the Divine Plan in the setting up of the Kingdom is at hand when the symbols of Revelation are finally unfolded to the Church.

Revelation 1:4. " John to the seven churches which are in Asia." Passing over the literal giving of the Revelation by the Apostle John to the seven churches of Asia, we think, here, rather of the first and principal member of the John class, referred to in other places as " the angel sent to testify these things in the churches," who serves his fellow servants with the " meat in due season " (Revelation 19:10, 22:6, 8, 9, 16).

The seven churches of Asia " while symbolizing the Church as it has been developed through seven clearly defined periods of this .Gospel Age also represent all the ecclesias, large and small, particularly at the end of the age, whose members need and receive the praise, warnings and corrections set forth in these messages.

Asia, according to some authorities, means boggy," which suggests the difficult and trying conditions surrounding the Lord's people during the period of their earthly pilgrimage (Psalm 40 : 2).

" Grace be unto you and peace from him which is (from Jehovah, the great Creator of the Universe and our God and Father), and which was (from all eternity-' from everlasting to everlasting '), and which is to come (is to continue throughout the countless ages of eternity-coming eventually into his rightful place in the hearts of his creatures) ; and from the seven spirits of God (symbolizing the fullness and completeness of the divine spirit in its many and varied operations. See Chap. 4 for further thoughts regarding the "seven spirits of God ') which are before his throne."

Revelation 1:5 - And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness (a title earned during three and a half years of loyal service), and the first begotten (born) of the dead (' the first that should rise from the dead ' from among all the billions whom, since Adam, death has claimed), and the prince of the kings of the earth (i. The Church, who are to be made the kings of the earth in the Millennial Age. 2. A ruler of rulers, before whom, in due time, the very greatest must bow). Unto him that loved us (the Lord's special love is for his servants -who desire to faithfully follow in his footsteps-John 17:23 ; Ephesians 2:4) and washed us ('loosed us' R.V.) from our sins (freed us from all we have suffered directly or indirectly through the fall) in his own blood," through his own precious sacrifice on our behalf.

Revelation 1:6. " And hath made us kings (' a kingdom,' R.V. ; the privilege of sharing with him the dominion of earth-Luke 12:12) and priests unto God and his Father (to share in the great work of reconciling a lost world- 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20) ; to him be glory and dominion (all honor and authority) for ever and ever. Amen."

Revelation 1:7. " Behold he cometh with clouds (As so much of this book points forward to our Lord's return and the events associated with the setting up of his Kingdom we are here shown at the very outset that the kingdom is not to be set up by peaceful means, but that it will be a cloudy and dark day ; a time of universal distress among the nations. Since 1914 we have seen these clouds of trouble rolling up on every hand) and every eye shall see ('discern ') him (eventually realize the presence of the new ruler who has taken charge of the affairs of earth), and they also which pierced-him (i. Crucified him 2. Persecuted the members of his body-Acts 9 4 ; Rev. ii : 8. Even these will be awakened from death and privileged to share the blessings of his Kingdom -Luke 23 :

39-43) : and all kindreds of the earth (all mankind) shall wait because of him (mourn on account of their past sin ' waywardness and rebellion against God, specially in view of the favor and reconciliation provided for them at such great cost). Even so (how appropriate that this should be so), Amen."

Revelation 1:8. '~ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending (the beginning and the end of the Father's plan revealed in His Word ; the author and finisher of our faith ; the first and last of Jehovah's direct creation-Col. i : 15, 16 ; Rev. 3 : 14), saith the Lord (' saith the Lord God.' R.V. Jesus says this on the authority of his Father), which is and which was and which is to come (compare v. 4), the Almighty." The one who has always been almighty-Jesus has only been almighty since his resurrection (Matthew 28:18).

Revelation 1:9. " I John, who also am your brother (symbolizing the John class in the Harvest time of the Gospel Age, freed from Churchianity, its titles and entanglements), and companion in tribulation (1, the sufferings of Christ ; 2, all those experiences intended to eliminate the flesh and develop the New Creature), and in the kingdom (the privileges and blessings of the kingdom, now and in the future) and patience of Jesus Christ (' patient waiting for Jesus,' Diaglott; waiting for the full revelation of his glory) was in the isle that is called Patmos (the Word means 'Mortal.' This rocky, barren isle of Patmos to which John was banished and where he would be literally separated from everything social, political and religious of his day, symbolizes the condition of separation from the world and churchianity, brought about by Present Truth), for (' on account of,' Diag.) the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

The pure truth of the Old and New Testaments and a faithful witness concerning the same, is what brings about the isle of Patmos condition (Comp. V. 2).

Revelation 1:10. "I (John, representing the John Class the true Church) was in the spirit on the Lord's day (This expression refers, of course, to the Millennial day, or day of the Lord, the seventh thousand year day of human history, which Bible chronology shows began in A.D. 1874. Not all Christians have been 'in the spirit' to the extent to which it has been their privilege during this period ; so that John specially represents the faithful remnant of overcomers living up to their privileges and blessings as spiritual sons of God. (Romans 8:9), and heard behind me (coming from the past) a great voice as of a trumpet."

A trumpet has a particularly clear, penetrating tone, and appropriately symbolizes the great message of truth that has been sounding down through the centuries, and which was first announced by Jesus, the apostles and prophets.

Revelation 1:11. " Saying (' I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last : and,'-These words should be omitted. They are not found in the oldest MSS. of the New Testament) what thou seest, write in a book (We must think of this command as addressed to the first member of the John class to be enlightened with the message of Present Truth, the Divine Plan of the Ages, and of which he subsequently made a faithful record through the printed page), and send it unto the seven churches (symbolizing all the ecclesias, large and small to be gathered like wheat from tares during the Harvest period) which are in Asia ; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea." As already suggested, the

meaning of these names and the characteristics of each church as described in Chapters 2 and 3, suggest that they symbolize various classes found among the Lord's people during the period here referred to - the early years of the day of the Lord. They also symbolize seven clearly-defined periods of the Church down through the nineteen centuries of this Gospel Age.

Revelation 1:12. " And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. (just as we would turn in order to hear more distinctly a voice that reached us from behind.) And being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks ; " (" lampstands," R.V.), the seven churches, the light-bearers of this Christian dispensation (V. 20 ; Matthew 5 : viz). As we look back into the past through means of the Church history of this Gospel Age, we are able to discern the seven stages through which the Church of Christ has been developed.

Revelation 1:13. "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks (' lampstands '), one like unto the Son of Man (we also see the multitudinous evidences that our Master has been with his people in spirit, according to his promise-' Lo I am 'with you always, even unto the end of the age,') clothed with a garment down to the foot (symbolizing that our Savior is here fulfilling a priestly office. Exodus 28:39), and girt about the paps with a golden girdle," girdle, servitude ; gold, that which is divine. So our Master has been among his people as their great divine servant, attending to their interests, feeding them with spiritual food, guiding them in the way they should go. (Comp, Revelation 15:6.)

Revelation 1:14. "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow (symbolizing the knowledge, experience and wisdom of our Master) ; and his eyes (symbolizing omniscience) were as a flame of fire," able to penetrate all outward forms and subterfuge.

Revelation 1:15. " And his feet like unto fine brass ('copper '),as if they burned in a furnace (every step our Master takes in his dealing with his Church is pure, refined, not mingled with the least suspicion of wrong principle or motive); and his voice (speaking to his people through the divine word) as the sound of many waters." - One of the grandest sounds in nature, symbolizing the impressive awe-inspiring sound of the true Gospel.

Revelation 1:16. " And he had in his right hand seven stars (the messengers of the seven churches, gone down into the tomb, specially protected and upheld, v. 20): and out of his mouth (symbolizing those the Lord is pleased to use as his mouthpieces) went a sharp two-edged sword (the sword of the spirit,' the Word of God - Hebrews 4:12; Matthew, 10:34): and his countenance (his aspect as seen by the eye of faith) was as the sun shineth in his strength,' the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ."

Revelation 1:17-18. " And when I saw him I fell at his feet " dead (symbolizing:

1, the humbling to the dust that is experienced when the great Head of the Church reveals the glory of His person and His Truth to His servants;

2, the consecration to become, dead with him ' that the manifestation of His love constrains).

And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto Me, fear not; I am the first and the last (the ' first born of all creation ' ; the first to rise from the dead ; the beginner and finisher of our faith) : I am he that liveth (' And the living one,' RV. ; the immortal one having the ' power of an endless life '), and was dead (really dead ; non-existent for parts of three days), and behold I am alive for evermore (as eternal as God is eternal), Amen; and have the keys of hell (the grave) and of death." "Of death and of hades" (R.V.); the right, power, authority to unlock reverse and abolish the conditions symbolized by death and the grave. In his revelation to his people at the end of the age the Lord specially reveals himself in this capacity; as the one who has died a ransom for all and now comes at his second advent to lift the curse, abolish present dying conditions and then awaken all who have gone down into the tomb.

Revelation 1:19. Write the things which thou hast seen (a second time, the first member of the John class is commanded to make a record of the wonderful things of the Divine Plan being unfolded to him - Comp. V.11), and the things which are ('meat in due season for the household of faith' - truths gradually unfolded from year to year through the Harvest period), and the things which shall be hereafter"; "the things that are about to transpire after these," Diag; the wonders and glories of the Millennial Kingdom.

Revelation 1:20. "The mystery (the Greek word *Musterion* does not mean something abstruse and difficult to grasp, but merely something that, for a time, is kept covered up) of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand (securely under my protection and control) and the seven golden candlesticks (' lampstands,' RV.) : the seven stars are (symbols of) the angels (special

messengers) of the seven churches : and the seven candlesticks (' lampstands ') which thou sawest are (symbols of) the seven churches."

(1) All the companies of the Lord's people gathered during the Harvest period, and according as they have opportunity letting their light shine ;

(2) The seven stages of the Church viewed dispensationally down through the Gospel Age.

CHAPTER 2.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA. EPHEBUS.

As already suggested, one application of these seven messages is to seven clearly-defined periods in the history of the Christian Church. We might perhaps describe them as seven phases of work in connection with the development of the true church. "Asia," "is previously remarked, means "boggy," and pictures the difficult way all Christians have had to walk. Those who have traversed a boggy country know that such a journey is a difficult one, aptly illustrating the pilgrimage to Mount Zion made by God's saints - a course beset on every hand with obstacles and pitfalls.

Revelation 2:1. "Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus write (' By the messenger of the congregation in Ephesus write,' Diag. It will be noticed that the message to each church is sent through an ' angel ' or messenger. So in fulfillment of this we find that a special servant has been raised up to minister the Truth to God's people in each of the epochs covered by these seven churches. Ephesus means ' first ' or ' foremost,' and roughly speaking covers the lifetime of the Apostles, or the period down to the close of the Jewish Harvest A.D. 70. The special messenger of this period was the Apostle Paul. Paul wrote more than half the New Testament. To Paul was given the special revelation concerning the ' mystery,' namely that ' Christ is not one but many members ' - Ephesians 3:3. By a careful comparison of the message to Ephesus with his writings it will be seen that it gives a very remarkable summary of what he taught. This is the case with all of these seven messages. They sum up the teachings left by the messenger belonging to each of the seven epochs): These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand (he who has been previously

pictured in this way : Revelation 1:16. Not that Jesus during the first epoch then had the 'seven stars' under His special care and protection, but prophecy speaks of "things that are not as though they were," and foretells how He would have them under His special care one by one throughout the long wilderness journey of this Gospel Age), who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (" lampstands ") ; walking in spirit with His people, ever sustaining them by His Spirit, Word and providences.

Revelation 2:2. " I know thy works and thy labour, and thy patience and how thou canst not bear them which are evil : and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles (claiming equal authority with the Twelve as did some of their contemporaries- 2 Corinthians 1:13), and are not, and hast found them liars (" false," R.V.) ; Testing their messages by the written Word, and their spirit by what is revealed therein (2 Corinthians 2:4).

Revelation 2:3. " And hast borne, and hast patience (hast exercised patience), and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." The early church endured faithfully for many years after Pentecost.

Revelation 2:4, 5. " Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Although starting well, after a few decades had passed, many grew weary in well doing and a falling away took place. This can be seen quite clearly from Paul's epistles, specially his later ones.

. In spite of frequent calls to repentance, this was not forthcoming, and in A.D. 70 the first phase of the Lord's work ended ; the " candlestick " of Ephesus was removed.

Revelation 2:6. " But this thou hast (to thy credit) that thou hatest the deeds (the spirit and activities) of the Nicolaitanes (Nicholas means ' lord,' and the reference here is to the doctrine of lordship in the church), which I also hate." This was a prominent characteristic. of the early Christians, and was well maintained during the first epoch. "One is your master (lord) and all ye are brethren," was their watchword.

Revelation 2:7. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (God speaks to us through His Word, but it is the Spirit that must apply the written message to our hearts); to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." None but our first parents tasted the tree of life in Eden, so none but the second Adam and the second Eve, the overcomers, will partake of immortal life on the divine plane ; the place of Jehovah's personal presence-the Paradise of God. Being made partakers of Christ is the precious promise here announced.

SMYRNA.

Revelation 2:8. " And unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write (' And by the messenger of the congregation in Smyrna write,' Diag. Smyrna means ' bitter,' and covers the period of the bitter pagan persecutions that followed the destruction of Jerusalem. Most of the opposition during the

Ephesus period came from the Jews, but after the destruction of the Jewish polity Satan turned the enmity of pagan Rome upon the infant church.

The special messenger of -this stage of the Church seems to have been the Apostle John. John lived for thirty years into the Smyrna period, and - so far as can be ascertained wrote none of his message-Gospel or Epistles-until Paul, the first Messenger had passed away. John seems to have recognized Paul as the first Messenger, and so the promptings of the Lord's spirit to 'write,' came after Paul had accomplished his work and finished his course); these things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive." A part of our Lord's description as given in Revelation 1:13-18 is referred to in connection with the message to each church. Here a part of Revelation 1:17, 18 is quoted.

Revelation 2:9. "I know thy works and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich (tribulation and poverty were indeed the portion of the Lord's people during the Smyrna period, but being rightly exercised in these experiences made them rich in heavenly blessings), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews (God's people ; symbolizing Christians) and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan."

During this period, the falling away was already far advanced and the tares were largely outnumbering the true wheat class ; thus was developed the counterfeit Church of Christ, until it culminated in Papacy.

Revelation 2:10. " Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer : behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have tribulation ten days (This mention of ten days of severe persecution is generally understood to apply to the ten years--a year for a day -of very bitter persecution of the Church that occurred in the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, A.D. 303-313. This is specially mentioned by Historians who had no knowledge of its prophetic foreshadowing by the Revelator) : be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." " The crown of life," R.V. Life on the highest plane, the divine plane.

Revelation 2:11. " He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." " Upon such (immortal beings) the second death hath no power."

About A.D. 320 this bitter period of the Church's history ceased, and for a very good reason : the Emperor Constantine had been nominally converted to Christianity. Some of the features of the Christian religion, doubtless, appealed to him as much more reasonable than the pagan superstitions in which he had been reared. He not only professed Christianity, but made it the religion of the Roman Empire. Hence, outward persecution soon ceased, and the next phase in the development of the Church began.

PERGAMOS.

Revelation 2:12. " And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write (' By the messenger of the congregation in Pergamos write,' Diag. Pergamos means ' earthly elevation,' and it was Constantine who gave the church such a good start in its gradual elevation from an earthly standpoint. This

continued for centuries until the corrupt and exalted system crowned and uncrowned the kings of Europe. At the time of Constantine's adoption of Christianity, a controversy was raging as to the Scripture teaching concerning the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Some of the bishops were inclined to the view that there were three Gods, and yet in some unexplainable way, only one God. Others were opposed to this and were holding fast to the truth that had been handed down by the Apostles, viz., 'To us there is one God, the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ' and that the Holy Spirit is the influence or power that proceeds from both. The one who took the lead in this endeavour to hold aloft the standard of truth against the inroads of error was Arius): These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges." It was at this time that the sharp sword of truth divided the Church into two great divisions, the Eastern (Greek) Church breaking away because of being unable to recognize the headship of the Bishop of Rome, self-styled the Pope : they, however, appointed a head of their own - the Patriarch of Constantinople.

Revelation 2:13. " I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat (' throne,' R.V.) is ; and thou holdest fast my name (my true position and relationship to the Father) and hast not denied my faith (that which, when in the flesh, I expressed so repeatedly, viz., that I am the ' Son of the living God' and that 'My Father is greater than I '), even in those days I wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr ('witness,' R.V.), who was slain among you, (However in spite of the faithful protests of Arius and those associated with him, the error gained the day, and at the Council of Nice (A.D. 325) specially called by Constantine to consider the matter, Arius was condemned and exiled and many of his writings burnt.

In the centuries that followed, various attempts were made to revive the Truth that was taught by Arius -- Arianism as it is slightingly called by the historians-but without success, and the doctrine of ' three Gods ' has remained an integral part of orthodoxy to this day.

'Antipas' means 'against the father.' It has often been suggested that this is a symbolical name for the Lord's faithful witnesses who were at this time against the exaltation of the Bishop of Rome as the father, Pope and visible head of the universal church during the absence in heaven of the true Head, the Lord Jesus. Those who took such a stand, were indeed often ' faithful martyrs,' frequently being put to death for their straight testimony. But in this verse the Lord has previously addressed His faithful who are seeking to hold fast to His name, ' even in those days when Antipas (apparently representing another individual or class) was my faithful martyr.' It is suggested, therefore, - that our Lord is here speaking ironically and in derision of the Popes, who in all their claims and teachings have been 'Antipas,' that is, ' against the Father,' God, whom they professed to serve and represent.

If it is asked how a Pope could be referred to as ' my faithful martyr,' we would reply, that in the dark ages it was a risky business to accept the office of Pope. The history of the Popes shows that a surprisingly large number of them enjoyed only a very short term of office and then died suddenly and quite mysteriously. Doubtless poison frequently hastened them from this earthly scene. Thus they accepted office at some considerable risk of a short career 1 But in order to be the head of the counterfeit church, many were willing to take their chance, and ironically they are referred to as the Lord's faithful martyrs) where Satan dwelleth." This latter statement being made at this point is very significant. By the time the Pergamos period was well started, the false Church, Satan's

counterfeit, was fully established in power, and was almost completely taken possession of by the "god of this world."

Revelation 2:14. " But I have a few things against thee (even against the true people of God during the Pergamos period), because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel (Peter tells us that Balaam ' loved the wages of unrighteousness,' being willing to injure the true interests of the children of Israel for earthly advantage, 2 Peter 2:15. See Numbers 22. He well typifies the large class in the professed church who are willing to teach error;

- (1) The creeds of the dark ages;
- (2) The theories of Modernism, for profit.

It seems that in the Pergamos period this class were tolerated more than they should have been), to eat things sacrificed unto idols (to imbibe false doctrines), and to commit fornication."

- (1) Mingle spiritual with earthly things;
- (2) Associate the affairs of the Church with those of the State.

Revelation 2:15. " So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes (that there is a class in the church specially ordained to preach the Gospel ; administer the sacraments, etc. Comp. v. 6), which thing I hate," strongly disapprove.

Revelation 2:16. " Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." The sword of the spirit; the Word of God. Public exposure of wrongs has always been an unpleasant duty and, on the part of those called upon to perform such a service -a thankless task. It has, however, often to be done publicly when quieter and more private methods have failed.

Revelation 2:17. " He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches ; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna (the deep hidden truths of the Word, of which the world and the church nominal know nothing), and will give him a white stone (symbolizing the evidences of personal friendship and relationship with the Lord Jesus as a member of his body - one of this brethren), and in the stone a new name written (symbolizing a new relationship with God through Christ), which no man knoweth saving he that receive it." No others know of the great change that takes place in connection with the called ones of this Gospel Age ; that they have been taken out of the family of Adam into the family of God and have thus received a new family name.

Continued overcoming is necessary to maintain this position.

From the beginning of the Pergamos period of the Church it would seem that no change in the Lord's general dealings took place until we come to the 12th century, and then various efforts were made from within the church to bring about some badly needed reforms.

THYATIRA.

Revelation 2:18 "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write ('By the messenger of the congregation in Thyatira write,' Diag. Thyatira means ' sweet savour of labour,' or ' sweet perfume of a sacrifice,' beautifully illustrating the efforts on the part of God's servants, against almost overwhelming odds, to cleanse the corrupt church system. The special messenger of this period of the Church was Waldo; a merchant of Lyons, who began his religious activities about A.D. 1160); These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, (penetrating, all seeing, understanding all about the position and interests of his people in this very darkest period of the Gospel Age), and his feet like fine brass." (" copper "). Able to stand by them in the midst of their greatest trials.

Revelation 2:19. " I know thy works and charity ('love ') and service and faith and thy patience, and thy works and the last to be more than the first." To use the language of the parable, the pound of some gained ten pounds, five pounds or two pounds, as the case might be.

Revelation 2:20. " Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee (' But I have this against thee,' R.V.), because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

This verse suggests that although the Lord was beginning to send more light at this time, some of his people were not as outspoken against the corruptions of the false system ruled from Rome, and symbolized by Jezebel, as they should have been.

Revelation 2:21. "And I gave her space (Gk. 'chronos,' 'a time') to repent of her fornication (Waldo and his associates pointed out some of the most flagrant of the errors of the Romish system ; preaching repentance ; that is, exhorting to a 'change of mind' from the error to the Truth, but without success), and (in spite of these efforts) she repented not."-The Lord had foretold, knowing the end from the beginning.

In the Bible a "time" represents a year, and a prophetic year of 360 days frequently stands for 360 years. (Note the calculation of the "seven times" of the Gentiles - 2,520 years !) This " time to repent " dates from the beginning of Waldo's ministry A.D. 1160 and terminates 360 years later - A.D. 1520. No repentance being forthcoming on the part of the Papal Church, it seems that in A.D. 1521 that system was forever cast off, and the Lord confined his favor to the Reformed Church, known as Protestantism. Luther formally disassociated himself from the Church of Rome in 1521 and in many parts of Europe, following his example, the people forsook that cast off system in tens of thousands.

Revelation 2:22. " Behold I will cast her into a bed (symbolizing a spiritual resting place; a system of religious teaching and practice ; a creed - Isaiah 28:20. Just as bed has a great hold upon the naturally lazy, so in a spiritual sense, the intimation seems to be that the adherents of Romanism will remain sound asleep in their great organization until its collapse in the great time of trouble at the -end of the age-Proverbs 6:10:11, ; 24:33, 34), and them that commit adultery with her (tolerate unhallowed union of Church and State) into great tribulation (the reform movements from the days of Luther onwards have been nothing but tribulations for the Church of Rome), except they repent of their deeds." Only a few identified with Romanism have been able to do this.

Revelation 2:23. " And I will kill her children (1, Her church members; 2, Other church organizations, that have broken away from Rome - Revelation 17:5) with death (spiritual death and not life is the portion of the unfaithful) ; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts (one's heart condition and the motives at the back of same) : and I will give unto every one of you (such experiences in the present life as well as rewards in the future) according to your works."

Revelation 2:24. " But unto you I say (' and unto omit), the rest (' remnant '), in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine (' teaching,' referring to those who had not imbibed the wrong teaching referred to in V. 20, ' and ' omit), which have not known (realized) the depths of Satan (who have not realized how grievously the false church, dominated by the Pope, had fallen into errors of doctrine and practice), as they speak (' as they say,' R.V. Rome's priests were probably accustomed to speak of the teachings of the faithful during the Thyatira period as ' the deep things of Satan,' Satanic deceptions. Humble, trustful children of God are sometimes almost miraculously shielded from error that their knowledge of God's Word and limited power to reason might prevent them from discerning. To those in this condition and living up to the light that had come to them, the Master says) ; I will put upon you none other burden." No additional tests of faith and patience.

Revelation 2:25. " But that which ye have already (1, The measure of light enjoyed; 2, The mark to which you have already. attained) hold fast till I come."

It is interesting to note that the Waldensian Church has continued to exist right down to the time of the Lord's Second Presence ; but with all other sectarian organizations, has now been cast off, in view of the new dispensation and its great work the Master has come to inaugurate. Waldo's followers believed Rome to be the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse, whose teaching ought not to be obeyed. They denied Purgatory and the sacrifice of the Mass.

Revelation 2:26. " And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works (including the work of protesting against the enormities of the woman Jezebel) unto the end, to him will I give power (' authority,' R.V.) over the nations." To be used during the Millennial age ; not for their subjugation, which they saw was the effect of Rome's power over the nations, but for their blessing and liberation.

Revelation 2:27. " And he shall rule them with a rod of iron (suggesting the strictness and vigour of the Millennial rule) ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers (' As the earthen vessels are broken it is breaking them together,' Diag. In this time of trouble the nations are breaking up by being allowed to dash themselves against one another) : even as I received of my Father." The - times of the Gentiles - having now ended, this work is being done by the Father's authority. This verse also implies that, at this time, the overcomers of the Thyatira period will have been raised from the dead in order to share in the great work here outlined.

Revelation 2:28. " And I will give him the morning star." The bright light of Truth which rises in our hearts before the Sun of Righteousness arises to fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord.

Revelation 2:29. 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

CHAPTER 3.

SARDIS.

Revelation 3:1. " And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write (' And by the messenger of the congrega'ion in Sardis write,' Sardis means ' that which remains ' and is generally understood to cover a short period prior to the Reformation begun by Luther. Its special messenger was John Wycliffe : the message to Sardis summing up quite remarkably the teachings of Wycliffe.

As Waldo translated a considerable part of the Bible into French, so it was the privilege of Wycliffe to translate the entire Bible into English) ; These things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God (symbolizing perfect knowledge and understanding. How appropriate that the Lord should refer to himself in this way at this period of perhaps the greatest darkness and confusion ever experienced by the church), and the seven stars (including Wycliffe, the messenger of the Sardis period. None need fear that the work of the Lord's servants will fail. All are firmly held and protected) : I know thy works that thou hast a name that thou livest (many in the Sardis period bore the name Christian ; implying that they were in union with the life giver), and art dead." Possessing no real union with Him.

In the next verse the Lord addresses some who are His people but whose spiritual life is at a low ebb :-

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

Revelation 3:3. " Remember therefore how thou hast received (the great favour of the Word of God in a language you can understand, and no longer clothed in the sackcloth of dead languages) and heard ('and didst hear,' R.V. ; understand') and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Many today have the Sardis characteristics. The Lord has come as a thief, but, because of failure to watch and to properly heed the sure word of prophecy, they are unable to recognize His beloved presence. However clearly it may be explained they cannot receive it. " If therefore thou should not watch I may have come as a thief, and thou mayest by no means know at what hour I may have come on thee." Diag.

Revelation 3:4. " Thou hast a few names (a few that are heirs to a ' name,' place and position in the body of Christ. Comp. Revelation 17:8' even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments (but have kept themselves unspotted from the world and a corrupt church) ; and they shalt walk with me in white (' without fault before the throne of God '- Revelation 14:5. There may be a reference here to the custom that prevailed in some places of making so-called heretics wear a yellow tunic. Their consolation would be that in the Lord's sight they were accounted righteous, pure, ' justified freely from all things ') for they are worthy."

Revelation 3:5. "He that overcometh ('the same' omit) shall be clothed in white raiment (Their righteousness will be demonstrated before others. It will be seen by all in due time); and (although

frequently blotted from earthly church rolls) I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

Revelation 3:6. " He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

PHILADELPHIA.

Revelation 3:7- " And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write (' By the messenger of the congregation in Philadelphia write,' Diag. The Philadelphia period brings us to the Reformation proper ; Luther undoubtedly being the special messenger of that period. He not only stood like a rock against the assaults of Rome, but also translated the whole Bible into German, and emphasized, in a way that brought blessings to thousands, the great fundamental truth of the Gospel message, ' Justification by Faith ' in the precious blood of Christ, in contrast to the justification (?) secured by the ritual and ceremonies of the Papal church.

Philadelphia means ' brotherly love.' This is one of the phases of the spirit of Christ, and suggests, that with the Reformation of Luther's day, more of the true spirit of the Master came back to the Church. There has certainly been a great contrast between the spirit of the Reformed Churches during the past few centuries and the cruel, tyrannical, loveless spirit of the Papal system ; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true (Luther realized that these attributes belonged only to the true Head of the Church and not to any ' holy father ' or 'infallible pope '), he that hath the key (symbol of right and authority) of David (type of the Christ, the true Church, Head and body. ' The Lord Jesus and not the Pope is the one who has all authority in the Church,' said Luther), he that

openeth and no man shutteth ; and shutteth and no man openeth " ; in spite of the claims of popes and bishops to have power to open and shut heaven, purgatory and hell.

Revelation 3:8. " I know thy works (the earnest efforts of Luther and the reformers to accomplish the work of the hour): behold I have set before thee an open door (All Christians looking back to the Reformation realize that a door of utterance, liberty and opportunity was then opened, such as had been never before the privilege of God's people to enjoy. All the powers that Satan was capable of operating were used in efforts to shut that door, but the Lord's Word has continued to stand firm), and no man can shut it : For (' because,' Diag.) thou hast a little strength (to stand against the forces of evil arrayed against you), and (yet) hast kept my word (specially the truth dispensed by Luther), and hast not denied my name." The Lord can always supply any deficiency along the lines of natural advantages in His service. Hence the " little strength," small amount of wealth, power or influence, earthly learning, etc., enjoyed by the Reformers was sufficient for the tasks in hand. The wonderful way the door of opportunity, utterance and service was kept open in the days of Luther, in spite of the tremendous forces arrayed against the faithful, is indeed a proof of this.

Revelation 3:9. " Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan (the Papal system), which say they are Jews (God's people, Christians) and are not, but do lie ; behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet (every knee shall bow to the feet of the Christ during the Kingdom period), and to know that I have loved thee."

The Diaglott translation of this verse corroborates the statement in the message to Thyatira -- And I gave her a time to repent," viz., that this symbolic time of 360 years terminated in A.D. 1520, when

the Papal system was cast off. It -reads : " Behold I am giving up those from the assembly of the Adversary which declare themselves to be Jews and are not. " With the beginning of the Reformation, Rome as a system, was given up-no longer dealt with by the great Head of the Church.

Revelation 3:10. " Because thou hast kept the word of my patience (' patient endurance,' Diag. Those very imperfect views of divine truth opened up during the Philadelphia period, that the increase of knowledge, during the time of the end, made it increasingly difficult to hold fast), I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." The saints of the Philadelphia period are here promised that they would be ' kept from the hour of trial ' to come upon all the inhabitants of the earth, but which would overtake the last phase of the nominal Christian Church-Laodicea, incident to its complete disintegration.

Revelation 3:11. " Behold I come quickly (' speedily,' Diag. The return of the Master was ever drawing nearer during this period of the Church) ; hold that fast which thou hast (1, The light of Truth; 2, Your Christian attainments - 1 Thesalonians 5:21), that no man take thy crown."

Revelation 3:12. " Him that overcometh will I make a - Church pillar in the temple of my God (the true a permanent part of the structure. Even while, in the flesh, to the extent to which we overcome, we may be pillars of support to others - Galatians 2:19), and he shall go no more out (no longer have the trying - experience of being outcasts from the nominal temple because of faithfulness to the Word) : and I will write upon him the name of my God (the overcomers are to be divine sons of the Most High), and the name of the city of my God (becoming a part of the new Government of

earth, symbolized by), New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God (it will not be built up out of human efforts and achievements) : and I will write upon him my new name." The Church, as the Bride, will receive the name of the Bridegroom.

The Philadelphia period saw the rise of a great many Christian sects, and God's people had a great many strange and unscriptural names fastened on to them. This last clause seems to point to this, and intimates that only true appellations (" names ") will henceforth be borne by the faithful -

Revelation 3:13. " He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

LAODICEA.

Revelation 3:14. " And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write (' And by the messenger of the congregation in Lao,dicea write,' Diag. Laodicea means a ' tried ' or ' judged , people, and refers to the nominal church during the early years, of the day of the Lord, beginning in A.D. 1874.

(The Messenger was Pastor Russell) ; these things saith the Amen (this is the same word as is translated ' verily ' in the Gospels. When our Lord had anything of special importance to announce to his disciples, he prefixed his remarks by the word ' verily.' So the intimation is that this message to the last stage of the Christian Church is of the utmost importance), the faithful and true witness (a pointer to the fact that here at the end of the age the Lord would cause not only a faithful witness to be given concerning His Word, but also that his people would be privileged to proclaim the message in its purity), the beginning of the creation of God." All the creeds of Churchianity, from

the Council of Nice to the present time, have been testifying that there are three Gods, and that Jesus is " co-equal and co-eternal with the Father." One of the distinctive truths uncovered and - emphasised during the Laodicean period is that Jesus is the beginning of Jehovah's creative work, " the first born of all .creation."

Revelation 3:15, 16. " I know thy works (works of a greater and more far-reaching character than Christians had ever before participated in, including world-wide missionary efforts costing millions of money. Jesus can estimate their worth exactly. He continues-And I know, too), that thou (the great majority in the Laodicean period) art neither cold' nor hot : I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee put of my mophth." Here we are shown how lukewarm " Laodicea would be used no longer as God's mouthpiece no longer used in any sense to give " the meat in due season " to the household of faith; to preach and coming Kingdom.

Revelation 3:17. "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods (the Church at this end of the age has indeed grown rich in material things some even think rich, also, in spiritual things and have need of nothing (nothing that any from outside can give in the way of spiritual light and assistance); and knowest not that thou art wretched, and mi&erable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Thinking of this as a literal description of a person ' what a picture of abject misery it would be ! And yet this is how the, spiritual state of the Church nominal of today appears to our Lord and Master.

Revelation 3:18. " I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire (Divine truth and character attainments secured at the cost of trial and sacrifice) that thou mayest be (truly) rich; and white raiment (righteousness secured by faith in the great atonement for sin) that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve (the eyesalve of truth ; by applying the message now due, to your minds and hearts), that thou mayest see."-the wonders of the divine plan.

Revelation 3:19. As many as I love I rebuke and, chasten (' I convict and put under discipline " Roth. Present Truth is the means by which this, is accomplished) : be zealous therefore (truly zealous-' hot '), and repent."

Revelation 3:20. " Behold I stand at the door and knock, (To Sardis the Lord said, ' I will come,' but ' thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.' To Philadelphia, ' Behold I come 'quickly'; 'speedily,' Diag. It was realized during this period that the Lord's return was drawing near. But to Laodicea the message is, ' I am come'; 'I am present.' If we hear a knock at the door we know that someone is present outside. The knock is an indication of someone's presence. So the Lord Jesus said that when He came He would give an appropriate I sign ' or indication of His return. This ' sign,' evidence, ' knock ' is set forth in the writings of the Laodicean Messenger, particularly in Vols. 2 and 3 of ' Studies in the Scriptures.' Bishop Walsham How's hymn, ' O, Jesus thou art standing, Outside the fast closed door,' calls up a graphic picture of the attitude of the nominal church of our day to the evidences of the Lord's Presence-although he did not intend his words to be applied quite in this way. But what a feast of favor and loving confidence has been the portion of those who have recognized the Presence of the Master and have opened their hearts in fullness of

consecration to Him !) If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me."

Revelation 3:21. "To him that overcometh (in connection with the peculiar trials of this evil day) will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." How forceful is this promise to the Church at this time when the thrones of earth are all of them tottering to their fall !

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

CHAPTER 4.

THE AUTHOR OF THE PLAN OF ATONEMENT.

This chapter contains one of the most beautiful of all the Revelator's visions. It pictures to us : (1) The great Author of the Divine Plan ; (2) His divine agencies for carrying it out ; (3) The means whereby the plan can be seen by the Church in the flesh.

Revelation 4:1. " After this I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven (Up to the time of our Lord's first advent there had been no opportunity for any to experience a change of nature ; to obtain access to heaven. On the contrary, all God's promises were concerning earthly blessings - Acts 3:19-21. At Pentecost came the opportunity for some to experience a change of nature. Access to the ' heavenlies ' was then for the first time opened up and the blessedness of the saints, ever since, has been to ' sit together in heavenly places ' with Christ Jesus. Here, at the end of the Age, the called ones have frequently seen the Restitution features of God's Plan before the High Calling opened up to them in its fullness.1, A little later the ' door' of opportunity opens and we see full consecration to be 'a very, reasonable service - Romans 12:1): And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me ; which said, Come up hither (thus in trumpet tones does the message of Present Truth, with its invitation to joint-heirship with Christ, come to those ready for the call), and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." " Things to come." " I will show him how great things he must suffer for my sake." (Revelation 1:1, 19).

Revelation 4:2. " And immediately I was in the spirit (Those who respond to this gracious invitation at once find themselves justified and begotten of the spirit-no longer in the flesh but in the spirit, because the spirit of God is dwelling in them - Romans 8:9) : And behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." The first thing seen by the John class as a result of the 'Spirit's illuminating influence is the great Divine Plan-- throne " ; God's righteous Government and dealings with His creatures, past, present and future. Whatever shadowy outlines of the plan of God we might have had before spirit begetting, it is subsequently seen with much greater clearness. This enlightenment has, almost without exception, come to the Lord's people through Vol. 1 of the Scripture Studies, and on its title page we are told the purpose of this book. We quote the well-known passage : " The Plan of the Ages-A vindication of the Divine -character and government : showing by a recognition and harmonizing of all the Scriptures that the Permission of Evil, past and present, is educational and preparatory to the ushering of mankind into the Golden Age of prophecy in which all the families of the earth will be blessed with a full knowledge of God, and a full opportunity for attaining everlasting life through the Redeemer, who will then be the, great Restorer and life-giver." - Also, we ate privileged to see the one sitting on the throne. That is, we see something of the person and character of the author and controller of the great eternal purpose.

Revelation 4:3. " And he that sat (on the throne) was to look upon like a jasper (a beautiful and brilliant diamond, representing the infinite wisdom and knowledge of God. The crystals of this stone are bounded by eight equilateral triangles, twenty-four angles in all-the shape of a double pyramid set base to base. The brilliance and beauty of the wisdom of God is thus fittingly represented-Romans 2:33. But a great Creator who possessed infinite wisdom and knowledge and nothing more could not be said to be a perfect character and so the one on the throne is also likened

to a sardine stone, representing God's love) and a sardine stone (' the one sitting was like in appearance to a jasper stone and a sardius,' Diag. The sardius is supposed to be the Carnetian, a stone of blood red color-the color of raw flesh, symbolizing God's love, specially for His human creatures. So Present Truth reveals to us the comforting fact that the Divine Ruler of the Universe who has formed a gracious purpose for the benefit of His human creatures, has not only infinite wisdom and knowledge to deal with them, but that He also is the great God of love. ' God is love,' said the beloved Apostle who saw this vision. After Jesus had told the disciples of His going away from them, Philip said, ' Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us.' Show us that God really has the character of a father ; that He is a God of love as well as of power and justice and we will be father to you ? In this I have but revealed to you the character of God. In seeing Me and realising what I have been to you, you have seen the character of My Heavenly Father, and what He, will be to all who come unto Him by Me.).

And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight (to look upon) like unto an emerald."

The first appearance of the rainbow was after the flood. It was put in the cloud as a sign that God remembered His covenant with Noah, that He would never again drown the world with water. To see the bow, then, is to see an evidence of God's faithfulness to His covenant. Now the great covenant specially relating to the Divine Plan (" throne "), is the covenant with Abraham. And so, circling the throne, that is to say, in every feature of God's plan from first to last ; stretching over this wonderful arrangement, we see evidences of God's faithfulness-that " he hath remembered his holy covenant " (Psalm 105:8, 42), and is fully determined to carry it out. For instance, the

Ransom, the development of the Seed, the Time of Trouble, the Kingdom, are all events working to one end-the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise.

The rainbow to look upon was like an emerald telling that the fulfillment of the covenant spells everlasting life to whosoever will of A the families of the earth.

Revelation 4:4. " And round about the throne were twenty-four seats (' thrones,' R.V.) : and upon the seats C thrones ') I saw four and twenty elders sitting (symbolizing the writings of the twenty-four who wrote the Old Testament. The happy and trustful, even in your absence. Jesus question might arise, ' Why should the symbol in reply seemed to say ' Philip, I have now " older " be used in this way ? We - would been with you a long time and have not I been a reply that an elder is one elected to feed the flock of God,' to comfort, guide and - help the Brethren. And surely this is the very thing the Old Testament Scriptures have been doing all the way down. They have been ' profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction in righteousness ' (2 Timothy 3:16). Elders in the Church should be similarly profitable. Thus we see that the symbol is a very apt one. In calculating the matter, some might be inclined to say, twenty-two or twenty-three or twenty-five or even more were used to write the Old Testament, but here we seem to be divinely shown that there were just twenty-four used in this important work. It is interesting to note in this connection that the Hebrew Scriptures used. by the Jews are divided into exactly twenty-four books. In the picture, each elder occupies a ' throne,' place of authority, round the central throne. So each of these testimonies has its place in the outwork-ing of the Divine Plan. All are necessary : in spite of modern scholarship to the contrary. Thinking of the matter literally, each elder would see the central throne from a different angle : So each writing of the Old Testament shows Jehovah and some feature of His great

plan for human salvation from a slightly different standpoint from that of the others'; clothed in White raiment (Speaking to us of the fact that the Old Testament writings are pure, free from mistakes - 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. The Holy Spirit does not make blunders. The wisdom and knowledge of God is sufficient to give His children a record in -which they 'May place their implicit trust!', The celebrated -infidel, Robert Ingersol, used to travel up and down the United States giving his famous lecture-' The Mistakes of Moses. It is related that in one place a friend asked another if he would buy a dollar ticket to hear Ingersol on ' The Mistakes of Moses ' ; he replied, ' I would give ten dollars to hear Moses on the mistakes of Ingersol ') : And they had on their heads crowns of gold." Picturing how these writings are crowned with divine approval as none others have ever been up to the close of the Old Testament canon. The fulfillment of all things written will put the divine " crown " upon them in the eyes of all in due time.

Revelation 4:5. " And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices (' lightnings and voices and thunders,' RN. That is to say : As the great Divine Plan works out, and the fulfillment of its various features takes place, it brings enlightenment to those looking for the evidences of the great Divine Ruler working in the earth. Following the ' lightnings ' come the voices ' of those ready to proclaim God's message as it unfolds from time to time - 2 Corinthians 4:13, and the symbolical ' thunders,' controversies, follow ; some receiving the message, others opposing the same) : And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. (Thinking of this literally : Seven lamps burning before a throne set in heaven at night would make such an object visible. What then has lighted up for us the divine ' throne,' God's government of His creatures? God's Word is likened to a lamp that sheds light upon the pathway of His people : but in the past some of the most saintly characters and deepest students of the Word have not obtained a

clear view of the 'throne set in heaven,' nor the character of the 'one . . . on the throne ' ; the Divine Author of the great Plan. On the contrary, the Heavenly Father has seen fit to keep His children waiting until the Harvest period, the Second Presence of His dear Son for this blessedness to be enjoyed - Daniel 12:12. Then a brightly burning lamp was hung up before the throne - Scripture Studies, Vol. 1 - and those looking in the right direction saw the outline of the Divine Plan. Then another ' lamp ' was hung up, and other features of the Plan were brought to view : then another, and so on, until, as the picture shows, ' seven lamps ' were to be in position, causing the details of the great Plan of God to stand out in all their beauty, as well as causing to be disclosed the gracious character of the one on the throne-a personification of wisdom, justice, love and power), which are the seven spirits (teachings - I John 4:1-3) of God." The Scripture Studies contain not a man's message, but teachings that have come from God-light from the presence of the Son of Man.

Revelation 4:6. " And before the throne there was a sea of glass (When we look at things from God's standpoint ; from the standpoint of the Divine Plan, the past, present and future of God's dealings are clear, luminous and plain) and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne (operating in connection with the Divine Plan) were four beasts (' living ones,' Diag. ; the four divine attributes of Jehovah - Wisdom, justice, Love and Power) full of eyes (wisdom ; omniscience) before and behind." Cognizant of all things past and future.

Revelation 4:7. " And the first living one was like a lion (justice, as manifested in the sentence of death., was the first attribute to be prominently displayed to mankind. The characteristics of the lion illustrate justice), and the Second living one (was) like a calf (lit. ' young bullock,' symbolizing divine power. In spite of Satan's assertion, ' Ye shall not surely die,' God's power was sufficient to

carry out the sentence passed upon His creatures - Romans 5:12), and the third living one had a face as a man (symbolizing love, manifested after four thousand years had passed, in the gift of Jesus. The face of a perfect man in the image of God would be the embodiment of love- 2 Corinthians 4:6), and the fourth living one was like a flying eagle." Symbolizing wisdom; to be specially seen when the " Plan of the Ages " is fully worked out.

Revelation 4:8. " And the four living ones had each of them six wings about him (Six is an imperfect earthly number, and suggests that God's attributes are being specially displayed in connection with the imperfect affairs of earth and mankind) ; and they were full of eyes within (' And the four living ones having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within,' R.V. Jehovah's ability to see the end from the beginning enables him always to act in accord with perfect wisdom, justice, love and power) : and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is and is to come." Never at any time are the divine attributes inactive (1 Corinthians 13:8) and their every operation speaks to us of God's holiness (Revelation 15:4).

A further application of the symbol of the four living ones " required by these symbolic pictures is to the New Testament Scriptures, " the testimony of Jesus "; primarily the four Gospels ; the four living messages of God to man ; but as the remainder of the New Testament is also a part of our Lord's -testimony, the Apostles merely being His mouthpieces, the New Testament as a whole seems to be symbolized by the "four living ones." Here we have God's justice revealed" just, yet the justifier of them that believe in Jesus," His power manifested in raising our Lord from the dead and

setting Him at His own right hand in the heavens (Ephesians 1:19-21) ; His love (John 3:16); and His wisdom, seen as soon as we get a glimpse of the Plan as a whole.

The " six wings " suggest how the living oracles of God (the 'New Testament) are of special value and are active in their divine mission during humanity's time of imperfection -the reign of evil.

They are " full of eyes," divine wisdom ; and their influence is always and universally felt. " They rest not day and night."

Revelation 4:9, 10. " And when those living ones give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever (the great author of the plan of salvation), the four and twenty elders (the writings of the Old Testament) fall down before him that sat on the throne and worship him that liveth for ever and ever (these records honor and magnify Jehovah in proportion as the light of the New Testament shines upon them. They can thus fulfil their divinely intended purposes), and cast their crowns before the throne (symbolizing the fact that all their authority and inspiration comes from Him and His divine plan, in which they play such an important part), saying,

Revelation 4:11. " Thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory and honor and power (the Word of God continuously proclaims God's worthiness; His eternal goodness'; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure (the pleasure of exercising the perfect wisdom, justice, love and power of His holy character) they are and were created."

CHAPTER 5.

THE EXECUTOR OF THE DIVINE PURPOSES.

The reader will have noticed how frequently "I saw" and similar expressions occur throughout the book of Revelation (Revelation 5:1, 2, 6, 11): the reference, being to the "visions and revelations" seen by the John class, the Church living in the early years of the day of the Lord (Revelation 1:10). In this chapter we are shown the executor of the divine plan of salvation and when and how He accomplishes His great work. As with the other visions of this book, we must "turn to see the voice" (Revelation 1:12); that is, we must look back to the message that comes to us from the past, from Jesus, the Apostles and prophets. In other words, we must turn to the Scriptures, for all is revealed there.

Revelation 5:1. "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne (the author of the Divine Plan) a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." This book symbolizes the eternal purpose of God with regard to the earth and mankind—originally known only to the Father. Being represented in His right hand suggests that it was something that, among the multiplicity of affairs of His vast universe, was to have His first attention. Apart from the bare promise of future blessing (that written on the outside of the scroll), none for a long time knew anything of the details of the Divine purpose.

Revelation 5:2. "And I saw a strong angel (a personification of the law and the prophets) proclaiming 'with a loud voice (during the first four thousand years of human history, through the types, shadows and promises of future blessing) : Who is worthy to open the book and to take the seats thereof ? " Who will be the one anointed to fulfil the divine promises and carry out all the wonders of God's grace? The John class, looking back into the past, see how for long centuries it was a mystery who this one should be.

Revelation 5:3. " And no man (' no one,' R.V.) in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book (take and fulfil that which was written therein), neither to look thereon." Neither to interpret from the written Word who he should be. Up to the first advent no one, even in heaven, had proved worthy of this great task. And, on earth, " None could give to God a ransom for his brother," hence could not redeem and bless mankind.

Revelation 5:4, 5. " And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not : behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seats thereof." Here we are shown that it was the Lord Jesus of the tribe of Judah who proved worthy to be the great executor of the Divine Plan. This was after He had given Himself a ransom for all and had thus become the " root," sustainer, life-giver of David and all mankind.

A parallel application of this picture may be made to the day in which we live. Prior to being enlightened by Present Truth, the John class often felt sad on account of the continual failure of -the Church Nominal to convert the world and establish God's kingdom on earth; generally understood

as the task committed to them, It often seemed that the prophetic promises of universal blessing, peace on earth, etc., which was obviously God's desire for His creatures, would never have a fulfillment. We were then shown that although a first advent was necessary to redeem man, a second advent and a divine universal kingdom is necessary before all that is written in the book can be carried out. What joy and rejoicing this knowledge brings co us 1 What tears are wiped away ! (Daniel 12:12).

Revelation 5:6. " And I beheld, and lo ('and I saw,' R.V.) in the midst of the throne (as the very center of the divine purpose) and of the four living ones (the central picture of the living message of the New Testament) and in the midst of the elders (the Old Testament, ' To him bare all the prophets witness '), stood a Lamb as it had been slain (' a Lamb standing as though it had been slain,' R.V. Slain, sacrificed, but ' standing,' raised again to life), having seven horns (all power) and seven eyes (all wisdom, complete knowledge of the divine purposes) which are the seven Spirits of God (which in due time God has caused to materialize into printed form, and which have now been) sent forth into all the earth." (Comp. Revelation 4 : 5).

Revelation 5:7. " And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." Jesus took the book for His own guidance, edification and instruction at His baptism, when the Holy Spirit came upon Him, and the " heavens were opened to him," the heavenly things beginning to be made plain (Psalm 40:7, 8).

Revelation 5:8. " And when he had taken the book, the four living ones, and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb (The whole Word of God when rightly understood is rendering

honor, reverence and worship to the Lamb. ' It is written concerning me,' our Lord had to be continually saying), Having every one of them harps (' having each one a harp,' R.V.) and golden vials ('bowls,' R.V.) full of odors (' incense,' R.V.) which are the prayers of saints."

Revelation 5:9. " And they sing a new song, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof : for thou wast slain and didst purchase unto God with thy blood, of e tribe and tongue and people and nation.' (R.V.) How true it was that when our Lord , the Lamb for sacrifice, " took the book " (e.g. on the road to Emmaus) it sang a new song ; a message the disciples had never realized before (Luke 24:32). And again, in these days of the Second Presence of the Master, He has " taken the book," and caused both Old and New Testaments to sing a new song ; a message so much more in accord with divine wisdom, justice, love and power, than we ever before realized. Now each book of the Bible is a " harp," full of harmony and heavenly music, and a divine receptacle ("golden bowl ") full of those things sweet to our spiritual sense of smell, and full of assurances of precious things that saints of all ages have desired and prayed for. In the clause, "thou . . . hast redeemed us to God," the word " us " is omitted by the oldest MSS. However, a word needs to be inserted here, so we might render it, " thou . . . hast redeemed (a class or company) to God."

Revelation 5:10. " And hast made us (' them,' R.V.) unto our God kings (' a kingdom,' R.V.) and priests (' and a priesthood,' Diag) and we shall reign on (epi ' over ') the earth." The first company the Word of God (elders, and living ones) tells about is the Church, the first fruits gathered out during the Gospel Age. Indeed we may say that the principal theme of the Word of God is concerning the Church and her divine inheritance.

Revelation 5:11. " And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels (the Great Company to be exalted to a spiritual nature similar to the angels) round about the throne and the living ones and the elders (finally delivered from the bondage of human creeds and gathered to an appreciation of the Divine Plan -- throne," and Divine Revelation-living ones and elders) : and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand (10,000 X 10,000 = 100,000,000) and thousands of thousands." That is several thousand above this number (Comp. Revelation 7:9). This gathering to the Truth' has a partial fulfillment at the end of the age, but the complete fulfillment is beyond the veil.

Revelation 5:12. " Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and strength and honor, and glory, and blessing." Worthy the Lamb to receive all that the Father has bestowed upon Him.

Revelation 5:13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." The great Divine Plan of the Ages shows; us that all mankind is to be brought into at-one-ment with God during the Millennial Age and to an appreciation of the worthiness of His dear Son.

Revelation 5:14. " And the four living ones said Amen. (This is the conclusion of the New Testament: testimony). And the four and twenty elders fell, down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever." The Revised Version simply reads:1 " And the elders fell down and worshipped.

"The writings of the Old Testament figuratively worship God by having their every testimony fulfilled. They thus honor and reverence His Name.

CHAPTER 6

THE SIX SEALS.

As we have seen, the book of Revelation 5:1 symbolizes God's eternal purpose that He purposed in Himself before the world was ; the details of which He gradually caused to be recorded in the writings of Moses, Israel's historical records, and the message of the Apostles and prophets. The opening of the seals shows the gradual unfolding of this great purpose from the first advent onward, and particularly discloses what God fore-saw would transpire in connection with the development of the Church during the Gospel Age (Acts 15:18).

Revelation 6:1. " And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals (disclosing happenings during the first period of the history of the Church), and I heard as it were the voice of thunder, one of the four living ones saying, Come and see." Or merely "come" (R.V.). The four "living ones," as we have already seen, sometimes symbolize the four attributes of God - Wisdom, justice, Love 'and Power. The operation of these in the affairs of the Lord's people we often speak of as God's providences. So Divine providence in various unmistakable ways calls our attention to the fulfillment of His Word.

Revelation 6:2. " And I (John, symbolizing the John class, the Church) saw and behold a white horse (a horse is a symbol of doctrine; a system of teaching. just as a horse carries one along, so: the Truth does the same for us as New Creatures, bringing us into and carrying us along the narrow way. White is a symbol of purity: so the white horse covers the period when the early church had the Gospel Message in its purity): And he (the first members of the body of Christ) that sat on him had a bow (the means and power to send forth the arrows of Truth - Acts 4:33); and a crown was given unto him (their efforts had the crown or seal of God's approval): and he went forth conquering and to conquer."! Representing the great success that attended the Church's early efforts (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 8:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:8).

Revelation 6:3. " And when he had opened the second seat (disclosing a period of the Church's history after the death of the Apostles when the falling away had begun to take place - Matthew 13:25; 1 Timothy 4:1, R.V.) I heard the second living one say, Come and see." " Come" (R.V.). God's providences call attention to the fulfillment of His Word.

Revelation 6:4. " And there went out another horse that was red (red symbolizes that which is false, untrue, sinful - Isaiah 1:18): and power was given to him that sat thereon (unto those who came into control in the Church after the death of the Apostles, and who began to mingle error with the pure Word) to take peace from the earth (God permitted evil to triumph. Error coming into the Church- the only place on earth where real peace was to be found-contention and division naturally result., The unity of the spirit is. lost), and that they should kill one another (symbolizing the enmity and jealousy that came into the Church in the wake of false doctrine. 1 John 3:15): and there was given unto him (to the ambitious leaders who were in the saddle) a great sword."The sword of the spirit is

the Truth; the Word of God. During this period, Satan began to produce counterfeits of the Truth, which were embodied in the creeds. Nearly all the great creeds of Christendom arose during this period.

Revelation 6:5. " And when he had opened the third seal (disclosing a still further period of Church history), I heard the third living one say, Come and see (our attention is directed to this further fulfillment of divine prophecy) ; and I beheld, and to a black horse - (symbolizing teachings from which the light of Truth has been entirely extinguished. The Papal teachings of the dark ages are here represented) ; and he that sat on him (Antichrist, set up in power ; the Pope and his underlings) had a pair of balances in his hand." In these days all supposedly spiritual ministrations had a definite money value and were weighed out accordingly.

Revelation 6:6. " And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living ones say, A measure (Gk. Choenix representing just over a quart) of wheat for a penny (' denarius,' the price of a day's labor in New Testament times equalling about 10/- in the money value of today. To have to work all day for a quart of wheat would indicate the great scarcity of this-commodity. So, during the dark ages the ' wheat,' the ' children of the kingdom,' were few in number the ' tares ' predominating - Matthew 13:24, 25, 38), and three measures of barley for a penny (barley, a coarser meal than wheat symbolizes the Great Company. These Were more, but not much more numerous): and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." Although few in number and greatly persecuted, God's people were well cared for by the great Shepherd of the sheep (Revelation 1:13). The operation of the Holy Spirit ("oil") in their hearts was not hindered; and the joy of the Lord (" wine ") was still the portion of the faithful.

Darkness apparently reigned supreme in Christendom up to the 12th century ; and from then on, various efforts at reform were made by the Waldensians and others because the Papal time to repent " had come (See Revelation 2:21).

Revelation 6:7. " And when he had opened the fourth seat (covering the period from the 12th century to Luther's day), I heard the voice of the fourth living one say, Come and see." God's providences -sometimes His wisdom, sometimes His power, love or justice, invite us to - come," see, consider, whatever things may be for our blessing and good.

Revelation 6:8. " And I looked and behold a pale horse (described by one writer as ' the ghastly green of terror and death,' symbolizing the system of teaching adopted by the apostate church during this period. Rome, specially during this time, taught that all who opposed her and all heretics should be put to death) : and his name that sat on him (those in control of the apostate church from the twelfth century up to Luther's day) was Death, and Hell followed him (their character and work were as much unlike those of the Master they professed to serve as night from day : for Jesus has the 'keys of death and the grave.' Rome instead of lifting, intensified the curse. The true Church ' hold forth the word of life the apostate system carried spiritual and even literal death wherever it went), and power (" authority,' R.V.) was given unto them (the professed guardians of the faith) over the fourth part of the earth (Europe ; not at this time over Asia, Africa or America), to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." Gentile governments dominated by the Papacy - Daniel 7:3, 17 ; Proverbs 5:3-6).

Revelation 6:9. " And when he had opened the fifth seal (disclosing the period from Luther's day to 1799, the beginning of the time of the end), I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held."

During this period of Church history, more light began to dawn, and it was seen that many thousands that Papacy had put to death, were not heretics, as was claimed, but God's faithful servants, martyred for allegiance to His Word. The expression, - And for the testimony which they held," might suggest that there were some things for which the faithful stood firm during the dark ages that were not supported by the Word of God. These martyrs are pictured as - the souls under the altar." When an animal was consumed on the brazen altar of the tabernacle or temple, the ashes would be left under the altar. So this clause speaks of those saints who had gone into death, whose sacrifice had been consumed. Although often put to death by cruel hands, sometimes literally burnt at the stake, the identity (soul) of none has been lost. (Psalm 139:16).

Revelation 6:10. " And they cried (in the sense that the blood of Abel cried for vengeance for a just recompense to be meted out - Genesis 4:10) with a loud voice, saying How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? " Looking back from this end of the age, we see that as the enormities of the Church of Rome gradually dawned upon God's people from the Reformation onward, and they saw that a terrible vengeance had been predicted to come upon the great antichrist system ; the thought among them was, When will it come ? How much longer is such a system to continue?

Revelation 6:11. " And white robes were given unto every one of them ('And there was given, to each one a white robe,' R.V. Before it was seen by Luther and others that Rome was Antichrist, it might have been thought that some at any rate who opposed Papacy, deserved the sufferings that came to them : But now they see them as God's righteous servants. The white robe being represented as given after death, suggests that these ones were right before God, fully approved by Him and perfected as New Creatures in Christ Jesus) ; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season (Gk. ' for a time '), until their fellow servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." This Chronos or symbolic " time " Of 360 years (Comp. Revelation 2:21) we might think of as beginning in the Spring of A.D. 1518 - six months after Luther nailed his 95 theses on the Church door at Wittenburg, which brings us to A.D. 1878 (Spring), when the vengeance upon Babylon began to be executed by her being cast off from favor (See Scripture Studies, Vol. II. Chap. 7. Matthew 23:35; 13:24-30).

Revelation 6:12. " And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal (covering the period of the time of the end) and lo, there was a great earthquake (an earthquake symbolizes a revolution-an upheaval of the symbolic earth or social crust. Although the French Revolution occurred near the beginning of this period, the context shows that the revolution here referred to is of a more spiritual character. It is a revolution in religious thought that occurs during the 19th century) and (as a result of this revolution) the sun became black as sackcloth of hair (a black of the very deepest dye) and the moon (' the whole moon,' R.V.) became as blood."

The reference here seems to be to the Higher Criticism of the Bible that has spread everywhere like a great plague during the past hundred years. It began in Germany about A.D. 1840 ; influencing

first the Universities and religious colleges, and then reaching the pulpits and pews of a worldly church. To-day this destructive criticism of the Word of God has completely prevented the sunlight of the Gospel from shining from the pulpits of great Babylon ; and the Old Testament -specially the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Jewish law-have become as " blood," repulsive to a " refined " ecclesiastical scholarship and as many as it can influence.

Revelation 6:13. " And the stars of heaven (not stars in any earthly calling, but ' stars of heaven,' bright ones in the ecclesiastical firmament) fell unto the earth (came down from spiritual things as a result of having their faith destroyed, to preach almost exclusively upon social, political and ethical subjects-1 John 4:5) even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."

Just as a mighty wind will strip a tree of its fruit, so the winds of false doctrine have denuded Chutchianity (in some respects fore-shadowed by Israel ; the fig tree) of her spiritual fruit. Just as the immature fruits of Zionism were dashed to the ground by the Great War, A.D. 1914-1918, so the great winds of false doctrine that have swept through Christendom during the " time of the end " have entirely bereft the Church nominal of her fruit. All her spiritual riches have been brought to naught-Joel 1:16-20).

Revelation 6:14. " And the heaven (the spiritual ruling powers, the Churches) departed as a scroll when it is rotted together (having lost their belief in the Bible as the Word of God, the clergy and ministers see no reason why their doctrinal differences should continue to divide them ; hence the great present-day talk of federation. They say, Let us ignore our differences and come together for

mutual support-Isaiah 8:12) and every mountain and island (' hill ' Sinaitic MS. Every government, large and small) were moved out of their places. "Out of the positions they formerly occupied. As a result of the increase of knowledge and liberty among the people, the attitude of the rulers toward them has of necessity changed.

Revelation 6:15. " And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men and the chief captains, and the mighty men and every bondman (worker) and every freeman (man of independent means) hid themselves in the dens ('caves,' R.V.) and in the rocks of the mountains." Powerful human institutions, supported by the kingdoms of this world ; Banks, Insurance Companies, Government Securities.

Revelation 6:16. " And said (' And they say,' R.V.) to the mountains and rocks, Fall on (' over ') us and hide (protect) us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb."

Revelation 6:17 "For the great day of his wrath (' their wrath,' R.V.) is come ; and who shall be able to stand? " Who will be able to weather the storm ? Which of our investments will stand the strain is the thought of many.

We are here given a graphic picture of what the John class are permitted to see taking place, not merely as natural happenings, but as events due to take place according to divine prophecy: just as people are sometimes seen running in all directions to escape a heavy and unexpected storm, so we are here shown how all classes from the least to the greatest, in view of the approaching time of

trouble, which they can to some extent see, are seeking shelter and endeavoring to make their positions as secure as possible.

God's righteous indignation against present imperfect and unjust institutions is a manifestation of Himself-of His character, His "face." The majority in Christendom living under the Sixth Seal, do not grasp the thought that the approaching time of trouble is a manifestation of the righteous judgment of God, although there may be some who even realize that in seeking to perpetuate the present order of things and their own favored positions in Church and State, they are really fighting against God.

CHAPTER 7.

THE FIRST FRUITS UNTO GOD OF HIS CREATURES.

Revelation 7:1. " And after these things (' And after this,' R.V. ; vision) I saw (another-that seems to go back a little in point of time) four angels standing on the four comers of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree."

Just as the Gospel and Millennial Ages overlap, so there is an over-lapping of events under the Sixth and Seventh Seals. The World says - "All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation," but the Church knows that they are living in the early years of the day of the Lord, and that a great change of dispensation is taking place (1 Thessalonians 5:1-6). Although the Lord's people have known for a long time that Christendom has been ripe for judgment, we are here shown how divine restraints operate to hold back the time of trouble, until a certain work has been accomplished, but which as soon as completed, would be immediately followed by the loosing of these winds of strife, affecting the more order-loving section of society (" earth the dissatisfied, revolutionary elements (" sea prominent ones in Church and State, including perhaps the Lord's people (" trees ") (Psalm 1:3).

Revelation 7:2, 3- " And I saw another angel ascending from the east (' from the sun-rising,' R.V.- Our Lord Jesus at His second advent, Matthew 24:27) having the seat of the living God (bringing with Him an understanding of the wonderful things to be disclosed under the Seventh Seal) : and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

Saying, Hurt not the earth,- neither the sea, nor the trees (the severity of the time of trouble must not begin) till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads." Impressed upon the minds of the faithful a knowledge of Present Truth; the Harvest Message.

Revelation 7:4. " And I heard the number of them which were sealed : and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of (' out of,' R.V.) all the tribes of the children of Israel."

When our Lord offered the High Calling to natural Israel at His first advent, few accepted it with its conditions of service and sacrifice : the majority of the branches of the Israelitish olive tree were broken off because of unbelief (Romans 11:17). The Gospel Age has been for the purpose of taking out from the Gentiles a sufficient number to replace the broken-off branches so many for each tribe. At Pentecost, the Israelites Indeed who accepted Jesus and became His disciples, ceased from being merely the natural seed and became the spiritual seed of Abraham-spiritual Israel. Thus the Israel of this chapter is a designation of the little flock; the Bride of Christ; the Israel of God.

As the whole 144,000 are represented as being sealed with Present Truth, the larger number, it would seem, would get their sealing after their share in the first, resurrection, which began in 1878.

Revelation 7:5-8. " Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand (Jesus being the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the greatest glory and honor, may be, will go to the twelve thousand belonging to the spiritual tribe of Judah). Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of

Nephtalim. were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasseh were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."

The characteristics of the sons of Jacob and the twelve tribes descended from them seem to foreshadow the characteristics of those who will compose the various tribes of spiritual Israel ; but whatever the called ones may be by nature, all must become conformed to the image of God's dear Son to be worthy of a place in this glorious company (Romans 8:29).

It is doubtless significant that Dan and Ephraim are omitted from this list of tribes. Ephraim, in some prophetic pictures, represents Christendom (e.g., Isaiah 28:1), and in others, the Great Company (See Hosea's prophecy) ; and Dan represents the class who, in this age, sin willfully after having received a knowledge of the Truth, and thus fail, altogether, to be numbered among God's sons (Hebrews 10:26).

Revelation 7:9. " And after this (vision) I beheld, and lo (' and after these things I saw,' R.V.) a great multitude, which no man could number (Compute; the number not having been repeated as in the case of the first company - Comp. Revelation 5:11) of (' out of,' R.V.) all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne (a lesser position of honor in connection with the outworking of the great Divine Plan, ' throne.' - Comp. Revelation 3:21) and before the Lamb,

clothed with white robes (pure righteous, in the enjoyment of God's full approval) and palms in their hands." A symbol of the possession of victory.

Revelation 7:10. " And cried (And they cry,' R.V.) with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne (the great author of the plan of salvation) and unto the Lamb." The Divine agent for carrying it out (Rev. 4 and 5). The salvation which we are now enjoying by faith, and actually in the Kingdom, is all of grace, and is of the Father and by the Son. The only ones during the Gospel age that have a vital appreciation of the precious blood of Christ, are those for whom His merit has been applied (Hebrews 9:24).

Revelation 7:11, 12. " And all the angels (a hint that the nature of the Great Company will be similar to that of the angels), stood round about the throne (the Great Company are now, as well as in the future, in close accord with the Divine Plan being worked out in their behalf), and about the elders (the Old Testament) and the four living ones (the New Testament writings. Their daily portion is the Word of God) and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, Saying, Amen : Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." What oneness and satisfaction is here pictured as the portion of all those who will enjoy the salvation provided.

Revelation 7:13. " And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" A question that has often been in the minds of the Lord's people down through the centuries-put there by His Word - Who is this great multitude here

brought to our attention? But among Christians of all denominations there has been considerable uncertainty.

Revelation 7:14. " And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. (The suggestion is ventured that John here turns and addresses the ' angel ' who is unfolding to him these wonderful visions-Rev. 1:1. ' You who have shown me so many wonderful things, I am sure can tell me about this Great Company.' And we would expect, and find in the writings of that ' faithful and wise servant,' a full and clear exposition of this subject). And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation (Many of the Great Company are developed in the great tribulation at the end of this age. But the reference here is to the general experiences of the Great Company during the present life. Many of their testings, working for their good, appear great tribulations, instead of being counted as light afflictions, as they are by those living nearer to the Lord and in more sympathetic understanding of His will), and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." However soiled from unnecessary contact with the world, God's providences bring them into full accord with the gracious arrangement for their cleansing.

Revelation 7:15. " Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple (,performing an important service in the Millennial Kingdom n association with the temple class, the little flock) : and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." " Shall spread his tabernacle over them," R.V. Close contact with the Divine Presence is here suggested.

Revelation 7:16. " And they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." Illustrating what were some of their tribulations in the midst of an unfriendly world.

Revelation 7:17. " For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne (the great central figure of the Divine Purposes - Revelation 5:6) shall feed them (' tend them,' Diag.)and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." By showing them the reason for their every sorrow and disappointment.

Thus we have outlined in this chapter the precious fruitage of the plan of salvation up to the close of the Gospel Age. It has been suggested by some that this great multitude is an earthly class, who will enjoy the Restitution blessings of the Millennium, but the fact that this chapter, in which they are so clearly pictured, precedes the definite announcement of the opening of the Seventh Seal (disclosing the events of the great thousand year day of the Lord - Revelation 8:1) shows that both the hundred and forty and four thousand and the Great Company are classes gathered out of the nations during the Gospel Age (Acts 15 : 14 ; Revelation 7:9).

CHAPTER 8.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS.

The first seal is described in one verse the second in one verse the third in two verses the fourth in one verse the fifth in three verses the sixth in six verses : but it takes John two hundred and seventy-four verses to describe the wonders disclosed under the Seventh Seal : suggesting the great unfolding of Truth reserved for the close of the age.

Revelation 8:1. " And when he had opened the seventh seal (covering the period of our Lord's Second Presence, beginning in A.D. 1874 - 'the last time,' - 1 Peter 1:5), there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Half an hour is the forty-eighth part of a day : A day in Scripture frequently stands for a year. The forty-eighth part of a year is seven and a half days. Continuing the symbol a little further we get seven and a half years.

When our Lord returned in A.D. 1874, He began to open the Seventh Seal (Revelation 7:2), disclosing the wonderful events of the- day of the Lord ; the work to be done during His second Presence ; the work of Harvest and coming Kingdom. But there was no public proclamation of the Truth until seven years later, when " Food for Thinking Christians" was published, and a million and a half copies went into circulation in a matter of a few weeks.

Until A.D. 1881 Pastor Russell was receiving the Truth into a good and honest heart, and setting it in orderly arrangement ; but seemed to be kept in some uncertainty how to begin the great work he

saw the Lord wished to have done (Ezekiel 3:15-17). With the publication of " Food for Thinking Christians," setting forth the " meat in due season,' outlining some of the wonders of the Divine Plan, the silence was broken,, and the trumpet ever since has been sounding louder and louder. Another thought about the half hour's silence, in harmony with all the facts is as follows : The effect of a marvellous spectacle when seen for the first time, is to so take one's breath away, that one is dumb with astonishment for several seconds. Such is the effect on beholding the heavens for the first time through a modern telescope. The half hour's silence after the opening of the Seventh Seal, suggests how great are the wonders of the Divine Plan now due to be understood- (Comp. 2 Corinthians 12:1-4).

In passing it is interesting to note that the interval of comparative peace, quiet, " silence, " between the two major phases of the great tribulation, according to a little different calculation, is exactly a symbolical half-hour, viz., from November, 1918, to September, 1939, as follows Half an hour is the forty-eighth part of a day the forty-eighth part of a thousand-year day is twenty years and ten months. This, it will be noticed, is exactly the length of the above interval.

After the opening of the Seventh Seal, John, typifying the Church living in the Harvest time of the Gospel Age, is permitted to see something never before disclosed, viz., a picture of the completion of the Reformation begun in the days of Luther, and concluded as a result of the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet ; the " last trump," the trump of God."

Revelation 8:2. "And I saw the seven angels (seven agencies or instrumentalities) which stand before God (They are before Him in that He sees the future, and knows what He will do at every

point, and turn of His great plan-Acts 15:18-When-ever a work has to be done, the Lord has the means ready for its accomplishment) ; and to them were given (through the over-ruling of divine providence) seven trumpets." Messages due to be proclaimed in order to accomplish the desired work of reform in each of the periods covered by the trumpets. They are messages that bring deliverance from Papal error and bondage.

Verses three to five form a parenthesis between the statements in v. 2 and v. 6 regarding the seven angels that sound the seven trumpets ; and the suggestion seems to be that they contain a picture of something closely related to the work accomplished by the trumpets. The seven trumpets, as we shall see, symbolize the various reform movements that accomplish the cleansing of the sanctuary after the period of great defilement, the dark ages. Each of these movements, although imperfect, and prior to the last one accomplishing only a partial cleansing, had divine oversight, both as to the message preached and work accomplished : and this seems to be the picture of this parenthesis.

Revelation 8:3. " And another angel (Jesus, the great High Priest and Advocate of the Church) came and stood at the altar (the true church in the flesh ; those who faithfully endeavored to cooperate in the sounding of the trumpets), having a golden censer (a divine receptacle -symbolizing the collection of doctrines preached to accomplish the various works of reform. For instance, the main plank in Luther's platform was justification by Faith : Calvin's Election : the Baptists' Water Immersion : Wesley's Free Grace) ; and there was given unto him much incense that he should offer it with (' add it unto,' R.V.) the prayers of all saints (all the saints associated with the various reform movements) upon the golden altar (God's people not only serve the interests of the Kingdom but also pray for the success of their work. And prayers and work that is in accord with the Lord's

will is made acceptable to the Father through Jesus our Advocate and High Priest, shown by the ' much incense ' added to the prayers of the saints. These prayers are represented as rising from the golden altar, because in the typical picture the sweet incense ascended from here) which was before the throne."-In accord with the outworking of the real divine purpose for man.

Revelation 8:4. " And the smoke of the incense (the sweet savor) which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's, and."-Prayers and service acceptable through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus we see depicted, how acceptable to our Heavenly Father have been the prayers for the successful prosecution of the Harvest and Kingdom work that has been carried forward during the past 50 years (Matthew 9:38), as well as faithful service performed in earlier times.

Revelation 8:5. " And the angel (the Lord Jesus, our Advocate and High Priest, the one having the oversight of all the affairs of His Church) took the censer (things that have already transpired show that this act has its special fulfillment at the end of the age. The golden censer represents the collection of truths, often mingled with serious errors, that in earlier periods of the Church's history, the Lord permitted to be proclaimed to accomplish the work He designed to have done; but at the end of the age, as the verse suggests, many additions are made to the -contents of the censer) and filled it with fire of the altar (In the tabernacle picture this would be the coals of fire from the brazen altar, symbolizing living truths from God's Word-fiery prophetic judgments Isaiah 6:6), and cast (the contents) into the earth (distributed the same among the people) ; and (as a result) there were voices and thunders, and lightnings,, and an earthquake." " And there were thunders, and lightnings and voices, and an earthquake," Diag., appropriately symbolizing the controversies,

enlightenment, proclamations, preaching and revolutions in religious thought resulting from the various Reform movements.

Revelation 8:6. " And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound." If one would be used by the Lord to accomplish a work, full consecration and preliminary preparation are necessary (Isaiah 52:11).

THE FIRST TRUMPET.

Revelation 8:7. " The First angel sounded (' And the first sounded,' R.V.-A message bringing freedom and liberty from that false doctrine and subsequent bondage which secured such a firm hold upon the Church of Christ during the long and silent dark ages. This great work was started by Luther and his associates. The various preliminary efforts at reform seem to be passed over in this picture), and there followed hail (the hard truths contained in Luther's message and in that of others contemporary with him) and fire (symbolizing the destruction of Papal influence, directly and indirectly the result of Luther's work) mingled with blood (the Reformation was not accomplished without some literal bloodshed. The Peasant risings contemporary with Luther's activities, seem to have been one of Satan's efforts to nullify his good work), and they were cast upon the earth (cast into the midst of Europe's social order) : and the third part of the earth was burnt up (see Revised Version-Destroyed from the Papal standpoint. The large numbers who embraced the message of Luther were no longer regarded by Papacy as respectable members of human society), and the third part of trees was burnt up (the German section of those Papacy had regarded as her faithful supporters-'trees of righteousness'? - no longer supported this institution. They were ' burnt up,'

destroyed, from the curious Papal way of looking at things) and all green grass was burnt up." " All flesh is as grass. " Practically the whole of the German States embraced the Reform doctrines. Thus the people of these States were, figuratively speaking, destroyed. They were no longer under Papal influence, supporters of the Apostate Church.

THE SECOND TRUMPET.

Shortly after the beginning of Luther's activities, a similar movement was set in motion in England that quickly produced a break with Rome. To Archbishop Cranmer more than perhaps to any other man, may be attributed this reformation produced by the Second Trumpet He, under God's providence, gave both the Bible in the English tongue and the Book of Common Prayer to the people of this country.

Revelation 8:8. " And the Second angel sounded (symbolizing the message that ever since Cranmer's time has continued to be proclaimed by the Church of England), and as it were a great mountain (England) burning with fire (in the words of another writer-' aflame with another great movement destructive of Papal power ') was cast into the sea (into a state of lawlessness, i.e., from the Papal standpoint) : and the third part of the sea (that third part of the people of Europe found in England) became blood." Repulsive ; Anathema to the adherents of the Church of Rome.

Revelation 8:9. " And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea (occupying positions among the people) and had life (spiritual life ? bestowed by Papacy), died (From the Papal standpoint that which gives spiritual life, power and authority to administer the sacraments and

otherwise act as a minister of Christ is Apostolic Succession ; the laying on of hands by those supposedly in direct line from the Apostles, viz., the Bishops of the Roman Communion. The excommunication of the clergy of the Church of England meant their spiritual death or worse, from the Papal standpoint ; And the third part of the ships (religious organizations, churches ') were destroyed." So Papacy thought, because no longer operated by adherents to the hierarchy of Rome.

THE THIRD TRUMPET.

Revelation 8:10. " And the Third angel (the agencies that, were used to accomplish the next part of the Reformation-Calvin, Knox and their associates. This movement developed into the Presbyterian Church) sounded (out his message), and there fell a great star (Calvin who had been a member of the Papal priesthood ' fell badly ' when he threw off his allegiance to Rome) from heaven (that part of the ecclesiastical heavens dominated by the Pope), burning as it were a lamp (a bearer of spiritual light ; ' burning as a torch,' R.V. An unsteady and very temporary light), and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters." Calvin's message has influenced a considerable section of Christendom from her Theological Colleges (" fountains downward.

Revelation 8:11. " And the name of the star is called Wormwood (aptly symbolizing the very hard, unpleasant, ' bitter ' view of the divine character and plan propounded by John Calvin) and the third part of the waters (the truths of God's Word -the Water of Life) became wormwood (that is, very bitter, on account of being mingled with the theories of Calvinism) ; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." Many lost their hope of life because of being unable to

accept the Gospel as presented by Calvinism. Others were hindered from obtaining life because blinded by Calvinism to the conditions of the High Calling.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET.

Revelation 8:12. 11 And the Fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars ; so as the third part of them was darkened ('that the third part of them should be darkened,' R.V.), and the day shone not for a third part of it,' and the night likewise."

The next important work of reform was that which later developed into the Baptist Church. The sun, moon and stars being heavenly lights, well symbolize the light that shines from the Old and New Testaments-the law and the prophets ; the message of Jesus and the Apostles. This proclamation (" trumpet ") resulting in the Baptist reform, whilst containing some precious truths, also obscured by its errors a considerable measure of the - light of the knowledge of the glory of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ." The whole counsel of God could neither be seen nor proclaimed by the Baptist Church.

The spiritual illumination produced by the Fourth trumpet message, caused the " day - of salvation, and the coming day of Christ, to be seen very imperfectly. The - night - of the reign of sin and death was imperfectly appreciated, too. Only the message of Present Truth shows us clearly the long night of six thousand years, followed by the thousand year day of the Lord.

The statement of verse twelve is very forceful.

The third part of the sun (the Gospel light) was smitten," irrevocably damaged and obscured so long as looked at through Baptist spectacles.

Revelation 8:13. " And I beheld and heard an angel ('an eagle,' R.V. Gk. 'One eagle ') flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound."

Anyone in the days of the fourth trumpet sufficiently far sighted, would have seen that three more trumpets had to be sounded to complete the work to which Jehovah set his hand in the days of Luther. Although we cannot know, personally, to what extent the fifth and sixth trumpet messages were woes to those who refused to walk in the increasing light of Truth, we are familiar with the effect of the Seventh Trumpet upon those who still persist in worshipping the creeds and institutions of the dark ages. Between the beginning of the sounding of the fourth and fifth trumpets there is an interval of about a hundred years. By the end of this time the good work of reform had to a large extent come to a standstill. For instance, England was in a deplorable condition religiously and otherwise. The majority of her people were in abject poverty ; crime was rampant ; and things were drifting rapidly toward a general revolution. And so, in the early part of the 18th century, God's time had come for another reform.

CHAPTER 9.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET.

Revelation 9:1. " And the Fifth angel sounded (The one who took the lead in this new movement was John Wesley) and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth (Stars symbolize teachers in the Church. For instance, the 'twelve stars'; the twelve apostles, Revelation 12:1. Ago-in we read of 'wandering stars ' - teachers who have lost their way ; got out of their depth.

Wesley as a young man was an ordained clergyman of the Church of England. He had such exceptional ability that eventually he would doubtless have become a bishop.; However, becoming ' irregular ' in his methods, and in other ways giving offence to his superiors, he ' fell ' from his position, and at the same time lost the hope of the preferments he might have enjoyed) and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit." " The abyss " (R.V.).

The abyss here seems to symbolize the condition of humanity under the reign of sin and death. The Greek word means " bottomless." Humanity is in a bottomless condition. The majority know not why they are here, from whence they came, or whither they go. " Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people." (Comp. Psalm 40 : 2). The Diaglott correctly renders this last clause-" the key of the pit of the abyss." This suggests one little corner of the abyss. This small part seems to be England ; and Wesley was given the " key " of the same. He probably saw more clearly than any in his day, the remedy for the distressing conditions with which he was surrounded ; viz., the conversion of the people ; their acceptance of the Gospel of Christ. For fifty years he preached

incessantly throughout the length and breadth of the land, the message of God's free grace : " Whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely." At times he was so ill that he should have been in bed, but he still kept on.

Revelation 9:2. " And he opened the bottomless pit ('He opened the pit of the abyss,' Diag. He proceeded to use the power and authority entrusted to him) ; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace. The immediate result of Wesley's work was that thousands were brought to the Lord. But the ultimate result of the teaching of Methodism has been only to add to the confusion (' smoke ') already existing in Christendom. Eternal torment, the immortality of the soul, and the Trinity, were a part of the message of the Fifth Trumpet.

With the return of the Master (See Revelation 10:1. Diag. literal) the Seventh Trumpet began to sound and our Lord had to His hand another devoted servant, ready ' prepared ' for the great work to be done (Revelation 8:6). Wesley had the doors of the Anglican Church closed against him. The Seventh Messenger had the doors of every sect, large and small, in Christendom closed to him, and yet the prosperity of his work was phenomenal. Wesley and his followers endeavored to convert the world before the due time ; the result was a ' smoke ' ; only more confusion than there would have existed in Christendom without them. But ' in the days of the voice of the Seventh angel ' the mystery is finished (Revelation 10:7) ; confusion and darkness are passed, and God's people, one by one, are translated ' out of darkness into his marvellous light ' - a happy prelude to the time when all mankind shall be delivered from their present darkness and corruption, into the glorious light and liberty of the children of God (Romans 8:21). And the sun (the Gospel light) and the air (the spiritual powers operating in England at this time ; particularly the Anglican Church) were

darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit." We might also say that Satan's power (" air," Ephesians 2:2) was to some extent dimmed, eclipsed, by the good work of Methodism. A hundred and fifty years (" five months," v. 5) after the time of Wesley, the great Master returns with the " key of the abyss " (Revelation 20:1). He does what His most zealous servants failed to do. Jesus not only has the " key " to earth's distress, but also the Power to successfully use the same. " The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea."

Revelation 9:3. " And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth (One characteristic about locusts is that when they make their appearance their numbers are always large. All sorts and conditions of men as a result of the Fifth trumpet were brought in a measure out of sin and unbelief, and became Methodists, and during the past hundred and fifty years their numbers have increased phenomenally) : and unto them was given power (not to convert the world, but to add a quota toward human betterment, and also, sad to say, to propagate some of the poisonous errors of the dark ages), as the scorpions of the earth have power." - To sting and poison those who come in contact with them.

Revelation 9:4 - " And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth (that is, mankind in general. ' All flesh is as grass.' The unbelieving world have not been injured by the activities of Methodism. ' Neither any green thing,' omitted by Siniatic ATS.), neither any tree (those already converted to God-Isaiah 61:3), but only those men which have not the seat of God in their foreheads." The masses of the unconverted amenable to Methodist influence.

Revelation 9:5. " And it was given to them (the symbolical locusts) that they should not kill them (Emphasize the great truth that death is the wages of sin), but that they should be tormented (by the -preaching that a hell of eternal torture awaited all outside of Christ) five months (In symbolic time, a hundred and fifty years; $5 \times 30 = 150$): and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man." Of an extremely severe and painful character,

The first Methodist Conference was convened by John Wesley in A.D. 1740, by which time we might say that Methodism was organized and had begun its work in earnest. This hundred and fifty years terminated in A.D. 1890 (1740 Plus 150 = 1890), by which time, Hell-fire preaching Bad-tidings of eternal misery for nearly all people -had begun to decline. '

Revelation 9:6. " And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." Many Methodists searched the Scriptures to see if they could find a more merciful provision for the world than was being taught, but without success, The false doctrine of the immortality of the soul stood in the way.

Revelation 9:7. " And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle (A man in the pulpit saturated with Methodist doctrine, frequently used to be a real wax-horse in spiritual things- Job 39:19-25 ; Joel 2:25) ; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold (The creed of the old-time Methodists was ' sudden death, sudden glory,' which to them meant all the glory of the divine nature, the crown of life. They frequently spoke as if these blessings were already theirs) and (yet) their faces were as the faces of men." In many ways much like other men able to enjoy a good time and a good meal.

Revelation 9:8. " And they had hair as the hair of women (They professed and often manifested much submission to the authority of the true Head of the Church-the Lord Jesus - 1 Corinthians 2:3-15), and (yet) their teeth were as the teeth of lions." Able to chew and swallow almost any unreasonable theory presented to them by their properly ordained (?) ministers.

Revelation 9:9. " And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron (The breastplate of Ephesians 6:14 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8, represents the blessing of justification, the imputed righteousness of Christ. Wearing something that looks like an iron breastplate would suggest that in spite of all their preaching of salvation through the Cross, the true philosophy of justification has not been understood by Methodists) ; and (yet in spite of ail their errors and misunderstandings) the sound of their wings (their preaching and other activities) was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle." Noisy in the extreme.

Revelation 9:10. " And they had tails (Wesley's followers, specially his preachers-Isaiah 9:15) like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails (They were busily occupied in injecting a little truth and much poison into the minds of their congregations) : and their power was to hurt men five months." A hundred and fifty years.

Revelation 9:11. " And they had a king over them, the angel of the bottomless pit (' And they have over them a king ; the angel of the abyss,' Diag. Or, in other words, Satan, the prince of this world. Satan's power was exercised over Methodism to the extent the Lord would permit. In the same way it has been exercised over the other reform movements ; to hinder the good work he foresaw they

might accomplish) whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon ('destroyer.' Throughout the period of the Old Testament this is the role he has fulfilled), but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon." " He hath the name, Apollyon " (R.V.). Apollyon also means destroyer. His same evil work has continued throughout New Testament times (Hebrews 2:14).

Revelation 9:12. " One woe is past (Methodism is no longer a woe to Papacy or the Anglican system. Her ministers will frequently occupy the same platform and speak eulogistically of the representatives of Rome and Anglicanism. ') ; and behold, there come two woes more hereafter." Two more movements to complete the Reformation.

Verse 13 to the end of this chapter contains a description of 19th century Protestantism, showing its complete failure to accomplish its self-imposed task of converting the world (VS. 20, 2T). Then "~ of the Millennial Age, beginning follows the work gradually and quietly without " outward show," in 1874.

This period covered by the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet not only completes the "cleansing of the sanctuary --the work of the first few decades of the day of the Lord, but also brings " whosoever will " of the world back again to " that which was lost " in Adam, when they will again " see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads : and they shall reign (over the restored earthly dominion-Genesis 1:27, 28 Matthew 25:34) for ever and ever." (Revelation 22:4, 5).

THE SIXTH TRUMPET.

Revelation 9:13, 14. " And the Sixth angel sounded (symbolizing the many and varied agencies that proclaim the message of 19th century Protestantism. During this period the various denominations gradually lost their distinctive features and began to preach a different message from that of their founders, hence is symbolized by another trumpet), and I heard a voice from (' the four horns of ' omitted in Sinaitic MS.) the golden altar which is before God (The golden altar in the holy of the Tabernacle represents Christ. We may well think of the altar here in the same way. The providences of Jesus, the great Head of the Church are here pictured-As we sometimes say-- Actions speak louder than words), saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet (the numerous agencies that proclaim the message of 19th century Protestantism), Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates." The Euphrates upon which ancient Babylon was situated symbolizes " peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues " that support mystic Babylon of this Gospel Age (Revelation 17:15).

The four angels of Revelation 7:1 represent the forces or agencies which, when released, bring the whirlwind of the great time of trouble upon Christendom. Prior to this there is a time of trouble along spiritual lines that comes upon the nominal Church. This is what seems to be referred to here ; and these four angels represent the forces of evil that bring spiritual pestilence and death upon the entire nominal Church. They are shown, however, to be completely subject to divine control. Four is a universal number.

Revelation 9:15. " And the four angels were loosed which were prepared for an hour (' and a day ' omitted by Sinaitic MS.) and a month and a year ('which had been prepared for the hour-and - month and year,' R.V.), for to stay the third part of men." " The third of the men " (Diag.). The flood of Higher Criticism and Evolution that has destroyed the spiritual life of such large numbers, is to some extent the outcome of the unreasonable errors of the dark ages, which became embedded in the creeds of the Reformers. These seeds of evil were sown (" prepared ") 390 years ago at the beginning of Protestantism's seige of Papacy (Ezekiel 4:5). A symbolic year is 360 years, and a month, 30 years. The picture shows that the letting loose of these evil agencies was not before the time of the Lord's appointment. Even the wrath of man is made to praise Him. (Psalm 76:10).

Revelation 9:16. " And the number of the army of the horsemen (Those brought into nominal church membership towards the close of the period covered by the Sixth Seal, through the influence of the creeds and other doctrinal monstrosities of Churchianity) were (roughly) two hundred thousand thousand (200,000,000 ; the Protestant Church membership at this end of the age) : and I heard the..number of them." Noted it as being correct (Pslam. 20:7).

Revelation 9:17. " And thus I saw the horses in the vision (The John class see the reality of what John saw in vision. Here it is a glimpse of the se6ts and denominations of Protestantism with their babel of conflicting theories. While horses symbolize creeds, doctrines, teachings--Revelation 6:2 ; Isaiah 31:1 - we may here carry the symbol a step further and think also of the organizations that have grown up around these creeds and teachings-the Protestant sects), and them that sat on them (Them that were supported spiritually and often materially through being identified with the great nominal church) having breastplates of fire and of jacinth and brimstone (Contact with such a

breastplate would be dangerous in the extreme. Comp. Ephesians 6:14 ; Revelation 9:9. The understanding of most professed Christians to-day as to how righteousness and God's approval may be secured is most injurious and even destructive of true faith. Almost without exception the Ransom is denied): and the heads of the horses (of the religious sects - Isaiah 9:15) were as the heads of lions (a lion has a noble head ; so many of Protestantism's leaders are naturally fine men. The Bible compliments them on their earthly learning) and (yet) out of their mouths (the mouths of the ' horses,' that is the mouthpieces of Churchianity) issued fire and smoke and brim. stone." Doctrines of hell-fire ; soul-destroying heresies, confusing theories of Modernism, substituted for the Word of God.

Revelation 9:18. " By these three (' By these three ,plagues,' R.V.-'three ' is omitted in the Sinaitic MS.) was the third part of men killed (destroyed the spiritual life and faith of vast numbers), by the fire, and by the smoke and by the brimstone which issued out of their mouths." From the pulpit and Press of our day.

Revelation 9:19. " For their power (to injure) is in their mouth (the oratory of the great leaders), and in their tails (the lesser clergy and ministers - Isaiah 9:15) for their tails were like unto serpents (The clergy manifest much appearance of wisdom yet, almost without exception, they teach Satan's lie, ' Ye shall not surely die ", and had heads (a considerable amount of self-will which made them follow man-made theories instead of submitting themselves to the Word of God - Revelation 20:4), and with them they do hurt." Sting and inject their poison, injuring the - spiritual life of those who listen to them.

Revelation 9:20. " And the rest of the men (the vast numbers in Christendom still outside the influence of nominal Christianity) which were not killed by these plagues (that have produced such far-reaching spiritual loss and destruction); yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold and silver, and brass and stone and of wood : which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk." They continue to devote their time, energy and thought almost exclusively to material things ; the things that bring present advantage. " God is not in all their thoughts."

One of the great arguments against Present Truth is that if generally preached it would make people careless and indifferent. Here we are divinely shown that this is really the effect of the eternal torment "gospel" and other false theories of Protestantism and not the true message from God's Word.

Revelation 9:21. " Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." The grossest sins continue to be practiced by Christendom, in spite of their civilization, education and influence of the nominal Christian Church. Neither the preaching of the creeds of the dark ages, nor the theories of Modernism, accomplish even to a small extent Churchianity's self-imposed task of converting the world (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

CHAPTER 10.

THE COMPLETION OF THE REFORMATION.

It has been already noticed that the last three trumpets are spoken of as " three woes " (Revelation 9:12). A woe is something that causes sorrow, grief, disappointment, anguish. For instance, the growth of Methodism was quite a woe to the Anglican Church, when they saw this vast number of people come into existence who disregarded their authority : for them to often see the Parish Church empty and the Methodist Chapel full! Similarly the wonderful growth of the evangelical denominations during the 19th century was indeed a woe to Papacy, in view of their stationary and stagnant condition. And now the Seventh Trumpet message telling among other things of the fall from favor and complete overthrow of organized religion, is a sore woe to every section of Protestantism as well as to the Papal system.

Revelation 10:1. " And I (John, representing the John class, the Church at the end of the age) saw a mighty angel ('another ' should be omitted-See Diag.) come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud (This is a picture of our Lord Jesus coming again at His Second Advent, to set up His Kingdom ; and prophecy shows that His presence dates from 1874. ' Clothed with a cloud ' suggests an invisible presence, hidden from the human eye. just as an airplane can be heard but not seen, because lost in the clouds, so Jesus comes again not as a man, but with the glory of the Father, which glory no man hath seen or can see) : and a rainbow was upon (' over ') his head (Our dear Master brings with Him the assurance that the great oath-bound covenant made with Abraham is about to be fulfilled -Comp. Revelation 4:3), and his face was as it were the sun (His presence

reflects upon His people the full clear light of the true Gospel - II Corinthians 4:6), and his feet as pillars of fire." Wherever he places His authority, plants His Truth, the powers of darkness are scattered ; His enemies are destroyed.

Revelation 10:2. " And he had in his hand (under His control) a little book (symbolizing a record or message) open (Jesus brings with Him the revelation of Present Truth): and he set his right foot (exercised a restraining influence) upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth." Symbolizing the two classes in Christendom who needed to be held in check until the close of the Harvest period, viz. the classes and the masses ; the conservative order-loving section of the community and the Socialistic and revolutionary elements ; or, we might say, Capital and Labor.

Revelation 10:3. " And (He) cried with a loud voice (made a great proclamation), as when a lion roareth (the loudest and most impressive voice in the animal world) : and when he had cried (with a cry that, in the first place, can only reach spiritual ears - Revelation 3:22) seven thunders uttered their voices." Thunder was ever regarded in olden times as the voice of God ; and this seems to be the significance of the symbol here (Job 37:2-5).

Revelation 10:4. " And when, the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I (John, typifying the first and principal member of the John class privileged to give the meat in due season to the household of faith - Matthew 24:45-47) was about to write (Pastor Russell felt it his duty to write and publish for the benefit of the Lord's people the Truth made known to him. And he, has told us, that at the beginning of his work he thought of outlining what had been revealed to him in One Volume. Subsequently he thought that perhaps two would be necessary. But as the subjects took

further shape and grew in his mind, he realized what bulky volumes they would be. Finally he came to the conclusion that Seven Volumes, to be published at intervals throughout ,the Harvest period, was the Lord's will for His people) : and I heard a voice from heaven (God, speaking through His Word and His providences, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." Immediately ; Do not disclose all the wonders of divine grace too quickly. They were to be assimilated gradually by the people of God.

Revelation 10:5, 6. " And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth (our Lord Jesus present at His Second Advent con-trolling and holding humanity in check-Revelation 7:1) lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein (Strange as it may seem the modern world needs to, be reminded of a personal Creator - Revelation 4:11; 14:7), that there should be time no longer." That the time shall be no longer delayed " (Diag.). We are here shown in a symbolical way, how the Lord Jesus during His Second Presence gives His people the strongest possible proofs and assurances that the time is at hand for the setting up of the long-promised Kingdom. These evidences are found in Volumes Two and Three of the Scripture Studies (Ezekiel 12:27).

Revelation 10:7. "But in the days of the voice of the Seventh Angel (the agencies used to sound the last Trumpet, the jubilee trumpet, with its glad message of the ' Restitution of all things '-Revelation 8:6) when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished (then is finished the mystery of God,' RV.), as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." " According to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets " (R.V.). God's servants have longed for the

time when the vail of mystery surrounding the divine purposes would be withdrawn, but this was not possible before the opening of the Seventh Seal and sounding of the Seventh Trumpet, both taking place during the Harvest period of the Gospel Age.

Revelation 10:8. " And the voice which I (John, typifying in the first place Pastor Russell--Comp. v. 4, followed by all others ready for the message of Present Truth) heard from heaven, spake again unto me and said ' Go and take the little book which is open in the 'hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth." God' providences direct all the Truth-hungry ones o His people to where they can obtain the satisfying portion.

Revelation 10:9. "And I went unto the angel and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it and eat it up ; and it shall make thy belly bitter ; but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey." How accurately this describes the message contained in the "Scripture Studies"! Sweet as honey to our taste; but after thoroughly assimilating and digesting it, the Lord's people experience something of the bitterness that it brings ; something of the unpopularity of the message and what it costs to be faithful to the light of the new day.

Revelation 10:10. "And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it up (made the Lord's message my own); and it was in my mouth sweet as honey : and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

Revelation 10:11." And he said unto me (' And they say unto me,' R.V.) Thou must prophesy again (not down to the close of the times of the Gentiles, 1914; or to any other date, but to the very end of

your course) before (' concerning,' RN.) many peoples, and nations and tongues and kings." The prophets reveal God's purposes and providences toward all sorts and conditions of men and these must be faithfully called attention to - by His people.

CHAPTER 11.

THE TWO WITNESSES.

Forever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in heaven."

To appreciate this chapter, it must be understood that the events leading up to " the time of the end," foreshadow events leading up to the actual end of the Gospel Age and " present evil world." John, who is addressed, foreshadows, as already pointed out, the John class-those of the Church who have tarried in the flesh until the time of our Lord's second presence, the Day of the Lord that began to dawn in A.D. 1874 (John 21:21-23 ; Rev. 1:9, 10). just as John on the Isle of Patmos (" mortal was in a condition of literal separation from the various phases of the then evil order of things, Rome, the center of imperial power; Corinth, the center of commerce ; Athens, the center of learning; and Jerusalem, the nominal center of God's revealed Word and worship : so the John class, the Church still in the mortal condition, are separated by Present Truth from every phase of this present evil world and while waiting for their change, prophesy " concerning many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings."

Revelation 11:1. " And there was given me (the John class, the Church) a reed like unto a rod (symbolizing the Word of God ; the great divine measuring rod which measures not material things, but spiritual things ; things pertaining to the Church and God's plan in general. ' And a reed was given me like a rod, saying, ' Diag.) and the angel stood saying, Rise (Arise from Babylonian bondage.' 'Arise and shine for thy light is come ') and measure (God's Word and Spirit and

providence's exhort us to measure) the temple of God (During the dark ages God's people were almost completely deprived of His Word, and although during the time of the end it has gradually been given back to them ; not until the Harvest time did we have it in such convenient form, with such helps as Concordances, Bible Dictionaries, and particularly the ' Scripture Studies,' so as to enable us to make accurate measurements of the Divine Plan and requirements.

A careful study of the Word enables the Lord's people to see that none of the sects of Christendom correspond or coincide with the measurements of God's 'temple'; His Church, as set forth in the New Testament - 2 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16) and the altar (symbolizing the worship the Lord requires and the kind of sacrifices He wishes us to offer), and them that worship therein." Those in the temple, worshipping in spirit and in truth-seeking to attain to the measure of the stature of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

Revelation 11:2. " But the court which is without the temple, leave out and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles (The ' Court of the Gentiles ' was not to be measured, because it represented the place or condition of those who are outside actual covenant relationship with God. just as Gentiles had access to a certain area of the Jewish Temple, so in the Gospel Age, the nominal spiritual temple-church-of God has been . made up of ' wheat ' and ' tares ' : those of the Temple proper and those who have come only so far as the symbolic ' court of the Gentiles ' - a condition of faith sufficient to prompt them to class themselves as Christians, or members of the Church of Christ. To the standards, conceptions and ideas of this host of nominal Christians, God's people should not give their attention ' Measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles -a large class of people outside of covenant relationship with God, who have been permitted membership in the

nominal church during the Gospel Age): And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." The term " Holy city " here seems to refer to the true Church - the Kingdom class; its doctrines and teachings. These would be " trodden under foot of the Gentiles," forty and two months, This indicates a period of 1,260 years ($42 \times 30 = 1,260$), during which the holy things of the Lord were misused and misunderstood by those who were Christians in name, but not in fact. These were the dark ages. Following this comes the vindication of the Truth and the Lord's people : their rescue from the power of error and a false church. This work went rapidly forward after the close of Papacy's power to persecute and hold down the Truth - A.D. 1799.

Revelation 11:3. " And I will give unto (permit a certain experience to come to) my two witnesses (the Old and New Testaments) and they shall prophesy (give out their testimony) a thousand, two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth." When a person is clothed in sackcloth, his body is securely hidden from sight. just so the " two witnesses " were not only kept from circulating among the people, but also were hidden in a language they could not understand.

Revelation 11:4. " These (The Old and New Testaments) are (also symbolized by) the two olive trees (As olive oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit can only be obtained from the olive tree, so & Old and New Testaments are the only channel of the Spirit of God ; it cannot be possessed apart from His inspired Word), and the two candlesticks ('lampstands ' - another symbol of the Old and New Testaments ; the only source of true light ; the only divine light shining amidst the darkness of this world), standing, before the God of the earth." That is to say, His eyes are ever upon His Word, to guard and to protect it. All efforts o burn or otherwise destroy the Word have failed. His Word has ever been before Him in His presence ; therefore in a place of security.

Revelation 11:5. " And if any man will hurt them, fire devoureth their enemies ; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed." If any man, any false teacher, shall be found handling the Word of God deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:2), or in any sense seeking to destroy or nullify " that which is written," he shall lose any hope of life he might have had. He shall be killed spiritually.

Revelation 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." The expression " the days of their prophecy " may be thought of as referring more particularly to the 1,260 years when the " two witnesses " were giving their testimony clothed in the sackcloth of dead languages (Jas. 5:17) ; but in another sense, the entire Gospel Age has proceedeth out of their mouth, and been the period of activity of the Two Witnesses. To some, the Bible has been a closed book ; to others, of a different attitude of heart, it has been the channel of every blessing. Thus God has sent, and will continue to send, His Word to accomplish His purposes for mankind (Isa. 55:10,11). He has given to the two witnesses "power over waters." The truths of His Word intended to bring refreshment, become blood-like, repulsive, a " savor of death unto death," a plague, instead of a life-giving message, to those whose hearts are not right before Him ; but to others, His Word is a " balm for all their woe." How very much depends upon our attitude of heart when we approach the Divine Word!

Revelation 11:7. " And when they shall have finished their testimony * (when the word has been proclaimed as a witness to all nations, and the members of the body of Christ have been called out), the beast (symbolizing a rule of violence toward God His Word and His people) that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit ('the abyss,' R.V.-that is evolved out of the elements that go to make up this present evil world) shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." During the dark ages it was the Papal beast that fulfilled this unenviable role ; but with the beginning of the time of the end, the Papal power to persecute and hold down the Truth was broken, and it was forced to retire from the public stage. It seems, however, that in some form it is again to make its appearance; resume some of its former power, and continue for a short time (Rev. 17:10)

At this time, however, the rule of violence and other beast-like characteristics, will not only 'be manifested by the Papal beast, but also by others ; and it is obvious that more subtle forces must be included in the entity symbolized by the beast. For forty years or more, prior to A.D. 1914, one of the most subtle, deceptive, blighting and soul-destroying teachings that the Adversary ever promulgated, was rising up in the nominal Church, viz., the so-called Higher Criticism of the Bible. Beginning in Germany, it spread rapidly throughout the religious world of Great Britain and America.

Higher Criticism assumes to be "wise above that which is written," saying that this and that part of

* The partial fulfillment of this prophecy at the close of the 1,260 year period of the Witnesses' testimony clothed in sackcloth, is here passed over.

the Bible is not reliable : that the first five books of the Bible are not the writings of Moses : that evidence has been found to show that they were written long after the time of Moses. The same method of criticism began to be applied to the prophets. Isaiah, the critics say, could not possibly have written the whole of his prophecy: Daniel was a forgery, etc.

Soon the New Testament came under this same violent and destructive criticism. Jesus said, " The words that I speak, they are spirit and they are life." Therefore, to destroy confidence in our Lord's inspired words is to destroy that which is the very life of the saints. For such beast-like destructive teachings to rear their head in the professed Christian Church, is surely well symbolized by the beast rising out of the abyss. " He shall make war with them --begin an attack upon the Two Witnesses : apparently prove, little by little, their unreliability as heaven-sent witnesses : seemingly destroy (" kill ") them by deceptive arguments, discrediting the Bible to the point where it is by many no longer regarded as the Word of God.

Revelation 11:8. " And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city (The proper thing to do with a dead body lying in the street, is to bury it : but not so the Two Witnesses. Although no longer regarded by the great majority of Protestant Ministers as the fully inspired, living Word of God, the Two Witnesses are not taken away from their place of prominence in the pulpits of the Nominal Church : they are still used as appropriate books from which to select texts for discourses, having little or nothing to do with their contexts, or the Plan of Salvation revealed in the Word), which spiritually (symbolically) is called Sodom and Egypt (Old Testament prophecies in which these places are mentioned, are frequently veiled references to Christendom, Rome and

Protestantism ; ' that great city that reigneth-exerciseth religious influence-over the earth'), where also our Lord ('their Lord,' R.V.) was crucified."

During the Gospel Age our Lord has suffered in His members, and has been crucified in those who have been crucified with Him (Gal. 2:20 ; Acts 9:4). It is very significant that Jesus was crucified at Golgotha, " the place of a skull." At this end of the age, the Higher Critics have figuratively crucified the Word of God as well as the faith of thousands of God's professed people ; thus greatly adding to the sufferings of the faithful members of the Body of Christ.

v. 9. " And they of the people, and kindreds and tongues and nations (That is, some of the people, particularly the leaders and more Drominent ones identified with the civil and religious organisations of ' that great city,' Christendom - Jer. 25:35), shall see their dead bodies (they will be cognizant of the fact that the clergy have ceased to regard the Two Witnesses as the living Word of God) three days and a half (This may be thought of as a short crucial time of testing, when the clergy and ministers will be challenged to discard (' bury ') the Bible along with their putrifying creeds' and (yet they) shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves." They prefer not to use their influence to carry out this only honest and proper thing. The logically minded would say-" If the Bible is not the inspired word of God, why not banish it from the Churches?" (Isa. 4 : 1).

Revelation 11:10. " And they that dwell upon the earth (Natural-minded men who cannot see above the level of earthly things, yet calling themselves Christians) shall rejoice over them and make merry (as they come to the conclusion that after all, the appeals and warnings of the Bible were never uttered by Divine Authority), and shall send gifts one to another (News items, calling

attention to the supposed wonderful discoveries of the Higher Critics re the unreliability of this and -that portion of the sacred Word : findings passed on to friends and colleagues, particularly among the clergy) ; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt an the earth." Specially natural men not subject to the law of God. but now held in restraint no longer. Hitherto a violation of the Word had brought reminders of the penalties prescribed therein for such transgressions. Now these things have been shorn of their terrors. when viewed in the supposed light of Higher Criticism. The Law of Moses, for instance, is no longer the divinely provided moral code for 20th century Christians ! It may be transgressed or set aside as occasion requires ! No wonder the " time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation is permitted to come upon " this generation!

V.11. " And after three days and an half (representing a short testing period in which the Bible appears to many as an uninspired book, no longer the Word of God, ' living and powerful '), the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet (God will once more vindicate His Holy Word. Its full inspiration will again be established. The Old and New Testaments will once more occupy their proper place as witnesses for God to a fallen, condemned, but redeemed world. Modern discoveries ; the wonderful and incontrovertible fulfillments of the ' sure word of prophecy ' ; the Lord's living witnesses ; and finally the establishment of a supernatural Kingdom in the hands of Messiah : all of these shall contribute to the ('convincing of the gainsayers.')

; and great fear fell upon them which saw them." Specially will those who have written disproving the inspiration of the Scriptures, wish to have their writings recalled from circulation.

Revelation 11:12. And they heard (some MSS. read, I heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud ; and their enemies beheld them." Divine power will ultimately lift up the Two Witnesses to that place of authority in the spiritual world they originally occupied. Thus, figuratively speaking, they will " ascend up to heaven," where God's Word is " settled " ; for ever established (Ps. 119:89). This final triumph of truth and righteousness over error and sin, the great Teacher, during His earthly ministry, ever sought to keep before the minds of His disciples. But He recognized that the vindication of the Word of Truth would not be accomplished without much trouble, conflict ("cloud"). " Their enemies beheld them," thus affording a never-to-be-forgotten lesson to those carried away by the strong delusions of the Adversary in his role of " Higher Critic."

Revelation 11:13. " And the same hour was there a great earthquake (co-incident with the restoration of the Witnesses to their proper place in God's arrangement occurs another great earthquake or revolution in religious thought ; a turning of men's minds back again to faith in His inspired Word. Compare Rev. 6:12. The great earthquake in which every kingdom will disappear, also occurs about this time-Rev. 16:18-20), and the tenth part of the city fell (although, as already suggested, there was a partial fulfillment of this chapter about the beginning of the time of the end, when the great revolution in France overthrew the monarchy and instituted a reign of terror ; this is here passed over, and the more important fulfillment at the end of the age considered), and in the earthquake (the great social revolution that ushers in the Kingdom) were slain of men, seven thousand (symbolizing a numerous but complete number. ' And by the earthquake were destroyed seven thousand names of men,' Diag. - symbolizing the titles, civil and ecclesiastical, worn and so much admired by the natural man. These will all have to go: Hence in the ' new earth,' Dukes,

Lords, Baronets, Knights, Bishops, Deans, Reverends, D.D.'s, etc., etc., will be as hard to find as a needle in a haystack) and the remnant ('the rest,' RX. of Them) were affrighted (considerably alarmed at such drastic changes) and gave glory to the God of heaven." Were rightly exercised by the experience.

Revelation 11:14. The second woe is past (Although the Seventh Trumpet begins to sound in the early years of the great day of the Lord, which began in 1874, its message is at first appreciated by few the majority of professing Christians know of nothing beyond the things disclosed under the Sixth Trumpet until the time of trouble has done its work) : and behold the third woe (The Seventh Trumpet and all it discloses of the glories of the New day-a woe surely, only to those blinded by the Adversary, and those -Who love unrighteousness and the unjust advantages of the 'present evil world' enjoyed by the few), cometh quickly."

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.

V. 15. " And the Seventh Angel (The many and varied agencies use to proclaim Present Truth, the message of the coming Kingdom Rev. 8 : 6) sounded (This trumpet continues to sound until the close of the Millennial Age, by which time 'all shall know me from the least unto the greatest ') and there were great voices in heaven (in the religious world ; among those professing to appreciate spiritual things), saying, The kingdoms ('kingdom,' RX. ; sovereignty) of this world are C is ' become the kingdoms ('kingdom,' I sovereignty ') of our Lord (Our Lord Jehovah) and of his Christ (Jesus, the Head and the Church His body) and he shall reign for ever and ever." This transference of power, prophecy shows, began to take place in 1878. See Scripture Studies, Vol 2.

Revelation 11:16, 17- " And the four and twenty elders (The writings of the Old Testament) which sat before God on their seats (' thrones ' ; occupying their places of authority in connection with the outworking of the Divine Plan) fell upon their faces and worshipped God (These writings reverence and honor Him by revealing the outworking of His gracious purposes), saying, We give thee thanks O Lord God Almighty, which art and wast 'and art to come,' omitted by oldest MSS.), because thou hast taken to thee thy great Power, and hast reigned." A further step in the setting up of the kingdom was in 1914, which prophecy shows to be the close of the times of the Gentiles, and when our Lord began to exercise kingly authority over the nations.

Revelation 11:18. " And the nations were angry (So angry that they began the most devastating war that had ever been) and thy wrath is come (the day of wrath ; the time of trouble that began in 1914. Dan. 12:1) and the time of the dead (all mankind condemned in Adam, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ), that they should be judged (probationarily judged ; placed on trial for life. This ' time ' or ' appointed time,' Diag.; the period of the Kingdom, which begins ' not with outward show ' in 1914), and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets (the Ancient Worthies to be raised as perfect men at the close of the day of wrath, probably a period of 40 years - Ezek. 20:9-11), and to the saints (although awakened at the beginning of the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet .- 1 Cor. 15:52 – a part of their reward for past faithfulness will be the priviledge of a share with Jesus in the work of the Kingdom - the blessing of all the. families of the earth) and them that fear thy name (those who come to recognize and obey the great King in that day – 2 Thes. 1:10) small and great (all mankind are included in this wonderful arrangement however insignificant or however honorable their position during the present life) ; and shouldest destroy

them which destroy the earth." Corrupt the - new earth." If by the end of the Millennium there are any of mankind still imperfect, they will be cut off. To allow them to continue to, live would be to mar a perfect society in harmony with God.

The next verse seems to come in as a little parenthesis and may be understood as follows :

Revelation 11:19 And the temple of God (the true Church ; her doctrines ; organization and work) was opened in heaven (In such a way as could only be seen and appreciated by the spiritually minded ; those ' seated in the heavenlies with Christ.' These wonders have been gradually disclosed to the John Class during the Harvest period from 1874 onward. And we might say that this ' opening up ' reaches a completion by the time our Lord takes His great power to reign), and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament (This most sacred article of furniture in the typical tabernacle and temple symbolizes the Christ ; that company of many members of which Jesus is the Head ; the I mystery,' more clearly revealed at this end of the age than ever before) and (as a result of this revelation of Present Truth to God's people) there were lightnings (much enlightenment coming to them upon all subjects of God's Word), and voices (proclamations of the Truth received - Acts 4 : 20), and thunderings (controversies and opposition as a result of the light coming in contact with the prevailing darkness), and an earthquake (revolutions taking place in, the minds of men, resulting from the increase of knowledge), and great hail." The circulation of the hard, compact message of Truth that has taken place throughout the Harvest period (Isa. 28 : 17).

CHAPTER 12.

THE PAPAL COUNTERFEIT.

John, continuing to look back into the past under the guidance, Oh! the Lord's providences (Rev. 1:12), sees how Satan has endeavored to frustrate God's purpose of gathering and developing His Church during the Gospel Age, by producing a counterfeit of this organization.

Revelation 12:1. " And there appeared a great wonder ('sign, R.V. Something warranted to attract attention) in heaven (in the religious world), a woman (the early church that began to appear on the stage of human events at Pentecost) clothed with the sun (enjoying the clear, unclouded light of the Gospel), and the moon (the light that comes from the Old Testament, the law, when the light of the Gospel shines upon it. The moon has no light of its own. What we see at night when we look at the moon is the light of the sun shining upon a dead satellite), under her feet (After we see the light of the true Gospel we find everywhere in the Old Testament, types and shadows corroborating and supporting the great plan, thus wonderfully confirming our faith), and upon her head a crown of twelve stars," the inspired teachers of the Church, the twelve Apostles.

Revelation 12:2. " And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." God's purpose in this age has been the development of a New Creation through suffering, in the midst of justified but imperfect human organisms. The New Creature begotten in us can only be developed at some cost and sacrifice of the flesh, hence the appropriateness of the figure used here (Gal. 4:19).

Revelation 12:3. " And there appeared another wonder sign,' RV.) in heaven (in the religious world in the early centuries of the Gospel Age); and behold a great red dragon (Pagan Rome a living monstrosity, cruel and fearsome, with which the early church had to contend), having seven heads (what confusion often results when there is more than one head of a concern!) and ten horns (symbolizing all the power operated by this devilish system), and seven crowns upon his heads." The self-appointed rulerships - exercised by the leaders of Pagan Rome.

Revelation 12:4. "And his tail (the last of the Pagan Emperors was Constantine, who experienced a conversion of a kind and became a professed Christian ; hence he was the ' tail ' of the organization here symbolized) drew the third part of the stars of heaven (teachers of the Christian Church which was making its influence widely felt in the 3rd and 4th century) and did cast them to the earth (brought them down to the level of earthly things. When Constantine became a professed Christian, he was so disturbed by the controversies going on within the Church that he convened the Council of Nice for the purpose of settling some of these differences. History tells us that Constantine sent out about a thousand invitations to the Bishops of his empire, but only 394 accepted, and came to the Conference. And the result for them, as we are here shown, was not good) : And the dragon (Pagan Rome) stood before the woman (the Church of the 3rd and 4th century) which was ready to be delivered (striving to be faithful and grow as New Creatures in Christ Jesus), for to devour her child as soon as it was born." Constantine thought it would be a good thing to make Christianity, that possessed so many more reasonable features than the old Pagan faiths with which he was familiar, the religion of the Roman Empire.

Revelation 12:5. " And, she brought forth a man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron (The language of this verse, so fitting if applied to the true Church organization of the Gospel Age- out of which is developed the Christ to rule all nations during the Millennium-must here, it seems, in view of the context, be applied to Satan's counterfeit of God's arrangement - the Antichrist-born as a result of the falling away of the early Church, 2 Thes. 2:7) ; and her child (the counterfeit Christ, the Papal system) was caught up unto God, and to his throne." -Sought to usurp and inaugurate with some success a counterfeit of the reign of Christ and the true Church.

Revelation 12:6. " And the woman (the true Church ; the faithful remnant, seeing that Constantine was making Christianity more and more an arm of the State to serve his own purposes) fled into the wilderness (into solitude and separation from a worldly Church organization), where she hath a place prepared of God, that they (unknown but faithful servants) should feed her them (Jehovah, our Shepherd and the Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheer), can succor and sustain the flock, however isolated or unfavorable their outward circumstances may be), a thousand, two hundred, and three score days, or, 1260 years; the period of Papal power to persecute and hold down the Truth, as marked in prophecy (Dan, 7 : 25 ; 12 : 7).

This flight into the wilderness may be thought of as beginning with the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, reaching a culmination in A.D. 539, when the Papal system was fully set up in power (325 plus 1260 = A.D 1585 ; 539 Plus 1260 = A.D. 1799). From A.D. 1585 or even before this, many were venturing out of the wilderness condition and uttering vigorous protests against the corruptions of the Antichrist system.

Verses seven to twelve show how the counterfeit church had to fight to gain supremacy : angry disputations, fraud, deceit, as well as carnal weapons being freely used. Being a counterfeit of the true, the language fits the victory of the real Michael and those associated with him. However, in the picture of the coming into power, of the true Christ, the expression " the Lamb shall overcome them " (Rev. 17 : 14), suggests entirely different weapons of warfare from those which Satan has used.

Revelation 12:7. " And there was war in heaven (In the religious world) : Michael (the counterfeit Michael ; the Bishop of Rome aspiring to be the Pope, God's representative on earth : Michael means I who as God,' or God's representative) and his angels (servants) fought against the dragon (Sought to secure temporal as well as ecclesiastical power) and the dragon (the civil Rulers of the Roman Empire) fought (to 'retain their -power and privileges) and his angels," servants, supporters, " hangers on."

Revelation 12:8. " And prevailed not (The ecclesiastical power came out on top); neither was their place found any more in heaven." The rulers of Imperial Rome were no longer able to exercise their Pagan religious influence over the people, but had to relinquish this to the Papal Church.

Revelation 12:9. " And the great dragon (Imperial Rome, with its Pagan temples and religious worship) was cast out (Christianity, even in a corrupt form, was considered much superior. And although to begin with, absorbed into the Roman Empire gradually, through cunning and intrigue, came out on top as the counterfeit Christ to reign over the affairs of Christendom), that old Serpent (' Deceiver,' also) called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world (Lucifer's

characteristics as deceiver, accuser and adversary of God, were markedly exhibited in Pagan Rome, which practically dominated the then known world): he (the rulers of Pagan Rome, the special agents of the Adversary), was cast out into the earth (were required to confine their attention to civil affairs), and his angels (servants, underlings, camp followers, 'hangers on') were cast out with him."

Revelation 12:10 " And I (John ; symbolizing the John class, the Church,' heard a loud voice saying in heaven (' And I heard a great voice in heaven saying,' R.V. This voice can be heard quite clearly after a perusal of Church History), Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power (' authority,' R.V.) of his Christ (It would seem that when the Pope dominated affairs in Europe, crowning and uncrowning kings, etc., the deceived agents of Antichrist really believed the promised Kingdom had come) : for the accuser of our brethren (the agents of Pagan Rome, who called us such hard names while we were endeavoring to get into control) is cast down, which accused them before our God (charged us with being the devil's agents), day and night." Incessantly, without a break.

Revelation 12:11 - " And they (the agents of Papacy) overcame him (Pagan Rome and similar powers in Europe) by the blood of the Lamb (Papists really thought so), and by the word of their testimony (the things to which they testified) ; and they loved not their lives unto the death." - Specially the aspirants to the Papal throne. (Comp. Rev. 2:13).

Revelation 12:12. Therefore rejoice ye heavens (' the heavens . . that are now.' The Roman Catholic Church) and ye that dwell in them. (The many enjoying the soft jobs and the revenues of

Antichrist). Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil (Pagan rulers not yet in submission to the Pope) is come down unto you having great wrath (very angry because of being deprived of former privileges and power ; fearing that these things will altogether disappear) because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

Here again the language of this verse reminds us forcefully of the rejoicing of God's people, when at the end of the age, they are delivered from Satanic deceptions and the god of this world is being driven from one vantage point back to another and he knows that unless fresh deceptions can be produced or there can be brought about a great rallying of his forces, his position will be hopeless.

Revelation 12:13. And when the dragon (the civil rulers) saw that he was cast unto the earth (when they saw -that all their former power and privilege would go unless they recognized the Papal system), he persecuted, the woman which brought forth the man child." They became willing servants of this great system of iniquity carrying out its behests. This power to persecute continued right to the end of the 1,260 years, A.D. 1799 (Rev. 12:6; 13:5; Dan.7:25; 12:7).

Revelation 12:14. " And to the woman (the true Church, specially during the time of the end) were given two wings (the Old and New Testaments) of a great eagle (representing Jehovah, the personification of wisdom. Ps. 61:4, 63:7; 91:4; Ex.19:4; Deut. 32:11, 12 the two wings,' the Word of God, which, with an ever increasing understanding of the same, was given back to the Lord's people during the time of the end), that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. "The subtle deceptions of the Adversary.

This verse speaks of a second flight into the wilderness, which takes place particularly toward the close of the Gospel Age. The Church to-day, by means of the message of Present Truth, is lifted high above the elements of this present evil world, separated from the bondage of great Babylon and nourished by the rich food of the Lord's provision during these days of His Presence (Rev. 3:20; Rev. 17:3).

It is suspected by some that the clause " for a time, times and half a time, " is what has been called " a primitive error " ; that is, an error we have no means of correcting by any of the existing MSS. That this is so is not a certainty, but the interpretation of the chapter only runs perfectly smoothly by the clause being left out.

Revelation 12:15. " And the serpent (the great deceiver, Satan) cast out of his mouth (his many mouthpieces in Church and State) water (Truth upon all subjects, but by no means always truth in its purity - Dan. 12:4) as a flood after the woman (The constant stream of books, periodicals, newspapers, as well as the utterances of Scientists, Political leaders, and the Clergy of the Nominal Church, are all having a share in the fulfillment of this prophetic statement), that he (Satan, through his innumerable agents) might cause her to be carried away by the flood." - Carried away, confused, hindered from making a stand for the naked principles of truth and righteousness.

v. 16. " And the earth (order-loving society public opinion educated somewhat along radical lines, through the increase of knowledge, including, the knowledge of God's Word during the time of the end), helped the woman (the true Church sympathized with her principles and ideals ') and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his

mouth." -Assimilated the great volume of truth and error that has flooded the earth during the time of the end and specially the Harvest period. See Vol. 3 Scripture Studies, page 66, for a fulfillment on a smaller scale at the time of the French Revolution.

Revelation 12:17. "And the dragon (The civil rulers at the end of the age, of the same spirit as the rulers of Pagan Rome) was wrath with the woman (hating the light of Truth shining from God's people ; their faithful stand against the errors of Churchianity ; the principles of Militarism advocated by all nations, etc. ' etc.), and went to make war with (violently oppose the activities of) the remnant of her seed (the last members of the Church of the First-born), which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."-- The truth as it is in Jesus."

CHAPTER 13.

THE PAPAL-PROTESTANT COMBINE.

In Revelation 12 : 3 we have brought to our attention a " great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns " which we saw to be Imperial Rome-the dominant civil power of the world prior to the advent of Antichrist. In this chapter we are given a full-length portrait of this great system of iniquity, the Papal Church.

Revelation 13:1. "And I stood ('I was placed,' Diag.') upon the sand of the sea (In such a position as would make the vision most impressive. In some of the visions of the Revelator, spiritual exaltation is needed in order for them to be seen-Rev. 21:10 - but the rise of the false church can be seen by many who are very much on the level of early things), and saw a beast (a beast-like system, savage, oppressive, cruel a rule of violence; the Papal system ; the mystery of iniquity.' Comp. Dan. 7:3, 7, 17) rise up out of the sea (Papal Rome developed out of a lawless, restless class in Christendon), having seven heads (many minds to guide the great institution; using all the worldly wisdom it can get hold of. Further, in Rome can be seen seven successive and distinct forms of government. Compare this with the one head of the true Church and His equitable, unchanging dealings with His people - Heb. 13:8) and ten horns (supported by all earthly powers) and upon his horns ten crowns (authority to rule, received in the dark ages from the Pope), and upon his heads (appropriated by the guiding minds of Papacy throughout the successive periods of its existence) the name elf blasphemy."-" Names of blasphemy," R.V. ; Blasphemous titles and claims too, numerous to mention here.

Revelation 13:2. " And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard (suggesting its spotted, variable, changeable policies in various parts of the earth, according to the condition and natural depravity of the people), and his feet were as the feet of a bear (suggesting Rome's cautious walk at times) and his mouth (the utterances and claims of its mouthpieces-V. 5) as the mouth of a lion (apparently backed up by such strength and authority as to be impossible to resist) : and the dragon (the civil power ; to begin with, Imperial Rome in the days of Constantine) gave him his power, and his seat (' throne,' R.V. ; authority to rule), and great authority. "-Every vestige of which the representatives of Papacy use to the full.

Revelation 13:3. " And I saw one of his heads (The most momentous event in the history of Papacy was the Reformation, headed by Martin Luther. And the 'head' here referred to, seems to symbolize the guiding minds of Papacy in his day) as it were wounded to death ; and his deadly wound (received by Rome from the sword of the spirit in the hands of the Reformers) was healed (As is well known although losing adherents in nearly a half of Europe, Papacy made a remarkable recovery) : and all the world (' earth,' R.V.) wondered after the beast." - Those not enlightened by God's Word were in doubt and uncertainty regarding such strange happenings.

Revelation 13:4. " And they worshipped the dragon (the civil powers) which gave power unto the beast (' And they worshipped the dragon because he gave his authority unto the beast,' R.V. Those who in spite of the upheaval at the Reformation, continued adherents of the Papacy, gave even greater honor and reverence to the civil powers, for their loyal support of the Papal system. Nominal advocacy of Christianity on the part of earthly governments secures the support of large

numbers of reverent-minded people, who otherwise would be more or less indifferent to their appeals): and they worshipped the beast (felt even greater reverence for Papacy because of her remarkable recovery from injury to prestige and power at the Reformation), saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to (successfully) make war with him?"

Revelation 13:5. " And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies (Divine providence has permitted the great claims and misrepresentations of God and His Word on the part of Rome's mouthpieces) ; and power (permission) was given unto him to continue forty a . and two months. " - Particularly the 1,260 years of Papal supremacy, A.D. 539 to 1799; 42 months, or 1,260 days (42 x 30), represents 1,260 years (Rev. 11:2).

Revelation 13:6. " And he (Papacy) opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name (misrepresent his character and plan) and his tabernacle (His people; the true Church among whom He dwells during the Gospel Age, 2 Cor. 6:16), and them that dwell In heaven." - "Even them that dwell in heaven" R.V. seated with Christ in the heavenlies."

Revelation 13:7. " And it was given unto him (He was permitted) to make war with the saints (persecute them in scores of cruel and revolting ways), and to overcome them (apparently gain a complete victory over them) : and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations. "-Power to make Roman Catholics of practically all Europe ; a counterfeit of the power of the true church during the Millennium (Rev. 2 26).

Revelation 13:8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (render willing or enforced obedience), whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." - " Whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the scroll of the life of that Lamb who was killed " (Diag.). " Written from the foundation of the world in the book of life " (R.V.).

While it is, of course, true that the great sacrifice for sins was provided for in God's purpose from the foundation of the world (or, as it might possibly be rendered-" from the downfall of the arrangement "), the reference here seems to be to the fact that God has written the names of His Church in the Book of Life, from the foundation of the world. This may be understood as follows :- Each one who comes into Christ is given a certain " name --position in the body for which certain qualities and characteristics are necessary. This " name " was provided for in God's purpose from the beginning when He arranged to have '144,000 members to constitute the Christ. Those who abide in Christ continue to bear the "name" given to them at consecration, and thus qualify for the position in the body to which they were called. Thus, without any individual predestination, the " names " of the Church are written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.

Revelation 13:9. " If any man have an ear, let him hear." --nd how important it is, to understand the foregoing and not be deceived by false claims of Antichrist. Verse ten shows the reason so many have been deceived and misled.

Revelation 13:10. " He that leadeth into captivity (those who have no objection to bringing others into religious bondage for the sake of personal advantage) shall go into captivity (Perhaps

unconsciously become more and more bound themselves-Gal. 6:7) : he that killeth with the &,word (would induce others to believe the creeds-Comp. Rev. 6:4) must be killed with the sword. (-would become similarly blinded and deceived by false doctrine. We might say, too, that whoever would use the sword of the spirit against this great system of error as did the Reformers, must stiffer for so doing-frequently be put to death in return ; v. 7.) Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."- Here are the experiences that will test to the limit the faith and patient endurance of the saints.

Revelation 13:11. " And I (John, typifying the John Class, the Church at the end of the age, looking back over the centuries) beheld another beast coming up out of the earth (If Papacy is represented by the first beast of this chapter, v. i, this beast must represent, it would seem, another ecclesiastical power that comes into existence at a later stage of human history. The Protestant State~Church systems seems to be here referred to, and perhaps more particularly, the Church of England.

Compare the expression, out of the earth,' and ' out of the sea,' v. i) and he had two horns (The two principal civil powers in Europe that have supported and have been allied to Protestantism have been England and Germany) like a lamb (Pastor Russell has aptly said -' The two horns like a lamb would seem to indicate that this beast, would be peaceably inclined ; not aggressive, but using the horns for defense '), and (yet when occasion required) he spake as a dragon." At times there has been small indication that Protestantism, and specially the Church of England, is little more than a purely worldly power.

V. 12. " And he exercixeth (in his particular domain) all the power authority,' R.~7.) of the first beast before him in his presence,' Diag. : while the first beast continues to exist), and (he) causeth the earth and them which dwell therein (not the saints, but those who are part and parcel of the

present order of things' to worship the first Least, whose deadly wound was healed." -Who made such a gallant recovery after the Reformation.

Some of the corrupt principles of the Papacy were incorporated into the creeds of the Reformers, and these the Protestant State Churches have caused their supporters to accept, reverence and support. For instance, the teaching that the church is the established Kingdom of God, is a cardinal error of both Papacy and Protestantism.

Revelation 13:13. " And he doeth great wonders (' signs,' R.V. The State Church systems of Europe endeavor to bring forth strong evidences that their systems and teaching are Scriptural; have divine approval) so that he (even) maketh fire (fiery judgments) come down from heaven on the earth (Specially upon Christians who refuse to bow down to this ' beast ') in the sight of men." -As a deterrent and warning to the untractable. For instance, note how the Anglican Church penalized and circumscribed the efforts of Nonconformists in earlier days!

Revelation 13:14. " And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles (' signs,' R.V; proofs of his Scriptural position) which he had power to do (to bring forward) in the sight of the beast (while Papacy is still in existence and active, and we might also remark, at Papacy's expense); saying (to a large extent by his example) to them that dwell on the earth (the large numbers who were dissatisfied with a Church and State brand of Christianity), that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword and did live. "Inclined them to an evil course by a bad example i Many were led to say - If our churches and religious associations are

to prosper, we must copy some of Papacy's successful methods of influencing and controlling the people.

Revelation 13:15. " And he (the beast coming up out of the earth) had power (an opportunity he was quick to accept) to give life unto the image of the beast (either ' Apostolic Succession ' or its effect. Pastor Russell's comment here is-' It may not be known to many how much stress was ~aid upon the " Apostolic Succession," which was supposed to be a virtue transmitted through hundreds of years of Papal corruption, by the laying on of hands of the Bishop. This, of course, was vested in the Roman Church, and also in the English Church on account of its being at first rather a secession from -the Papacy than a reformation. To many minds even among the clergy, there was a veneration for that ceremony which neither Papacy nor the English Church were adverse to promoting '), that the image of the beast should both speak (with authority-no longer a weak, helpless, lifeless organization), and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast (in some way support the great federation of churches, or, at any rate the political and social work they endeavor to forward) should be killed." Their spiritual influence-influence for good-destroyed. Assassination of character ; killing socially and financially may be included.

Revelation 13:16. " And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond (all classes of society) to receive a mark (a mark of approval) in their right hand (indicating a willingness to support federated Protestantismat this time closely allied to the interests of the State) or in their foreheads. I '-Implying mental assent to its doctrines and spirit.

Revelation 13:17. "And that no man might buy or sell (should be able to buy or sell,' R.V. ; Trade in spiritual things), save he that had the mark of the beast (The clause, 'or the name' should be omitted. See Diag.), or the number of his name.' -Or unless he bears one of Churchianity's many names :-Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc None are allowed to preach the Word in the temples of the Nominal Church, unless they assent to some extent to one of her elastic creeds, ancient or modern. In fact, the nominal church of today is pleased to make use of the services of almost any, whatever their degree of belief or unbelief as long as they will not preach the message of Truth now due-the good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people.

Since the fall from favor of the great nominal church system (Rev. 18:2), it is obvious that all the sects have been losing their distinctive characteristics, doctrinal differences, etc., and have become increasingly one with the social, political and commercial phases of the kingdoms of this world ; so that failure to conform to their often unjust and unreasonable laws and arrangements, creates an effective barrier to some of the commonest privileges of social intercourse-represented by the symbol, " buying and selling "! Note, for instance, the indignities heaped upon those who refuse to bow down to the god of War -more or less worshipped by every religious sect of Christendom.

Revelation 13:18. " Here is wisdom (Here is a feature that contains much divine wisdom and foreknowledge. Weymouth, however, suggests a little different thought:-' Here is scope for ingenuity : Let people of shrewd intelligence calculate the number of the wild beast : for it indicates the number of a certain man, and his number is 666.'). Let him that hath understanding count ('compute,' Diag.-divine the significance of) the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man

(A number that identifies it with a man. As the 'one new man,' Christ, Head and body cannot be the one here referred to, that organization being perfect and complete from the divine standpoint, the reference must be to the other symbolic man brought to our attention in the Scriptures-the 'man of sin'; the Antichrist); and his number is Six hundred, three score and six." The literal rendering of the Greek is 600, 60, 6.

Six is an imperfect earthly number ; and the powers of a number intensify its symbolism. As this chapter pictures the three great entities that have been developed by Satan alongside the true Church during this Gospel Age, viz., Papacy, Protestantism and a final federation of all the sects in close conjunction with so-called Christian governments, these numbers may be applied to these three organizations. Rome - the most imperfect institution of all ; imperfect and corrupt in doctrine and in every phase of her work, would be represented by 600. The Protestant State-Churches of Europe discarded some of the most grievous errors of Romanism, but still retained in their creeds much error, both of doctrine and of practice, hence would be appropriately represented by the number 60. Later reforms have purged God's people of still more of the errors of the dark ages. However, the final line-up of all the so-called Christian forces the "image of the beast --fails utterly to establish God's Kingdom on earth, or even a tolerable Christian society; hence the number 6 emphasizes the imperfections of this great federation ; this " body of sin " ; this great system of sin Satan has built up in the midst of this " present evil world," which our Lord comes to destroy prior to the establishment of His long-promised Kingdom-" so making -peace " (Rom. 6:6 ; Eph. 2:15).

In Chapter 14 there follows a picture of the perfect organization of Jehovah that is to take the place of the imperfect human -efforts and arrangements of the present time.

CHAPTER 14.

THE HARVESTS OF THE GOSPEL AGE.

This chapter contains three visions, beginning at verse one, verse six and verse fourteen respectively. In verses 1-5 we have the twenty second in this wonderful series of visions that John saw when " in the spirit on the Lord's day " : foreshadowing what the Church, the John class have seen since the dawning, of the Lord's day or day of the Lord, in A.D. 1874.

FIRST VISION.

Revelation 14:1 " And I looked and lo, a Lamb stood ('And I saw, and behold the Lamb standing,' R.V.) on the mount Zion (Symbol of the heavenly phase of the Kingdom), and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name ('Having his name and the name of his Father,' R.V.) written in their foreheads." - Indelibly impressed on their minds.

The actuality of this vision did not arrive until A.D. 1881 ; for not until the close of the General Call in that year had there been the complete 144,000 with the Lamb on Mount Zion - the heavenly phase of the Kingdom, which began to be set up in A.D. 1878, with the resurrection of the sleeping saints. At that time, according to the teaching of the parallels our Lord " stood up," began to exercise kingly authority (See Scripture Studies, Vol. 2); so that since then He has been standing on Mount Zion.

Although since A.D. 1881 there has been the full 144,000 with the Lord, a number of these, the feet of him "are still in the flesh (yet seated with Christ in the heavenlies ") and subject to further proving and testing; necessitating, since 1881, a restricted call, for some to fake the places of those who fail to continue to stand (Eph. 6 : 13).

The description here given is specially to that part of this little company still this side the veil we who are alive and remain." The two names in the forehead contrast this company with the worshippers of the beast and his image, who nominally assent to a trinity of gods-Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But this little flock have a clear understanding of the character ("name") of the two persons with whom we have to do, the Father and the Son (1 Cor. 8:6).

Revelation 14:2. " And I heard a voice from heaven (from the true Church in the flesh, Eph. 2:6), as the voice of many waters (representing the combined witness for the Truth given by the faithful remnant during the Harvest period. Nothing in nature is more majestic and impressive than the sound of many waters), and as the voice of a great thunder (The voice of God speaking through His Word, Job 37:2-5. Also symbolizing the universal controversies in the religious world - ' the heavens . . . that are now," as a result of the proclamation of the message) and I heard the voice of harpers (Bible Students) harping with their harps." - Producing harmony from the Divine Word, symbolized by the Harp (Ps. 49:4).

Never has so much Bible Study been done before this time.

Revelation 14:3. " And they sung as it were a new song (the true Gospel Message, lost sight- of for so many centuries, with the additional features of Truth disclosed since the opening of the Seventh Seal) before the Throne (That is to say, Our Message is in full accord with the Divine ' throne,' government, plan), and before the four living ones (It is in full accord with the Divine attributes and the New Testament Revelation. See Rev. 4 : 6) and the elders (the Old Testament writings) : and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand (Present Truth is a special blessing reserved for the faithful at the end of the age. No section of the nominal church has even attempted to proclaim the message of the coming Kingdom, with its good news for all, Isa. 61:1-3), which were redeemed from (' purchased out of,' R.V.) the earth."-The first Company of redeemed ones for whom Christ's merit is applied (Heb. 9:24).

Revelation 14:4. " These are they which were not defiled with women (symbolizing all the Church systems of Christendom apart from the virgin Church of Christ espoused to Him, 2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 17:5) ; for they are virgins (pure ones, separate from the world and all false systems, John 17:16). These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. (Implying freedom; liberty to carry out all that the Lord indicates, Gal. 5:1, just as the Twelve literally followed Jesus from place to place, so the 144,000 have done this in a spiritual sense). These were 'redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.'" -The first fruits accruing from the great plan of salvation.

Revelation 14:5. " And in their mouth was found no guile (' lie,' R.V., the errors of the creeds may be here thought of. At the end of the age God's people are privileged to enjoy the Truth in its purity. ' No lie is of the truth ') ; for they are without fault (' without blemish,' R.V. ; ' blameless,' Diag.-Not

free from fleshly shortcomings, but having pure heart intentions : free from the blots and blemishes of a worldly church) before the throne of God."-Walking in the light of His plan.

SECOND VISION.

Verses six to thirteen picture the agencies which our Present Lord is pleased to use to accomplish the great closing work of the Gospel Age-the work of Harvest-.

Revelation 14:6. " And I saw an angel (' another ' is omitted in the oldest MSS.) fly in the midst of heaven (the religious world) having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth. (We are here shown an agency used by God to proclaim the Gospel-here called the I everlasting Gospel,' perhaps in contrast to the short-lived gospels of the creeds ; the beliefs of the nominal Church. No agency has done this more effectually than Volume One of the Scripture Studies. And this book the remnant have worked hard to circulate, because of its setting forth the message so much better than could be done by word of mouth. This message first ,goes to those that ' dwell on the earth 'independent Christians-and then as a witness to others), and to every nation, and kindred,- and tongue and people." The expression, " fly in the midst of heaven," suggests the rapid circulation of this book.

Revelation 14:7. " Saying with a loud voice (Through means of its very wide circulation), Fear God, and give glory to him ; for the hour of his judgement is come : and worship him that made heaven, the earth and the sea, and the fountains of water." This sums up the general impression made by the Divine Plan of the Ages upon those who appreciate its message (Compare Scripture Studies, Vol. 1, Chapter 16, " Concluding Thoughts "). It increases our reverence for the great

Jehovah. It tells of the great things He has done for man, and is going to do, in spite of human unbelief, incompetence and failure : causing us to honor Him rather than human might and achievements. It helps us to realize, too, that the climax of the judgment of the Church has come : also, that the time is ripe for God to take a hand in the affairs of earth, by the setting up of His Kingdom (See Vol. 1, P. 344, 345): that He, too, is the author of every wonder, both in nature and in grace.

Revelation 14:8. " And there followed another angel"(and another, a second angel, followed,' R.V.), saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, (Another agency follows with the proclamation of an additional message, symbolizing the message. of Volume 2 of the Scripture Studies. One of the most remarkable, even astounding truths disclosed by this book, is the delineation of great Babylon showing that it is -the name given by God to the Nominal Church ; and still more wonderful, that divine prophecy shows the very year when this supposedly divine institution, to some extent used by God throughout the Gospel Age, was irrevocably cast off from favor. No other book has ever presumed to proclaim such a message as this-Isa. 21:9) because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Babylon's wine is, of course, her false doctrines (Isa. 29:9) ; the effect of which has been to produce an improper relationship between the Church and the World; teaching that unlawfully mingles spiritual with natural things ; that allows the professed virgin church of Christ to unite in her work with worldly governments and earthly concerns in general one of the principal reasons for the coming of " the day of wrath. " In the Greek, the word for " mind " is the same word as is here translated, " wrath."

Revelation 14:9,10. "And the third angel (agency, Volume Three of the Scripture Studies) followed them (Volume Two was published three years after Volume One, and Volume Three about two years after Volume Two), saying with a loud voice (In a way that is widely and easily understood), If any man worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in 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 (The principal truth emphasized in Volume Three of the Scripture Studies is that the Harvest of the Gospel Age has come, when the Lord's people are definitely commanded to separate themselves from great Babylon. or, to use the figure of the 'parable, to separate themselves as wheat from the sectarian bundles of tares, Rev. 18:4 ; Matt. 13:37-43. As a result of the circulation of the first three Volumes of the Scripture Studies, great enlightenment reaches the Lord's people concerning the Plan of God, the time in which we are living, and the clear course the Lord wishes all His people to take at this time. Hence, as here pictured, the great responsibility of all who fail to take the course so clearly marked out but who continue to reverence worn-out and discarded systems (See Rev. 13), receiving their marks or badges of approval on account of mental assent to, or material support of their questionable practices and unscriptural views. Such must share in the judgments of this day, including the hard message of judgment from the prophetic word, i.e., ' wine . . . undiluted in the cup of his indignation,' Diag., so unpalatable to those who ' love the present world ' social and religious and who would strenuously seek to save it from dissolution): and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone (tormented by having the false doctrines of the institutions he worships, criticized and ridiculed, including the doctrine of eternal torment for all the unsaved) in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."

This symbolic torment - mental anguish, chagrin, etc., takes place, not in a future life, but during the days of our Lord's Presence, when the last members of the church, as holy angels -messengers, are associating themselves with Him in the great work of Harvest He comes to accomplish (Mat. 13:39, 41; 24:31).

Revelation 14:11 "And the smoke of their torment (the remembrance of what they suffered-smoke rises for a considerable time after there has been a great fire, and is a reminder of the conflagration that has taken place) ascendeth up for ever and ever (The experience will never be forgotten. Their misery and mental anguish will be sufficiently severe to be lasting) and they have no rest (in God and His promises no peace of mind) day or night, who worship the beast and his image (Rome and Protestantism and the secular powers to which they are so closely allied), and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Who ever continues to be called by one of Churchianity's many names, with all that this implies of mental assent and support(Isa. 4:1). Surely a severe experience for those who refuse the light of Present Truth when it comes to them, but who continue to reverence false systems and false doctrines.

Revelation 14:12. Here (during this time when the vision is having its fulfillment) is the patience of the saints (the time when their patient endurance and faithfulness is being specially tested) here are they that keep (' they that keep,' R.V.) the commandments of God (and particularly the work He outlines to be done at this time, Rev 14:15, 16 ; Rev. 18:4) and the faith of Jesus.' (1) " the faith once delivered unto the saints (2) the faith that Jesus always exemplified.

Revelation 14:13. " And I (John; here symbolizing the first member of the John class to be enlightened by Present Truth) heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write (incorporate the following as a part of the third angel's message-See Vol. 3, Chap. 7), Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit (their special privilege is), that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them." In Volume Three, Chapter Seven, the difference between the saints who died prior to our Lord's return and those living in the flesh during the Presence (parousia) of the Lord, is for the first time made plain. These latter, instead of sleeping until the first resurrection, experience an instantaneous change at the moment of death; the time for the first resurrection having come. They merely rest from their labor for the Lord the Truth and the Brethren their activities continuing on the other side of the veil.

THIRD VISION.

A picture of the Harvest work-the harvesting of the ripe wheat and later of the vine of the earth-now appropriately follows vision number two. It is something that could never be seen or appreciated without hearing and understanding the message of the three angels just brought to our attention.

Revelation 14:14. " And I looked and behold a white cloud (A cloud symbolizes trouble ; and white, purity, righteousness. Here seems to be pictured the righteous and just trouble that comes upon the Church Nominal as a result of the advent of the Harvest message) and upon the cloud (in full control of this particular divine dispensation) one sat like unto the Son of Man (symbolizing the risen saints all made one with and like -their Lord, Comp. Dan. 7:13), having on his head a golden crown (having been given the Divine nature) and in his hand a sharp sickle."-And having fully

under His control the sharp sickle of Present Truth ; the Harvest message, as contained in Vols. 1, 2 and 3 of the Scripture Studies.

Revelation 14:15. " And another angel (Bro. Russell, followed by other members of the little flock, as they began to realize that the Harvest had come) came out of the temple (the nominal Church), crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap (As we realize the truth that the Lord's presence and the Harvest has come, we begin to T)ray to the ' one on the cloud,' the Lord of the Harvest, to begin the reaping work-to send forth laborers into His harvest ; to use us and others in the great work) ; for the time is come for thee to reap ; for the harvest of the earth is ripe, "The fields are white unto harvest."

Revelation 14:16. " And he that sat on the cloud (Christ and the risen saints, in response to the cries of those enlightened by the Truth during the years of Harvest) thrust in his sickle on the earth ; and the earth was reaped."-The world-wide Harvest work is accomplished ; the earnest consecrated ones on this side the veil being used as the divine agency (Matt. 13 : 30).

This picture beautifully shows the close fellowship, co-operation and service existing between the members of the body of Christ in the flesh, and the reapers on the other side the veil (John 17:8, 18).

Revelation 14:17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle." As the harvesting of the "wheat," the saints, the " children of the kingdom " draws to a close, " another angel " (agency) is shown as being used ; specially to do a work upon the 11 vine

of the earth." Instead of the saints all being taken beyond the veil by the close of the Gentile Times, as at one time expected, many were allowed to remain in the flesh. Here we are shown that the object is the accomplishment of a further work. To begin with, this agency (the "angel . . . out of the temple which is in heaven ") includes the Church still in the flesh after the close of the Gentile Times ; gathered to Present Truth from the four winds through means of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, This agency being called another angel " fits in well with the facts of the case, viz., that the personnel of the Truth people associated with the Watch Tower has completely changed during the past twenty years. The Society friends are now to a large extent, composed of those who have come away from the " temple which is in heaven," that is the true spiritual temple, the Church ' and are to-day chiefly an earthly class, " another angel," yet still possessing to some degree the sharp sickle, of Present Truth, particularly the judgment features of the Divine Word. At the beginning of the Harvest period, the sharp sickle " was in the hands of the " one on the cloud " (v. 14) but gradually, during the years of Harvest, the message is passed to the Church in the flesh and to many others at one time associated with her.

Revelation 14:18. " And another angel (the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society) came out from the altar (without judging individuals, we may say that the Watch Tower organization which seems to consider it its special work to proclaim the ' Day of Vengeance of our God,' has ceased to be an organization issuing a call to God's people to sacrifice as members of the Royal Priesthood. Instead, it has become almost entirely an agency proclaiming the message of Restitution and the Day of Vengeance. It has, therefore, figuratively speaking, ' come out from -away from-the altar ') which had power over fire (' Having authority over fire,' Diag. Power to publish and distribute the message of the Day of Vengeance) ; and cried with a loud cry (gave powerful exhortations) to him

(' another angel,' I out of the temple ' ; particularly those in association with the Society ; now called ' Jehovah's Witnesses ') that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth ; for her grapes are fully ripe.”

As the true vine is Christ and His Church-a spiritual Company joined to their heavenly Lord, so the vine of the earth symbolizes a church organization which is of the earth earthy. The fruitage of the one results from the operation of the- Divine Spirit : that of the other, from human efforts and activities. The product of the true vine is carefully preserved and gathered to the heavenly garner : that of the vine of the earth is crushed and destroyed in the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Revelation 14:19 "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth (gave forceful testimony to the message of the Day of Vengeance - the hard prophetic judgments of the Word relating to Babylon), and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."--
Causing a terrible carnage among those identified with the false vine.

The truths pertaining to the Day of Vengeance bring to light and make manifest the spirit of Ecclesiasticism in its every phase. They also show that nothing short of complete destruction can be the end of this vine.

Revelation 14:20. " And the winepress, was trodden without the city (the city of God). and blood came out Of the winepress even unto the horse bridles by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." The Sinaitic MS. reads: "Twelve hundred furlongs."

If we think of this picture literally, the blood of the grapes in depth up to the horses bridles, and covering a space of twelve hundred furlongs (150 miles), we can see how impossible it would be for any horses or their riders to make their way through such an awful and chaotic mess. We are thus graphically shown how completely the citadel of error and all its supporters will be overwhelmed in Armageddon : no human organizations with their selfish leaders will fight their way through into the Millennial period beyond (Rev. 9 : 16). The way will thus be prepared for the true vine (Christ), to begin its gracious and beneficent work of blessing mankind and filling the face of the earth with fruit.

CHAPTER 15.

THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB.

Revelation 15:1. " And I (John, representing the John class) saw another sign (evidence 1, of the presence of the Master, 2, of the outworking of the Divine purposes in harmony with prophecy) in heaven (what follows symbolizes happenings in the religious world - ' heaven '), great and marvelous (most impressive), seven angels (Seven is a number suggesting completeness. In the previous chapter we were shown three agencies used by Jesus, the Chief Reaper, to gather God's people together as wheat separated from tares. These seven angels, which in verse six we are shown as I coming out of the temple,' seem to represent all the living members of Christ gathered out of the nominal temple, Babylon, at this end of the age separated by the sickle of Truth. They come out gradually during the years of Harvest) having the seven last plagues (Truth which is a blessing to one class, is a spiritual plague to another, a savor of death unto death.' Those who withdraw from the Church Nominal as a result of receiving the message of Present Truth, giving at the same time a quiet but forceful testimony concerning the same, appear, to the worshippers of the beast and his image, like people afflicted with '-seven plagues ' and the less they have to do with them, and the farther they can get away from them the better) ; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." - " Because by them (by means of the truth concerning all the wonderful features of the Plan of God with its times and seasons' the wrath of God ('wrath ' - same word in Greek as ' mind ') was to be completed" (Diag.). Through the Plan of the Ages, with its times and seasons, God's mind regarding the earth and mankind is fully revealed; including His divine anger against every phase of this present evil world.

Revelation 15:2. " And I saw as it were a sea of glass symbolizing a condition from which everything, whatever the angle from which we look, is clear and luminous) mingled with fire (a condition, however, that brings fiery trials of a peculiar character to those who occupy the same) ; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast (had overcome by means of the Truth the evil influence of the first beast, Papacy, Rev. 13:1-8 ; Or, the second beast may be referred to, Rev. 13:1-14, symbolizing the State-Church systems of Protestantism) and over his image (the final religious combine closely united with the so-called democratic governments of earth, John 8:32), and over the number of his name (having got free from his many ' names 'sectarian labels. The words, ' and over his mark ' should be emitted), stand on the sea of glass (Enjoying the light of the knowledge of the glory of God ; the pure, clear, luminous vision of Present Truth), having the harps of God."-A book which is one harmonious whole from Genesis to Revelation (Rev. 3:4, 2).

Revelation 15:3 " And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb (The true Gospel shows the perfect harmony that exists between the writings of Moses and the testimony of Jesus), saying Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways (dealings ; Wise, just and loving ways of carrying everything out), thou king of saints." "O king of the nations" (Diag.).

Revelation 15:4. " Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? (We find it difficult to believe that any will fail to reverence and honor the great Jehovah when in the Millennial Age all are brought to an accurate knowledge of the Truth. The language of the majority will surely be, ' Lo

this is our God ; we have waited for him,' Isa. 25:9) for thou only art holy : for all nations shall come and worship before thee ; for thy judgments are made manifest."

Revelation 15:5. " And after - that (And after 'these things,' Diag. After being given a vision of the exodus of the whole of the little flock, ' seven angels,' from Babylon during the Harvest period ; being made free by the Truth - a message as abhorrent to Churchianity as seven plagues rolled into one-John is shown something else that takes place during the same period) I looked and behold, the temple (that is, the sacred things) of the tabernacle (the dwelling place) of the testimony (of God's testimony-the Bible) was opened (In other words the sacred things of the entire Word of God were opened up) in heaven." -But in such a way as could only be appreciated by the spiritually minded. This the Lord has accomplished through His faithful and wise servant-the Seventh Messenger (Rev. 3:14 ; Matt. 24:45-47).

Revelation 15:6. "And the seven angels (God's faithful servants or messengers ; the whole of the little flock) came I out of the temple (The words ' out of the temple are omitted in some old MSS. However, they do come out of the temple even although John may not say so here. * They come out of the Nominal Church in response to the call, ' Come out of her my people,' and into prominence as witnesses for Jehovah), having the seven plagues (the whole counsel of - God - the truth pertaining to the entire plan of God, including God's purpose concerning the powers that be, civil and ecclesiastical), clothed in pure and white linen (Christ's righteousness, kept ' without spot or wrinkle or any such thing '), and having their breasts girded with golden girdles." – That is upheld by divine power until the work of Harvest be accomplished. A girdle is a symbol of servitude.

Revelation 15:7. " And one of the four living ones (the Divine attribute of wisdom) gave unto the seven angels (all the living members of the little flock) seven golden vials (' bowls,' R.V. ; divine receptacles. All the Volumes of Scripture Studies seem to be here referred to ' and are necessary to fully elucidate the truth now due) full of the wrath of God (Also, full of the mind of God ; v. i ; God's mind towards Christendom speaks of divine wrath), who liveth for ever and ever."

It is indeed the very essence of divine wisdom for the Truth to be promulgated in book form and for the Lord's people to circulate it in this way ; ,testing at once their humility and willingness to sacrifice that the " world their Savior might see."

Revelation 15:8. " And the temple (the nominal Church - the place where God is nominally worshipped) was (gradually) Red with smoke (confusion, as more and more of the Lord's true people leave her- Rev. 18:4; Isa. 6:4) from the glory of God ('the light of the knowledge of God,' now shining for the benefit of God's people), and from his power (His favor having been withdrawn from this system) ; and no man (' no one,' Diag.) was able to enter into the temple (A literal building too full of smoke for one to enter can be easily imagined. During the Jewish Age the temple was the true place of acceptable worship-the divinely provided ' house of prayer ' for Israel, just as for a time true worship might be offered to God through the various branches of the Church nominal. This picture seems to teach, therefore, that from the time Present Truth began to be proclaimed, it has been impossible for anyone to render fully acceptable service and worship through becoming identified with these sectarian church systems ; because of divine favor having been withdrawn from them, Rev. 3 : 16. Although church members have been made by the million

since the plagues began to be poured out, set-vice and worship, to be acceptable to God, must be in accord with the Truth and the work to be done at the end of the age, and no longer through the arrangements of the nominal Temple. Comp. 1 Kings 8:11. Specially would this be true in the case of those who have entered the ministry of any of the various branches of Sectarianism), till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."-" Completed." By the time Present Truth has done its work all sectarian strongholds with their grievous misunderstandings of God's purposes, will have been pulled down (2 Cor. 10:4, 5). Then, however, the true house of prayer will be ready for all people; through which they may come to God and find rest to their souls (Isa. 56:7).

CHAPTER 16.

PLAGUES UPON ECCLESIASTICISM.

In this chapter we are shown the effect of the circulation of the Truth of God's Word since i began to be opened up through the publication of the Scripture Studies. Instead of being "savor of life unto life " (Rev. 10:9, 10), to those continuing to reverence ' false creeds an worn out systems-often because various privilege and advantages are theirs by so doing - the message is like death to them- a plague, which they would gladly avoid, but are unable to do so

Revelation 16:1 " And I heard a great voice (' out of the temple ' omitted by some MSS. When God give the Truth to any, He also gives them powerful encouragement to enter into its service- witnessing concerning the same to others far and near) saying to the seven angels (all the faithful servants of Present Truth), Go your ways (Some in one direction, some in another. Comp. Matt. 10:5-7), and pour out the vials (' bowls,' R.V. ; the divine receptacles) of the wrath of God, (the divine mind concerning Christendom and His plan for humanity in general) upon the earth." - Among the order-loving people of the world.

Revelation 16:2. " And the first went (That is, the many gencies that have been used to circulate Volume Scripture Studies) and poured out his vial upon the earth ; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore (The message almost seemed like a corrupting and destroying cancer) upon the men which had the mark of the beast (those still tarred with Papal traditions) and upon them which

worshipped his image. "-Reverenced and served federated Protestantism with its worldly concepts of what a Christian should be and do.

The effect of Volume One upon the minds of some is almost as painful as the effect of a cancer on the body.

Revelation 16:3. " And the second (omit ' angel the agencies used to circulate and proclaim the message of Volume 2, concerning the times and seasons relating to God's plan and the fact that the end of the age has now come) poured out his vial (' bowl '.) upon the sea (It affects those who are not as subservient to orthodoxy's faith and order as the ecclesiastics consider they should be, but are, as they would say, restless unsettled) and it became as the blood of a dead man (The position of those who accept and act upon the truth Of Volume 2 is generally regarded by Churchianity as hopeless) and every soul (Some MSS. omit ' living ' : That is, every soul that imbibes the teaching concerning the early closing down of the present dispensation and acts upon it, and who ' would have had so much influence for good ' if they had continued to ' walk according to the course of this world ' ?) died in the sea."-Died to their former environments ; Ceased to be part and parcel of the present order of things.

Revelation 16:4. " And the third (angel,' omit) poured out his vial (' bowl ' - The agencies used to circulate the message Of Volume 3) upon the rivers and fountains of waters (Christendom look to its denominational systems, religious college and seminaries for the truth-the water of life. Volume Three Scriptually demonstrates that none of these organizations are now being used by God

that they have been cast off from favor) ; and they became blood. "-Repulsive ; undesirable to those able to receive the message from God's Word.

Revelation 16:5, 6. " And I heard the angel of the waters (the saints on the other side the vail, associated with their Lord in directing the work of truth spreading-the work of Harvest. Rev. 14:14-16) say, Thou art righteous O Lord, which art, and wast and shalt be, because thou has judged thus."-(They fully assent to the righteousness of the divine purpose of bringing a great time of trouble upon Christendom's state-church systems, and causing them to pass away ; and particularly His method of carrying this out.) " For they (Churchianity's representatives, and those who occupied similar positions before them, Matt. 23:29-32) have shed the blood (injured the life) of saints and prophets (faithful servants ; preachers of God's Word), and thou hast given them blood to drink (1, the repulsive errors of the creeds; 2, the message of Present Truth that appears not a good thing but repulsive to those blinded by the god of this world- 2 Cor. 4:4; 2:16), for they are worthy.'-- They deserve it (Diag.).

Revelation 16:7. " And I heard another out of the altar say (' And I heard the altar saying,' R.V.) Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." The consecrated class this side the vail are equally in accord with the divine method of dealing as pictured in this chapter.

Revelation 16:8. "And the fourth ('angel' omit) poured out his vial (The Message of Volume Four ; the prophetic truths relating to the day of Vengeance, with the reasons why it is to come upon the present generation) upon the sun (With out the sun there could be no life on the earth, no warmth, comfort, or any other blessing we now ,enjoy. Many, specially the more privileged classes, think

that the ' powers that be,' civil and ecclesiastical, can supply the foregoing blessings -1 hence they say that the condition of things as now constituted must continue. Volume 4 shows, however, that the dissolution of the present order of things is in progress and that none of the panaceas offered can avert the predicted end); and power was given unto him (' and it was given unto it,' R.V., i.e., the contents of the Fourth Vial) to scorch men with fire."-Often making them feel very warm as they read of the fiery prophetic judgments to come upon Christendom.

Revelation 16:9. " And men (Specially the leaders and more influential ones) were scorched with great heat (the heat of truth ; becoming very hot and indignant on account of what was being said about themselves and their systems, civil and ecclesiastical), and (instead of humbly accepting the message of God's Word, they) blasphemed (continued to misrepresent) the name of God, which had power over these plagues (on account of allowing such evils to go abroad in the earth) : and they repented not (' they reformed not,' Diag. They remained unconvinced by the message being preached to them) to give him glory."

Revelation 16:10. " And the fifth (' angel ' omit) poured out his vial (' bowl ') on the seat (' throne,' R.V. ; ' the ruling authorities) of the beast (Papacy, or perhaps, the Second Beast may be referred to-Rev. 13 : ii. Ecclesiasticism's very center of authority ; the things upon which her leaders take their stand and regard as necessary for the perpetuation of their religious influence over the people ; doctrines such as the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, eternal torment, are attacked in Vol 5 and shown to be gross errors, utterly unsupported by the Word of God) ; and his kingdom (particularly the domain of power of the clergy') was full of darkness (' his kingdom was darkened,' R.V. As the light of Truth increases, the greater appears the darkness of fallen Church systems) and they

(particularly the clergy and ministers) gnawed their tongues for pain."-To accidentally bite the tongue is very painful, but to gnaw the tongue, the pain would be excruciating. And so it is in a spiritual sense. The trouble, too, has to do with the message ('tongue') the clergy have been preaching.

Revelation 16:11. And (instead of being convinced of the Truth so clearly and ably expounded in Volume 5), they blasphemed (continued to misrepresent) the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores (the many sore points touched upon by Present Truth) and repented not of their deeds."-Their many activities of an unscriptural character.

Revelation 16:12. " And the sixth (' angel ' omit) poured out his vial (' bowl ') upon the great river Euphrates (symbolizing the multitudes supporting organized religion, Rev. 17:15. just as ancient Babylon was situated upon the Euphrates, which was the source of much of her trade and prosperity, so mystic Babylon is supported by I peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.' The truths set forth in Vol. 6 emphasize individual responsibility, both as Christians and as members of human society. Thus its message rules out the need for such a body as the clergy and shows that the members of the Church of Christ are one class and not two) and the water thereof was dried up (The general effect of such teaching is to cause all who are to any extent influenced by the same, to withdraw their support from organized religion. It should be remembered that previous vials do not cease to be poured out when a fresh one appears, so that eventually all seven forms of evil, so far as the nominal church is concerned, are in operation at the same time) that the way of the kings of the east (' the kings from the sun-rising,' R.V. -Christ and His joint heirs, who take control of human affairs during the Millennium, Rev. 20 : 6) might be prepared." Loss of

confidence in false creeds and worn-out systems is but a step toward seeing the real remedy for human troubles and distresses-the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Revelation 16:13. " And I (John, representing the John class) saw three unclean spirits (In Bible language a spirit often represents a teaching, or system of teaching, I John 4 : 1-3. Unclean spirits would refer to, false erroneous teachings, propaganda, etc., whether . concerning social, political or religious affairs) like frogs (It has been well said that a frog has a wise look, large mouth, often appears much puffed-up, but utters only croakings and is really a very harmless little creature. This suggests the character of the teaching that would go into general circulation among the people) come out of the mouth (from the mouthpieces) of the dragon (symbolizing the civil powers of Christendom, which occupy the same place to-day as did Pagan Rome in the early centuries of the Gospel Age, Rev, 12 : 3. These mouthpieces would include Ministers of State, politicians, books, periodicals, a controlled Press etc.) and out of the mouth (from the mouthpieces) of the beast (Papacy, Rev. 13 : 1), and out of the mouth (the m.outhpieces-particularly the clergy and ministers) of the false prophet." - Confederate Protestantism.

This is the first mention of the false prophet in these visions and evidently refers to that entity, the " image of the beast " after it has received life ; has become active and influential in the affairs of the world (Rev, 13 : 15)- Until the past few decades, the various denominations of Protestantism (apart from the State Churches), have been practically impotent, politically and socially, but today, show much evidence of life in these directions. just as " that prophet " is the Christ, Head and body, God's mouthpiece to the world, so the " false Prophet " symbolizes a great religious organization

that misrepresents to the world the divine character and plan - a federation of churches, whose message is without exception a false one.

According to the application here made, the Sixth Vial began to be poured out in A.D. 1904.

(Vol. 6 of the Scripture Studies was published in that year.) These unclean spirits would therefore symbolize the sum total-since that time of the 'evil propaganda : (1) Of the political forces endeavoring to keep alive the patriotic Support of the people for their respective governments and institutions, (2) of Rome, so subtle and corrupt and yet modified somewhat to suit the times, (3) of the Protestant sects, willing to preach and teach almost anything to secure popularity and support.

v . 14. " For they are the spirits (teachings) of devils ('demons,' Comp. 1 Tim. 4:1), working miracles (' signs,' R.V. Trying to give every evidence possible that what they say is truth) which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world (the great and influential of earth are the ones Satan specially tries to influence and the people will just follow their leaders), to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.' -- The war of the great day of God, the Almighty " (R.V.). In spite of a universal cry of " Peace and safety," the effect of the policies of the civil powers and church systems, has been to rally the people to their respective standards in such a way as to lead them in the direction of inevitable war, and the " time of trouble such as was not since there was a nation " (Zeph. 3:8, 9; Dan. 12:1).

Revelation 16:15. " Behold, I come as a thief (This verse comes in here as a parenthesis. It seems to bring us down -to the close of the times of the Gentiles, when the gathering of the nations for the ' war of the great day ' is about complete. Although the Bible clearly teaches that ' the days of the Son of Man'-the time of our Lord's Presence-began 40 years prior -to this time, A.D. 1914 was a

year of great expectations, many believing that the time of trouble would begin there; would be soon over, and the earthly phase of Messiah's Kingdom be set up.

The Master here seems to say, Remember all you have learned about my quiet thief-like presence, and that my kingdom comes 'not with outward show.' Do not expect things to develop too rapidly). Blessed is he that watcheth (continues to watch) and keepeth (continues to keep) his garments (T, The robe of Christ's imputed righteousness, by continuing to exercise a living faith in the Ransom sacrifice ; continuing to keep it unspotted from the world, 2, The garment of praise ; By continuing to show forth the Lord's praises, 3, The Robe of humility ; By continuing to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God), lest he walk naked (To be without these things would mean a condition of nakedness, before God), and they see his shame." - Lest fellow believers see one's lack of these necessary Christian requirements.

Revelation 16:16. " And he ('they,' R.V. ; the 'unclean spirits ') gathered them together (caused the people to rally to their respective standards in Church and State-Capital, Labor, Romanism, Protestantism, Facism, Socialism, etc., etc.) into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon." Armageddon means "mount of destruction and was the great battle ground of Old Testament history (Judges 4; 5:19; 7; 1 Sam. 31) - The literal Armageddon or hill of Megiddo in Palestine, was a place of great slaughter, destruction , and this seems to be the meaning of the symbol. The nations of earth are not to be gathered to Megiddo in Palestine, but to a condition where they will be destroyed as nations (Dan. 2:44), prior to the setting up of Messiah's long promised Kingdom. Armageddon would therefore be a name applicable to the entire period of the day of wrath that began in 1914.

Although the Seven Vials of this chapter may be fittingly applied to the Message of the Volumes of Scripture Studies, there is another view of the matter that seems equally appropriate. Seven is a symbol of perfection, completeness. The seven vials, therefore, may be thought of as symbolizing the whole of the Truth now due to be understood and opened up to us through Pastor Russell. The "seven angels" direct the message against seven phases of this "present evil world," symbolized by the "earth," "sea," "rivers and fountains of waters," "sun," "throne of the beast," "Euphrates," etc. So divine providence has prompted the Lord's people ("seven angels") to testify from time to time against all the various phases of Satan's empire here symbolized; declaring "all things written" in the prophets ("seven vials") concerning Christendom that are now due to be fulfilled.

Revelation 16:17. "And the seventh angel 'omit) poured out his vial ('bowl') into upon, 'R X.) the air (The final unfolding and witness for the Truth is against the ruling powers of Christendom; specially the rulers of Ecclesiasticism. Satan is the 'prince of the power of the air.' He exercises an invisible influence over the minds of men. Somewhat similarly, the clergy, the rulers of this darkness,' exercise an influence over the minds of the people; specially leading professed Christians away from the Truth, and into the ditch of skepticism and unbelief, support of worldly governments, worship of the god of war, etc.

It is interesting to note that the witness in recent years has been 'poured out' upon the literal air-broadcast by the Radio to the ends of the earth); and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne ('And there came a great voice out of the temple of God.' Sinaitic MS.), saying, "It is done." When the witness has been fully given there will be no mistaking the matter.

Revelation 16:18. " And there were voices and thunders and lightnings (' And there were lightnings, and voices and thunders,' R.V.) (1) Enlightenmen from the Word of God coming to large numbers This has been particularly noticeable from 1918 onward ; (2) Proclamation of the message received, ' voices , ; (3) Much controversy and opposition as a result, ' thunders.'

The remainder of this chapter pictures the disruption and passing away of the various elements of this present evil world, resulting to a considerable extent, from the powerful influence of the message of Truth, ' mighty through God to the pulling down of (Satan's) strongholds (sectarian and otherwise), casting down imaginations (doctrines for which there is no foundation in God's Word), and every high thing (specially the theories of Modernism) that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.'

"And (as a result of the increase of knowledge coming to men-knowledge of the Word as well as truth upon all other subjects) there was a great earthquake (a great revolution in public opinion ; a complete change of outlook on the part of the masses), such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. "So momentous and far-reaching. This has been taking place particularly since the close of the first World War.

v. 19. " And the great city (Christendom: Satan's rulership of this ' present evil world,' Gal. 1:4 ; 2 Cor. 4:4 ; John 12:31) was divided into three parts (His kingdom is now sadly divided against itself and therefore cannot stand - Matt. 12:25. There are various ways of dividing Christendom into three parts. One of these is as follows :- (1) The ruling elements ; capitalistic elements with their supporters and followers (2) The Labor and Socialistic elements and (3) Separate and distinct from

these two great camps, there is a small but increasing number who have been getting enlightened concerning the time in which we are living (that the great tribulation has come; that Messiah's Kingdom is shortly to follow) who are, so far as possible, standing separate ; not taking sides in the great struggle that is soon to envelope the earth, Rev. 16:16; 19:1 ; Isa. 21:7), and the cities (governments) of the nations fell (before the rising tide of revolt on the part of the oppressed peoples of earth) : and great Babylon (Specially the great system of confusion that for centuries has masqueraded before the world as the church of Christ) : came in remembrance before God (the time having come for a recompense to be meted out for all the evil she has done in Zion-Rev. 6:9-11 ; Matt. 23 : 35, 36), to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."-Just the experiences that Babylon merits for her long train of evil practices, Rev. 6:8; 13:7). This is preceded by, Babylon having to drink from the - golden cup " (the Bible), the judgments written concerning her (Rev. 17:4; 18:20. R.V.).

Revelation 16:20. " And every island fled away (The Socialist Republics - arrangements just a little above the level of the restless masses-' sea ' ; that in many cases have taken the place of the more autocratic kingdoms that have been overturned since 1914, will in due time disappear) and the mountains were not found. "-Governmental functions will for a time cease.

Revelation 16:21. " And there fell upon men a great hail (hard, compact truth, coming with tremendous force as the logic of events brings home to Christendom, and specially its religious elements, the truth of the message of the Day of Vengeance and coming Kingdom, faithfully proclaimed for half a century) out of heaven (the ' new heavens ' - the new powers of spiritual control of the Millennial Age already beginning to operate), every stone about the weight of a

talent (each one in weight about 112 lbs.-Sufficiently heavy to kill any upon whom such a hailstone should fall. When convinced of a truth one is, figuratively speaking, 'killed,' completely overcome by the same) : and men (some not completely knocked out by this hailstorm i blasphemed (continued to misrepresent) God (and to attribute the message of Present Truth to the devil) because of the plague of the hail ; for ('because,' R.V.) the plague thereof was exceeding great. "-Because the message made them feel so uncomfortable.

CHAPTER 17.

THE END OF HUMAN MISRULE.

Revelation 17:1. " And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials (' bowls '-One of the John class - Rev. 15:1. In this case, the Seventh Messenger, who was privileged to bring together the wonderful truths of the Divine Word due to be opened up during the Harvest period - Rev. 3: 14) and talked with me (John, representing the Church at the end of the age. This was done by word of mouth and through the printed page), saying unto me, Come hither ; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore ('harlot,' R.V. ; symbolizing a church, unfaithful to the heavenly Bridegroom ; and that system more unfaithful and corrupt than all others is surely the Church of Rome - Comp. 2 Cor. 11:2) that sitteth upon many waters."-That has the support of scores of millions of poor deluded human beings (v. 15). God's mind and purpose regarding this system has been shown by many Protestant writers during the 19th century, and Pastor Russell has pointed this out, particularly in Scripture Studies, Vol. 2, Chapter 9, and Volume 4.

Revelation 17:2. " With whom the kings of the earth (the great ones of the world) have committed fornication (entered into unfaithful collaboration with her. The union of the kingdoms of Europe with this great system was specially unlawful, in view of her claim to be the one true church ; the prospective bride of the Lamb), and the inhabitants of the earth (the vast hosts that have come under Papal influence) have been made drunk (spiritually intoxicated) with the wine of her fornication." - Her false doctrines which mingle spiritual truth with human traditions ; heavenly things with earthly things ; the affairs of the church with those of the State.

Revelation 17:3. " So he carried me away in the spirit (In spirit,' Diag. ; in mind) into the wilderness (representing a condition of separation from the world and worldly ideas and mere forms of godliness. The John class allow themselves to be influenced and guided by the Lord's servant whom He has so wonderfully used here at this end of the age - Comp. Rev. I : 10 ; 12 : 6) : and I saw a woman (the Papal Church) sit upon a scarlet colored beast (In Daniel, Chapter seven, the empires of the earth are likened to beasts ; suggesting their savage, vengeful character, specially when attacked. The empire that first supported the unfaithful church was Imperial Rome in the days of Constantine, and the Governments of Europe that grew out of the old Roman Empire have continued to support this system even to fight for it if necessary-Comp. Rev. 12:3. The beast being scarlet colored, suggests that the civil powers supporting Papacy are stained with sin-totally unchristian, Isa. 1:18), full of names of blasphemy (' With names full of blasphemy,' R.V. Blasphemous titles ; false, unscriptural, God dishonoring), having seven heads (supported by all the wisdom of this world) and ten horns."-And all the power, too, that can possibly be secured for her support.

v. 4. " And the woman (the Church of Rome) was arrayed in purple (a symbol of royalty, representing Rome's claim to be the Kingdom of God) and scarlet color (perhaps picturing her monstrous claim to be continually sacrificing Christ afresh for the sins of the people), -and decked with gold (seeking to pose as a divine institution. Gold symbolizes divine things) and precious stones ('precious stone' R.V ; claiming to be the repository of all the precious truths of the Divine Word - Prov. 20:15. By using these things as a cloak, they carry on their nefarious work) and pearls (symbolizing prominent and desirable positions in the world that are in her gift. Comp. Matt. 13:45, 46. Another thought suggested by these symbols is that Rome does everything humanly possible to

attract and impress the natural man), and having a golden cup (the Divine Word) in her hand (symbolizing her claim to alone have the power to properly interpret the Scriptures. But what follows shows her lamentable failure in this respect) full of abominations (abominable doctrines) and filthiness of her fornication."-- Even the unclean things of her fornication " (R.V.); unclean teachings resulting from her wrong course and attitude towards the kingdoms of this world. Thus we have pictured here the use she has made of the Divine Word, and the kind of teaching she has set forth even while having it in her hand.

Revelation 17:5. " And upon her forehead (where it can be clearly seen ; Stamped indelibly upon her mind) was a name written, MYSTERY (the great system where mysteries are worshipped. The mystery of iniquity ' is here contrasted with the mystery of God '-the true Church ; Christ, Head and body, Col. 2 : 2), BABYLON THE GREAT (the greatest false church system of them all, with confusion stamped indelibly upon the soon minds of her devotees. This is obvious as Word as there is any discussion concerning the Word of God), THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS ('the harlots,' R.V.- the Protestant State-Church systems that separated from Rome under circumstances of travail) AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."-Small religious bodies not united with the State assuming an " holier than thou " attitude toward the great Church systems of Christendom, and yet saturated with the errors and abominable doctrines of the dark ages.

All these Babylonish systems are the result, directly or indirectly, of the falling away that culminated in the Papacy (2 Thes. 2:3, 4).

Revelation 17:6. " And I saw the woman (the Church of Rome) drunken (intoxicated) with the blood of the saints (so much so that they verily think they do God service by persecuting His people), and with the blood of the martyrs (' witnesses,' Diag.) of Jesus (Many not saints have stood firmly for some of the truths of the Gospel and have suffered therefor at the hands of Rome) : and when I (John, the John class) saw her (Saw this abominable system in the light of God's Word, v. i) I wondered with great admiration.' , -- I wondered with a great wonder " (R.V.). Evil things as well as things that are noble and good cause wonder and astonishment. The bestial practices of Rome's priests during the dark ages have indeed -caused astonishment to the Lord's people. They have marveled, too, at the longsuffering patience of the great Jehovah towards this " vessel of wrath fitted for destruction."

Revelation 17:7. " And the angel (the Seventh Messenger) said unto me (the church at the end of the age), Wherefore didst thou marvel? ('wonder,' R.V. ; Do not doubt divine wisdom in permitting such an institution to exist : Its days are numbered. It has ever been subject to His control - Acts 2:23; 4:27, 28; Ps., 76:10.

The angel now tells something to John that helps him to grasp God's fore-knowledge of everything that would transpire in connection with the history of Antichrist) I will tell thee the mystery of the woman (the apostate church - Truths hidden from past generations but made known at the end of the age to the John class) and of the beast (the civil powers) that carrieth her (that are closely bound up with and supporting ecclesiastical power-the violent and cruel governments of earth), which had the seven heads and ten horns." Supported by all the worldly wisdom and power Church and State united can muster.

Revelation 17:8. " The beast that thou sawest (The beast that John saw in a previous vision-See Rev. 13:2, 3 - the rule of violence operated by Rome. The woman of this chapter seems to represent purely ecclesiastical power ; and although the beast in some pictures represents civil power, in Roman Catholic countries, the union has been so close that it has often been impossible to tell the other from which " was (active in all kinds of iniquity and questionable doings during the 1,260 years of Papal power to rule and persecute, A.D. 539A.D. 1799) and is not (For a considerable part of the time of the end, beginning 1799, through force of circumstances, the church of Rome has had to take a back seat-has been no longer able to occupy the center of the stage of world events) and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit (' the abvss,' R.V. Again come into prominence out of the welter of world events. This time the Papal spirit and activity will seek to operate through so-called Protestant as well as Roman Catholic governments, although Papacy's hand may still be a hidden one) and (although allowed to continue a short time, shall then) go into perdition (destruction) : and they that dwell on the earth (others beside the elect church, v. 6) shall wonder (marvel at what is happening, and be in considerable doubt and perplexity. Their wonder, however, will not be in respect of those things that cause astonishment to the John class --Comp. v. 6) whose names ('name,' R.V.) was not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world (As already suggested, Rev. 13:8, God has arranged for 144,000 to occupy the divine plane of existence as joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom : the characteristics of each one have been predestinated, and during the Gospel Age the call has gone out to those drawn by the Father to qualify for one of these ' names.' Such as fulfil the conditions, becoming conformed to the image of God's dear Son, qualify for the place in God's arrangement to which they have been called. Thus, without any predestination of individuals, the names of the little flock are written in the book of life from the foundation of the world), when they behold the beast that was (at one time active and prominent)

and is not (and then had to, drop out of the limelight for a time) and (although one would hardly expect public opinion to tolerate such a thing) yet is." "Shall be present" (Diag.) once more to try to repeat, by more refined methods perhaps, the practices of the dark ages.

Revelation 17:9. " And here is the mind which hath wisdom. (The angel seems to say to John-' What I have shown you regarding the judgment of the great harlot is something that is only appreciated by those who have the wisdom from above * ' And now the angel adds some further details). The seven heads (In addition to the previous suggestion, v- 3, these heads may indicate seven successive forms of government that have supported Papacy during her existence. Compare the seven periods of the true church-Rev. 2 and 3) are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth."

Revelation 17:10 "And there are seven kings (Seven kinds of rule, the guiding minds of the seven forms of government of the Holy Roman Empire that succeed one another during the Gospel Age) : five are fallen (five of these symbolic ' heads,' ' kings,' were already in the past when the ' mystery of the woman ' began to be made plain to the John class), and one is (It would seem that the sixth head came into power about the beginning of the time of the end. All know that Papal policies underwent a great change during this period. Their power to persecute and temporal power previously exercised were broken, and more subtle and underhand policies had to be used), and the other (the seventh ' head,' ' king ') is not yet come (that is, during the Harvest period, 1874 onward when the visions of the Revelator began to be made plain to the Lord's people) ; and when he cometh (comes into power), he must continue a short space." "A little while (R.V.)- a short but indefinite period.

While it is difficult to determine the exact dates when the symbolic " heads " followed one another (It is thought by some that the first six " kings " coincide with the periods covered by the six seals- See Rev. 6, there being a short overlapping period between the Sixth and Seventh heads, as there is between the Sixth and Seventh seals), it seems fairly clear that the Fifth head came into power at the time of the Reformation (Rome then had to devise new means for successful operation) ; the Sixth head with the breaking of Papacy's temporal power in 1799 ; and the Seventh head beginning to appear at the end of the times of the Gentiles, 1914.

Revelation 17:11 "And the beast that was (at one time :active ; that during the dark ages exercised dominion over the human conscience) and is not (able now to exercise this undesirable function ; and has not since 799 been permitted to exercise any temporal dominion), even he is the eighth, and is of the seven ('Is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven,' R.V. When the beast comes into prominence again out of the I ' abyss " '-v. 8-he will quickly begin to rear and use his eighth head, which grows up out of the seven. The Seventh kind of rule which begins to operate in 1914, it would seem, quickly merges into another, symbolizing radical changes in policy because of the great time of trouble gradually proceeding to its dread culmination, that sounds the knell of all false systems. The eighth head being of the seven, may suggest a combination of all Papacy's previous forms of government and policy, when her ablest minds will all join in the life and death struggle for her continued existence. But the sure word of prophecy cannot be broken), and (in spite of their best efforts) goeih into perdition" - "Goes into destruction " (Diag.).

In connection with the foregoing symbolical picture, it must be remembered that during the latter periods of Papacy's existence, her influence is not confined to Roman Catholic countries as previously, but that the Protestant sections of Christendom almost entirely lose sight of their former protests and co-operate with and become increasingly one with the power and policies of Rome and her paramours-the so-called Christian Kingdoms of Europe. Thus the Seventh and Eighth heads include the kind of rule operated by confederate Protestantism and the civil powers to which she is now so closely united. Ere " perdition " comes the spiritual teaching, practices and exercise of authority of the Protestant half of Christendom, will be little better than that exercised by Papacy aforetime. In fact, Protestantism's use of spiritual authority to-day is just as evil and blighting to Christians and God's revelation of Truth, as was Rome's in her darkest days.

Revelation 17:12. " And the ten horns which thou sawest -(the civil governments that have been of assistance to Papacy, v. 3, Rev. 13:1. The present picture has to do with the civil powers in Christendom to-day-the period of the 7th and 8th head ; the powers that be) are (symbolical of) ten kings (Ten, in Scripture, seems to signify completeness ; a whole or complete number. The reference is to all the rulers or would-be rulers of to-day), which have received no kingdom (The words, ' as yet ' should be omitted : they are not in the oldest MSS. The reference is to all who are hankering after civil, political and ecclesiastical power subsequent to the close of the times of the Gentiles. Beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, the Gentile governments were given a lease of power and authority to exercise the same, which was to last for 'Seven times,' or 2,520 years (a symbolic time is 360-years. $360 \times 7 = 2,520$). This lease began in 606 B.c and expired in A.D. 1914, so that all the rulers and would-be rulers, down to the holders and would-be holders of petty local authority, are included in the ' ten kings that have received no kingdom '-no divine authority to act,

direct or indirect. Comp. Dan. 2:37, 38) ; but receive power (' authority,' R.V.) as kings one hour with the beast."

This verse does not say from where these wielders of authority-civil, political and ecclesiastical-obtain the same. This, however, is patent to all ! And what violations of conscience and principle are some willing to practice in order to be " dressed in a little brief authority." In his extremity, the Pope may directly or indirectly authorize the clergy of the Church of England. The Anglican clergy will endorse their brethren of the free churches. All with any influence at all, and willing to support the tottering structures of Christendom will receive the " power " -endorsement and authority, " one hour with the beast," and how proud many of them feel."

Revelation 17:13. " These C ten kings '-exercisers of authority, great and small) have one mind (' These have one purpose,' Diag. To (1) Look out for number one ; (2) Preserve the present constituted order of things in Church and State) and (to accomplish these two things) shall give their power and strength unto the beast." - Present beast-like governments, civil and ecclesiastical.

Revelation 17:14. " These (ten kings, wishing the present order of things to continue, and in order to accomplish this) shall make war with the Lamb (who has returned to overturn the powers that be, and to establish His Kingdom), and the Lamb shall overcome them (This symbol suggests our Lord's quiet yet successful method of accomplishing what He has returned to do): for he is Lord of lords ('The Lamb will conquer them because he is Lord of lords,' Diag. ; of all would-be lords), and King of kings. (particularly of those represented by the ' ten kings.' ' All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,' said Jesus, and He now takes His great power and begins His reign. Rev.

11:17): and they that are with him (The Church either on this side or the other side of the vail, who share with the Lamb in his great victory) are called (to this position) and chosen (because of responding to the call), and faithful."-To their covenant of sacrifice.

Revelation 17:15. " And he said unto me (The Seventh Messenger says in explanation to the John class) the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth (Comp. v. i ; that supports the Apostate Church), are (a symbol of) peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Revelation 17:16. " And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast (the civil powers that have been so, obviously supporting Rome and her daughters, and that ecclesiastics have been using for their own convenience, sometimes even against the inclination of these civil powers), these (because at last waking up to the true situation) shall hate the whore (' the harlot,' R.V. ; the apostate church that so long deceived them with her blandishments, doctrines, practices, forms, ceremonies, arranged to appeal to the natural man possessing an innate desire to worship something), and shall make her desolate (withdrawing from her temples of fashion and false worship) and naked (exposed to the discontented, revolutionary peoples of earth), and shall eat her flesh (the things of the flesh in which she has gloried ; confiscate her revenues if she has any left at the time indicated in this prophetic picture), and burn her with fire. ~ '-Anarchy, general lawlessness-the final stage of the great tribulation (Rev. 18:8).

Revelation 17:17. "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will (God by His providences can do this with His creatures without in any way interfering with their free moral agency. in this case, by allowing them to fulfil their own selfish desires, while the light of Truth is being withheld from

them. 2 Cor. 4:4), and to agree (to be of one mind, although with mixed and varying motives), and give their kingdom (their influence and authority) unto the beast (to bolster up a rotten state of things), until the words of God shall be fulfilled. I 'Until His purposes be accomplished the sure Word of prophecy entirely fulfilled,

Revelation 17:18. " And the woman which thou sawest (the unfaithful church, that the Lord's people can so clearly see developed as a result of the falling away after the death of the Apostles) is (that which became) that great city (that great ecclesiastical government) which reigneth (which has exercised great power and influence) over the kings of the, earth."-The great ones of the world. " The kingdoms of the earth " (Sinaitic MS.). Both statements are true. How thankful we are that the reign of Babylon is to be followed by the reign of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10, 23-27).

CHAPTER 18.

THE DECLINE OF NOMINAL CHRISTIANITY.

In Chapter twelve we saw the development and birth of the great Antichrist system and how it fought to obtain pre-eminence, and how Satan fulfilled his promise made on another occasion " All this power will I give thee . . . if thou wilt worship me " (Luke 4:5-7). We also saw in Chapter thirteen, that as a result of Satan's efforts to corrupt and frustrate God's purposes and the efforts on the part of many to remedy the matter, three great entities would rise up during the Gospel Age :-

(1) That most corrupt and abominable of all religious institutions, the Church of Rome ; (2) A less corrupt form of Christian worship and work-the Protestant State Church systems, followed by (3) A great variety of smaller religious bodies, all of whom make efforts to cast out one or another of the errors of the dark ages, and which eventually come together into a great federation-" the image of the beast. " In the previous Chapter (Rev. 17) we saw the same things pictured from another angle viz., a collection of church systems unfaithful to Christ, the Heavenly Bridegroom, and hence designated " harlots "-the prophetic picture showing God's complete control of the situation and His fore-knowledge of all that would transpire. And now (Rev. 18), we see how divine endurance of these " vessels of wrath fitted for destruction " comes to an end and how divine favor is fully withdrawn from them (that is, the measure of favor the sectarian systems have enjoyed because of some of God's people being among them) and finally how these systems of confusion are caused to disappear from the earth -- Cast as a great millstone into the sea."

Revelation 18:1. ("And" omit) "After these things (after the visions of chapter 17) I saw another angel (This messenger, brought to John's attention is none other than the Messenger of the Covenant, our Lord Jesus, coming again at His second advent) come down from heaven (The John class have seen from Bible prophecy how this great event took place in A.D. 1874 - the beginning of the times of restitution-Acts 3:19-21; See Scripture Studies Volume 2 for proofs. The Church at this end of the Age sees with the eyes of her understanding what John saw in symbol), having great power (' authority' R.V. ' All power in heaven and in earth '); and the earth was lightened with his glory."-The first droppings of the mighty shower of blessings that will come to mankind during the Millennial Kingdom. The enlightenment here referred to is not that which comes to the Lord's people, but general enlightenment on all subjects that has come to the world since 1874.

Revelation 18:2. "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great (the great system of religious confusion called by men the Christian Church) is fallen, is fallen (The fall here referred to is a fall from the measure of divine favor previously enjoyed. The Messenger of the Covenant sounded out this message first of all through Scripture Studies, Vol. 2--Comp. Rev 14:8; and which took place, prophecy shows' in 1878. For now half a century this has been the united testimony of the John class - the remnant of the true church at the end of the age), and is become the habitation of devils ('demons'; the evil spirits, more and more entering into her divine protection having been withdrawn. And to-day all admit, many devilish characters are within her borders), and the hold of every foul spirit (false and dangerous teaching - 1 John, 4:1-3), and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."-The " birds of the air that our Lord in one place interprets as the children of the wicked one."

Now follows the reason for the casting off from favor of the nominal Christian Church. Instead of blessing the world, Rome's influence, at any rate, has been the reverse.

Revelation 18:3. " For (Because) all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (All nations have imbibed to their injury her false doctrines. Thus the nations of Europe have been led to think of themselves as Christian nations and have given their support to the church who thus misled them. ' By the wine of the wrath of her fornication, all the nations are fallen,' R.V. -from the position they might have occupied had they not been corrupted by the great ' harlot,' v. 9. Rev. 17 : 1, 2), and the kings of the earth (the great ones of the world) have committed fornication with her (united themselves to a system which, if its claims to be the virgin church of Christ were true, would have been unlawful) and the merchants of the earth (particularly those with some ability to trade in spiritual things to their own profit ; becoming Cardinals, Bishops, Deans, Canons, Priests etc., in her organizations) are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."-" Were enriched by the power of her luxuries " (Diag.) ; her revenues ; choice livings with little to do, etc.

Revelation 18:4. " And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her my people (This I voice ' forcefully sounded out through the message of Scripture Studies, Volume 3, has been the united testimony of the enlightened saints ever since. Rev. 14:9, 10) that ye be not partakers of (' have no fellowship with,' R.V.) her sins (her unscriptural practices) and that ye receive not of her plagues."-The punishments to come upon her for her guilt. Even to have her errors pointed out is a plague to her devotees (See Rev. 16).

Revelation 18:5. " For her sins, have reached unto heaven (Through the centuries they have reached immense proportions) and God hath remembered her iniquities." Although a full recompense has never been meted out for Papal iniquities, or the less gross sins of the Reformed Churches, these things are remembered by Jehovah and a full recompense is to come at the end of the age (Rev. 6:10, 11; Matt. 23:35, 36; Gal. 6:7, 8).

In verses 6 and 7, the Lord addresses His own people, enlightened by the truth here set forth. He says that His message just announced concerning Babylon is not one they must keep to themselves, but faithfully witness to, whatever the cost.

Revelation 18:6. " Reward her ('Render unto her,' R.V.) even as she rewarded you ('even as she rendered,' R.V.) and double unto her double (Don't be afraid of giving her a double dose) according to her works (If you think her works deserve it) in the cup (the Bible, Rev. 17 : 4) which she hath filled (' mingled,' R.V. ; ' mixed,' Diag. ; misused, misapplied, mingled with errors without number) fill (' mingle ' ; ' mix ') to her double." -A really generous portion.

Revelation 18:7. " How much she (specially her clergy and ministers) hath glorified herself (honored herself rather than the Master she professes to serve), and lived deliciously (' luxuriously,' Diag. ; in comfort and even luxury), so much torment and sorrow give her (The more the luxury and self-indulgence on the part of her great men, the harder will be the experiences of the Millennial judgment which begins with the great day of wrath at the close of the Gospel Age) for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen (our positions of authority are ours for good), and am no widow

(cast off by the Heavenly Bridegroom as some are preaching-Comp. V. 2 and v. 6), and shall see no sorrow." - " Mourning " (R.V.) -1 trouble such as some unimportant people declare to be coming.

Revelation 18:8. " Therefore (Because of Churchianity's persistent refusal to listen to the Lord's voice through His Word) shall her plagues come in one day (the early years of the Millennial day ; the day of the Lord ; particularly those plagues outlined in Rev. 16), death (loss of spiritual life), and mourning, and famine (not only a famine for hearing the word of the Lord-Amos 8 : ii-but a great shortage of material good things previously enjoyed-Jer. 25:34-38) ; and (as a culmination of these judgments) she shall be utterly burned with fire (utterly destroyed by the fire of that day-I Cor. 3 : 13-15) : for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." (Rev. 17:16).

Revelation 18:9. " And the kings of the earth, (the great ones of the world who have given big donation, towards her upkeep, thinking that religion is a good thing to keep people contented with their lot), who have committed fornication with her (enjoyed questionable relationship) and lived deliciously (' luxuriously,' Diag.) with her (enjoyed together far more than their share of earth's good things) shall bewail her (' shall weep and wail over her,' R.V.), and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning." Experience much sorrow and disappointment when they see the approaching collapse of organized religion.

Revelation 18:10 " Standing afar off (as much as to say - We can't help what is happening ; it is not our responsibility ') for the fear of her torment (for fear of becoming too involved in the misfortunes of the cast-off Church systems) saying, Alas, Alas, that great city Babylon (Alas that

this great system will be of no more use to us, to help us further our own purposes), that mighty city! (' the strong city,' R.V. So, they thought, as well as the clergy, comp v.7) for in one hour (quite suddenly and unexpectedly) is thy judgment come." A symbolic hour, viz., one twenty fourth part of the thousand year day of judgment, is 41 years and 8 months. During this period, from 1878, all the judgments of the written Word concerning her had been revealed (Comp. Rev. 17:1).

Revelation 18:11. And the merchants of the earth (Those trading in the wares of mystic Babylon - the Clergy) shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more." -Their business of trafficking in the Word of God is at an end (See 2 Cor. 2:17 Diag.).

Now follows a number of symbols, picturing the spiritual things in which the clergy have traded - truths and half-truths as well as grievous errors they have made use of, not for the glory of God, - but to help forward -the growth and prosperity of sectarianism.

V. 12. " The merchandise of gold (Divine promises misused and misapplied), and silver (Truth perverted by the clergy from its proper use, for reasons best known to themselves), and precious stones (precious graces of character that the preachers intimate that all and sundry may possess if they will, by their own efforts), and of pearls (The pearl of great price is joint-heirship with our Lord in His Kingdom. Churchianity teaches that. the prizes of this world may still be enjoyed by those who would aspire to this great blessing-teaching most agreeable to those for whom the clergy carry on their religious services), and fine linen (teaching as to how righteousness may be secured - usually the intimation being that, it is by works and not by faith), and purple (misapplication of the truth concerning the royalty of the Kingdom ; that a death-bed repentance will usher one straight

into this glorious condition. Such a trading on the credulities of the people the religious leaders mistakenly think extends their influence), and silk (symbolizing Christ-like characteristics such as meekness and humility, which the clergy intimate all may possess apart from the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit. Again, very agreeable teaching to the unregenerate - Ezek. 16:10, 11, and scarlet (misconceptions concerning the sacrifice of Christ; even intimating, because conducive to the prosperity of their Church systems, that a soldier's sacrifice on the battlefield is akin to what our Lord Jesus accomplished by His death), and all thyrine wood (' aromatic wood,' Diag. Wood symbolizes human traditions : This sweet-smelling wood suggests theories that appeal to the man of the world, such as the natural immortality of all), and all manner vessels of ivory (Beds were at one time decorated with ivory-Amos 6 : 4-suggesting creeds made to appear pleasing, agreeable, right and proper to the adherents of Churchianity), and all manner vessels of most precious wood (human traditions put on the same level as the Word of God. (Comp. Isa. 52:11), and of brass ('copper,' Diag.-A symbol of perfect human nature and here representing Churchianity's wrong presentations upon this subject for the furtherance of their own position and influence), and iron."- Wrong teaching concerning the empires of earth (Dan 12:40). The words "and marble" are omitted in the Sinaitic MS.

Revelation 18:13. "And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense (These four things remind us of the ingredients that went to make up the holy anointing oil, symbolizing the Holy Spirit - Ex. 30:23; 31:3; Isa. 11:2. The reference here would be to the misuse the clergy make of the Bible teaching regarding the Holy Spirit, telling us, among other things, that the Spirit is a third person in a Trinity of Gods), and wine (misconceptions concerning the doctrine of Christ's Kingdom ; that it is now in operation and that they are its representatives. -Another instance of

trading on human ignorance and credulity), and oil (teaching regarding the anointing of the Spirit ; that it can be imparted through the laying-on of the bishop's hands ; and that authority to preach can only be secured in this way-Isa. 61:1), and fine flour (a reference to the meal offering, Lev. 2:1, 2; misconceptions regarding the kind of preaching the Lord wishes to have done ; and the ideas of the clergy concerning the matter of which their sermons should be composed-Isa. 30 : io), and wheat (errors preached regarding the class constituting the children of the Kingdom. Matt. 13 : 38), and beasts (' cattle,' R.V.), and sheep (symbolizing Babylon's teaching concerning the kind of things that should be brought in sacrifice and who should bring them--Ps. 50:12-15. No gift being too small or too large and horses and chariots (teaching that it is Babylon's duty to give all human organizations and those who keep them going, a religious twist and try to secure their recognition of the ' church '), and slaves (' bodies,' Diag.), and souls, (' lives,' Diag.), of men." - Teaching that man's eternal destiny depends upon membership in one of the various church systems. That man's body must be cared for as well as the soul is a teaching often emphasized merely to produce an effect ! Since the fall of Babylon in 1878, the above teachings have been appealing less and less to the congregations of the nominal church, so that her clergy and ministers are having to hunt high and low for fresh subjects upon which to preach : and yet church membership decreases and the revenues get less and less.

Revelation 18:14. "And the fruits that thy soul lusted after (the growth and prosperity of their Church systems ; appreciation of their ministry and teaching, as illustrated fore-going) are departed from thee, and aft things which were dainty (artistic) and goodly (beautiful music ; trained choirs ; fine organs-merchandise they put in their windows to attract the crowd) are departed from thee (The revolutionary troubles soon to engulf Babylon will cause such things to be at a considerable

discount), and thou shalt find them no more at .all." In the next age such will not be necessary adjuncts for those who worship in spirit and in truth.

Revelation 18:15, 16. " The merchants of these. things (clergy, choir-men, organists) which were made rich by her (who got a bit out of their church activities), shalt stand afar off for fear of her torment (realizing it is hopeless to expect any reinstatement into their former positions), weeping and waiting and saying, Alas, Alas, that great city, that was clothed' in-fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls!" - This great religious organization that we thought was a permanent and divine institution ; righteous in the sight of God ; indeed, the very Kingdom of God on earth (Rev. 17:4).

Revelation 18:17. "For in one hour so great riches (all those things the clergy regard as their spiritual riches, vs. 12, 13) is come to nought (' is made desolate,' R.V. ; has lost its value in the eyes of the people). And every shipmaster (heads of the sectarian organizations called churches), and all the company in ships (all those who are working their passage to heaven through membership in the church nominal), and sailors (those who run the show), and as many as trade by sea (' gain their living by the sea,' R.V. ; by trying to evangelize the masses), stood afar off."-

Realized that the condition of organized religion was becoming hopeless.

v. 18. " And cried (cried out,' R.V.) when they saw the smoke of her burning (the evidences of her coming destruction), saying, What city is like unto this great city ! "-What organization, kingdom or government has met with a fate quite like this?

v. 19. " And they cast dust on their heads (symbolizing their anguish and despair), and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich (that provided a good living for) all that had ships in the sea (the clergy and ministers and workers in these large organizations supported by the people) by reason of her costliness ! (her wealth, endowments, investments) for in one hour is she made desolate. "-Financial collapse has overtaken her.

Although on the part of many, there is much lamentation over the desolation of ecclesiasticism, another class are able to exult over this feature of the great divine plan (Ps. 97:8).

v. 20. " Rejoice over her, thou heaven (that is, those who will constitute the new heavens, the new ruling power of the Millennial age-Comp. Rev, 12:10-12. The next clause tells us who they will be) and (' even ') ye holy apostles and prophets (' ye saints, ye apostles and ye prophets,' R.V. ; faithful preachers of God's Word and not Of human traditions) ; for God hath avenged you on her." - "For God hath judged your judgment on her " (R.V.). The judgments previously proclaimed by the Lord's people are the very things that will be executed upon Babylon (Rev. 6:10, 11).

v. 21. " And a mighty angel (' And one strong angel,' Diag.) took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, Saying, Thus (by whatever powerful agency the Lord is pleased to use) with violence shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."-But will be caused to disappear in the revolutionary troubles that prepare the way for Messiah's Kingdom.

Now follows a description of the desolate condition of the nominal church, subsequent to her fall from favor and prior to her overthrow.

Revelation 18:22. "And (During this period) the voice of harpers (those able to bring harmony from the Word of God : These will have obeyed the call - Come out of her my people,' Comp. Rev. 14:1) and musicians (' minstrels,' R.V.), and of pipers (' flute-players,' R.V.), and trumpeters (and others endeavoring to sound forth the heavenly music, Ps. 92:1-3 ; Rev. 8:2), shall be heard no more at all in thee (They were at one time scattered among the sects of the nominal church) ; and no craftsman (faithful servant of God-' workers together with him '), of whatsoever craft he be (whatever work of a Scriptural character he was endeavoring to carry out), shall be found any more in thee." The remainder of this verse is not found in the oldest MSS.

Revelation 18:23, " And the light of a candle ('lamp,' the lamp of God's Word. 'Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet ') shall shine no more at all in thee (It shone among the sectarian systems at one time, but since Babylon's casting off from favor, her spiritual light has been going out-Comp. Rev. 11:7, 8); and the voice of the bridegroom (the Lord Jesus) and of the bride (the faithful little flock of saints) shall be heard no more at all in thee (These faithful ones were at one time in Babylon, but at the end of the age obey the call to come Out, v. 4) : for (because) thy merchants (traders in spiritual wares-the clergy) were the great men of the earth (occupying the chief seats at feasts, and as prominent a position elsewhere as they could possibly push into. Because of this attitude being so different from that of the Lord's servants, the Bridegroom's voice cannot be heard nor the light of the lamp shine through them) for by thy sorceries (cunning sophistries ; deceitful handling of the Word of God ; holding down and misrepresenting the Truth, II Cor. 2:17; 4:2; 11:13; 11:4) were all nations deceived." Satan's principal deceiving agency has been the nominal church, Papal and Protestant (Comp Rev. 20:1).

V. 24. " And in her (at her door) was found the blood of prophets and of saints (the Lord's faithful servants, proclaimers of His Word, Comp. Acts 20:26), and of all that were slain upon the earth." Churchianity has injured the spiritual life of millions. The millions of literally slain in the bloody conflicts in Christendom during the Gospel Age, might have been spared if the professed Church, with a firm and united voice, had declared its adherence to the teaching of the New Testament on the subject of war. What a tremendous responsibility has rested upon this great system! And God's recompense for -her long line of iniquities has not yet been meted out! (Rev. 6:11; Matt. 23:36).

CHAPTER 19.

THE VICTORY OF THE LAMB.

In chapter eighteen we have seen pictured the gradual decay of nominal Christianity that takes place at the close of the Gospel Age, and the Lord's people washing their hands of the whole dismal business, being made free from its influence by the Truth. Chapter nineteen seems to bring us down to the time when the last members of the body of Christ is complete and shows how the world-wide Work accomplished during the Harvest period, begins to have its influence upon a considerable number of others who waking up begin to see something of the wonderful time in which we live. The chapter goes on to show the final victory of the Lamb over all His enemies.

Revelation 19:1 "And after these things (after the members of the John class have seen with the eyes of their understanding the things depicted in chapter eighteen, they are shown Something else) I heard a great voice (a great proclamation) of much people in heaven (in the religious world), saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor and power, unto the Lord our God." This is a picture of how increasing numbers (spirit begotten ones as well as others not so blessed) come to some understanding of the truth of God's plan , as the time of trouble draws on, and specially of the Truth concerning the Day of Vengeance upon Christendom.

Revelation 19:2. " For true and righteous are his judgements (We can assent to the justice of the things to come) : for he hath judged (indicated His judgment through the declarations of the sure word of prophecy) the great whore ('harlot'; the nominal Christian Church) which did corrupt the

earth (the present social order) with- her fornication (illicit union with earthly governments - mingling of spiritual things with natural things; the spirit of the world with the spirit of Christ), and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand'. " When this great company of people begin to manifest themselves, divine recompense on Babylon is about to fall (Rev. 18:24).

Revelation 19:3. "And again they said, Alleluia (They give a united and world-wide witness concerning the things they are beginning to understand). And her smoke (the remembrance of the destroying agencies that will cause Christendom to collapse and pass away) rose up for ever and ever." It will never be forgotten but will ever have a prominent place in world history.

Revelation 19:4. "And the four and twenty elders and the four living ones fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying "Amen ; Alleluia." The Old and New Testament Scriptures, by opening up ever more and more clearly, and being faithfully proclaimed by an ever increasing number of those who desire to serve God and His Truth, honor and magnify Jehovah, the author of the great plan of salvation they contain.

Revelation 19:5. " And a voice came out of the throne saying, Praise our God' ' all ye his servants (picturing exhortations given to the Lord's people to continue to faithfully witness for Him. A knowledge of the Divine Plan itself is a powerful incentive to make it known. ' And,' omit), ye that fear Him, both small and great." - Old and young; learned and ignorant; rich and poor; may share in this glorious ministry of proclaiming the message of Truth-the good news of the coming Kingdom ; the printed page being specially suitable for this purpose.

Revelation 19:6. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude (specially manifested during the years of the time of trouble-subsequent to 1914), and (later) as the voice of many waters (showing how still larger numbers come to a knowledge of the truth that the Kingdom has begun. After the great tribulation, this will be all the living peoples of earth), and (later still) as the voice of mighty thunderings (All mankind, living and dead, will take up the same great theme), saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."-The long-promised kingdom has at last come.

Revelation 19:7. " Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him (The striving after and receiving the honors of men on the part of religionists, so forcefully pictured in the previous chapter, will pass away during the period of the Kingdom) : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." It will gradually -dawn upon mankind as the Millennial day progresses, that the true Church are all beyond the veil, united to the heavenly Bridegroom, having earnestly endeavored by the use of the means of grace, to make herself ready for that great event.

Revelation 19:8. " And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white (This company, at one time poor and despised, evil spoken of, misrepresented, with their characters blackened by Satan's servants, will in the next age be seen by mankind in its true light; that although imperfect, its members were, while in the flesh, God's faithful servants): for the fine linen (in this picture represents not the righteousness of Christ, but) is the righteousness of saints." -- "The righteous acts of the saints" (R.V.); that their service in the flesh had divine approval, being presented through the merit of Christ. How many things performed by the Lord's people and condemned and vilified, will later be seen as righteous acts!

Revelation 19:9. " And he (Jesus, who receives the revelation from His Father, Rev. i : ii) said unto me (John, here representing the first member of the John class to be given the custody of Present Truth ; Pastor Russell), Write (as a part of the meat in due season for the Lord's household, Matt. 24:45-47), Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. (In the Jewish marriage arrangement there was a feast before the ceremony, and a greater one afterwards. The one before the event is well fulfilled by the feast of Present Truth enjoyed by the Lord's people during the period of our Lord's Presence, 1874 onwards--Rev. 3:20. Privileged indeed have been all those permitted to enjoy these good things). And he saith unto me (John-the John class) These (things I am unfolding to you) are the true sayings of God." -The evidence is overwhelming, that what we have set forth in the Scripture Studies is a message from God's Word, specially provided for our day.

Revelation 19:10. " And I (John, representing the John class ; the Church at the end of the Age) fell at his feet (at the feet of the angel-the Seventh Messenger making these things known to the Lord's people) to worship him (rendering too much -honor to the instrument used, rather than to the author of the great divine plan of salvation). And he said unto me, See thou do it not. I am thy fellow servant (Here we see clearly that in this symbolic prophecy, the angel who shows these things to John is not a ' winged creature,' but represents a faithful servant of God in the flesh) and (one) of thy brethren (' All ye are brethren') that have the testimony of Jesus (' the truth as it is in Jesus ' - the special message Jesus brings at His Second Advent): worship God : for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." - Prophecy here refers to preaching. Prophecy in the New Testament sense of the word, means preaching the Gospel under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This prophesying may be done by word of mouth and through the printed page. What has given such life

to the Seventh Angel's message-the message of the Scripture Studies, is the fact that it is so full of the " testimony of Jesus "-the message He has sent in these days of His Second Presence. We may say, too, that the New Testament breathes life into Old Testament, prophecy, opening up its meaning. Finally, the testimony of Jesus must be the life of all preaching to be acceptable to God or a blessing to others.

The remainder of this chapter is composed of three Visions : verses 11-16; verses 17 and 18; and verses 19-21 ; in which we see the Lamb riding victoriously on behalf of truth and righteousness (Ps. 45 : 3, 4).

FIRST VISION.

Revelation 19:11. "And I saw (As another vision in this grand series) heaven opened (symbolizing an opening up of further features of Present Truth -Rev. 4:1; 11:19; 15:5 ; Matt. 3:16), and behold (I saw) a white horse (The white horse seen under the first seal symbolizes the doctrines of the Gospel, enjoyed and proclaimed by the early Church. They had the message of Truth in its purity-Rev. 6:2. Then we saw the corruption of the true faith after the death of the Apostles, represented by the red horse-Rev. 6:4 ; and finally, the gross darkness that was reached in the dark ages, represented by the black horse-Rev. 6:5. At the end of the age, our Lord and Master opens up the Truth once more in its purity. This has been seen by the John class as taking place from 1874 onward - the period of our Lord's Presence) ; and he that sat upon him (Having full control of the great Divine Plan for human salvation, with its times and seasons) was called Faithful and True (the Lord Jesus, who has been so faithful and true in His service and care for His people throughout the nineteen centuries of this Gospel Age. Matt. 28:20 ; Rev. 1:13; 2:1), and in righteousness he doth

judge (His people) and make war."-With His enemies ; using upon them the sword of the spirit in the bands of faithful servants. The one here disclosed may be thought of as the complete Christ-Jesus and all the members of His body, made one ; although, of course, at the time John sees the vision, not all are beyond the veil.

Revelation 19:12. " And his eyes were as a flame of fire (penetrating ; all things naked and open before Him), and on his head were many crowns (Every member of the glorified Christ will have the crown of life-immortality. They will further be crowned kings and priests of the Millennial Kingdom-Rev. 20:6); and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself." - At this time of the manifestation of the sons of God, the glorified Christ will assume a new character ; occupy a new position and begin a new work, which no one will fully appreciate and understand except those favored with membership in this glorious company.

Revelation 19:13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in sprinkled with, ' R.V.) blood (Each member of the glorified Christ will be identified as having shared in the sacrifice and sufferings of Christ -Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12. The picture also suggests one who has engaged in a most sanguinary conflict-that of the battle of the great day-Isaiah 63:1-4): and his name is called the Word of God." Every member of this glorified company will be a living expression of the great Jehovah, their heavenly Father; a living expression to men of His gracious purposes, past, present and future: the great honor to be bestowed upon those who have endeavored to live the Word of God while in the flesh.

Revelation 19:14. " And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses (At this beginning of the revelation in the Kingdom of the Christ complete, some of the great multitude of spirit begotten ones will be this side the veil, and some of these, at any rate, will be carried forward by, and faithfully witnessing to, the faith once delivered unto the saints. Still others will be gathered to the Truth as the work of the Kingdom goes forward and will, figuratively speaking,

I ride on the white horses ' until the knowledge of the Lord fills the earth as the waters cover the sea. They will be ' armies in heaven,' in the sense that they will be the representatives of the new ruling power of earth, the ' new heaven '), clothed in fine linen, white and clean. All those the Lord uses as servants of the Truth now or in the future, must be approved by Him ; righteous in His sight ; cleansed from sin and the defilements of this present evil world.

Revelation 19:15. " And out of his mouth (from all those whom He uses as His mouthpieces) goeth a sharp sword (' a two-edged broad sword,' Diag. This sword is the Truth-the sword of the spirit), that with it he should smite the nations (Bring His message to their attention with great force) : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron (a rule that is strict in the extreme ; allowing no licence to sin, no over-looking of the least deviation from the great eternal principles of righteousness and truth) : and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."-Here representing not so much the experiences that will crush the fruit of the false vine (Rev. 14 : 19, 20), but the meting out of whatever divine recompense may be necessary, upon all those in the Millennial day whose sins stand unrepented of and hence unforgiven. Any bad character fruitage or work in that day will be crushed as grapes of the winepress (1 Tim. 5:24 ; Eccl. 12:14 Gal. 6:7, 8 ; Mal. 4:1)

Revelation 19:16. " And he hath on his vesture ('mantle,' Diag.) and on his thigh (probably that part of His garment that covers the thigh) a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."-Just as the Lord's enemies who stand in the way of Him establishing His Kingdom, eventually realize the hopelessness of attempting to stand before the bearer of such a name (Comp. Rev. 17:14), so those who would oppose the great King during the period of the Kingdom, will realize the same

SECOND VISION.

Revelation 19:17 "And I saw an (Gk. one ') angel standing in the sun (In Chap. 12:1 the early church is pictured 'clothed with the sun' - having the Gospel light in its purity shining upon her. This angel seems to represent the last members of the Church, after Present Truth has shined upon them, enjoying a still more brilliant unfolding of Gospel truth); and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls, that fly in the midst of heaven ('in mid-heaven,' R.V. Picturing quite a large class in Christendom who have some ability to appreciate that which is above the dead level of earthly things. 'Flying in the midst of heaven ' suggests moving about in search of something better than what they have got), Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God."-- The great supper of God " (Diag.). This supper, it has been suggested, is a great feast of prophetic truth ; a feast that comes between that spread by the Master for His faithful when He returns (Rev. 3 : 2o), and the " feast of fat things " to be provided for all during the time of the Kingdom (Isa. 25:6).

Revelation 19:18. "That ye may eat (mentally assimilate ; understand the teaching of Bible prophecy concerning) the flesh of kings (the ' things of the flesh ' appertaining to earth's great ones,

particularly the civil rulers-Rom. 8:5), and the flesh of captains (great militarists - Job. 39:25), and the flesh of mighty men (political and commercial giants), and the flesh of horses (particularly the false systems of teaching symbolized by the red horse and the black horse, and the religious organizations that support them; how they came into being ; their experiences and final end, as predicted in the Word of God-Rev. 6:4, 5. Present Truth surely enables us to see the teachings of the churches in their true light and understand from prophecy the ' things of the flesh ' concerning them, for they have little that is spiritual in their make-up), and of them that sit on them (specially the clergy, who guide and control these great institutions-Rev. 9:17), and the flesh of all men (the doings of all mankind as seen in the light of prophecy) both free and bond (masters and servants), both small and great.” - Obscure and prominent.

Although the Church in the flesh appreciates and enjoys this depicting of humanity's doings as seen from God's standpoint, there are now, as already suggests many others able to rise above material things, to appreciate at least some of these prophetic pictures. For instance, how many can enjoy the delineation of the universal empires that occupy the period of the times of the Gentiles - the interval between the overthrow of God's typical kingdom, Israel, and the Millennial day, when He whose right it is begins His reign, as given in Dan. 2! (Ezek. 21:26, 27; 39:17-20).

THIRD VISION.

In these last three verses, the Lord's people are shown the. final phase of the battle of the great day, and how the Lamb destroys every vestige of influence that would oppose the progress of His Kingdom (Rev. 17:14 ; Ps. 2:4, 5, 8, 9).

Revelation 19:19 "And I saw the beast (The Papal rule of violence, cruel, sly, vindictive) and the kings of the earth (the great ones of the world) and their armies (all they can muster to help them), gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse (the white horse, v. 11; the faith once delivered unto the saints ; the Kingdom message now being preached in all the world for a witness ; the influences the great King has let loose in the earth with a view to inaugurating a new dispensation), and against his army."? -Against all taking their stand on His side.

Rev. 19:20. "And the beast (Papacy) was taken captured," Diag. , caught red-handed, while playing her old tricks), and with him the false prophet (hand and glove with Papacy in her nefarious deeds. These great systems are 'caught' and rendered helpless by having the searchlight of truth turned upon them in such a way that all will see their hypocrisies and abominable practices, and their misrepresentations of the divine character and plan) that wrought miracles (' signs,' RN.) before him (That has tried to show to the Papal Church so many proofs that they are the Reformed Church of Christ, in possession of divine favor), and with which he (the false prophet) deceived (not the wily birds of the Papal hierarchy, but) them that had received the mark of the beast (those impressed with some of the Papal characteristics - received directly from papacy or through some of her daughters, the Protestant sects ., Rev. 13:16; 15:2), and them that worshipped (reverenced gave thought, time and support to) his image (Papacy's likeness wherever found, Rev. 13:15-17). These both (both of these great systems) were cast alive (while active and resolutely opposing the Truth concerning the incoming Kingdom of Messiah) into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."- The destruction of the great time of trouble.

Revelation 19:21. " And the remnant (the people who remain after the beast and the false prophet have disappeared, and previously deceived by these great systems of falsehood, Zeph. 3:8, 9) were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the (white) horse (the Christ, controlling the true doctrines and teachings of God's Word. To be slain by the sword of the spirit, means to be converted to the Truth : To be completely overcome by the same, without an argument left to the contrary) which sword proceedeth out of his mouth (the many mouthpieces who at this time will be willingly and gladly proclaiming the message of the Kingdom, without money and without price, Rev. 22:17): and all the fowls (' birds,' R.V. ; the class referred to in v. 17. Those able to rise above the grossly material) were filled with their flesh."-They understood, up to the limit of their capacity, the exposures of the *sure Word of Prophecy.

CHAPTER 20.

THE MILLENNIUM.

In Chapter ten, verse one, John is given a vision of our Lord's invisible coming, for the purpose of proclaiming in the earth seven great messages of God, completing the Reformation. In Chapter 18:1, His coming is shown again: this time to begin a work of judgment ; exercising His kingly authority in the casting off of Babylon. Finally, in Chapter 20:1, His coming is shown again for the binding of Satan and the full establishment of His long-promised Kingdom."

The four visions of this Chapter : vs. 1-3 ; vs. 4-10 ; v. 11; v. 12; show the Millennial Kingdom from four different angles.

FIRST VISION.

Revelation 20:1 " And I (John, representing the John class, the Church at the end of the age ; those in the spirit on the Lord's day) saw an angel (the Messenger of the Covenant) come down from heaven (Prophecy shows that AD 1874 was the beginning of the times of Restitution, when Jesus came down from heaven - Acts 3:21. In the light of the Word we see this with the eyes. of our understanding), having the key of the bottomless pit (' the abyss the key to the solution of all earth's troubles the right or authority to deliver mankind from the bondage. of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Compare comments on Rev. 9:1) and a great chain (the linking up and full elucidation of every section, chapter and verse of the Word of God) in his hand." - Under His control. When this is done the Word of God will indeed be felt to be living and powerful, able to deliver all men from the snares and deceptions of Satan (Heb. 4:12) and bring them to an accurate knowledge of the Truth.

Revelation 20:2. And he laid hold on the dragon (Satan, in order to carry out his work of deception and operate as the I prince ' and ' god of this world ' has built up a great organization in the earth, by which he exercises control. The dragon here symbolizes Satan, as represented in the great empires of earth.-Comp. Rev. 12:3; 13:2. Not only must Satan's personal influence be shut off from the earth, but the power to, deceive on the part of certain great entities in the world must be restrained, too. And he also laid hold of) that old serpent (' the old serpent,' R.V. That is, Satan as represented in the ecclesiastical powers -of the world, through which the most cunning and subtle deceptions have been presented to the Lord's people - 2 Cor. 11:3, 4; Rev. 13:14; 19:20; Comp. Rev. 12:9) which is the devil and Satan (which is the very personification of the great. enemy and opposer of Jehovah God), and bound him a thousand years." - Effectively restrained his every influence. (Matt. 12:29; Mark 3:22-27; Luke 11:21, 22) Compare the counterfeit of this great work of our Master- Rev. 12:9-12. .

Revelation 20:3. "And cast him into the bottomless pit the abyss" R.V. -.A condition similar to that in which Satan has held poor humanity for 6,000 years. Also, a condition of enforced idleness and inability to do many things done previously-1 John 5:19; RV.; Rev. 9:1, 11; 11:7; 17:8) and shut him up and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." As the binding of Satan is a gradual work, beginning with the bright shining of Present Truth during the Presence of the Master, so the loosing of Satan will doubtless be gradual, until his influence is sufficiently powerful to test the heart loyalty of all human creatures, who for a 1,000 years have been enjoying the blessings of Messiah's Kingdom (II Thess. 2 : 8).

SECOND VISION.

Revelation 20:4, 5. " And I (John, representing the John class) saw (The Church sees with the eyes of her understanding, in the light of the Word) thrones (the Gentile kingdoms; all earthly rulers, great and small), and they sat upon them (all with any earthly authority, do all in their power to ' sit tight '-holding on to their privileges and power to the very last) and judgment was given unto them (God's expressed judgment is that with the close of the times of the Gentiles, the rule of fallen man over his fellows must pass away): and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus ('the testimony of Jesus,' R.V. '), and for the Word of God (Although out of existence, in some cases for hundreds of years, the identity of none of the Lord's saints is lost : all will be faithfully brought forth by resurrection power. The beheading pictures the willingness of the consecrated to give up the earthly life with all its interests, that they might submit to the headship of Jesus; being accepted as members of the body of Christ - Eph. 1:22; 4:15, 16; Col. 1:18.

"Because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the Word of God,' Diag. They make this full surrender because of what God reveals to them of His goodness and love and the riches of His grace that center in Christ), and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image (and who had not rendered reverence and obedience to false systems, as soon as it was seen that they misrepresented God and His Word - Rev. 13:12, 14-16) neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands (neither given false religious organizations in close collaboration with the civil powers, mental assent, nor material support) ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a (' the,'-Diag.) thousand years. This is the first resurrection." - This is the company to share the first resurrection.

The first sentence of verse five, " But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," is-not found in the oldest and most reliable Greek MSS. - the Sinaitic, Vatican numbers 1209 and 1160, nor the Syriac. When inserted, it obviously breaks the sense of the passage.

Revelation 20:6. " Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection (The dead in Christ who are raised first and glorified with Jesus, to live with Him on the divine plane, are indeed blessed; having received of the Father it may be said, in all reverence, the greatest blessing in His power to bestow. Further, they will be holy,.. perfect, complete, entirely sanctified, in contrast with the world to be raised during the 1,000 years, who will come forth ' every man in his own order ' in varying degrees of imperfection of mind and character, although with tolerably sound but not perfect organisms-I Cor. 15:40, 48) : on such the second death hath no power (Because of possessing immortality, the ' power of an endless life '), but they shall be priests of God and of Christ (a ' royal priesthood ' for -the purpose of teaching and instructing mankind ; helping them to draw near to God with acceptance, and eventually effecting complete at-one-ment between God and His creatures-Heb. 7:15-17) and shall reign with him a thousand years. "- Contrast this with the counterfeit priesthods of this Gospel Age, who have done their best to "reign" over the people and at the same time keeping them in ignorance of the Divine character and plan (1 Cor. 4:8).

Revelation 20:7. " And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. "Being permitted to apparently circumvent divine power and again deceive the people.

Revelation 20: 8. "And (as unchanged in heart as ever) shall go out to deceive the nations (not nations as we know them to-day, but all mankind awakened from death and comfortably filling the earth. Gen. 1:28) which are in the four quarters of the earth (scattered universally all over the earth; enjoying the world-wide paradise, all deserts and wastelands having disappeared. Isa. 35:6-10), Gog and Magog (Gog and Magog are mentioned in but one other place in the Bible the prophecy of Ezekiel, Chapters 38 and 39, and there picture the forces that oppose the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom--Christ's Kingdom at the beginning of the 1,000 years. This suggests the meaning of the symbols; the forces that will be in opposition to the Kingdom at the end of the 1,000 years), to gather them together to battle (to oppose in whatever ways will then be open to them, the operation of the divine government among men) : the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." It is not the thought, of course, that the number that Satan succeeds in deceiving will be as the sand of the sea, but all mankind in the four quarters of the earth will be as numerous as this (Gen. 22:17, 18). The number who will fail in this final testing is not here revealed, and so far as can be seen, the question " Are there few that be saved?" has never been answered. There are Scripture intimations, however, that the number of total failures will not be a very large one. For instance, so far as can be reasonably calculated, the number who have lived during the past 6,000 years, would not be much above twenty thousand millions (20,000,000,000) and the Bible seems to suggest that the number who will " eat of the tree of life," (See Comments to. Rev. 22:2) will be approximately 20,736,000,000 ($144,000 \times 144,000 = 20,736,000,000$). So there would not be a great difference between this number and the number who, according to the best estimates, have ever lived.

Revelation 20:9. " And they (the disloyal, rebellious ones at the end of the Millennium) went up on ('over,' R.V.) the breadth of the earth (a few being collected from all parts of the earth) and

compassed encircled,' Diag.) the camp of the saints about the holy ones,' Diag. lit.) and the beloved city (the divine government established through Christ ; dear to Jehovah as the apple of His eye, and operating over all mankind restored to perfection. The ' Camp of the holy ones ' seems to specially speak of the Ancient Worthies - the earthly representatives of the unseen kingdom of Christ and the Church. Ps. 45:16; Amos 9:6. The word 'camp' suggests a temporary rather than a permanent condition ; supporting the thought suggested by other Scriptures, that at the close of the 1,000 years, the Ancient Worthies will be exalted to the spirit plane of existence. The reason for this rebellion seems to be dissatisfaction with the authority the Ancient Worthies will be exercising. If the control of the Ancient Worthies lasts for a little season beyond the 1,000 years, Satan may inject the thought into the minds of some that these princes are holding on to their power beyond the allotted time, and they may be deceived into thinking that they are acting for God by taking the control away from them. Comp. 1 Sam. 26:6, 10; 26:11), and fire (a destroying agency) came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

Revelation 20:10. " And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (a symbol of complete destruction. Although not in the case of Satan, this destruction so far as humanity is concerned, will be their second death), where the beast and the false prophet " (were cast at the beginning of the 1,000 years). " Where both the beast and false prophet were cast " (Diag.). As the first sentence of verse five is an interpolation; not being found in the oldest and most reliable MSS., so, one ventures to suggest , the latter clause of this verse is an interpolation, too ; it being so out of accord with the plan of God and the general teaching of His Word. It appears to be, what has been called by Rotherham in resgeot of certain other passages, a " primitive error,"

that is, an error we have no means of correcting by any of the existing MSS. We are plainly told that the devil is not to be tormented but destroyed (Heb. 2:14 ; Ezek. 28:19).

THIRD VISION.

V. ii. And I saw a great white throne and white purity ; throne rulership. Here is another picture of the universal Kingdom of Messiah. Some cannot see this coming kingdom at all. Others can see that there is to be a Kingdom of God established on the earth at some time; but it is reserved for the John class to see its greatness and blessedness and the far-reaching character of its work) and him that sat on it (The Christ, Head and body ; earth's rulers for a 1,000 years) from whose face the earth and heaven fled away (This cannot be the literal heaven and earth, which abide for ever - Eccles. 1:4 ; nor the new heavens and new earth brought to our attention in Rev. 21:1, which also abide for ever, See Isa. 66:22. It must therefore be ' the heavens and earth that are now,' the spiritual rule operated by Satan, the ' prince of the power of the air,' which has its visible manifestation in the rule of the ecclesiastics and the inequitable and oppressive social arrangements of the present time. From the face of earth's new ruler shines the ' light of the knowledge of the glory of God ' - 2 Cor. 4:6. As this glorious knowledge of God-His perfect wisdom, justice, love and power, reaches humanity, one after another of the unscriptural and oppressive arrangements in Church and State now tolerated will have to give way for something more just and god-like, just as many of the teachings and practices of the dark ages have fled away before the increasing light of our day ; public sentiment no longer tolerating such things) ; and there was found no place for them." - For any of the warring sects or the imperfect social, political or industrial arrangements of the present time Comp. Dan. 2:35).

FOURTH VISION.

The final vision of this chapter is of the day of judgment ;.first seen clearly by the majority of the John class after a reading of Chapter 8 of Volume i, Scripture Studies.

Revelation 20:12. " And I saw the dead (the world of mankind awakened from death yet not enjoying what God calls life, but still in a condition of imperfection), small and great, (a reference to the position occupied under the reign of evil) , stand before God (' before the throne,' 'R.V. They will be responsible to earth's new ruler, v. 11; Amenable 'to, His righteous government, standing their trial of a 1,000 years); and the books were opened (One of the necessary requirements for a just trial for life is that the will of God should be fully revealed to man, hence the books of the Bible will be fully opened up, Isa. 29:18): and another book was opened, which is the book of life (' another book of life was opened,' in addition to the Lamb's book of life -open during the Gospel Age-implying an opportunity for all to get their names written as worthy of eternal life, Mal. 3 : 16) and the dead (all upon whom death passed in Adam - Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 29) were judged out of those things written in the books (judged, tested, tried, by the perfect standards of the Old and New Testaments ; the Word of Divine Revelation -John 12 : 48), according to their works." The New Covenant under which mankind will be dealt with is a covenant of works, as was the Law Covenant. By the close of the 1,000 years the great Mediator, Christ, will have enabled all men to reach a condition where they can perform perfect works. All who come short of this must be cut off.

Revelation 20:13. " And the sea (the world in lawlessness and chaos at the time of the inauguration of the Kingdom. Isa. 60:5) gave up the dead which were in it (they will be gradually lifted out of

this undesirable condition-Acts 3:19-21); and death (the present dying condition) and hell (hades, oblivion, the death state, into which all men have gone from Adam downward) delivered up the dead which were in them ; and they were judged every man according to their works. "The works all will be privileged to perform in that day.

Revelation 20:14. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire (that is, into destruction. The elimination of the conditions among men represented by ' death and the grave ' will take the whole of the 1,000 years. 1 Cor. 15:25, 26). This (lake of fire) is (a symbol of destruction and in the case of humanity, this will be) the second death."-The penalty to be meted out upon the incorrigibly wicked during the Millennial Age, who after having been redeemed and released from the first death, fail to render perfect obedience to the laws of the Kingdom. They will die a second time.

Revelation 20:15. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life (If any by the close of the 1,000 years are not found worthy of life) was cast into the lake of fire." - Into destruction (Acts 3:23). They shall be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (whose presence by His Spirit is everywhere -Ps. 139:7-10. They will therefore be eliminated from God's universe) and from the glory of His power." Divine power will never be exercised for their awakening again.

CHAPTER 21.

THY KINGDOM COME.

in the wonderful and beautiful visions of this chapter, we are shown the work of the Millennial Age from a higher viewpoint than previously. They reveal not only the class who will constitute the heavenly phase of the Kingdom, but also the pure, heaven-sent joys of those who will benefit by the earthly blessings.

Revelation 21:1 " And I (John, representing the John class) saw a new heaven and a new earth (By means of the sure word of prophecy and the helps we have been given to understand the same, we have been privileged to see with the eyes of our understanding, the Millennial Kingdom, both in its heavenly and earthly phases) : for the first (' former,' Diag.) heaven and the first ('former'), earth, were passed away (Not the first heaven and earth which were before the flood, Heb. 2:2, 5, but ' the heavens and earth that are now.' The 'new heaven' is the ' third heaven,' 2 Cor. 12:2); and there was no more sea."-No more discontent and lawlessness, but instead, "peace on earth - goodwill among men " (Rev. 20:13; Isa. 60:5).

Revelation 21: 2. " And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem (' And the holy city, a new Jerusalem,' Diag. I Saw) coming down from God out of heaven (just as the old Jerusalem was the center of divine authority and worship in the typical Kingdom of God, established in Israel, so, in the Millennial Age, the glorified Church will be a new and heavenly government established among men. Present Truth shows that God's Kingdom is not set up by the gradual Christianizing of

the nations, through the Church in the flesh, but only after they have been endued with power from on high through a participation in the first resurrection, Rev. 20:6. Prophecy shows that this new Kingdom has been coming down to earth since 1878; that since then, Christ and the risen saints have been making their influence increasingly felt in the earth, although none but the John class have been privileged to see it) prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." - At such a time the beauty and perfection of a bride's adornment leaves nothing to be desired; the last touch has been given to her attire; the last fold of her raiment is in its place-suggesting that when the new Kingdom begins its work, the Lord will have everything ready ; no adjustments, no alterations or improvements will have to be made in its policies or the way it will carry forward the work of Restitution. How different from the constant making and repealing of laws and arrangements in the kingdoms of this world!

Revelation 21:3. " And I (John) heard a great voice out of heaven (' out of the throne,' R.V. This message comes to the John class through the Word and unfolding of the Divine Plan) saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God (God's dwelling, His presence) is (to be) with men (the time having come for His Kingdom to be set up in the earth), and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. His presence will extend from being with the few during the Gospel Age (2 Cor. 6:16-18) to all mankind during the Millennium.

Revelation 21:4. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (Remove all cause of sorrow and disappointment) ; and there shall be no more death (by the time the Kingdom has completed its work), neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are

passed away." - The effects of the long 6,000 years' reign of evil will be entirely eliminated by the close of the Seventh thousand year day.

Revelation 21:5. "And he that sat upon the throne (Christ in control of the great divine plan of salvation) said, Behold, I make all things new – 'I renew all things.' The times of restitution will bring man back to the perfection that Adam lost-Acts 3:19-21). And he (the Lord Jesus during the days of His presence) said unto me (John, here representing the first and most prominent member of the John class, the church at the end of the age-Pastor Russell), Write (concerning this Kingdom to come, and the blessings it is to bring to mankind. The Scripture Studies are the result of this command) for these words are true and faithful." - The coming Millennial day when the curse of death is to be lifted, and all the families of the earth blessed, is not a cunningly-devised fable.

Revelation 21:6. "And he said unto me, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end (I am the one who was with the Father before the world was, and who began to carry out the great plan for human salvation. I have now returned to finish His work. The words-' It is done ' are not found in the Sinaitic MS.). I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.' - And how this statement was acted upon, both in spirit and in letter during the whole period of the ministry of the Seventh Messenger, who. made the glorious message of Restitution clear to the Church ! Not a single appeal for money was ever made, nor a single collection taken up.

Revelation 21:7. " He that overcometh (sin and human imperfection) shall inherit all things (' these ,things,' . R.V. ; the earthly blessings just described) and I (the Lord Jesus) will be his God, and he shall be my son." The world will be human sons of the great Messiah.

Revelation 21:8. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death."

While the foregoing is a list of the grosser sins in the calendar, we must still remember that the Revelation is a highly symbolic book, and that it is possible for some of these evil practices to survive in a more refined form, well into the Millennial Age. For instance, even the Lord's own people are sometimes "fearful" of the outcome of an experience, when perhaps their faith is severely tested. So the thought is, that perfect, implicit-trust must be developed by all. John's words, "He that hateth his brother is a murderer," put a more refined meaning on murder than is usually thought of at the present time. Hankering after some of the old ways of Churchianity may be fornication (Rev. 17:1-5; 18:3) and to still wish to hold on to any of the false theories so prevalent during the Gospel Age, would be to believe, if not tell, a lie. Such explicit warnings as the foregoing will surely have a salutary influence upon all mankind!

Revelation 21:9 "And there came unto me one of the seven angels (One by one the John class are brought into contact with the Seventh Messenger) which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues (The 'angel' privileged to record God's message due to be understood at this time ; which has been such a blessing to some and yet a plague, 'a savor of death unto death' to others, See Rev. 16), and talked with me (1, By word of mouth; 2, Through the printed page), saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." In the favored time in which we live, we are privileged to have a clearer view of the true church, the Kingdom class, than has ever before been vouchsafed

to God's people, as well as the conditions upon which fellowship in this mystery can be enjoyed. Not only so, but in the days of the voice of the Seventh angel, the John class are permitted to see the influence of the new Kingdom already making itself felt, coming down to earth ; its glory shining upon the feet members of the body of Christ still in the flesh. Doubtless the fact of the Kingdom beginning to be set up while some of its members are this side the veil, was foreshadowed by Solomon sitting upon the throne of Israel while David was still alive - (1 Kings 1:46, 53; 1 Chron 23:1; 29:22) - and possibly, also, by the temple of Solomon being filled with divine glory about a month prior to its completion - (1 Kings 6:38; 2 Chron. 5:13, 14; 7:1, 2, 10). It also may be significant and perhaps typical that at this time 142,000 burnt offerings (symbolical of an accepted sacrifice) were offered! (2 Chron. 7:5).

Revelation 21:10, 11 And he (The Seventh Messenger) carried me a-way in the spirit (The John class are carried away mentally, in the spirit of their minds) to a great and high mountain (that is to as high a position mentally and spiritually as it is possible for the New Creature to attain while in the flesh, Eph. 2:6), and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem (' the holy city, Jerusalem,' R.V. ; the glorified Church ; the new government of earth), descending out of heaven from God." - This prophecy began to be fulfilled in a small way-" not with outward show " - in 1878, and an important further step was reached in 1914. By the close of the great time of trouble the " holy city " will have. reached the earth, with the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies to be the visible representatives of the Kingdom (Ps. 45:16).

Revelation 21:11. "Having the glory of God (In contrast with the fading glory possessed by the rulerships of this world, civil and ecclesiastical-Rev. 17:4; 18:16): and her light (the wisdom and

knowledge displayed in all the acts and dealings of earth's new government) was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone (a symbol of Jehovah, as represented by His infinite wisdom and knowledge, See Rev. 4:3), clear as crystal." - None of the laws and instructions will be obscure ; difficult to understand ; requiring a clever lawyer to interpret the same.

Revelation 21:12. " And (the city) had a wall (a protection) great and high (infinite power backing every act of the New Kingdom ; guarding all its interests, in its embryotic as well as in its glorified state. Contrast this with the " wall," protection, of the false church-the fickle civil governments of this present evil world) and (it), had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon which are the names of the twelve tribes of the Children of Israel." These twelve angels (agencies) may be thought of - as symbolizing the twelve companies into which the little flock will be divided; each company having the oversight of that phase of the Restitution work for which it has been prepared (Matt. 19:28). Each of the called ones at the time of His begetting is a probationary member in -one of these twelve companies-" twelve tribes --and - to obtain membership in which tribe, in its glorified condition, he must pass through a particular " gate," set of experiences, avenue of instruction necessary to fit -him for the place in the particular tribe to which he has been called. Thus the experiences of the Lord's people are often widely different; some being called to pass through one set of experiences, and some through another.

Revelation 21:13. On the east three gates; on the north three gates ; on the south three gates ; and on the west three gates." If we thought of a literal city in the form of a square with three gates on each side, one standing on the outside of the city would of necessity be nearer to one or two of the twelve gates than to any others. This well illustrates how the Lord invites the called ones into the

tribe -to which they are nearest by nature : or, in other words, into that place in the Kingdom for which they can be best prepared and qualified to fill.

If we extend the picture so as to include the earthly phase of the Kingdom, the same principle will apply: Each member of the human family will be called into that tribe of the great earthly house of Israel for which he can be best fitted, by the set of experiences, avenue of instruction leading to that particular tribe (Rev. 22:14).

The various classes among the Ancient Worthies will be the means of access into the various tribes of fleshly Israel, and to begin with they will probably form the nucleus of these tribes of Antitypical Israel.

Revelation 21:14. "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." -- Jesus Christ Himself being the foundation corner stone " (Eph. 2:20. Diag.).

In addition to the suggestion of verse 12, the wall of the city seems to symbolize the characters' of those called to compose the Kingdom class ; built up by means of the testimonies of the Lord's inspired mouthpieces - the twelve Apostles (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Every step of faith and obedience, resistance of temptation, etc., makes the " wall " a little higher, broader and stronger. All the grace and truth we enjoy as New Creatures rests upon the foundations that are found in their writings.

Revelation 21:15. " And he that talked with me (The Seventh Messenger, the Lord's mouthpiece to the Church during its Laodicean Stage-Comp. v. 9) had a golden reed (the Divine Word, correctly understood and accurately applied) to measure the city (the Church, the Kingdom class ; her doctrines and service now' and in the future. Ps. 48 : 12, 13 ; Comp. Rev. ii : i), and the gates thereof (the steps to be taken to come into Christ) and the wall thereof."-The standard of character required of the little flock. These measurements are accurately set forth in the Scripture Studies.

Revelation 21:16. " And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth (a perfect cube, suggesting the uprightness and perfect rectitude of all who will be accounted worthy of being part of the 'city'; also the qualities that will characterize the work of the Kingdom. Phil. 2:15) : and he (the Seventh Messenger) 'measured the city with the reed (Accurate measurements of spiritual things are the portion provided for the Lord's household at the end of the age - Matt. 24:45-47), twelve thousand furlongs. (Twelve symbolizes completeness of Organization; and the powers of a number intensify its symbolism. Thus is pictured the absolute perfection Of Organization in the glorified church ; the perfect way in which the new government will function. Rev. 21 : 2). The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." -All its ways will be equal. It will be a perfect manifestation of the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths, of divine love (Ps. 50; Ezek. 18:25, 29).

Revelation 21:17. " And he (the Seventh Messenger) measured the wall thereof (its thickness), an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man (a human instrumentality), that is of the angel."

To be of the Kingdom class it is necessary for each one to attain as New Creatures, a certain breadth of character. A wall of 144 cubits, or roughly 216 feet wide, would be a very thick wall indeed : So those counted worthy of a place in the Kingdom must have very broad, rounded-out characters. This verse suggests that we may have every confidence in the measurements made by the " angel." The number 144 divides more easily than any other number, into the number of the elect, 144,000 : suggesting how the perfect characters of the little flock will blend and harmonize with one another ; how united all-! knit together they will be. This perfect unity beyond the veil is realized to some extent while the Church is still in the flesh (Ps. 133:1).

Revelation 21:18. "And the building (solid fabric) of the wall of it was of jasper (symbolizing our Heavenly Father. Rev. 4:3; 21:11. Each one of the Kingdom class will be made like Him - conformed to His image): and the city was of pure gold (It will be composed of divine characters), like unto clear glasses." - Transparently clear in all its activities, with " no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning."

Revelation 21:19. " And the foundations of the wall of the city (the writings of the inspired Twelve) were garnished with all manner of precious stones. -(precious graces of character. 1 Pet. 3:3, 4; 1 Cor. 13:4-7. The following suggestion is made regarding these foundations). The first foundation was jasper (symbolizing the wisdom and knowledge of God. Comp. v. 11; Rev. 4:3. The epistle to the Romans shows more clearly than any other part of the Word, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God as revealed in His great plan) ; the second sapphire (a beautiful blue stone, symbolizing faithfulness. Paul's two epistles to the Corinthians are full of exhortations to faithfulness) ; the third, a chalcedony (symbolizing obedience, submission to divine authority ;

specially emphasized in the Epistle to the Galatians) ; the fourth, an emerald." A bright green stone, symbolizing deathlessness ; life in Christ-the prize offered to the overcomers. This mystery was fully revealed for the first time in the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. 3:3-5).

Revelation 21:20. "The fifth, sardonyx (symbolizing humility Philippians holds up before us the great humility of the Master and copied so faithfully by His servant Paul. Phil. 2:5-9; 3:7-11); the sixth, sardius (loyalty. Colossians exhorts to loving loyalty to Christ. Rev. 4:3); the seventh, crysolite (the word means gold stone,' and symbolizes heavenly wisdom. In the two epistles to the Thessalonians are to be specially seen the heavenly wisdom that governs the Church) ; the eighth, beryl (Love of the Father : The two epistles to Timothy outline for us the requirements of the Christian ministry; the performance of every phase of which, to be acceptable, must be prompted by love) ; the ninth, a topaz (Benevolence : Titus shows us the characteristics that must be possessed by the servants of the Church-the benevolence that must characterize all they do) ; the tenth, a chrysolite, (Constancy ; cheerful endurance ; which reminds us that the epistle to the Hebrews is one long exhortation to hold fast-to patiently endure) ; the eleventh, a jacinth (Unchangeableness, : In the epistle to James we have outlined the unchangeableness of God's law-that perfect law of liberty that governs the Lord's people) ; the twelfth, an amethyst." Royalty : Reminding us of the last ' of the inspired writings to be added to the inspired canon, the epistles of John, in which we see the royalty of the position of the true Church in their relationship to the Father and the Son ; at the present time as well as in the future.

Revelation 21:21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls (The composition of a pearl-its innumerable layers of inconceivable thinness ; deposited one on the other, suggests how each

member of the Kingdom class in his endeavor to press through the set of experiences 'gate' that will qualify him for the particular tribe to which he is called, adds layer by layer, the character meet for his future inheritance and work) ; every several gate was one pearl : and the street of the city (the way all must walk who are identified with this city) was pure gold (fashioned from the materials found in the Divine Word), as it were transparent glass." The narrow way to the Kingdom is a clear and plain path to those whose hearts are loyal and true. " And types, parables and hitherto dark sayings, become luminous, shedding their light on the narrow way in which the Anointed (Christ) Company is called to run for the prize now disclosed to view." - Pastor Russell.

Revelation 21:22. " And I saw no temple therein (During the present age and specially at the end of the age, the little flock have no need for the external arrangements of the visible church, in their worship. Acts 7:48) for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb ore the temple of it." " We worship God in spirit and glory in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh --forms, ceremonies, showy ritual (John 4:23).

Revelation 21:23. " And the city had no need of the sun neither of the moon, to shine in it (the light of the Old and New Testament as it shines through the channels of orthodoxy): for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The saints receive their light straight from the Word of God and the channels of His appointment (Rev. 1:20).

Revelation 21:24. " And the nations (the peoples of earth) shall (future, i.e., in the Millennial Age) walk in the light of it (By the same light that the saints enjoy to-day. The words ' of them which are saved ' should be omitted, See R-V.) and the kings of the earth (the prospective ' kings and

priests unto God ') do bring (Present tense) their glory into it." All we have of an earthly kind - our present limited powers of glorifying God, brought into the service of the Kingdom. (Omit and honor,' R.V.).

Revelation 21:25. " And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day (So long as the day of salvation lasts, the privileges of the Kingdom now and in the future, are free-open to every member thereof. Nothing is confined to, or enjoyed by an exclusive few to the detriment of the many) : for (because) there shall be no night there." Nothing will be hidden or done in the dark under the administration of the Kingdom (Isa. 29:15). Further, the dark night of sin and death will be no more. Among the Kingdom class in the flesh, the " darkness (night) is past and the true light now shineth. "

Revelation 21:26. " And they (the members of Christ) shall bring the glory of the nations into it." " And honor " omit, Sinaitic MS. - All that earth can provide in the way of help toward the accomplishment of the great work of Restitution (Comp. Isa. 60:1-13). Men eminent in natural gifts will be glad for them to be used for the blessing of their fellows, instead of for the advancement of selfish interests.

Revelation 21:27. " And (yet) there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth (' nothing common,' Diag.; vulgar, profane, of low character), neither whatsoever worketh abomination (anything in sympathy with the abominations of Rev. 18:5), or maketh a lie (none who would teach

error however profitable and advantageous to themselves - Rev. 18:11, 15. Only the good and honest hearts have been -invited during the Gospel Age to enter the Kingdom Class, the Church. The same principle will apply to the earthly phase of the Kingdom), but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."--Only those whom the Lord definitely calls with the high calling, and who have their names inscribed as probationary members of the body of Christ.

“Called Lord by Thee to highest place,
To presence of Thy glory bright,
O! for such condescending grace
How can we speak Thy praise aright?”

CHAPTER 22.

THE CONSUMMATION.

The first few verses of this chapter give a still more exalted view of the Millennial work, as well as a glimpse of the eternal state beyond the 1,000 years-closing with sundry exhortations and warnings which synchronize most helpfully with all that has gone before.

Revelation 22:1, 2. " And he (the Seventh Messenger) showed me (the church) a pure river of water of life (a picture of the life-giving message of the Gospel that will flow to mankind when the Church is complete and beyond the - veil), clear as crystal (Nothing then will be dark or obscure), proceeding out of the throne of God and of the 'Lamb," - That is, resulting from the operation' of the Divine government in the hands of Messiah. "In the midst of the street of it (After Lamb, it seems that there should be a comma rather than a full stop, as in the R.V. for figuratively speaking, the water of life, the truth that will bring life to all who will receive it, flows along the one and only way that all will be required to take in that Millennial Day-the ' way of holiness ' and life-Isa.35: 8), And either side of the river, was there the tree of life (From the wording of this Verse it is quite obvious that the expression 'tree of life' is here used in harmony with the general character of the Revelation, in a symbolical sense, for no tree could be on both sides of a river at the same time. As the river is a symbol of the life-giving message of the Gospel, so the tree of life is evidently the world's great restorer and life-giver, Christ, Head and body. Thus the picture teaches that Christ, the life-giver, will be easy of access to all mankind- in that day), which bare twelve manner of fruits,

and yielded her fruit every month : (The fruit that accrues from the functioning of the tree of life in the Millennium, is the awakening from death and the restoration of Adam and all condemned in him. Matt. 19:28.

If each member of the little flock be privileged to awaken from death and start up the highway of holiness, twelve human being each month, a hundred and forty-four would be thus blessed in a year and 144,000 in a thousand years. By each one of the 144,000 doing the same blessed work, the result would be $144,000 \times 144,000 = 20,736,000,000$ - the approximate number, it has been reasonably estimated, who will enjoy the restored paradise in the ages to come), and the leaves of the tree (the teachings that the saints, have professed and lived, and which will flourish before the eyes of all during the period of the Kingdom were (are to be) for the healing of the nations." They will bring healing, mental, moral and physical, to the extent they are partaken of - obeyed.

Verses 3-5 give us a glimpse of the - eternal state beyond the Millennial Day –

Revelation 22:3. " And (by the time the great healing work is concluded, Matt. 19:28, and the incorrigibly wicked destroyed, Rev. 20:15) there shall be no more curse (The curse of sin and death will have disappeared from man's fair domain, Isa. 60:21) ; But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it (In full control ' from .sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth ') ; and his servants shall serve him." Render Him perfect obedience.

Although by this time the Kingdom will have been delivered over to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28) yet Christ is seated with the Father in His throne (Rev. 3:21) and will therefore rule the earth as a part

of the great universal dominion. He will rule in association with the Father. Thus the " throne " is " the throne of God and of the Lamb."

Revelation 22:4. And they (restored humanity) shall see his face (fully enjoy his favour) : and his name shall be in their foreheads." His character will be fully understood and appreciated by all (John 17 : 3 ; Comp. Rev. 14:1).

Revelation 22:5. " And there shall be no night there There shall be night no more,' R.V. By the close of the Millennial age all traces of the reign of evil will have vanished - Zech. 14:7); and they need no candle (' lamp,' R.V) neither light ,of the sun (The Word of God with its provision for human salvation, although valued with such an appreciation as only perfect human beings can exercise, and who doubtless will have it written in their perfect memories, will no longer be needed); for ('because,' Diag.) the Lord God giveth them light (further light, further revelations of eternal truth. Isa. 66:23) : and they shall reign (over the restored earth, exercising the dominion originally designed for the perfect man, Adam. Gen. 1:26; Matt. 25:34) for ever and ever."-- For the ages of the ages " (Diag.) the endless ages to come (Rom. 6:23).

Revelation 22:6 "And he (the Seventh Messenger) said unto me (the John class) These sayings ('words,' R.V.) are faithful and true (The Lord's servant in his writings gives this assurance to the Church by quoting numberless Scriptures to support all that he set forth - exhorting us to ' prove all things and hold fast that which is good ') : and -the Lord God of the holy prophets (' the Lord God of the spirits-teachings-of the prophets.' See Revised Version and Diaglott. The Lord God who from time to time all down the age has provided for His people faithful expounders of His Word,

Rev. 1:20, here at the end of the age) sent his angel (the Seventh Messenger ') to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." " To show to his servants what it is necessary to have done speedily " (Diag.) ; the world-wide work of Harvest that was to be accomplished in a matter of a few decades from 1874 and carried on speedily because of the knowledge that the Gentile Times end in 1914, with the ,expectation associated with this date of the early glorification of the Church.

Revelation 22:7, " Behold I come quickly (' speedily,' Diag. . Now the end of the age has arrived, all things relating to the coming of the Master will have speedy fulfillment) : blessed is he that keepeth (The word ' keepeth ' in the Greek also has the significance of ' observe,' ' watch,' suggesting the thought of observing and watching the fulfillment of) the sayings C words,' R.V.) of the prophecy ,of this book." - In Rev. 1:3 a blessing is pronounced upon those who understand and " keep the things written in this book." Here " keeping the words of the prophecy of this book " is alone mentioned, intimating that the interpreting and understanding of the same by the John Class are things that have already taken place.

Revelation 22:8. " And I John saw these things and heard them (None but the class typified by the Apostle John fully appreciate the wonderful unfoldings, of truth given at the end of the age through the Seventh Messenger. Nominal Christians and the world must wait until the Kingdom is in full operation before they will come to an accurate knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. 2:4). And when I had heard and seen., I (manifested a common human weakness that has been continually taken advantage of by Satan ; I) fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which &hewed me these

things." John began to give too much honor to the instrument used, rather than to the author of the great Plan of the Ages.

Revelation 22:9. " Then said he (the Seventh Messenger) unto me (the John class) see thou do, it not: for I am thy fellow-servant and (one) of thy brethren, the prophets (one of those who are seeking to faithfully proclaim the truths of God's Word, Eph. 4:11), and (one) of them which keep the sayings of this book : worship God." (Rev. 14:6, 7).

Revelation 22:10. " And he said unto me, Seal not (' Seal no longer ') the sayings of the prophecy of this book .(As soon as the time comes for this book to be fully unfolded, the intimation is that it is to be well advertised, freely talked about) : for the time is at hand. "

Revelation 22:11, "He that is unjust (unjustified ; and all but those in Christ are in this condition, however moral or well meaning they may be) let him be unjust still : and he which is filthy (wallowing in the mire of sin), let him be filthy still (if determined to continue in this course) : and he that is righteous (made right with God, Rom. 5:1), let him be righteous still (Let him see that he continues to maintain this condition of justification by continued faith in the precious blood of - Christ) : and he that is holy (entirely sanctified), let him be holy still."-Let him seek to maintain this condition.

As shown by the context, this verse is only applicable at the end of the Gospel Age, when the John class are appreciating the wonderful visions of the Revelator and keeping the words of this book. It clearly teaches that the light of Present Truth is not given for the purpose of reforming the world, or

to make things very different from what we find them. Indeed prophecy shows that at this time the line is about to be finally drawn between the true church and all others ; between the spirit begotten and the rest of mankind, who are to be privileged to enjoy the blessings of restitution about to be ushered in. Then the filthy will be cleansed; the unrighteous made holy.

Revelation 22:12. " ('And ' omit) Behold I come quickly (Here again the Master emphasizes the speedy accomplishment of the things pertaining to His advent, reminding us of the repeated evidences that have come to us from the sure* word of prophecy emphasizing this great truth, Comp v.7, v.20; Rev. 3:11) ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." How clear it is from this as well as from numerous other Scriptures, that the rewarding of the faithful takes place, not at the moment of death, but at the return of the Master.

Revelation 22:13. "I am Alpha and Omega (the one who began and who - is to bring to a completion the great plan of salvation. Eph. 3:11; Diag.; Heb. 1:2; Diag.), the beginning and the end (the author and finisher of our faith) the first and the last. "- of Jehovah's direct creation (Rev. 3:14; Col. 1:15).

Revelation 22:14 - "Blessed are they that do his commandments (the requirements of the 'New Law Covenant, ' that wash their robes,' R.V. ; Get rid of their earthly defilements), that they may have right to the tree of life (justice and wisdom will no longer bar the way of the willing and obedient, now the Ransom has been provided and presented on behalf of all. Comp. Gen. 3:24), and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Seven times in this book are different ones pronounced Blessed Rev. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14 this final benediction being the only one referring to the world in general ; whose blessedness is appropriately emphasized at the time when the opportunity finally comes to them of entering into relationship with their gracious Creator and the provision originally made for them, lost through sin and restored by the sacrifice of a willing Redeemer.

Revelation 22:15. " For with-out (outside the blessings of the Kingdom, Matt. 25:41-45) are dogs ('without are the dogs,' R.V. ' Shepherds who cannot understand ' and who therefore have not given warning to their flocks of approaching dangers ; and specially at the end of the age, of the approach of the great time of trouble ushering in the Kingdom-Isa. 56:10-12. It would seem that with many of the ' clergy, it will be a long time before they fall into line with the arrangements of the Kingdom) and sorcerers (The Greek word means ' one who is an enchanter through the use of drugs.' And let us remember that there are spiritual druggists as well as those who attend to the physical frame. The reference is to any who would wish to benumb the senses of the people to the truths of the Word of God by sophistry and unsound argument - 2 Cor. 2:17. Diag.), and whoremongers ('fornicators,' R.V. Any still in possession of the spirit of Churchianity. Rev. 17:5) and murderers, (having a suspicion of hatred for others, still in their hearts - 1 John 3:15), and idolaters (who would reverence any person or thing before Jehovah) and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." "And everyone who loves and practices falsehood." Diag.- Who would support or act in harmony with the creeds or shibboleths of this present evil world.

Revelation 22:16. " I Jesus have sent mine angel (the Seventh Messenger) to testify unto you these things in the Churches (the assemblies of the Lord's people. Verse six tells us that it was Jehovah

God who sent this faithful servant to begin His work when the time was ripe, and here we see that it was the Lord Jesus who sent him also. For nearly 40 years prior to the close of the times of the Gentiles (1914), all the wonderful features of Present Truth were being testified to the Lord's people - Eph. 4:8). I (Jesus) am the root (sustainer) and the offspring (descendant) of David (according to the flesh, but his life-giver during the Millennial age), and the bright and morning star." - The one who has sent to His people a most brilliant illumination of the truth before the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. He is the author of all the truth and grace we enjoy, whoever may be His honored channel of blessing.

Revelation 22:17 "And the spirit (the Lord Jesus. The Lord is that Spirit ') and the bride (the overcoming church joined to the heavenly Bride-groom) say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." A final emphasis is here given to the great truth that at this time of our Lord's apokalupsis, His revelation, as well as the thousand years of His parousia, during the period of the Kingdom, He is a glorious spirit being, invisible to the natural eye. He will, however, give the gracious invitation, "Come, take of the water of life freely, " through all the numerous and appropriate arrangements of the Millennial day.

Revelation 22:18. For I testify unto every man that heareth (understands something of) the words of the prophecy of this book. if any man shall add unto these things (Specially during the Gospel Age have some been led, consciously or unconsciously, to add to the things written. For instance, such things as the doctrine of the Trinity and eternal torment. Comp. Rev. 20:5), God shall add unto him

the plagues that are written in this book." To such as cling to these old errors, Present Truth is indeed a plague (Rev. 16).

Revelation 22:19 "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy (A temptation that will perhaps specially come to some during the Millennium ; a temptation to soften-down or otherwise apply some of the prophetic pictures contained herein), God shall take away his part out of the book of life (' from the tree of life,' R.V. ; Rev. 20:15), and out of the holy city (membership in the earthly phase of the Kingdom. ' And from the things ' omit these words, See R.V.), which are written (which blessings of eternal life and citizenship are described) in this book."

Revelation 22:20. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus." And who like the John class can say this, " and rejoice at any evidence of the approach of the Master, knowing thereby that our deliverance and our glorification with Him draw nigh. Surely all in sympathy with His mission of blessing and His spirit of love, will hail every evidence of His coming as the approach - Of the great joy which shall - be unto all people.' (Pastor Russell).

Revelation 22:21. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Praise to Him -by whose kind favour,
Heavenly Truth hath reached our ears.

May, its. sweet reviving savor,
Fill our hearts and calm our fears.

What of truth we have been hearing,

Fix, O Lord- in every heart.

In the day of Thine appearing

May we share Thy people's part.

T.S. Dec., 1942.

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