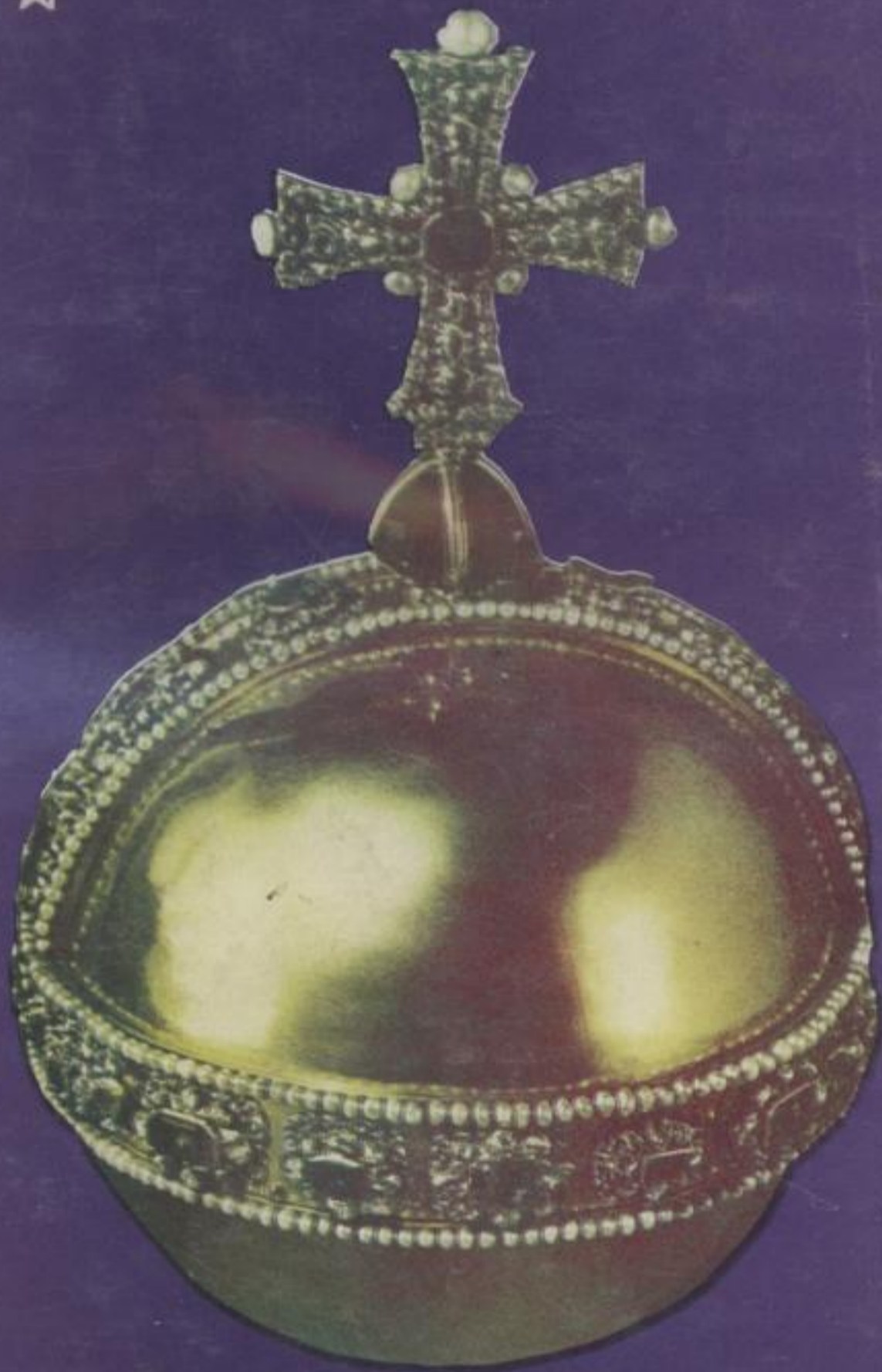


# The Patmos Story



A Study of the Book of Revelation

By  
W.G. Finlay D.D.



# The Patmos Story

The Isle of Patmos - one of the islands in that part of the Aegean which is called the Icarian Sea - is particularly rugged and bare. Today, there are still faint traces of mining operations which in the days of the Roman Empire, was worked by those who were convicted for some crime against the State. John the Apostle was one of these.

On a hill to the south of the island there stands a monastery which bears the name 'John the Divine' while half way down the slope there is a cave or grotto which traditionally, is the site where John received the Revelation. That which he received from the Lord Jesus Christ was written in a Book which for years has been shrouded in mystery. As one looks back over the years and with the wealth of history to call on, one is able to see the precision of the Revelation as it reveals prophecy as history pre-written.

# The Hattmos Story



## A Study of the Book of Revelation

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# CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	
Identity of the Churches in Asia . . . . .	11
CHAPTER 2	
The Crystallising of the Revelation . . . . .	39
CHAPTER 3	
The Secular Tapestry of the Apocalypse . . . . .	47
CHAPTER 4	
The Fifth Seal and Change . . . . .	69
CHAPTER 5	
The Little Book . . . . .	85
CHAPTER 6	
Israel to the fore . . . . .	97
CHAPTER 7	
The Beast . . . . .	107
CHAPTER 8	
Setting the end of the age Scene . . . . .	123
CHAPTER 9	
The Other 'woman' . . . . .	139
CHAPTER 10	
The Marriage Supper of the Lamb . . . . .	159
CHAPTER 11	
The Resurrection of the Dead . . . . .	181
CHAPTER 12	
The Books Opened . . . . .	191
CHAPTER 13	
The End . . . . .	200

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## INTRODUCTION

The Book of 'the Revelation of Jesus Christ', after an incredibly chequered history for almost two hundred years, was through *ecclesiastical sanction*, finally admitted to what Jerome called 'the holy library' and which the church calls 'The Canon of Scripture'. It is patently obvious that ecclesiastics, both ancient and modern, have remained sceptical about the authenticity of the last Book of the Bible and have treated it, together with the Epistle to the Hebrews, James and II Peter, with a suspicion which borders on complete rejection. The bias against these Books – and indeed against the Old Testament narrative – is, whether men know it or not, an extension of the first attempt to form a Canon of Scripture in 140 A.D. The 'Canon of Marcion' contained one Gospel which was a mutilated revision of that by Luke and ten epistles by Paul – all of which was the sum total of the early writings considered 'profitable for doctrine'. The reason for this peculiar 'censorship' was that Marcion, who, notwithstanding his Roman name was a 'converted Jew', declared that all the Apostles, with the exception of Paul, were corrupters of the Truth who should be expunged from ecclesiastical memory.

In essence, Marcion's contention has been projected into modern theology which relegates the writings of *bona fide* Apostles to the position of inferiority and utterly rejects any other portion of Holy Scripture which appears to be in conflict with what Paul has written. What has been forgotten in this modern day and age is that when the Apostles did write – their main objective was the *oral* preaching of 'the faith once delivered' – they never considered their literary efforts as 'the rule of truth' nor was it their intention of legislating for the future organisation of the Christian church. There is absolutely nothing to indicate that these Apostles regarded their writings – which were peculiarly local in context and content – as the sole vehicle which contained the sum total of God's Truth – no such claim is made by them nor would they be so presumptuous as to censor the Old Testament Scriptures which the Lord had declared to be 'the word of Truth' (John 17:17).

At a time when men wrote what *they* thought the Apostles were thinking when *they* wrote about the things of God, one finds an even distribution of emphasis which took in the fact of Calvary and what men interpreted as the effect of this on the world. Toward the end of the First Century, the writings of men began to take precedence over the historical event of Calvary and *religious philosophy* about the Christ of God was a developing trend which threatened to superimpose itself over the facts. The Book of the Revelation was written against this background – a background which refused to acknowledge that it was drifting into troubled waters. Marcion's rejection of the Revelation given to John, just forty-four years after it had been written, was typical of the resistance to the corrective urging of the Holy Spirit – a resistance which was to continue for a further one hundred years.

In the Third Century of the Christian dispensation, three separate and fully autonomous centres of Christianity emerged – that in Asia Minor which sanctioned its own Canon of Scripture and in which the Apocalypse, Hebrews, James and II Peter were omitted; that in Alexandria which omitted Hebrews, James and II Peter; and that in Carthage which taught only the Pauline epistles. Strangely enough, the Alexandrian church which upheld the authenticity of the Revelation was governed by Dionysius who, in ecclesiastical circles was considered one of the ablest bishops of the time and who followed Marcion's repudiation of John's authorship of the Apocalypse. However, notwithstanding this rejection by the Bishop of Alexandria, it was due to this church that the Book of the Revelation was finally sanctioned as an integral part of Holy Scripture at the third Council of Carthage in A.D. 397.

This did not mean that the church now accepted the Revelation – far from it. Martin Luther (A.D. 1517) had his own ideas about the canonicity of the scriptures and while he placed the Gospel and First Epistle of John, the Epistles of Paul and the first of Peter as 'the kernel of Christianity', he treated the remainder of the Books with varying degrees of disrespect and at times, outright denial. Erasmus of Rotterdam, while leaving the Canon unaltered, denied Apostolic origin to II Peter, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse. The doubts expressed at the beginning of the Christian dispensation continue to this day and theology, instead of attempting to elucidate the Message of the Book, continues to occupy itself with the questions of authorship and Canonicity and apparently content to explain: "All that can be affirmed, however, is that Revelation certainly arose within a Jewish Christian setting, its author using apocalyptic symbolism and language familiar in Jewish Christendom and perhaps incorporating



fragments of apocalyptic literature current in his day.”

Turning from this general background to the Book of the Revelation – which background may be seen as ecclesiastical opposition within a very feeble ecclesiastical sanction – one opens the Book itself to consider what it has to say in answer to the scepticism, rejection and other charges made against it. It is stated in the first verse of the first chapter: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.” John was thus the writer and the Lord, the Imparter. In the light of this evidence, the question of authorship (apart from the Lord Himself) revolves around which John for there were several of this name within the Christian community at that time. It is absolutely true – as many critics through the ages have noted – that John himself provides no addition to his name but this may be seen as the intrusion of a note of anonymity within an era which was marked by an emphasis on the writings of man to the detriment of the Message conveyed. However, John does unobtrusively identify himself by claiming to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and one who had been an eye-witness to the momentous happenings in Judaea. He used phraseology which identifies him with the writer of the verses recorded in John 19:35 and I John 1:2. He was a prisoner on the isle of Patmos because of his testimony of the Living Christ and a fellow sufferer with those who were being persecuted by both the Roman and Jewish authorities.

Ussher’s dating suggests that the Revelation was written in A.D. 96 and indicative of the challenge presented by the Book, even this date has become an arena of great controversy with theologians contending that it had its beginning no later than A.D. 60. The point at issue here is not an interminable argument as to when the Book was written but the fact that it was written by John during his imprisonment on the isle of Patmos. However, in order to corroborate Ussher’s dating and merely as an intellectual exercise, it should be noted that Irenaeus (A.D. 180) who lived very much nearer the time than the theologians of today, stated: “It (i.e., the Revelation) was seen not a very long time ago, but almost certain in our own generation, *at the close of Domitian’s reign.*” Eusebius, the ‘father of church history’ too confirms this in that he recorded that under the persecution of Domitian, the apostle John was banished to the isle of Patmos for his testimony concerning the Word of God. It is historical fact that the reference to Domitian makes the date of the writing of the Revelation certainly no earlier than A.D. 96.

As has been stated previously, by A.D. 96 the general state of Christianity had degenerated from its initial zeal and was governed by a primitive form of theology which revolved around what *man said* in contrast to what had actually transpired. John, it will be noted: “. . . was in the isle called Patmos, for the *word of God*, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9) – a phraseology almost identical to that which Eusebius used in describing the Apostle. Why the emphasis on John’s ministry concerning the Word of God? May it not be that even then the gulf separating theology and the Truth had become very noticeable?

Having been introduced to John and his particular circumstances in A.D. 96, nothing more is recorded of him and one is thus dependent on secular sources for further information. Eusebius records a history which many today will find hard to believe and yet when other scriptural facts are correlated with this, the story by Eusebius concerning John will be found as one which bore the marks of the Hand of God in its affairs. John, according to the historian, came directly under the attention of Domitian who had him arrested, tried and condemned to death. This policy would be a natural one under the circumstances for at a time when humanitarian considerations were simply non-existent, it is inconceivable that a trouble-maker such as John would have been summarily banished to an island and left there to rot. The usual procedure was to eliminate opposition and at the same time to afford the rebellious population the opportunity of witnessing the futility of their cause. John, according to Eusebius, was condemned to death – not in the customary manner of crucifixion or burning at the stake, but to be thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. To many, the suggestion that John could have escaped this fate would be asking too much. If a man were to be thrown into burning oil, in the ordinary course of events, his life would be terminated immediately.

However, it should be remembered that in the Old Testament there is a similar happening recorded when Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego were condemned to death in the ‘burning fiery furnace’ which had been heated ‘seven times more than it was wont to be heated’ (Dan. 3:19-28). That trio escaped because of the Providence of God – could not the same be the experience of John? John, it will be recalled was, by this time, a very old man whose frail body would be over-taxed in the normal routines of the mission enterprise. It must be obvious that he lived under the Providential Care of the Lord – a Care which had been intimated by the Lord in His closing Message to Peter.

Having received the Commission to ‘feed my sheep’, Peter ques-

tioned the Lord concerning the 'apostle whom Jesus loved' (John 21:20). The Lord answered Peter: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is it to thee? follow thou me" (John 21:22). This, of course, gave rise to the tradition that John would not die and this tradition among the brethren whom, one would have thought, would have been impervious to speculations and dedicated to fact. However, one may see in this statement by the Lord that it was within His Foreknowledge of the events which would arise subsequent to His Ascension, that He determined that John would tarry for the express purpose of recording the Revelation as a counter to the speculations and theories which men would superimpose over the Truth.

Leaving the testimony of historians, attention is focused on the Revelation itself. As has been stated, it is the purpose of the Book to reveal the things – events and situations – which would shortly develop – the acceptance of revelation would result in blessing. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3). Here is a statement which cuts right across the theology of so many who aver that the Revelation is an undecipherable collection of symbols which should never be a part of Christian teaching. 'Blessed is he that readeth . . . ' – this immediately establishes the Book, not as a massive work of unintelligible mysticism – this would defeat the very name of the Book – but as a source of blessing, 'blessing through knowledge'.

At the outset, it should be clearly understood that the Lord intended that His Revelation be in free circulation – 'Blessed is he that readeth . . . ' – which is perhaps why the 'mystery of iniquity' has been so active down the centuries in preventing the essential information in this Book from reaching those who would benefit most from it. It is quite common today – indeed as it was in the days of the 'church fathers' – to hear it contended that the metaphorical language mitigates against a clear understanding of the Book of the Revelation – 'a book too sublime and deep for human reasoning' as Dionysius declared. However, it should be noted that the Lord positively stated that He 'signified' the events which were to come to pass – the word translated from the Greek *semaino* which literally means 'to show by signs and symbols'. To suggest that the Lord would use unrelated and unqualified signs and symbols 'too sublime and deep' for human understanding would be an exercise in futility for blessing could not result unless these signs or symbols were clarified by the Lord Himself. It will be found that these identical symbols are all used in the Old Testament and in such a manner as to make identification unmistakable.

In order to illustrate the point, an example may be taken from Revelation 4:6-8. "In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts (Greek – *zoon*: literally, *living creatures*) full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a *lion*, and the second beast like a *calf*, and the third beast had a face as a *man*, and the fourth beast was like a *flying eagle*." If one ignores the Old Testament – as so many do – private speculation (it cannot be called 'interpretation') tends to force the scene into a universal context by claiming that all creation is represented in the gathering around the 'throne'. This immediately falls down for if 'all creation' was representatively gathered, marine life which is usually symbolised by the fish (which incidentally was the symbol of the early Christians) was missing.

On turning to the Old Testament, one finds the same four symbols used by Ezekiel the prophet (Ezek. 1:10) who equates the symbols in relationship to the Glory in almost the identical manner as is found in the Revelation. While this does not add much by way of identification, it will be noted that Ezekiel was drawing on symbolism which had been provided at an even earlier stage and established by God Himself.

In Exodus 25:8 it is written: "And let them (Israel) make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell *among them*." This, of course, had to do with the construction of the Tabernacle – the 'dwelling place for the Lord' – which was to be surrounded by the Israel people in a God-ordered array (Num. 2). On the eastern side of the Tabernacle and under the leadership of the tribe of Judah, Issachar and Zebulon formed the first side of the square. *The ensign of the tribe of Judah was a lion*. On the west, headed by Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin formed the other side of the square. *Ephraim's ensign was the calf or the ox*. On the northern side with *Reuben's ensign of a man*, were the tribes of Simeon and Gad, while the southern flank was given to Dan with the tribes of Asher and Naphtali. *The ensign of Dan was a flying eagle*.

In the light of this, it will be seen that, far from having to speculate as to the meaning of the symbolism employed in the Revelation, one has but to reconsider the Old Testament which provides the key to understanding. Against this, one may be tempted to ask why the Lord resorted to this means of communication of the events which were shortly to come to pass? The answer is once again obvious. In His Foreknowledge, the Lord knew what men would do with the revealed scriptures – in A.D. 96 they had already placed all emphasis *on man* and this just half a century away from the tremendous events on Calvary. What would they do with the events which were even further back

in time? With the passage of time in the Christian dispensation, the Old Testament was pushed into the background until men decided that it no longer formed an essential part of Scripture and consequently proceeded to issue copies of the New Testament alone. The Lord was thus forcing, if men were to understand His Revelation, a return to the old Scriptures for it is only there that the key to understanding may be found.

Returning to the first chapter of the Book of the Revelation, John records the situation which resulted in his commission to write the Work which today, and despite the scepticism of man, still forms the last Book of the Bible. The now aged Apostle was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day' – a phraseology which is clarified in the last chapter of the Book, when he was startled by a real and living voice which was by no means the by-product of ecstatic spiritual elation occasioned by his solitude on the island. He heard a voice behind him saying: "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last . . . And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle" (Rev. 1:11-13). That this was the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be doubted for John continues: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:17-18).

The full significance of what one may call John's re-introduction to the Risen, Triumphant Christ of God, may be seen in the phrase 'the Alpha and the Omega' and the setting in which 'one like unto the Son of man' appeared. The setting was, of course, associated with the Holy of Holies or the Tabernacle in Israel. The 'Alpha and Omega' or in Hebrew, the 'Aleph and Tau' had a very real significance in the days of the Levitical priesthood. The 'Aleph and Tau', the first and the last letters in the Hebrew alphabet, were inscribed on two stones which formed an integral part of the 'breastplate of the High Priest'. "Thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment, the Urim and the Thummin: and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place" (Ex. 28:30). Further instances of mention insofar as these stones are concerned, is found in Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; I Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63 and Nehemiah 7:65.

The priestly usage of these stones had to do with questions which arose in terms of God's Direct Revelation given to Israel primarily in the context of the Law. They were called the *yea stone* and the

nay stone and when the priest stood before the altar with some question, the Glory shone on one or other of these stones signifying either yes or no – with no arbitration in terms of indeterminate answers. It was a case of either a positive or negative answer – the response being always in the context of what *God had said*. The significance of the Lord to John on the isle of Patmos as 'Alpha and Omega' confirms again that which has been stated earlier, namely, that men were superimposing *what they thought* over what God had declared and in consequence, the Alpha and Omega, by reason of that which followed, was saying a very definite NO to the trends which were developing.

Having thus seen the identity of the Author of that which was to follow, one is in a position to consider *the dispensation* in which the events which were about to be unveiled, would occur. Once again, if one disallows the Old Testament, the symbolism of the 'seven golden candlesticks' can mean anything or nothing at all. It is only as one considers the Book of Exodus where an accurate and detailed description of the seven candlesticks is given, that one can begin to approach the reason for the symbolism employed in the Revelation. In this, one may see the position of the candlesticks in the Tabernacle which was on the left side directly opposite the Table of Shewbread. The light of the candlesticks illuminated the Holy of Holies, the source of which was the oil which was continually supplied by the High Priest. The picture thus recorded by John threw the High Priest into focus and his attendance on the matters pertaining to the 'dwelling place of God'.

While this may not serve as an indication of the dispensation involved in the matters about to be revealed, the fact of John's description of the garments worn by 'the Son of man' will provide the missing clue. In Exodus 28:2-3 and on the consecration of the High Priest, it is stated: "Thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for *honour and glory*. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garment to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office." It should thus be noted that God specifically commanded that 'holy garments' made for 'honour and glory' be the symbol of the priest's office. In passing through the Old Testament, it will be noted that in Psalm 8:5, the 'son of man' is associated with 'honour and glory' while in the New, Peter records that he saw the 'Son of man' clothed with the garments of 'honour and glory' (II Peter 1:17). This was, of course, the experience which he shared with James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-5).

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the same phraseology is again

used and without doubt in respect of the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest. "No man taketh this HONOUR unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee" (Heb. 5:4-5). The words 'honour and glory' are once again used as the garments of the High Priest – garments which were not earned, but given according to the calling of God. The whole picture is that of Christ Jesus, High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek consecrated in Eternity.

It is most significant that John did not see what Zechariah the prophet saw for this would have added confusion to the identification of the dispensation involved. The Old Testament prophet saw 'the priest on the throne' (Zech. 6:13) whereas John saw the Priest tending the candlesticks. The essential difference between the two is dispensational – the one during which the High Priest is the Mediator while the other that in which He becomes King. The dispensation thus involved in the vision which John saw was that period in which the High Priest remains in the heavens 'until his enemies be made His footstool' (Heb. 1:13) – a dispensation which today is known as 'the Christian Dispensation'.

\* \* \* \* \*





## CHAPTER 1

### *THE IDENTITY OF THE CHURCHES IN ASIA*

With the subject of Source and Dispensation fully seen in the symbolism of the 'Alpha and Omega' clothed in High Priestly Garments tending the seven golden candlesticks, one is equipped to pass on to a consideration of the first events which were annunciated by the Lord Jesus Christ. "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia and unto Laodicea" (Rev. 1:11).

At the very outset of the messages to the seven churches, one is able to see that discrimination, a very 'dirty word' in the modern context, is the order of the day. The time of the giving of the Revelation, as has been seen, was, according to Irenaeus, '. . . at the close of Domitian's reign.' Notwithstanding the many arguments which theologians present against Ussher's dating of A.D. 96, historians, much closer to the time and event, leave one in no doubt that the period around the turn of the first century is correct.

At this time, there were many 'churches' in existence. In Palestine, Greece, Asia, the British Isles, in Spain and regions of Gaul. Tertullian (A.D. 155-222), considered to be the church's first great genius after the Apostles, wrote: "The extremities of Spain, the various parts of Gaul, the regions of Britain which have never been penetrated by Roman armies have received the religion of Christ." Eusebius (A.D. 260-340), the great church historian, pinpoints the *Apostles* as having taken Christianity to Britain. "The apostles passed beyond the ocean to the isles called the Britannic isles." Gildas, the British historian (A.D. 425-512), establishes the fact that a Christian church was begun in Britain as early as A.D. 37, only four years after the Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Christ, the True Sun afforded His light, the knowledge of His precepts, to our island in the last year, as we know, of Tiberius Caesar."

Thus, on historical evidence, one is able to see that at the time

of the Revelation the message of Christianity had been spread far and wide and that Christian communities existed in regions other than Asia Minor. However, these other communities did not come within the compass of the seven messages which were specifically directed to the 'seven churches which are in Asia'. As there was obviously something very pertinent to the churches in this region, it behoves students of the Revelation to consider all relevant information which provides light on the subject.

In the first instance, it will be noted that men from Asia, indeed from the whole territory known today as Turkey, were present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. This poses the question as to why, at this particular time, there should have been such unusual activity and so great an influx of people into Jerusalem. Another question also arises when one considers Peter's exhortation to those assembled in that he said: ". . . let *all the house of Israel* know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Why limit the imparting of this news to *all the house of Israel* and why commit this task to an apparently mixed multitude when he later refused to consort with Cornelius on apparent racial grounds (Acts 10:1-28)?

At first glance the narrative appears to engender confusion in the mind of the student but if one delves more deeply into the subject, one is able to see that, far from presenting contradiction and confusion, the original Greek wording of the text provides a glorious, God-honouring continuity of the Plan and Purpose of Almighty God. It will be seen that Peter's exhortation concerning *all Israel* in the context which presupposes Israel in existence outside of the bounds of Palestine was in conformity with what was accepted by the ruling hierarchy in Judaea at that time. It was a known fact that Israel was in dispersion (John 7:35) and, notwithstanding the Jew's claim to Israel's inheritance, it is of singular interest to note that James, some thirty years later and ten years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews, wrote ". . . to *the twelve tribes* which are scattered abroad . . ." (James 1:1). In the light of this, Peter's exhortation is seen to be in conformity with the then known facts, namely, that Israel was not in Judaea at that time but in regions far removed from Jerusalem.

Having thus established that Israel was the target of Peter's exhortation, one passes on to consider the people entrusted with this commitment. It will be recalled that at the commencement of the Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, He directed His newly chosen disciples in the context of His publicly declared Mission, namely, to the 'lost

sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt. 15:24). He sent them: ". . . not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5-6). That the disciples were obedient to their mission is confirmed in Luke 22:35 and also confirmed is the fact that at that time no reaction to this was forthcoming from the Jews in Judaea which indicates that the disciples did not fulfil this mission among the Jews there.

Against this background together with the news of tremendous unrest in Judaea plus the story of the Crucifixion of One Who claimed to be Israel's Messiah and the impending 'Feast of Wave-Loaves' (Lev. 23:15), those of Israel in dispersion who were able, would have travelled to Jerusalem if for no other reason than to satisfy their curiosity. It should be recalled that the 'feast of wave-loaves' was one of the seven feasts which were exclusively Israelitish and would have no meaning or significance to people of another race. That others *were there* is not denied but their presence did not have, *for them*, the same significance as it did for those of the Israel nation.

There are, no doubt, those who would say that the above contention is pure speculation and if there were no other factors involved, this would be freely admitted. However, there is much more to the story. Peter's dissertation was limited to quotations from the Scripture – documents which meant little or nothing to those not of Israel – and yet the people were so moved that they said: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:36). The Greek wording is most illuminating. The word *brethren* here recorded is *adelphoi* and is used extensively in the New Testament to denote *blood relationship* as distinct from the fellowship of faith which is derived from the Greek word *philadelphos*. Those who were thus moved by Peter's exposition of the Scripture therefore *claimed blood relationship* with the disciples who were Israelites.

In the context of the exhortation 'let all the house of Israel know' and the bewildered response of 'what shall we do?', Peter provided the answer: "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:28). This immediately thrusts to the fore the fact that these men were guilty of 'sin' – a condition which in the Israel context arose from the transgression of God's Law which was given to the nation at Sinai (I John 3:4). Further to this, the word 'repent' has a peculiar significance which is largely overlooked by many today. In the Biblical context, the word has a meaning far removed from that which is usually now implied. It meant to 'think again' in the primary sense with sorrow and contrition being secondary

to it. If the student examined the overall situation as it obtained when this word was used, it would be seen that Israel, being the only nation in the world to have known the Commandments of the Lord and the only nation which could transgress these plus being the only nation to have received the mechanics for reconciliation arising from violation of God's Laws, had much to think about. They had been committed to blessing 'all the nations of the earth', they had received 'the glory and covenants, the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises' (Rom. 9:4) and they had thrown all this away when they rejected God's Directives for them. However, there was yet more for them to think about.

Incorporated into the Scriptures were the writings of 'holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (II Peter 1:21) and which showed very clearly that God was far from finished with them. These men recorded the promises of a Redeemer through Whom the sins of the nation would be blotted out (Isa. 44:22) and reconciliation wrought (Isa. 54:5). In the light of this, one is able to appreciate the call, first made by John and subsequently the Lord Jesus Christ and ultimately the Apostles for the people to 'think again'. They were enjoined to think again on the matter of national destiny.

What happened to these men after Pentecost? They obviously returned to their homes and formed the basis for the Christian communities in the towns where they resided. Peter, some twenty-five years later, knew full well the significance of Satan's attention on the people whom God had constituted as His witnesses and found it necessary to write to them reminding the people of their national identity and calling. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God . . ." (I Peter 1:1). While the subject of 'the elect' has become one of much controversial speculation, Peter was under no delusions concerning it for having based the whole of his ministry on the only Scriptures which were in existence at that time, he would naturally use the phrase in the Old Testament context which was the Israel nation (Isa. 45:4). In support of this, it will be noted that these 'strangers' who were the elect of God are further unmistakably identified by Peter who wrote: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (I Peter 2:9-10).

The titles given by Peter are both racial and national and will be found to be those bestowed on Israel by God (Ex. 19:5-6). The peculiar status of 'not my people' and 'not having received mercy' is the projection by Peter of the events recorded by Hosea the prophet in respect of the condition of Israel arising from the national departure from the Directives of the Lord. Attendant on the pronounced judgment (Hos. 1:6-9) one finds the promised reconciliation for the nation in the words: "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God" (Hos. 1:10).

In the light of the obviously national character of events thus far considered, many find it difficult to reconcile this with the word 'church' as it appears in Paul's writings as well as in the Revelation. However, this 'difficulty' need not arise if one is prepared to 'rightly divide the word of truth' and diligently 'search the scriptures'. In so doing, one finds that the English word 'church' owes its origin to the Greek word *Kuriakos* which literally means 'pertaining or belonging to the Lord'. This word was borrowed by the Gothic nations and became the German *Kirche*, the Anglo-Saxon *Cyrise*, the Dutch *Kerke*, the Scottish *Kirk* and eventually the *English Church*.

In searching the Scriptures, one finds that a variation of *Kuriakos* does exist in the Greek Text but is only found to have been used on two occasions and most certainly not in the context as visualised to-day. In the first instance of its usage, Paul uses the phrase when writing of 'the supper pertaining to the Lord' (I Cor. 11:20) while John, recording the events leading up to the giving of the Lord's Revelation, used the term when stating that he was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day . . .' (Rev. 1:10). In no other portion of Scripture does this word occur and this naturally leads one to enquire as to the actual word used which has found its translation into the English word 'church'.

The simple expediency of using any reliable Bible concordance will immediately reveal that the Greek word which has been translated into 'church' is *ecclesia* a word which prior to the beginning of the seventeenth century, was always translated *congregation*. William Tyndale used the word *congregation* as did Coverdale in 1535 to be followed by Whittingham in 1557. Three years later, in 1560, the word *congregation* was dropped and *church* substituted although versions of the 'Great Bible' continued to use the original word for a further ten years.

An interesting fact is brought to light by comparing the Greek Septuagint (3rd century B.C.) with the Hebrew writings of the Old Testament for the Greek word *ecclesia* is found to be the equivalent of the Hebrew *qahal* which is used extensively in the context of the Israel nation. Two instances of this will suffice at this stage. On the occasion of Isaac's charge to his son Jacob, one finds the patriarch's blessing embracing the word *qahal* in an illuminating way. "And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a *multitude* (*qahal*) of people." In the Greek of the Septuagint, this word is *ecclesia*. The second instance is found in Genesis 35:11 where to Jacob the promise of a 'nation and company (*qahal*) of nations' is found. Here again the Greek word in the Septuagint is *ecclesia* which sets an unmistakable pattern within the *national context of Israel*.

In the light of this, one may see the contentions previously expressed, namely, that the Israel content in the events of (a) Pentecost and (b) the spreading of the Message of the Lord Jesus Christ, is fully justified. That satanic inroads were being made into the Israel community cannot be doubted for the writings of Peter, James and John were intended as corrective admonitions against the insidious penetrations by the serpent and his minions among God's witness nation Israel. That these went unheeded is obvious from the fact that in A.D. 96, the Lord Himself commanded John to write to the 'assemblies' of Israel in Asia Minor warning and exhorting them to 'think again' and to keep the faith committed to them.

### *The Contents of the Message to the Seven Churches*

In considering the contents of the seven messages to the 'assemblies' in Israel in dispersion, one should bear in mind that, as in many other instances of prophetic fulfilment, there are two fulfilments. There is what may be termed the 'near fulfilment' which has to do with circumstances arising out of the then obtaining situation and the 'far fulfilment' which is a comprehensive completion of the prophecy at a time determined by the parallelism of the events. This principle is very definitely demonstrated by the seven messages to the 'churches' in Asia.

While there have been and still are those who limit Biblical Revelation to the age in which it was given, i.e., the Bible has ceased to have a literal relevancy today and has become the source of allegory from which to draw an infinite variety of spiritual truths, throughout its pages are God's assertions which contradict this view. For instance,

in the Revelation, the Lord commands John to "Write the things *which thou hast seen*, and the things *which are*, and the things *which shall be hereafter*" (Rev. 1:19). The things which John had seen were, of course, the mighty events recorded in the Gospel under his name. The things which currently obtained were well within the compass of his own knowledge – his incarceration on the isle of Patmos was the direct result of these. However, of the things 'which shall be hereafter', these could have very little relevance to the man John for he was nearing the end of his life and only future generations could benefit from the knowledge about to be imparted.

The terminal date of the things which shall come 'hereafter' cannot be determined by either theological or philosophical dogma but by the fulfilment of the events which form the basis of the Revelation. Here indeed are the quick-sands into which so many have blundered for, having examined the 'near fulfilment' of the messages to the seven churches, they conclude that nothing further is to be gleaned from this and consequently deprive themselves of the wealth of information provided by the Lord in the subject of prophecy.

The first superficial glance at the seven messages recorded in the second and third chapters of the Revelation will establish that there were seven literal assemblies within the cities mentioned all of which had situations which, while differing in content, had one feature in common. The common denominator was the mechanism of destruction which had as its main objective, the negation of Peter's call to the founding fathers of those assemblies to 'Let all the house of Israel know that God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ' (Acts 2:36). One has but to read each of the Epistles to appreciate the satanic attention which was being paid to developing knowledge of Truth as it was being spread among God's servant nation Israel in dispersion.

However, as one diligently 'searches the scripture', one finds that there is more than an obvious clue to be found in the names of the cities in which the 'assemblies' had been formed. Each of the seven cities bore a name which carried a meaning that was determined by the context of the message and provides an appreciation of the 'far fulfilment' embodied in the seven messages. These names are revealed as seven stages of church history. *Ephesus*, the first of the messages, is associated with the situation of 'letting go' while *Smyrna* has as its highlight, 'anointing oil'. The remaining five are *Pergamos*, 'married to power'; *Thyatira*, 'ruled by woman'; *Sardis*, 'a precious stone'; *Philadelphia*, 'brotherly love' and *Laodicea*, 'power of the laity'.

It is more than superficially significant that after almost two

thousand years one is able to look back and to find that church history, as such, has followed the course prescribed in the seven messages and that the current situation, highlighted as it is by the actions of the World Council of Churches, modernism, humanism, the permissive society and other apostasies are a graphic amplification of the last message to the church at Laodicea.

However, as this work is intended as a study of the Book of Revelation and not merely parts of it, the course to be followed will be that of historical progression and in the case of the seven messages, each will be considered in chronological order with its parallel secondary fulfilment.

## EPHESUS

The first message (Rev. 2:1-7) was directed to the assembly at Ephesus in which city the place the goddess Diana held was pre-eminent among the many gods worshipped (Acts 19:24-35). Those who returned from Jerusalem after the Pentecostal experience had much to overcome not the least of which was the paganism associated with the worship of Diana. However, they persisted in such a manner as to earn the commendation of the Lord Who said: "I know thy works and thy labour and thy patience and how thou canst not bear with them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not and hast found them liars; And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted . . ."

Several features emerge from this message, the first of which confirms the fact that a very deliberate attempt was being made, through doctrinal issues, to subvert the Truth. It will be noted that the Lord drew attention to the fact that men, *claiming to be apostles*, had tried to infiltrate the assembly and that they were exposed as imposters by the application of the yardstick for apostleship which the Lord had provided (John 15:27) and which Peter later confirmed (Acts 1:21-22). Here one is brought face to face with the kernel of the Revelation and which, as has been explained previously, provides the reason why the now Triumphant Risen Christ had to leave His August Position on the right hand of God (Heb. 1:13) to provide a Divine counter to the spurious claims and doctrines of men. The Lord thus commended the assembly at Ephesus for exposing the 'Liars' and for holding fast to the faith.

Thus, between the time of the establishment of the assembly at Ephesus and the Message to it from the Lord from Patmos in A.D. 96, one finds its sixty-three year history very chequered indeed. It will be





*Scattered ruins and rocks of ancient Ephesus.*

recalled that in A.D. 64 (Ussher's dating) Paul wrote his only letter to the seven mentioned 'churches' in Asia and at such a time as to coincide with Nero's abominable persecution of Christianity generally. Secular sources confirm that this date marked the breaching of the wall of apostolic faith and the tragic reality of the situation of 'letting go' as was charged by the Lord.

While many students have speculated over the actual mechanism which resulted in the indictment by the Lord, it is patently obvious that speculation as such need not enter into the picture for the Lord indicated the inducement which resulted in the fall of the assembly. It will be noted that He said: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate" (Rev. 2:6). From this it would appear that the 'deeds of the Nicolaitanes' was not unknown in this assembly, i.e., the 'works or effects' of the Nicolaitanes which, as will be noted later in the third Message of the Lord, has to do with the inclusion of proselytes within what was primarily an Israel community. Throughout the Old Testament history of Israel one finds that the proselytised alien has ever been the major cause for the nation's departure from the Directives of God (Isa. 1:7; Hos. 5:7; 7:9). History repeated itself in the case of the assembly at Ephesus.

The message to this 'church' closes with the admonition of the Lord Who said: ". . . 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 . . ." That the 'church' at Ephesus did not repent and continued to depart from the apostolic faith is evidenced by the complete destruction of the city in 262 A.D. the dust of centuries covering the story of the church at Ephesus which 'let go' of its first love and courted other lovers.

## SMYRNA

In the second message, i.e., to the assembly at Smyrna, one finds that this is summed up in four brief verses which highlight three facts. In the first and in contra-distinction to the message of the first assembly, there is no admonition to repent and no warning of the removal of the candlestick. In the second feature, it will be observed that mention is made of trial, persecution, tribulation and poverty lasting for a period specified as ten days. The third fact is an exhortation to endure all things and to overcome the tribulation.

The most striking of these three features is that proclaiming the *ten day* tribulation period (Rev. 2:10) for this had a very real meaning to those involved in this 'church' at that period. Secular history records

ten very distinct tribulations through which Smyrna passed and their tabulation is a wonderful vindication of the accuracy of Holy Scripture. These phases were (1) Nero persecuted Smyrna in 67 A.D. (2) Domitian, in 85 A.D., added Smyrna to his general persecutions and while Nerva, who succeeded Domitian, did not persecute Smyrna, Trajan who succeeded him, recommenced the persecutions in 108 A.D. and this constitutes the third phase. (4) Adrian, who succeeded Trajan, was apathetic on the subject and during his reign, persecutions waxed and waned with unpredictable regularity. However, the real fourth phase was commenced by Adrian's successor, Marcus Verus, who in 162 A.D. pressed the persecutions at Smyrna almost to breaking point.

Three rulers followed in quick succession, Commodius, Pertinax and Julianus, but their persecutions were mediocre compared with Severus who in 200 A.D. marked the fifth phase of persecutions. In the next 85 years, five distinct periods are marked by intense persecution and tribulation for Smyrna and were perpetrated by Maximus (235 A.D.); Decius (249 A.D.); Valerian (257 A.D.); Aurelia (274 A.D.); and Diocletian (285 A.D.).

In the above tabulation, attention has been drawn to Smyrna and not the other regions where assemblies had been constituted for it was the unique experience of the church at Smyrna that it underwent the ten distinct periods of persecution and tribulation. It is from this period that one is able to see the widening of the gulf between the 'near fulfilment' and that projecting into the future for it was some 18 years later that *all Christianity* underwent a ten-year period of persecution.

In 303 A.D., Diocletian had responded to a request made by Lucinius, the emperor of the eastern Roman Empire, in which he craved tolerance for Christians. However, Galerius, the adopted son of Diocletian, inveigled his mother who was a bigoted pagan, to persuade Diocletian to recommence the Christian persecutions and in this he was successful. By the middle of the year 303 A.D. a full-scale assault was being made against all Christians no matter where they were and lasted exactly ten years, ending when Constantine succeeded to the throne in Rome. Constantine, together with Lucinius, issued a joint decree of tolerance toward Christians which brought the prescribed period of ten prophetic days to an end.

In the midst of this message to the assembly, now referred to as the 'church' in the English translations, at Smyrna, there appears the parenthetical portion which deals with 'the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan' (Rev. 2:9). As happens so frequently, many allow themselves to form

an opinion of the Scripture based on their acceptance of an approximate English equivalent of the Hebrew or the Greek words and the phraseology here is no exception. In Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, as well as in other Greek Dictionaries of the New Testament, it will be noted that the word translated 'Jew' in this text, comes from the Greek *Ioudaios* which literally means 'pertaining to Judaea' and is a geographical or religious rather than a racial term.

This being so, one naturally asks the question as to the reason behind the reference to the blasphemy or, literally, vilification in the context of God, by spurious claimants in the land of Judaea? If this scripture is literally translated it will read: "I know the *blasphemia* – the evil speaking of the things of God – of those who claim Judaea as their own – and this without authority – but who are of the assembly of Satan." This, without doubt, is an extension of the scope of the Revelation in its warning against the dangerous trends which were developing – not only within the context of the written and spoken Message of Truth – but also in the context of Satan's counterfeit for true Israel.

The subject of the counterfeit may be seen in the Old Testament – God's Holy Word which in those days and by reason of ecclesiastical sanctions was ignored completely in favour of the writings and oral teaching of the church fathers. It will be noted that the prophet Ezekiel who wrote at a time when nationally the Israel presence in Palestine was nil, drew attention to the fact that unnamed people laid claim to the territory formerly occupied by both Judah and Israel. "Son of man, those that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying: Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance" (Eze. 33:24). Here, in unmistakable terms, are people of unspecified origins claiming the land as an inheritance – the claim being totally false as evidenced by the fact of it being mentioned at all. This was the groundwork for Satan's conspiracy who sowed an alien seed in the land of Judaea which would and did grow into proportions which dictated not only the political course of events, but also those in the religious sphere as well. The Lord Jesus Christ branded them as being of their 'father the devil' and condemned them for doing his works (John 8:44). The reason for the reference to the 'synagogue of Satan', when taken in conjunction with the warnings against the doctrinal trends which were developing, may thus be seen as the corrective exhortation by the Lord to His people to get back to the Word of God.

The overall situation was thus fraught with dangerous possibili-

ties and as one passes on to consider the remaining five messages, one is able to see that despite the intervention of the Lord by giving the incredible Revelation to John on the isle of Patmos, the satanic conspiracy continued unchecked and, tragically, unhindered by those teachers who professed to believe God.

## *PERGAMOS*

Pergamos – an assembly or church which became ‘married to power’ carried with its name an indictment which most one-worlders today find convenient to forget. Situated in the north-west regions of Asia Minor, Pergamos was considered a University city although the learning dispensed there was the very antithesis of enlightenment. The city wallowed in a depravity encouraged by paganism and idolatrous practices which were unrivalled by any other centre in Asia Minor. It was to this city that men returned from Jerusalem after Pentecost and endeavoured to fulfil Peter’s commission to ‘Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ.’ An assembly was established under the leadership of Antipas and this flourished for a while until the leaven of Pergamos began to permeate the congregation and the apostolic faith suffered a tremendous blow from which, from all evidences to hand today, it has never recovered.

The third message to the seven churches in Asia begins in the same vein as the two preceding messages. ‘I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth’ (Rev. 2:13). This commendation was surely well earned particularly when one considers the social atmosphere which obtained in that city ‘where Satan’s seat is’. It required more than the average courage and conviction to go into a city where the very air was charged with the pollution of Satan’s dominion and to begin a work which, in every respect, was diametrically opposed to the principles which held the people in its grip.

The specific reference to Antipas and his martyrdom in Pergamos provides a picture of the fate of those who sought to expand the knowledge of the accomplished Mission of the Lord Jesus Christ in which trial and tribulation was the constant companion of all involved in the congregation. Antipas vigorously opposed the evils which dominated the social life of the city and contended with the priests who dispensed the debauchery associated with the god Aesculapius whose temple was the fulcrum around which life revolved in the city. It should be noted

that the Lord referred to Antipas as 'my faithful martyr' – a commendation which arose because of his opposition to the prevailing situation which, in many ways, is identical to that which today obtains within many cities of modern Israel – Anglo-Saxondom. Antipas was taken by the priests of licentiousness and burned to death in a brazen bull in the temple of Aesculapius during the reign of Domitian in circa A.D. 100.

The martyrdom of Antipas, occasioned by his opposition to the then prevailing evils, draws the subject of integration and miscegenation very much to the fore. Although one has no means of ascertaining the racial composition of the inhabitants of Pergamos, from the ensuing indictment of the Lord it becomes more than apparent that incompatible elements were present in the city and that these were being fused into a oneness which was detrimental. The Lord's charge against the Israel assembly in Pergamos highlights this feature. "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast them there that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel." This charge is perfectly lucid and the only excuse – if excuse it could be called – for ignorance of its complications, is the lack of knowledge of the Old Testament history.

Balaam is referred to on a number of occasions in the New Testament and unless his history is studied and accepted, much of the essential truth embodied in the New Testament references becomes obscure. Balaam was a prophet who sought to make capital out of his gift, marketing this and characterising false teachers of whom the word picture provided in the end of the age scene, indicates there would be a plentiful supply (II Peter 2:15). This situation is recorded as 'the way of Balaam' while in Jude 11, the 'error of Balaam' refutes utterly the contention held by so many that God, finding Himself in a situation created by Israel's disobedience to His Laws, had to reject the nation and begin again. It is reasoned by those who lack the conviction that God said what He meant and meant what He said, that notwithstanding His unconditional, Oath-bound promises, God discontinued His national Plan and began with an individual one. A Holy God – so they reason – must curse, by rejecting a people such as Israel had become, ignorant of the higher morality of vicarious atonement by which God could be just and a justifier of His people. This, is the 'error of Balaam' – an error into which so many fall today.

The third aspect of the subject of Balaam is that referred to by the Lord in His condemnation of those at Pergamos, namely, the 'doctrine of Balaam'. It should be noted that the Lord did not speak of the

'way of Balaam' nor the 'error of Balaam' but rather that in the church at Pergamos, there were those who held, i.e., kept the 'doctrine of Balaam'. The record of this doctrine (Num. 25) leaves one in no doubt as to the reason for the Lord's condemnation for it involved the violation of God's command to Israel to remain separate from all other people. Balaam, who was frustrated at every turn and unable to earn his fee as a hireling prophet, propounded his doctrine of physical integration with the children of Israel in which twenty-four thousand Israelites became involved in a situation which is described as a 'plague' (Num. 25:9). God's reaction to this was one of wrath and judgment and the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ was consistent in His condemnation of those in Pergamos is surely a warning to those who, in the modern context, hold the 'doctrine of Balaam'.

Another feature to be observed in addition to the Lord's condemnation concerning the trend in the church at Pergamos, is that, as in the case of the first message to the church at Ephesus, the 'Nicolaitanes' are again mentioned. Whereas the 'deeds' or the practices of the Nicolaitanes were recorded in the first message, the permeation of the 'doctrine' of these people within the church had become such as to warrant the warning of the Lord. It will be noted that the Lord averred that He 'hated' this subject – an attitude which should stimulate further enquiry and alignment with Him Whose Name Christianity bears.

The general voice of antiquity accuses the Nicolaitanes of legalising that which God prescribed as illegal, i.e., the eating of things offered to idols and of mixing in and encouraging idolatrous worship. The morality of these people was the very antithesis of that to be found in the Law of the Lord – a Law which, to them, was totally unacceptable because of its prohibitions and restrictions. It is significant to note that this group of people derived their name from Nicolaus whose name literally means 'conqueror of the people'.

It will be noted that Pergamos had been induced to depart from the Directives of God and were using the instruction of the Nicolaitanes for the literal translation of the Greek text is: "So hast thou also in addition those that use (Greek: *krateo*) the instruction (Greek: *didache*) of the Nicolaitanes which thing I hate." The 'teaching or instruction' of the Nicolaitanes centred on the complete breakdown of any form of separation depending for its existence on integration in all forms. Nicolaus, after whom the group was named, will be found to have been elected as one of the first seven deacons of the church (Acts 6:5) and it was the accommodation of this proselyte from Antioch which resulted in the Law of the Lord being phased out and 'grace' taught in

its place. The fact that the 'doctrine of the Nicolaitanes' was roundly condemned by the Lord is thus in keeping with His avowed statement that the Law of the Lord was valid and should remain so till 'heaven and earth pass' (Matt. 5:17-18). It is small wonder that the Lord pointed an accusing finger at this assembly at Pergamos for Satan had indeed engulfed this church with his evil and anti-Christ machinations and very few indeed escaped these.

As has been mentioned previously, the seven messages to the churches in Asia carry both the immediate and local message as well as that which extends into the future, with that to the church at Smyrna extending to the time of the ten-year persecution of Christianity under Diocletian. It is not without significance that the next stage of church history as recorded by secular historians follows the pattern as revealed in the message to the church at Pergamos. The intense persecutions of Diocletian came to an end in A.D. 313 when Constantine succeeded to the throne in Rome and within twenty-four years, half the Roman population professed a conversion to Christianity as a religion. However, it is quite apparent that this was political expediency motivated by a desire to curry favour with the Emperor who was said to be converted to Christ. An outward show of Christianity began to appear but subsequent developments indicated a complete lack of inward conviction. A combination of pagan idolatry and Christian ceremonies soon indicated the meaning of the prophetic message to the church at Pergamos for this integration of paganism and Christianity and *vice versa* establishes an unholy marriage with the power of Satan himself.

History tears aside the facade of Roman conversion and reveals itself for what it was, namely, an expediency by which a pseudo-faith could contaminate and utterly pervert the truth. It cannot be denied that Romanism dominated the dissemination of Christianity and even though this was brought to an end in the Reformation, the superstitions with which Rome endowed the Christian faith continue, to a lesser or larger degree, today.

Julian, the nephew of Constantine, succeeded to the throne in Rome in A.D. 361 and, according to secular sources, was instructed in matters pertaining to Christianity by no less a person than Eusebius who enjoys the title of 'father of church history'. While receiving instruction from this illustrious person, Julian was under the persuasion of Maximus, a magician steeped in the lore of ancient paganism and it was not long before he renounced Christianity and returned to the worship of the ancient Roman gods. Julian did not forbid Christian ceremonies but made it very clear that his sponsorship of paganism



was a directive for the Roman populace. Julian's death two years after his succession was attended by the most obscene oaths – a testimony to his reversion to the kingdom of Satan in Roman paganism.

Jovian next succeeded to the throne in Rome and the assimilation of Christianity within pagan Rome continued. The order of official Popes was inaugurated and the foundations of Roman Christianity were laid. In the history thus far considered one may see the amazing clarity of the prophetic message to the church at Pergamos for the 'doctrine of Balaam', the God-condemned alliance of integration, became a tragic reality when Christianity was wedded to paganism in Rome. However, the 'doctrine of the Nicolaitanes', too, has its part for 'ecclesiastical hierarchy' based on pagan priestly prerogatives, began to emerge in the Roman version of Christianity. Priestly traditions began to be superimposed over the Truth and any non-acceptance of the priestly directives was held to be blasphemy against God Himself punishable by death. In A.D. 697, Pope Agathon issued an edict in which all reactionaries to the new order of Christianity were to be persecuted and those who, in spite of all political pressures, still held on to the apostolic faith, found themselves in a similar situation to that which obtained when Diocletian embarked on his ten-year persecution of Christians.

### THYATIRA

Ecclesiastical dogmas emanating from fertile brains and propounded as God-given Truth is, in a manner, the personification of the 'doctrine of the Nicolaitanes' which, with the passage of time, has characterised the mesalliance of Christianity with Romanism. This is forcibly driven home when one considers the period of A.D. 820 when Theodora, the wife of Theophilus, the eastern Roman Emperor, caused the revival of image worship which characterised that of paganism. It is not without significance that the fourth message to the churches in Asia brings this subject to the fore. The assembly or church at Thyatira – a region very close to Pergamos – would naturally be contaminated with the same problems as obtained in the larger University city. That the 'doctrine of Balaam' was practised in this region is clearly evident from the words of the twentieth verse of the second chapter. "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

The ramifications of Jezebel and the havoc caused by this Phoenician woman in the northern kingdom of Israel is recorded in the First

Book of Kings. In her history, one is able to see that in her rampage in Israel, she was supported by 450 prophets of Baal and 400 of Astarte the so-called 'Queen of heaven'. Opposition was brushed aside with the 'prophets of the Lord' put to death on her orders (I Kings 16: 31-32; 18:19) and the whole of the northern kingdom introduced to idol worship with particular emphasis on Astarte.

In the message to the church at Thyatira there is no suggestion that the Lord supported the theory of the reincarnation of the woman Jezebel – far from it. He used the illustration of Jezebel to indicate the dangerous trend in the church in that they suffered the leaders to guide them into a spiritual fornication by the propagators of false pagan worship of Venus – the Roman queen of heaven. The compromise which characterised the church at Pergamos was also in evidence at Thyatira and the apostolic faith was being diluted by the integration with pagan ideals and customs. The church was warned against a continuation of this in the words: "Behold I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds" (Rev. 2:22).

There was no repentance and as one looks on the splendour of ancient Thyatira with its dyeing industry and generally vigorous economy, its current position in Asia Minor is indeed a grim warning to those who treat the admonitions of the Lord lightly.

Theodora, the wife of Theophilus the eastern Roman Emperor, as has been mentioned previously, acted in a typical Jezebel-like vein. Christianity, having been wedded to the power of pagan Rome, was induced by this woman to commit further spiritual fornication by elevating a woman to the position of 'Queen of heaven'. Statues were erected to the virgin Mary who was endowed with the title borne by Astarte of the Phoenicians and by Papal edict, homage and worship was to be accorded her. She became the central figure in the Papal religion and the fact that she bore the same title as Astarte is borne out by a painting in the Tate Gallery where the virgin Mary was given the infamous title of 'Queen of heaven'.

That the Roman elevation of Mary to deity created an era identical with undiluted paganism cannot be doubted for across all history books is blazoned the words 'the dark ages' – a period when the 'queen of heaven' took pre-eminence over 'the Word made flesh' (John 1:14). The period of darkness in which Christianity was dominated by the act of the woman Theodora, covered the years 820 to 1553 when the authority of the 'queen of heaven' was broken in the Re-formation of the Christian faith. Thyatira – ruled by a woman – is a message which, in

keeping with all others, is proven wondrously accurate and true by the cold and unbiased facts of history.

Before leaving this fourth message there is one point which requires attention and which in the previous three is lacking. Each of the first three end with an exhortation to 'overcome' the evils, i.e., to remain uncontaminated by the machinations of Satan which were directed against the spread of the knowledge of the accomplished Mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, and for the first time in the seven messages, there appears the promise of the Second Coming of the Lord. "But unto you, I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the *depths of Satan*, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast *till I come . . .*" Note how the Lord refers to the Jezebel act as the 'depths of Satan' – the delusion of substituting Mary for Christ. The subtlety of superstition injected within the Christian Message when both the Pergamos and Thyatira eras dominated would never truly be eradicated for in each of the three succeeding messages, one finds hope in the fact that the Lord has promised to come again. This Promise has been the hope of many and today takes on a very real meaning when Satan, knowing 'that he hath but a short time', is throwing every mechanism which he has used in the past and many new ones invented for this time, into the battle of the age.

As one looks back on the four messages considered thus far, it is more than a little evident that Satan has been determined to either contain or pollute the good news of the accomplished Mission of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 15:24). He has used perversion of the Truth and unadulterated paganism; he has used the 'doctrine of Balaam'; he has used the 'doctrine of the Nicolaitanes' and he has used the fornication of Jezebel to accomplish his ends but though he may claim success with the majority, there has always been the 'little flock', the 'seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal' who have, under God, carried the Truth inviolate. It stands today as the hope which is centred in the Promise of the Lord: ". . . hold fast till I come."

### SARDIS

The name of Sardis, the city in which was established the fifth of the seven Israelite churches in Asia, was derived from the predisposition of the inhabitants towards amassing great fortunes in precious gems. While being an undoubted centre of the textile industry and a city where coins were minted under the opulent Croesus, its main claim to fame arose because of the exquisite jewellery which was fashioned

by the craftsmen of Sardis and distributed throughout the then known world. The name of Sardis thus became synonymous with 'precious stone' – an expression which is most illuminating in the context of the prophetic message to be found in the messages to the seven churches in Asia.

The directive of the Lord concerning the church in Sardis as it obtained in A.D. 96 is summed up in six verses, the main features of which are: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God . . . Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy."

In this great city of precious gems which boasted a mighty temple to Cybele, historic records indicate a state of society which was saturated with the bacchanalian lusts which characterised this worship. The apostolic faith brought to this city from the pentecostal experience by those who were present in Jerusalem for the 'feast of wave-loaves', was initially vigorous and virile but, after half a century this had begun to crumble with the little community of believers striving to hold off the erosion of worldliness. At the time when John received the Revelation, the church at Sardis, while retaining the name Christian and performing Christian ceremonies, became spiritually dead merely having a 'form of godliness but denying the power thereof'.

The warning of the Lord was: "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." There was nothing silent or secretive about the judgment which fell on Sardis and likewise there will be nothing silent or secretive about the Coming of the Lord at the end of the age. History records a sudden, swift, unexpected and noisy fulfilment of the judgment on Sardis for in one day, the whole city was destroyed in an earthquake which changed the whole topography of the countryside. From that day to this, the region has been a wilderness of ruin.

The prophetic era indicated by the message to the church at Thyatira, as has been indicated, focused attention on the period in which Christianity was dominated by 'the rule of the woman', i.e., the era of the elevation of Mary to the position of deity and worshipped as Queen of Heaven. Following the events within church history from this Thyatira era, the most important event was the Reformation which has been likened to 'a shining light', a 'precious jewel', phrases which

recall to mind the meaning of the name 'Sardis'.

The Reformation, however, saw tremendous happenings on the earth which went further than is normally accepted. One is familiar with the work of such men as John Wycliffe who, in the fourteenth century, endeavoured to present the Bible to the people in their own language that they might have the light of Scripture in such a manner as to rediscover the God of Revelation. Others, too, who strove in the same context and who gave their lives for this cause are even today remembered in the history of that period. In 1552 when Papal dominion was finally broken in Britain and the Bible became available to all, it was indeed an occasion for rejoicing. However, other events were taking place which were not acknowledged and passed unnoticed by the people of Christendom. Two prophecies were in the process of being fulfilled and Christianity had been so dazzled by the brilliance of the 'precious stone' of God's Word, that no comment was made of them. In the Book of Hosea which deals with the indictment against Israel and the effect of the nation's spiritual adultery, one finds the assurance of the Lord's release from the consequences of sin.

"Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight" (Hos. 6:1-2). As nothing of the nature is recorded within the literal three days nor in the prophetic period of days of 360 years duration, some other time scale was obviously intended to which Peter makes allusion in his second epistle (II Peter 3:8) and which indicates that *with the Lord* 'one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.' This is obviously the time scale intended in Hosea.

If one calculates the period of two thousand years during which Israel was 'torn and smitten' as commencing when the kingdom of Israel was destroyed in the Holy Land under the Assyrian invasions, this would end in 1324 A.D. It will be noted that the prophecy indicates a process thereafter for 'after two days will he revive us; *in the third* day he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight.' The 'revival' began from that period for this was the era of the Reformers whose efforts culminated in the presentation of the shining jewel of the open Word of God.

Another prophecy was that of Ezekiel in which the national resurrection of Israel was assured. This event is pictured in the vision of the valley of dry bones (Ezek. 37) and of which the Lord said: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel . . ." At the outset,

one is given to understand that the resurrection here implied had nothing to do with the return of the remnant from the Babylonian captivity for as is made amply clear by Ezra, this return comprised 42 360 of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin with a sprinkling of Levi.

In the resurrection of 'the whole house of Israel' one may see it as a process for ". . . behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them" (Ezek. 37:7-8). This is the precise picture of events as they are depicted in the 'Sardis' picture. They came alive but there was no breath in them – 'thou livest and thou art dead'. Under the impetus of the 'Sardis' revelation, the People of the Book stood up but there was no understanding of the national events which comprise almost five-sixths of the Book.

Before leaving this message to the church at Sardis, it will be recalled that the Lord said: "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." The 'holding fast' has a very definite meaning when one considers the attempts made by the Papal authorities to recover what had been lost to them through the Reformation. While there were many very definitely in favour of a return to Rome there were those who did not 'defile their garments' and legislation was introduced to make any contact with the See of Rome illegal in Britain. This legislation involved the Royal Family, the Parliamentarians and the Clergy and as one looks on these matters today, it has become the modern tragedy that those who have not 'defiled their garments' are very few indeed.

## **PHILADELPHIA**

The sixth message, that is, that to the church at Philadelphia, is one of commendation and encouragement. "I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength and hast kept my word and hast not denied my name . . ." When considering the proximity of this church to those which came under the condemnation of the Lord, it is all the more remarkable that no word of remonstrance is found associated with it. It stood aloof from the contamination which eroded the foundations of the other churches and the community retained the zeal which marked its beginning. The city of Philadelphia was never destroyed although it changed its name and is today known as Allah-shehr – the 'city of God'.

The essential difference between the 'Sardis' and the 'Philadelphia' eras in prophecy is very clearly marked in that the former is

characterised by a 'deadness' and the latter by the reverse. As has been shown above, the 'raising up' which highlights the Sardis era, was manifest in the Anglo-Celto-Saxon and kindred people and the Philadelphia period, too, has a particular meaning among these people. Having emerged from the ritualistic cloisters of the Roman religion and while making every provision against a return to the dominion of the Pope, they failed to take note of the essential requirements of Scripture, namely, that the priesthood as such was abolished for "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8:1) – "... even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:20).

Within the church, while the yoke of Rome had been overthrown, the authority of the priesthood had not been relinquished for the priestly prerogatives still covered the same fields as did those of Rome. Among other facets of priestly authority was the right of withholding or the granting of Communion to the laity, the exercise of which was rife in the Sardis era as it had been under the periods of Roman dominion. While this doctrine obtained, there could be no 'brotherly love' – the English equivalent of the Greek "Philadelphia".

However, as the Lord reveals that an era of 'brotherly love' would follow the period of the opening of the Word of God, history faithfully records this happening. During the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, the exercise of priestly prerogatives verged on the fanatical until checked by what is today known as non-conformism initiated by John Wesley. In 1736, John Wesley was in America but his 'high church' attitude offended many people who were further incensed when he refused to give Communion to a certain Mrs. Williamson. This refusal led to his arrest on a charge of defamation and in a subsequent indictment he was charged with improper ecclesiastical usages. Wesley left America in 1737 without standing trial.

On May 24th, 1738, Wesley attended a Moravian meeting in London and to quote his own words: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." This was the beginning of a new understanding – the commencement of a new era and its effect, within the context of the word 'Philadelphia', became felt by all. This became an era of not only consolidation but expansion for it was from this time that the promises of God made to Israel, began to take effect.

True modern Israel in Anglo-Saxondom became "a great and mighty nation" (Gen. 18:18) spreading abroad "to the west, and to the

east, and to the north and to the south'' (Gen. 28:14). Here a 'nation and a company of nations' (Gen. 35:10) developed which appeared to have as a preoccupation the Word of God. The Bible, the 'precious stone', was printed in many languages so that people all over the world might know the Plan and the Purpose of the God of Israel in His people. It was indeed an unparalleled era which lasted for 110 years and only ended when the 'precious stone', by reason of its free distribution, became the focal point of destructive criticism.

### LAODICEA

This immediately introduces the last of the seven messages to the churches in Asia which concerned the assembly at Laodicea. In whatever way one may look at this last message, one incontestable fact emerges in that at the conclusion of the revelation of events, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ stands knocking at the door. If one reconsiders the message to the church at Thyatira, it will be noted that the Lord said: ". . . hold fast *till I come*" and in that to the church at Philadelphia, He said: "Behold, *I come quickly . . .*" whereas in the last message, He said: "Behold, *I stand at the door and knock.*" The three phrases are indeed most significant in that the first two are indicative of the work of the Holy Spirit, the *parousia* or Presence of the Lord while the last is marked by the *epiphaneia* or His literal appearance.

As one looks back on the many other scriptures which indicate the literal appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, one is struck by the extreme necessity for His coming again. In the Olivet Discourse, the gravity of the situation is such that unless the Lord did come, 'no flesh would be saved' (Matt. 24:22). A further indication of the urgent necessity of His Return is found in the recurrence of the days and equal in magnitude to those which necessitated the judgment of the Flood (Matt. 24:37-39). In the light of this, the message to the church at Laodicea takes on an ominous meaning.

At the outset, one is struck by the contrast in this message when compared with that to the church at Philadelphia. In the latter message, there is nothing but commendation whereas in that to Laodicea, there is nothing but condemnation. This assembly became the centre of Christian activity in Asia, indeed the meeting place for whatever church councils were held, and, in this sense, enjoyed the title of the Cathedral city of Christianity in Asia. Occupying as it did a place of prominence in the Christian world, an air of self-satisfaction permeated through this assembly and it became more concerned with position and possessions than with the task of 'letting all the house of Israel know



that God hath made that same Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ.'

This situation was described by the Lord Who said: "I know thy works . . . thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing", whereas, in reality, He said they were: ". . . wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." It will be noted that this assembly boasted its possessions and in terms of its initial function, it had become completely negative, neither hot nor cold, but 'luke-warm' and in which state, the Lord said: "I will spue thee out of my mouth."

The message does not end on this pathetic note, however, for the Lord made an appeal to this assembly: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." That this appeal fell on deaf ears is all too apparent and today, the spade of the archaeologist reveals the awesome judgment revealed in the words: "I will spue thee out of my mouth." The epitaph to the church at Laodicea is found in the work, *The Bible, the Scholar and the Spade*, from which the following extract is taken. "Today, absolutely deserted and uninhabited, Laodicea is a pathetic but powerful witness to the fate of a lukewarm church. It was rich and self-satisfied. But its gold perished, its riches vanished away. Once again history has written with unerring finger, its confirmation of the reality of the Divine judgments and the truth of the Divine message." Thus, with heavy presentiments, the message to the local church is left and attention is focused on the prophetic implications.

From the current behaviour of the World Council of Churches and other denominational groups, it is more than apparent that this present time is indeed the Laodicean era of church history. "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing . . ." has a very real meaning today particularly when one considers the financial grants given to terrorist groups when there are literally millions of Christians in desperate need. Money is thus squandered on the lawless element of humanity whose profession of faith is seen in the mutilated bodies of their victims. Another instance of the 'richness' of the church is the resolve of one denomination to *withdraw its capital investments* in South Africa to force a change of policy into one which is so roundly condemned by the Lord throughout the message to the churches in Asia.

There are, of course, many clergymen who realise the significance of these times and who do not hesitate to present the picture as it really is. A Doctor of Divinity in England has said: "Traditionalism,

clericalism and ecclesiasticalism have been on the increase in the Church of England during the past three generations. They have driven multitudes out of the church . . .” A South African D.D. has also said: “Christianity has become a pious allegory, a dim mythical philosophy, or a mere ethic; instead of the confident proclamation that in fact and in truth, Almighty God is descended into this world that He might raise man up to a newness of life.”

The charge against the church in the Laodicean age is threefold. In the first instance it lacks the Lord’s ‘precious stone’, the eternal treasure of the Word of Life. In the second instance it lacks the ‘white raiment’, the Lord’s righteousness, which is simply the Lord’s ‘right ways’. Thirdly, it is blind.

It is no exaggeration to state that there has been a general tendency to drift away from God’s Holy Word which, in essence, is regarded by many as allegory in poetic language designed to communicate some deep spiritual truth which lies deeply embedded within the human consciousness. Within this concept, the Bible is relatively unimportant and this accounts for a statement made to this writer by another clergyman who said: “In the interests of Truth, the church is prepared to discard the Bible.” In this, the gentleman concerned was no doubt speaking of his own denomination for there are still those who hold that the Bible is indeed, the Word of God written.

God’s ‘right ways’ are similarly subjected to a mass of interpretation. This, of course, involves the Law of the Lord which, so many proclaim, has been abolished in the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here indeed is blindness for those of this persuasion fail to see that it was the ‘law that was added’, namely, the ritual of sacrifice, which was fulfilled in the Sacrifice thus providing an ever-present Mediator before the Throne of Grace when sin, the violation of the Law, intrudes. In this context, the Lord Jesus Christ has become ‘our righteousness’, and here again one finds an incredible attitude of unbelief obtaining. This is found when it is decided that ‘it really doesn’t matter whether or not Jesus was born of the virgin’. The assault on His Person and Identity, the lowering of His Image to conformity with the degraded state of *degenerate* humanity – these and many other facets attest to the lack of belief in the ‘righteousness’ of the Lord.

The ‘eyesalve’ to correct blindness is seen in the situation as it obtains today. It is generally held that God has no plan in operation and that His Holy Spirit is working selectively among individuals who happen to ask for special favours. It cannot be seen that the great plan for world rehabilitation announced in the National Charters of the Old

Testament are still in force and, notwithstanding the current world scene, are slowly but surely reaching the point of Divine intervention when the Kingdom of God, in all its Majesty, will be established in the earth. The national aspect of this is repudiated as are all those national matters which constitute five-sixths of the Bible. Here indeed is blindness which contributes in no small measure to the calamity of the Laodicean age.

A further indication of this is to be seen in the fact that, wrenching the statement 'I stand at the door and knock' out of context and placing it within that of the human heart, denies a hope of the termination of the Laodicean apostasy in the literal and visible Return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Looking back over the past two thousand years, one is able to see that in the seven messages to the churches or assemblies of Israel in Asia is provided, not only a directive concerning the then established communities but also a prophetic preview of seven stages of church history commencing with its inception at Pentecost and culminating in the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout these seven stages one is given to understand that while men may exercise the gift of free will and may align themselves with anti-God forces, the Lord God of Israel was aware of this and persistently worked His purpose as laid down in His Holy Word. Notwithstanding the many vicissitudes in church history, it is of singular importance to note that the Lord formed Israel the nation to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth and it is within this nucleus that His Plan has continued and will continue until finally consummated at the end of the age.

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## CHAPTER 2

### THE CRYSTALLIZING OF THE REVELATION

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

As in all consideration of Holy Scripture, texts should never be removed from the context and this scripture is no exception although many have quoted it in isolation to support some theory or other. One should ever bear in mind that in the original languages, the Scriptures were not marked by chapters and verses and in many cases great disservice has been done to the context by breaking the continuity of the message with the insertion of a new chapter. This practice has given licence to ‘private interpretation’ which has no bearing on the overall subject.

In the first verse of the fourth chapter, the opening words are usually discarded as irrelevant with all concentration made on the speculative assessment of the ‘things which must be hereafter’. In the original Greek, the words which have been translated ‘After this’, are *metta tasta* which literally translated provides the essential link which denies any private interpretation or the removal of the text from the context. *Metta tasta* is literally ‘after these things’, i.e., after John had been acquainted with the messages to the Israel assemblies in Asia and their prophetic significance which ended on the tragic note of the Lord Jesus Christ standing outside the door of the Church at Laodicea knocking to come in. As a sequel to this certain happenings were imperative if God’s Plan and Purpose were to have meaning in the earth.

“Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which *must* be hereafter.” There can be no denying the urgency here – an urgency resulting from the chaos of the Laodicean era in which the ‘riches’ of the Word of God are lacking; the essential righteousness of Christ stripped away and blindness contributing to a false masquerade. Read-

ers are invited to read this short chapter and to note that there are five separate features blended in the one picture of Glory and which may be summed up as follows:

- (1) *A Throne* (not an altar) on which is seated Glory Personified.
- (2) Twenty four seats occupied by elders clothed in white raiment.
- (3) Thunder and lightning emanating from the Throne.
- (4) Four living creatures in attendance round the Throne.
- (5) The worship accorded the Occupant of the Throne.

At the very outset of the Revelation, the Lord indicated that this would be given through the use of 'signs and symbols' – a feature which should be borne in mind throughout any study of this Book. The fourth chapter is symbolic and is a reflection of the Kingdom of God *in the earth*. This contention meets with all the requirements of Holy Scripture in that, from the time of Satan's disruption of the perfection of Creation, the whole tenor of Scripture is toward the 'times of the restitution of all things' (Acts 3:21) which cannot, scripturally, be construed as anything less than the re-establishment of the earthly Kingdom of God. This is the very purpose of the resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29) and the 'great city, the holy Jerusalem' (Rev. 21: 10) finding tangible expression *in the earth*.

If one were to indulge in the simple exercise of drawing a general picture of the scene depicted in the fourth chapter on a piece of paper, a staggering fact begins to emerge. One has a central point around which are placed *twenty-four* entities which, in turn, are boxed in by four others. This is a picture identical with that which greets the eye when one considers the displacement of Israel around the Tabernacle.

It is one of the most tragic consequences of the apostasy of this time that men and women should be encouraged to think *only* in terms of the New Testament as relevant to the Christian Faith while the Old Testament suffers a patronising toleration which is divorced, in the main, from Christian concepts. Here is an example of such irresponsible teaching. How, without the Old Testament, is one able to understand this vital picture of the things which must come as the imperative conclusion to the Laodicean apostasy? The picture is surely worthy of closer study.

One will note that the first and indeed the most stupendous feature which greeted John's eyes, was the Throne of Glory. However, John was not unique in this for there is the record of others who had seen a similar picture. Moses and the leaders in Israel were given a

vision similar to that of John. "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness . . ." (Ex. 24:9-10). Thus, at the outset, one has the picture of the leaders in Israel receiving a vision of God Himself dwelling in His Glory.

It was clearly God's intention to manifest Himself in Israel for Moses received implicit instruction for the construction of the Tabernacle and was told the reason for this in words which deny ambiguity. "And let them make me a sanctuary that *I may dwell among them*" (Ex. 25:8). "I will meet with you to speak to you there . . . and *I will dwell among the children of Israel*" (Ex. 29:42-45). Thus, as one shares with John the vision of God in His Glory one also sees the earthly reflection of this in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Needless to say, the Tabernacle, the symbolism and ritual associated with it, was the peculiar possession of Israel being positioned as it was in the very centre of the assembled nation.

In passing on to the second of the features enumerated above, it will be recalled that this had to do with the twenty-four elders who were seated round the Throne. Association with the Old Testament Tabernacle is not lacking here either. In the first instance, the numeral twelve, in Scripture, signifies perfect *government* and *organisation*. There were twelve patriarchs – there were twelve tribes in the organisation of God's Kingdom at Sinai – there were twelve apostles dedicated to the spreading of the good news concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. In the new Jerusalem there are twelve gates containing the twelve names of the tribes of Israel guarded by twelve angels (Rev. 21:12). In view of all this it is obvious that the numeral twelve is expressive of perfect earthly organisation and government. Twenty-four is exactly double this number and has the same significance in its highest form – heavenly. This is thus no contradiction of the contention relating to the displacement of Israel round the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

In terms of organisation and government, there is a most significant development when one comes to consider those entrusted with service associated with the Tabernacle. As is well known, this lot fell to the tribe of Levi which, because of its peculiar function, was not allotted territory in Palestine. In the Book of Chronicles is related the *twenty-four courses* of the Levitical priesthood (I Chron. 24:5-19) whose function was to preserve the Law of the Lord in all its integrity and purity and to see that its requirements were met. Theirs was the task

of ensuring that the Constitution of the Kingdom was observed throughout the nation. That the Levitical priesthood was abrogated by the High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek (Heb. 8:1-5) does not alter the fact that the vision granted to John has a very direct reference to the organisation of Israel round the Tabernacle in the wilderness and which must have relevance in the things which must come hereafter.

The third of the five points raised previously concerns the 'thunders and lightnings' which emanated from the Throne and which requires very little elucidation. As the same feature attended the giving of the Law of the Lord to Israel at Sinai, one may understand this as indicating the power of God issuing forth to govern and direct the affairs in His Kingdom. This, of course, has a particular significance when one considers that behaviour today, particularly within the true modern development of Israel in Anglo-Saxondom, is characterised, not by the Directives of God, but the dictates of the human conscience. This is a recurrence of the situation which led to the institution of the Judges in Israel for then 'every man did that which was right in his own eyes' (Jud. 17:6). 'Thunders and lightnings' are indeed indicative of discipline which, when one considers a later chapter in the Revelation, is precisely what will happen when the Lord returns (Rev. 19:15).

The displacement of the four 'beasts' round the Throne is further evidence of the association of the picture with Israel in the wilderness. As has been intimated previously, many have held this representation to mean the four heads of God's Creation in the earth. However, as all the features discussed this far are seen to align themselves very definitely with Israel and the Tabernacle, this contention of world representation is out of place. There are further points which put it out of court for there are obvious omissions of certain species which does not support the contention of generalisation. There is no representation for the insect kingdom just as there is no allusion to the plant or vegetable kingdom. Reference, too, to the inhabitants of the sea is missing, all of which leaves one with the feeling that the theory lacks corroborating evidence. However, if one persists with the association of John's vision with that of Israel in the wilderness, all difficulties disappear.

In the second chapter of the Book of Numbers one finds that four tribes, each with two others, are placed in deliberate arrangement around the Tabernacle. The tribes and standards were positioned as follows: On the east and in the company of Issachar and Zebulun, Judah set up the tribal standard of the *Lion*. On the southern side, Reuben raised his standard of a *Man* with which both Simeon and Gad were joined. Ephraim with the standard of the *Bull* or *Ox*, together with



Manasseh and Benjamin occupied the western side while Dan, with his standard of the *Eagle* covering Asher and Napthali, completed the 'box' around the Tabernacle. Was it then pure coincidence that these were the 'beasts' or living creatures which were in attendance on the Throne and which worshipped the King day and night? Was it pure coincidence that this was the purpose for which Israel was created (Isa. 43:21)?

The fifth feature noted at the outset of this consideration of the 'things which must be hereafter' was the worship or service accorded to the Throne by these 'beasts'. This can only refer to Israel for in terms of Holy Scripture, this nation was formed for this purpose and at no time did God ever relieve His servant nation of their responsibility. It foreshadows the completion of Israel's role and the significant feature is that the Church, as an organised body, is not seen in the vision which, in the light of the messages to the churches and the conditions obtaining at the Laodicean period, is understandable. This vision is one which is God-honouring in the extreme showing as it does the continuing faithfulness of God to His Word: "This people have I formed for myself, *they shall shew forth my praise*" (Isa. 43:21).

Having seen the vision and having considered its symbolism, it now remains to apply this to the sequence of events which must follow the apostasy of the Laodicean age.

The overall picture as presented to John was undoubtedly intended to bring to remembrance the scene of Israel's national organisation at Sinai when the nation functioned in satellite-like fashion around the Alpha and Omega Who manifested Himself in the Tabernacle. The pattern of this is, as related in Hebrews 8:5, based on the pattern of 'heavenly things' thus bringing to the fore the meaning of the Prayer which the Lord left as a guide line to supplication. ". . . Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." While the picture is indeed a heavenly one, this is an expression of God's desire in the earthly context which is adequately vindicated when one considers the implications of the symbolism of the Tabernacle as it centres on the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first feature of the Tabernacle was the Brazen Altar – the Altar of Sacrifice which foreshadowed the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God in terms of the 'law of commandments contained in ordinances'. The second feature was the Laver which in its original usage was for priestly use in purification prior to entering the Holy place. Here, too, is a shadow of the metaphorical washing in the precious Blood of the Lamb. Within the Holy of Holies and at the entrance stood the Candlestick illuminating the Table of Shewbread. The Candlestick finds its

meaning in the Person of the Lord Who indeed is the 'Light of the world'. The 'Shewbread' also points to the Lord for He is the life-saving and life-giving 'bread from heaven'. The altar of incense, another of the furnishings of the Holy of Holies is indicative of the Lord in His Priestly office after the Order of Melchizedek. The Ark of the Covenant which was the very centre of the whole organisation of Israel's Service and worship, too, foreshadows the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It indeed sums up the whole subject. The tremendous symbolism of the Ark of the Covenant is simply the centring of the whole Mercy of God in Christ Jesus and the Mighty Calvary Act.

This very brief consideration of the symbolism of the Tabernacle as it centres on the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed complementary to the vision which John saw. Bearing in mind that the Second Advent of the Lord is depicted in the Scriptures as a very real and tangible event – indeed the mighty and visible deliverance promised by God (Acts 3:20) – the centring of the symbolism of the Tabernacle in Him clarifies what otherwise would be obscure promises.

It will be noted that prior to the end of the age, the Lord has promised a regathering of scattered Israel and the unification of the sons of Jacob. "They (reunited Israel) shall also walk in my judgments and observe my statutes and do them" (Ezek. 37:24). This, of course, is the setting which must precede the full realisation of Israel's function in the earth for it will be noted that the Lord God said: "If ye obey my voice indeed . . . then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a *kingdom of priests and an holy nation* . . ." (Ex. 19:5-6). The priests were intimately involved with the Tabernacle and that the Lord God intends to regather all Israel within the bonds of the requirements for the priestly office, i.e., bring them under His commands, is indeed a preparation for their priestly role.

When this has been accomplished, the Lord says: "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Ezek. 37:27). The Tabernacle in the Person of the returned Lord Jesus Christ will be with Israel and the promised Millennium will have begun. This is exactly the picture which was given to John on the isle of Patmos for, in symbolism, he saw the Millennium reign of the Lord, which reign is the era in human experience when the Will of God is done in the earth as it is in heaven.

The Old Testament prophets all directed their writings toward this great experience and while the 'traditions of men' may have switched off the perception of men to the reality of the Kingdom of God

in the earth, God's Plan did not deviate nor was there any alteration to the original Plan. While men's attention was focused heavenwards and their ambitions centred on achieving citizenship within the realms of God, His plan has continued for the establishment of His Kingdom on the earth. It is toward this end that the Resurrection of the dead was directed and to this end, the Lord Jesus Christ directed attention when He said: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear my voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).

Thus, then, the whole picture of the 'things which must come hereafter', i.e., the utter failure of the Laodicean era, is the establishment of the visible and very tangible Kingdom of God in the earth. This is the hope extended to an age which continues to rot under the administration of the doctrines of men.

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## CHAPTER 3

### *THE SECULAR TAPESTRY OF THE APOCALYPSE*

A fitting, indeed needful climax, to the events of the Laodicean age are recorded in the closing verses of the fourth chapter of Revelation. Bearing in mind those tragic events in which the Church was depicted as gravitating toward self-indulgence and self-sufficiency even going so far as to place the Lord Jesus Christ outside its doors, the assurance of acceptable worship is indeed a faith-building mechanism. As one looks at the picture of the elders and the four living creatures worshipping God, one is brought to the sad realisation that the situation as it currently obtains, will continue until the Lord Himself takes a hand by exercising His Sovereignty over His people Israel thus inaugurating the Millennial Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The point to note about the fourth chapter is that while it has its context arising out of the seventh stage of Church history, the picture of Almighty God dominates in contra-distinction to the Laodicean era in which *man* and his assertions are the dominating feature. The change is brought about not, unfortunately, through the change of heart in the Church, but due to the direct intervention of Almighty God Who has never abrogated His prerogatives within the Israel people. The worship as seen in the fourth chapter embodies all the implications found in the Sovereign statement of the Lord when, in the context of having made the Israel people, He said: "This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise" (Isa. 43:21). In brief then, the fourth chapter is nothing less than the promised Millennium in which God's true Israel people will function in accordance with His Will.

As the whole tenor of Scripture is directed toward the functioning of God's Kingdom on the earth – indeed the terminal in God's Purpose in the earth – the events revealed subsequent to this must be in a time context other than the Millennium. As one therefore turns to the fifth chapter, this is confirmed in such a manner as to be unmistakable in its association with the unfolding of *secular history* as it runs parallel with that of Church history.

While the scene described in the fifth chapter appears essentially the same, there are differences which, without doubt, are intended to convey a time factor upon which the revealed events would revolve. It will be noted that in the fourth chapter, attention is focused on the Throne, the elders and the four living creatures. The worship accorded the Occupant of the Throne crystallises the whole purpose of the vision. Having thus provided the assurance of the Kingdom to be established, the Lord then provides the 'bridge' in time by drawing attention to other features which are not present in the vision of Glory.

In the first instance, the Occupant of the Throne has a book in His right Hand which becomes the subject of the voice of the angel who asks: "Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?" This 'Book' is obviously not the 'book of life' (Rev. 20:12) which is opened in judgment of the dead for this only takes place at the end of the Millennium and which, so far as the Scripture is concerned, carries no seal. This 'book' was no doubt the book which Daniel was told to seal (Dan. 12:4) — a book which contained things of a secular and national character.

It is inconceivable that John would have been ignorant of the sealed book and his weeping because none was found worthy to open the book might have been because of his disappointment that the time was not at hand for the unsealing of history. However, in his lament, John heard the voice of one of the elders saying: "Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seals thereof." John then looked and saw another change for ". . . in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

Here indeed is the positive direction toward the time factor for the symbolism is that pertaining to the Lord Jesus Christ officiating as High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek of which the Levitical Order was but a forerunner. This fact is soon established. In John 1:29, John the Baptist, ". . . seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Notwithstanding the many insidious teachings which are rife today concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ in which it is intended to make Him an imposter and charlatan, this statement by John establishes the Truth that He was indeed the Lamb of God.

Further unchallengeable links in the chain of evidence are to be

found in the Epistle to the Hebrews where it is recorded of the Lord Jesus Christ Who, “. . . endured the cross . . . is set down at the *right hand of the throne of God*” (Heb. 12:2). All this establishes the significance of the vision which greeted John’s eyes for he saw, on the *right hand* of God, the Lamb Whose Sacrifice had removed sin, taking the Book from the *right hand* of God. The essential fact here evident is that the Lamb – the Lord Jesus Christ – was still seated in His August Position on the right hand of God officiating as Mediator and had not, as yet, taken ‘the throne of his father David’ (Luke 1:32) which would only be at the “times of the restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21). He was not as yet the ‘priest on the throne’ (Zech. 6:13) but rather the High Priest seated on the right hand of God making His intercession on behalf of sin.

That the Lamb had seven ‘horns’ and seven ‘eyes’ is yet another projection of the future. ‘Horns’, as is explained in the Book of Daniel, are symbols of kings or dynasties in which government is centred and with which the Lord Jesus Christ is equated in Isaiah 9:6-7. The seven ‘eyes’ are the seven attributes with which the Lord, as described by Isaiah the prophet (Isa. 11:1-9), shall reign in the earth. Thus, in summing up the vision, one may see the Lord, having fulfilled the ‘law of commandments contained in ordinances’ (a peculiar Israel law) and still carrying the identification of the Lamb of Sacrifice, projecting His future function as King in Israel in the ‘horns’ and ‘eyes’.

The remainder of the fifth chapter is taken up with the acclamation of the worthiness of the Lamb, Weymouth’s translation being most illuminating: “Thou art worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because thou wast killed and didst redeem to God, with thy Blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And thou didst make them to our God, a Royalty and a priesthood and they shall reign on the earth.” This glorious anthem of praise is sung because of the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus through Whom men may ‘overcome’ and ‘live and reign with Him’ during the thousand years of the Millennium.

After this anthem of praise, the Lamb opened one of the seals and as one stands in the twentieth century and looks back, the wonder and accuracy is branded into the consciousness as the mighty Grace of God extended toward those who, with the faith of Abraham, believe Him. “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquer-

ing to conquer.’’

In the first four seals it will be noted that horses are employed as symbolism. Without the Old Testament as a guide, these ‘horses’ could be made to mean anything whereas if one uses what God has given, the story of the ‘horses’ in the first four seals is found to have a very real meaning in history. Horses in their primary symbolism depict war or military might, a fact which is clearly demonstrated in Deuteronomy 32:13; Psalm 66:12; Isaiah 58:14 and Zechariah 9:10. To the symbolism of ‘horses’ is added that of ‘colour’ for the four horses are described as White, Red, Black and Pale. While Zechariah 6:2-7 provides a clue as to the meaning of the last three mentioned colours, White is left for the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation to indicate its meaning as Triumphant Glory.

As has been noted in the quotation of the first two verses of the sixth chapter, the White horse had a rider to whom was given a crown as an addition to the bow that he carried and who went forth ‘conquering to conquer’. This was a picture which John could follow with consummate ease. Imperial Rome, in A.D. 96, was readily identified with the White horse. As has been stated above, the White horse is indicative of triumph and victory and it is not without significance that the Roman Emperors and all-conquering generals, invariably rode white horses in their victory parades. That the rider in the seal had a bow in his hand is expressive of armed might, which is significantly demonstrated in Ezekiel 39 where it is described that the Lord will strike the bow out of the hands of Gog as he comes up against the ‘unfenced villages’ in the land of Israel.

The Crown which was given to the rider is seen in the then prevailing custom of placing laurel wreaths on the heads of the conquering Roman heroes. The first seal is therefore a depiction of Imperial Rome in its heyday for at this time, all the lands formerly possessed by the three preceding Empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece were now under the control and dominion of Rome.

That Imperial Rome at that time (A.D. 96–180) fulfilled all the requirements of the first Seal cannot be denied and in order to summarize this situation, a quote from Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* would not be amiss. In point of fact, if one is to fully appreciate the first four Seals of Revelation six, this rather lengthy work by a self-confessed non-Christian is invaluable. In respect of Rome in its heyday and in conformity with the first Seal, Gibbon describes the situation as follows:



“If a man were called to fix in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus (A.D.96–180). The vast extent of the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hands of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect.”

It is not intended here to debate the philosophy of Edward Gibbon for whatever religious persuasion may have motivated his conclusions, his portrayal of the facts as they obtained are confirmed by countless historians who did not share his religious opinions. These facts very definitely support the contention that in the Seals, one has a progressive unfolding of the dominating secular power as history develops from the time when John received the vision on the isle of Patmos in A.D. 96.

However, while the White horse and its rider finds its interpretation in the triumphant era of Imperial Roman history, as with the messages to the Churches, there appears to be a parallel set of circumstances which, in point of fact, introduces what could be called the primary or secondary meanings attached to the Revelation. It would appear out of keeping with the tenor of Scripture if Israel, the people of the Book, were suddenly lost and had no part in the Seals. This contention in no way invalidates what has been written concerning the Roman Empire at that stage but supports the suggestion of primary and secondary meanings to be found through the Lord's Revelation.

As has been noted above, in the Old Testament the horse symbolises military might and armed conflict. However, as one proceeds with a study of the horse as it appears in the Old Testament, one finds that it is used in the context of *Israel when in a state of national blindness*. In general, a horse is a domesticated animal docile, affectionate, faithful and true but at all times, requires to be kept in hand and mastered. In order to lead a horse, a bit is put into the mouth so as to make the task easier which is precisely how God represents His people Israel when they had no understanding. It will be noted that in Isaiah 63:13 the Lord led His people “. . . as an horse in the wilderness that they should not stumble.” Many indeed are the references to Israel in this context and as one looks forward in time to the vision which John saw at a later stage, one may see the King of Israel coming from heaven on a ‘white horse’ (Rev. 19:11).

One may thus see that the ‘White horse’ is also indicative of

Israel which, from the time of its Redemption on Calvary, *could* go forth 'conquering to conquer'. It should be noted that the Apostles were Israelites and that Peter instructed those Israelites present at Pentecost to ". . . let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." Thus the first 'going forth' of the news of the 'White rider' – the Lord Jesus Christ – was within the context of Israel.

Israel, having been redeemed to God through the Calvary Act, was now in a position to fulfil her commission if she accepted her national redemption. She could go forth 'conquering to conquer'. When Peter told the assembly at Pentecost to inform Israel concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, he was fulfilling the Lord's commission to him to "Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17) – the first step in the regathering of scattered Israel so that they could indeed be God's ". . . battle-axe and weapons of war" – the symbol of the 'bow' in the hand of the rider of the White horse. This surely reminds one of Joseph's bow which ". . . abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob" (Gen. 49:24).

The 'crown' which was given to the rider, i.e., the symbol of the victory, is surely the victory expressed by the Lord Jesus Christ when He said: "Fear not little flock (sheep – Israel); for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

Is it pure coincidence one wonders, that the White Horse figures so prominently in British history? In Thierry's *Norman Conquest*, in Miller's *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, in Chamber's *British Empire* and in Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, the figure of the White Horse is portrayed as an integral part of British history with F.E. Hume, in the *Art Journal* stating: "The Saxon White horse is still preserved in the device of Kent, a white horse rampant on a red ground, and in the various white horses cut in the surface of the chalk downs in several parts of the south and west of England."

Reverting to the secondary or perhaps primary meaning of the Seal which depicted the White horse and its rider, one may see that this indicates a victory over Satan who had succeeded in bringing Israel under the 'curse of the Law'. "Christ hath redeemed us (Israel) from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written (in Israel's law), Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3: 13). Israel's redemption was thus a victory which would project itself down the corridors of time, suffering assault from time to time but never again creating the same desperate need for a re-enactment of

Calvary. As depicted in the Message to the Church at Laodicea, this victory would enter an all-time low with the need for 'eyesalve that ye may see' but none can thwart God nor diminish what He has wrought through Jesus Christ His Son on Calvary.

The assurance is that He shall send forth His Son again this time to ride a 'white horse' and to establish His Kingdom in Israel which, He assures, will have no end (Luke 1:33) thus confirming the phrase that He shall go forth 'conquering to conquer'. This will culminate in the situation described by one of the seven angels who said: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

Thus in summing up the first Seal with the White horse and its rider, one may see that it has a twofold meaning. In the first instance, it depicts the continuity of Israel through the Christian dispensation until the Coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ – the broadest sweep of history into what is today the future. In the second instance, it has its near fulfilment in the depiction of the Imperial Roman Empire in its heyday providing the guide-lines to the passage of time as it is manifest in developing secular history. As will be seen in the unsealing of the book, history flows from the Revelation in such clear and concise symbolism that none may doubt that the Lord is providing all the direction necessary for men to repent for surely the 'Day of the Lord' approaches.

### *THE RED HORSE*

"And when he had opened the second seal . . . there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth and that they should kill one another and there was given unto him a great sword." No matter in which way one may look at the story of the Seals of the Revelation, it is an inescapable fact that, having been introduced to the White horse and his rider with its symbolism of triumph and dominion, the second horse, Red in colour, accompanied by words which indicate civil war, surely indicates a process of disintegration.

As one stands almost two thousand years in time away from the scene on the isle of Patmos and with the wealth of historical records readily to hand, it is comparatively easy to follow, not only the symbolism employed, but the actual course of history as it was foretold and as it was revealed.

The Imperial Roman Empire very definitely achieved a dominion

and general state of existence summed up by historians as 'The Golden Age of Rome'. Having achieved extensive frontiers, the Empire entered into an eighty-year period during which Roman civilisation was guarded by disciplined valour, gentle but nevertheless the powerful influence of laws and the image of a free constitution. The Roman Senate possessed the sovereign authority although it fell to the Emperors to be the executive powers of government. During an eighty-year period, i.e., from A.D. 98 to 180, the *status quo* was maintained by the Emperors Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian and the Antonines all of whom looked upon the matter of civil administration as a sacred trust. Such was their diligence, that no breath of civil unrest is recorded and until the appearance of Commodus, no hint of internal strife was evident.

In the Second Seal, the phraseology used is such that one cannot mistake the implication of civil war for the rider was given power to 'take peace from the earth', i.e., disrupt the prevailing order, which would have as a consequence, internal strife in which the people would 'kill one another'. In the recorded history of Commodus, the son of Marcus, one is able to see the precise picture as revealed by the Red horse enacted on the stage of Roman history.

At the outset, it should be noted that Marcus, the father of Commodus, was a man of the most amiable character who, while maintaining the rigid discipline of the Stoics, had one failing in that in the unsuspecting goodness of his heart, he could not see wrong in anyone. His wife, Faustina, the daughter of Pius, was as subtle as Marcus was solid. From the historical record, it would appear that Marcus was the only man in the whole Roman Empire who seemed ignorant or insensible to the irregularities of his wife — a state of bliss which crystallized into folly when Marcus requested the Senate to declare her a goddess. This was agreed to and Faustina was represented in her temples with the attributes of Juno, Venus and Ceres.

The family background is given in order that one may appreciate how it was that a son of such a virtuous father could be capable of such vices which are historically associated with him. Marcus spared nothing in the education of his son and the subsequent events in the life of Commodus reveal that artificial education cannot displace the factors of heredity. As a youth, Commodus was weak and timid relying heavily on others for direction. Having been endowed by nature with a weak and wicked disposition, he became the pawn of his attendants who gradually corrupted his mind. His dependence on others became a drug and he refused to take any initiative on his own with others ever encouraging him to acts of cruelty until it became the ruling passion in

his life. At the age of fifteen, Commodus was elevated to full participation of the Imperial power and history records a long list of distasteful escapades in which he was immersed in blood and luxury.

On succeeding to the throne (A.D. 180), he was embarrassed with the command of not only a prodigious army but a mighty Empire. He had no competitor for the throne, he inherited no internal problem – he had truly inherited the Golden Age of Rome. His boredom was soon evident in the negligence of the public administration and the general breakdown in Roman discipline. The army began to lose its efficacy with desertions taking place almost daily and such was the loss of discipline that instead of fleeing to some other country to be lost to recapture, the deserters formed themselves into bands which preyed on the highways and ultimately formed themselves into an army which plundered with impunity.

The storm was growing within the Empire and the general populace was beginning to feel the effects of Commodus on the throne which made for great insecurity within Rome itself. Discounting qualifications, Commodus raised a Phrygian slave to the exalted position of his right-hand man and henceforth his actions were directed by Cleander. Lacking the qualities of a Roman, Cleander encouraged Commodus to divest Rome of the mechanics of its greatness, the position of Consul, Patrician or Senator being offered for sale at a price. Such was Cleander's influence that Gibbon wrote of the general state of Roman society in these words: "In the lucrative provincial employments, the minister shared with the governor the spoils of the people. The execution of the laws was venal and arbitrary. A wealthy criminal might obtain, not only the reversal of the sentence by which he was justly condemned; but might likewise inflict whatever punishment he pleased on the accuser, the witnesses, and the judge."

Such was the beginning of the decline of Rome which indeed took peace from the earth. To counter the smouldering embers of revolt, Cleander urged Commodus to include among the Praetorian guards, people from the barbarians who could be relied on to execute their duties without any compunction dictated by loyalty to Rome. In the passage of time, Commodus abandoned the reins of Empire concentrating his powers on the unbounded licence of indulging his sensual appetite, being guided in the matters of state by those around him.

History has preserved a long list of consular senators who were put to death on the least pretext and Commodus, a dispassionate shedder of the blood of the noblest families in Rome, ended his life as he

had those of others. Marcia, the favourite concubine of the Emperor, poisoned Commodus but such was the hatred of the people, that one of the inmates of the household could not wait to see him die and so rushed to his couch and strangled him. Thus ended thirteen years of tyranny and Commodus, the son of Marcus, was ignominiously buried in an unmarked grave.

Those involved in the death of Commodus – it is clearly evident that it was not a spontaneous action – had already chosen a new Emperor, one Pertinax, whose record of fidelity to the Roman Empire was unquestioned. He strove to reverse the damage done by Commodus but to no avail. The Empire was declining but worse still, the people of the Empire were reacting to a decade of degradation and violence knew no bounds. The phrase recorded in the second Seal “. . . that they should kill one another” became a very real experience in Rome during the years which followed the death of Commodus. The Praetorian guards, prominent during the reign of Commodus, created more civil strife by brutally murdering Pertinax and so plunging the Empire into chaos and giving a very real meaning to the phrase “. . . and there was given to him a great sword.”

The dual fulfilment of the symbolism of the Red horse and rider will be discussed at a later stage when the symbolism of the horse departs from the revelation of the Seals. As has been intimated previously, while in the main one may see the development in Roman history in the symbolism of the horses, the Israel association with it is equally real. Thus the Red horse and its application to some portion of Israel history cannot be ruled out but in order to present clarity in continuity, it is intended to pursue the one aspect of prophetic fulfilment as it concerns the Roman world until the symbolism of the horses ceases.

### **THE BLACK HORSE**

“And when he had opened the third seal . . . I beheld and lo, a black horse; and he that sat upon him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice say, A measure of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and wine . . .” The colour black is, of course, the opposite to the colour white and it is logical to conclude that the events depicted in the Black horse symbolism should be the antithesis of those of the White horse. The Red horse, as has been seen, indicated the internal strife and civil war occasioned by the despotic rule of an Emperor who abandoned the principle of discipline and dissipated the authority of civil administration. Notwithstanding sincere efforts to correct the effects

of maladministration, the situation gradually worsened until, in the general economy of Rome, the spectre of depression was seen.

The voice which spoke in the context of the Black horse drew attention to the need for stability in the cost structure of essential commodities – a statement which must inevitably lead the student to consider the financial structure of the Roman Empire. Rome was the great city in which was centred all the opulence and luxury which was afforded by those far-off times. Through a thousand channels, merchandise of every type flowed into the city and it is from this that one is able to appreciate in some small measure, the type of financial structure which characterised the Roman way of life.

The rate of customs varied considerably according to the value of the commodity, some authorities claiming that it ranged from one-eighth to one-fortieth of the saleable value. However, it has been suggested that essential products were treated to a light duty whereas luxury items became very costly. Preference was given to articles produced or manufactured by the labour of Empire subjects while commodities imported from Arabia and India were almost taxed out of existence. The historian Pliny observed that Indian commodities sold in Rome fetched a price one hundred per cent higher than the original value and that among imports from Eastern suppliers from which much revenue was derived was cinnamon, myrrh, pepper, ginger, the whole range of aromatics, precious stones, leather, cottons, silks, ebony and ivory.

It was during the period of attempted reconstruction after the civil wars that the Roman population was hit by what could be called a capital gains tax although this was limited to all legacies and inheritances and subject to a five per cent taxation. This was imposed to pay for the 'mercenaries' who were hired to deal with the deteriorating situation within the Empire. The Emperor Caracalla found himself in the invidious position of receiving further demands from his army and levied further taxes, increasing the tax burden of legacies and inheritances by a further five per cent. This was not the only additional burden imposed on Roman citizens for Caracalla finds special mention in the annals of Roman history for his complete subjugation of the Empire to his bills of taxation. He imposed a land-tax, a capitation, i.e., the levying of tax by the head upon each person, and extortionate duties on corn, wine, oil and meat. All in all, the history of the Roman Empire between the period 200 A.D. to 250 A.D. followed, in minute detail, the provisions of the third Seal with its Black horse and rider.

## THE PALE HORSE

“And when he had opened the fourth seal . . . and behold, a pale horse and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed . . . and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth; to kill with the sword and with hunger and with death and with the beasts of the earth.” That the history of the Imperial Roman Empire followed the symbolism of the first three horses so exactly is sufficient encouragement to look at the next development which took place and, true to the depiction of the ‘pale horse’, one finds famine, decay and death. Edward Gibbon, whose *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* could have been a commentary on the first four Seals of Revelation had he been predisposed to accept the Christian faith, sums up the situation in the following words: “During that calamitous period (250 A.D.—300 A.D.—Ed.), every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and final moments of its dissolution. This gloomy period of history has been decorated with inundations, earthquakes, praetor natural darkness . . . But a long and general famine was a calamity of a more serious kind. It was the inevitable consequence of oppression which extirpated the produce of the present and the hope of future harvests. Famine is almost always followed by epidemical diseases, the effect of scanty and unwholesome food. Other causes contributed to the famous plague which raged without interruption in every province, every city and almost every family of the Roman Empire. During some time, five thousand persons daily died in Rome; and many towns that had escaped the barbarians, were entirely depopulated.”

While this picture is adequate to establish the veracity of the contention that the ‘pale horse’ was indeed a graphic description of the disintegration and decay of Imperial Rome, further corroborations are found in a general survey of Rome during that period. During the early years, i.e., A.D. 250 to 300, the Goths began an invasion of the provinces of the Roman Empire and only retreated after extracting a promised annual payment of tribute. A second invasion by the Goths further devastated the eastern portion of the Empire to be followed after a few years by the third invasion. At this time there were general disorders in Sicily, open rebellion in Alexandria and revolt in most parts of the Empire. It was at this stage that the famine occasioned by an acute food shortage added pestilence to the list of misfortunes now crowding in on the decaying Empire.



Desperate efforts in Rome to halt the erosion of the Empire were undermined from within for the incredible happened. Individuals sought, through the most fantastic of gymnastics, to seize the throne. Oblivious to the fact that the throne itself was in jeopardy and that the Empire was crumbling around their ears, the intrigues, assassinations and blatant corruption practised by the pretenders makes for an incredible story of imbecility.

However, such was the extent of the Roman Empire that notwithstanding all this, it managed to survive although the old constitution presided over by Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian had come to mean absolutely nothing. Government now developed almost entirely upon the Emperor who, although maintaining the Senate, did so merely as a form. In the year 275 A.D., Aurelian, who was by no means an Emperor of great stature, was forced to suppress a sedition at Rome – an ominous sign indicating the encroaching rot which had set in on the Empire. Subsequent to his death by assassination, three Emperors ruled in quick succession, the history of which may be likened to the throes of an animal prior to its death. There was a stability in government but the rot which had set in assured that Rome would never again be the Empire it was during the Golden Age symbolised by the White horse.

Diocletian was elected Emperor in 285 A.D. and the circumstances of this has a direct bearing on the change to be noted in the context of the Seals. Significantly, the Horse, the symbolism of military activity in rulership disappears from the story – a fact which finds an explanation in Diocletian's election to the throne in Rome. *Diocletian was a statesman not a warrior.* His predecessors, notwithstanding deviations into the sphere of debauchery, were all cast in the mould of national heroes whose claims to fame were always in the context of military exercise. Diocletian, however, born of a father and mother who had been slaves to a Roman senator, distinguished himself as a diplomat rather than a soldier. He was promoted to consulship and in his diplomacy in the context of the wars with Persia showed that he had qualities in diplomatic leadership which were sorely needed at a time when the Empire was disintegrating. He was thus elected to the now vacant throne in Rome and he immediately set about stemming the tide of decay. He divided the Empire into four sections placing his associates Maximian, Galerius and Constantius, in the position of Emperor in the other three and then proceeded to embark on reforms which, though valiant, could not avert the symbolism embodied in the 'pale' horse and Imperial Rome passed into oblivion, a saga written in history and pre-written in the first four Seals of the Revelation of the Lord Jesus

Christ.

### A SIGNIFICANT DUAL FULFILMENT

Before passing on, it should be noted that in the Fifth Seal there is no evidence of the symbolism of the 'horse' and prior to a consideration of this fact, it is necessary to return to a peculiarity which is missed by many when considering the second or Red horse.

"And there went forth another horse that was red, and power was given to him . . ."

It will be noted that in connection with the second or Red horse, the Scripture positively states that there went forth *another horse* that was Red – it was not necessarily the same as the White horse but another one. While this point may, at first glance, appear irrelevant it is significant that in respect of the remaining horses the wording merely concentrates on the change in colour whereas in respect of the second, it very plainly refers to *another horse*. This point, minor as it appears, should be sufficient to encourage a second look at the Red horse to discover if, on the stage of history, there is a dual fulfilment of the symbolism. As has been noted previously and in respect of the White horse, there is a very definite dual fulfilment in this – one in respect of Imperial Rome and the other in the context of Israel, God's servant nation. That appertaining to the Red horse, too, could have a similar implication.

Prior to considering *the events* related to the Red horse and its rider in the dual aspect of fulfilment of the symbolism, it would serve a useful purpose to investigate the many occasions on which the colour red is used in Scripture and the context in which this appears. The old notion that the name 'Adam' was the first Scriptural reference to the colour red because he was made of the 'dust of the earth' which was supposed to have been red in colour has, of course, no foundation at all. The name Adam merely means a description in which the colour of blood is diffused by the skin thus presenting a fresh and fleshly hue. It is not associated with the actual colour of red as this is commonly understood.

The first reference to red does not appear in the Bible until the birth of Esau and of which it is stated: "And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau" (Gen. 25:25). The actual name was not given because of the redness but rather because of the rough and wild appearance of the child. It was at a much later stage that this name was changed to Edom meaning 'red'



the Ordinance, ".....in Isaac shall thy seed be called"

and was occasioned by the event in which he bartered the birthright for 'red pottage' (Gen. 25:30). At first glance this would be a rather meagre excuse for the changing of the name of Jacob's twin but when one considers the many traditions which surround the name of Esau which appear in both Arab and Jewish reference books one may appreciate that the account in Genesis 25 set the seal on Esau's association with the colour red. In the traditions, Esau showed an early predisposition toward blood-letting whether this was in the sphere of hunting animals or preying on passing caravans and in consequence he was referred to as 'the bloody man'. He is recorded as being a selfish man, determined to have his own way in everything even at the expense of running contrary to his father's wishes with passion governing his life to a very marked degree.

As one turns to the Scripture, one finds that, as a rule, red is equated with selfishness, covetousness, a passionate life and sin (Isa. 1:18). If credence may be given to the traditions which surround the life of Esau then one may see why his name was changed to Edom signifying red in all its meaning. However, there may be some who are tempted to claim that Esau could not be guilty of sin for this is very definitely defined as being a 'transgression of the law' (I John 3:4) and Esau and his descendants were not present when the Law was given at Sinai. This is correct – as far as it goes but it does not take into account the background story which starts with Abraham. Abraham, it will be recalled, revealed a particular predisposition toward obedience and this was the basis on which the Abrahamic covenant hinged. "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, and *my laws*" (Gen. 26:5). It should be noted that these laws were not those conceived by human society at that time but those given by God at some time thus far undisclosed. That Abraham would pass these laws down to his progeny is assured when one reads the soliloquy of the Lord recorded in Genesis 18:17-19: ". . . For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." In the light of this, Esau, being descended through Abraham's son Isaac, would be well informed as to what constituted the laws of God and any violation of these would constitute 'sin' in the accepted meaning of the word.

A point of great interest emerges here in that while Esau was conversant with the Law, neither he nor his descendants were given the Ordinances whereby reconciliation could be wrought through the

shedding of the blood of substitutionary sacrifice. This was 'the law that was added' and of which Esau knew nothing and therefore remained dead in his sins.

As Esau and his descendants began to develop into nationhood through the assimilation with the pre-Adamite Horite people. God's Israel people too, were developing into national proportions and it was at that stage that red in terms of blood introduced the fact of substitutionary offering and in which the blood of the slain lamb caused the angel of death to pass over. It is not intended here to enlarge on this subject – it is surely well known – but merely to emphasise that the colour *red* had, as one of its meanings, the fact of substitution.

As one passes on through the Old Testament record, one finds that the Esau characteristic which wrought the change of name to Edom, was passed on to his progeny for in the Babylonian onslaught on Jerusalem the Edomites were particularly vicious, to such an extent that the captives in Babylon made special mention of it. The prayer of those captives, while being simplicity itself, provides food for thought in respect of the Edomite attack on Jerusalem. "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Psa. 137:7). Even with the demise of the kingdom of Judah, the Edomites were not at rest for as one considers the history of the remnant which was given the mandate to rebuild the city and the Temple one finds the re-emergence of Edomites who slowly but surely gained dominance over true Judah and eventually became the rulers of the land known as Judaea. After almost two millennia, Esau had fulfilled the role seen by Isaac who had indicated that by his sword, Esau would live and that eventually he would take the dominion which had been given to Jacob and would then break the restraining hand which had been a burden to him (Gen. 27:40-41).

While the true progeny of Jacob remained in control of Jerusalem the witness to God's Truth would be maintained but this was not the intention of Esau whom God hated (Mal. 1:3). By this time Esau had supplanted Jacob and was passing himself off as the people of God's Covenant. It is small wonder that the Lord denounced them in such terms as to be an unmistakable indictment against them for their spurious claims (John 8:37-47).

Here, then, one may see the symbolism of the Red horse coming to the fore for as has been seen, Edom means 'red' and red is also associated with the fact of substitution, a situation which Edom contrived to bring about when they displaced true Israel and presented

themselves as the Covenant heirs. It would be labouring the point to re-emphasise the many occasions on which the Lord charged the Jews with nullifying the Word of God and so the subject is left with the brief comment that that which has been written above explains the cryptic remark of the Lord when He said: "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews (Judaean), and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2:9).

Here indeed is a charge which vindicates the contention that the true heirs to the land of promise had been displaced by a counterfeit known as the 'synagogue of Satan' and which had been substituted for true Israel. In murdering the Messiah of Israel they cried: "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25) in typical Edomite passion thus staining Esau's progeny with the colour red and marking them as the anti-Christ adversaries ever seeking to expand their dominion.

The events associated with the Red horse are mainly warlike in nature and true to that which has been written above, the Jews wielded the sword and the tongue and killed and were killed. The seditions which raged in Jerusalem just prior to its destruction in A.D. 70 were indeed a graphic fulfilment of the Red horse but subsequent history is even more illuminating. To most people, the slaughter which took place in Jerusalem in A.D. 70 put an end to the aspirations of the inhabitants of Judaea whereas history records just the reverse. A few years after the Revelation was given to John and during the reign of Trajan, *Dion. Cassius* relates: "The Jews about Cyrene slew of the Romans and Greeks 220 000 men with great cruelty; and again in Egypt and Cyprus 240 000 men." The Roman reaction to this was that Trajan sent Lucius and other generals against them also "Marcius Turbo with great forces by sea and by land, who in various battles slew many myriads of Jews." Other historians writing of that period noted that the Jews went beserk wherever they were and turned on all and sundry: ". . . the Jews with incredible commotion, made wild as it were, by rage, rose at once in different parts of the earth. Throughout all Libya they raged the fiercest wars against the inhabitants and the country was almost desolated" (*Anc. Hist. Univ.*, Reign of Trajan).

While all this was taking place, Palestine appears to have remained in a state of submission to Rome as well it might after the awful slaughter of A.D. 70. A slow trickle of Jews began to re-enter Palestine but these had neither the inclination nor the means to bring about an open confrontation with the Roman authorities. It is not without significance that a 16th century historian wrote of Hadrian's treatment of these Jews that he treated them '. . . as imposters and mounte-

banks showing his dislike for them by building a temple to Jupiter on the spot where Solomon's Temple formerly stood.' The use of the word 'mountebank' in this context is rather significant in that it means "an itinerant quack who from a platform appealed to his audience by means of stories and tricks."

In the year 132, the 'imposters' found a leader in the person of Bar-Cochab who claimed to be the Messiah and in the subsequent revolt, the full significance of the Red horse is made clear. The statistics are briefly summed up as being 50 strong fortresses demolished, 985 towns burned and 580 000 men killed with uncounted multitudes perishing from famine and sickness and an equal number captured and sold as slaves (*Anc. Univ. Hist.*, Reign of Hadrian).

Thus, notwithstanding the accuracy of fulfilment of the second Seal in Roman history, that appertaining to Esau—Edom is a very graphic indication of the pattern of dual fulfilments in the Revelation. The association of Esau with the colour red and the history of his progeny in pursuit of displacing Jacob and substituting themselves in the role of the Covenant people; the fanaticism of frustration at the Roman disruption of their plans and the subsequent blood-baths — all these add weight to the contention that the Red horse symbolism incorporates the ramifications of he who is claimed to be the 'end of the world' while Jacob is said to be the 'beginning of it that followeth'.

One could, of course, project the Red horse into the present day for the red shadows of Communism originally initiated by the Jew Karl Marx, have fallen on almost every country in the world. This anti-God system has certainly taken peace from the world; has initiated civil wars and has fomented national and international strife resulting in wars in which the metaphorical 'swords' are the modern armaments of destruction. While the red flag continues to wave in the winds of Edomite ambition to gain complete dominion over the whole world, the Word and Purpose of God, unchanging and eternal, carries its assurance that Esau-Edom shall not achieve his goal. The *ersatz* state in Palestine, wrenched in typical Edomite vein from the hands of Ephraim-Israel in 1948, is hurtling to its rendezvous with destiny — a rendezvous elucidated by the Prophet Ezekiel in dramatic words: ". . . there, the Lord the Eternal declares, I speak in hot indignation of the riff-raff of the pagans and especially of Edom, of all Edom, for taking my land to be their own, exulting in malicious spite, to pray upon its pastures. Therefore, prophesy about the land of Israel and tell the mountains, hills, watercourses, and valleys that the Lord the Eternal declares: I speak

in indignation and in fury, because you have had to bear the taunting of the nations. Therefore, says the Lord Eternal, I swear that the nations round you shall have to bear taunts when they are ruined. But you shall put out your branches O mountains of Israel, you shall bear fruit for Israel my people; for soon they will be coming back . . .” (Ezek. 36:5-8, Moffat).

While many are quick to claim that the Israeli State fulfils the predicted return of Israel to the land, they forget that while the return of true Israel is foreseen, so, too, is *that of Edom*. The last Book of the Old Testament plainly reveals this in terms which are unmistakable in their application. “Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts. They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever” (Mal. 1:4).

Thus, while there is every justification for projecting the Red horse and its symbolism into the present day, one should remember that the second Seal is not an end in itself – it is followed by others and by reason of the continuation of the horse symbolism, one should seek historical continuity of events. “And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine” (Rev. 6:5-6). The lesson of the Old Testament Scriptures in terms of the meaning of the colour black is most significant. It is indicative of self-indulgence in sin and emblematic of luxury. The story of Ephraim when the birthright tribe had departed from the Laws of God is summed up by blackness for in essence it is stated: “Ephraim is a cake not turned” (Hos. 7:8) and consequently turned black. The many statements recorded by the prophets from this point provide the guidelines to what is implied in the symbolism of the Black horse and his rider. “He is a merchant, *the balances of deceit* are in his hand” (Hos. 12:7); “. . . making the ephah small, and the shekel great and *falsifying the balances by deceit . . .*” (Amos 8:5). “Shall I count them pure with the *wicked balances*, and with the *bag of deceitful weights?*” (Micah 6:11).

The whole theme associated with the colour black in the Old Testament has to do with exploitation of merchandise and, in keeping with this, the Black horse of the third Seal draws attention to the economics of everyday life. The voice from the midst of the four beasts called for a return to the principle of ‘the labourer is worthy of his hire’



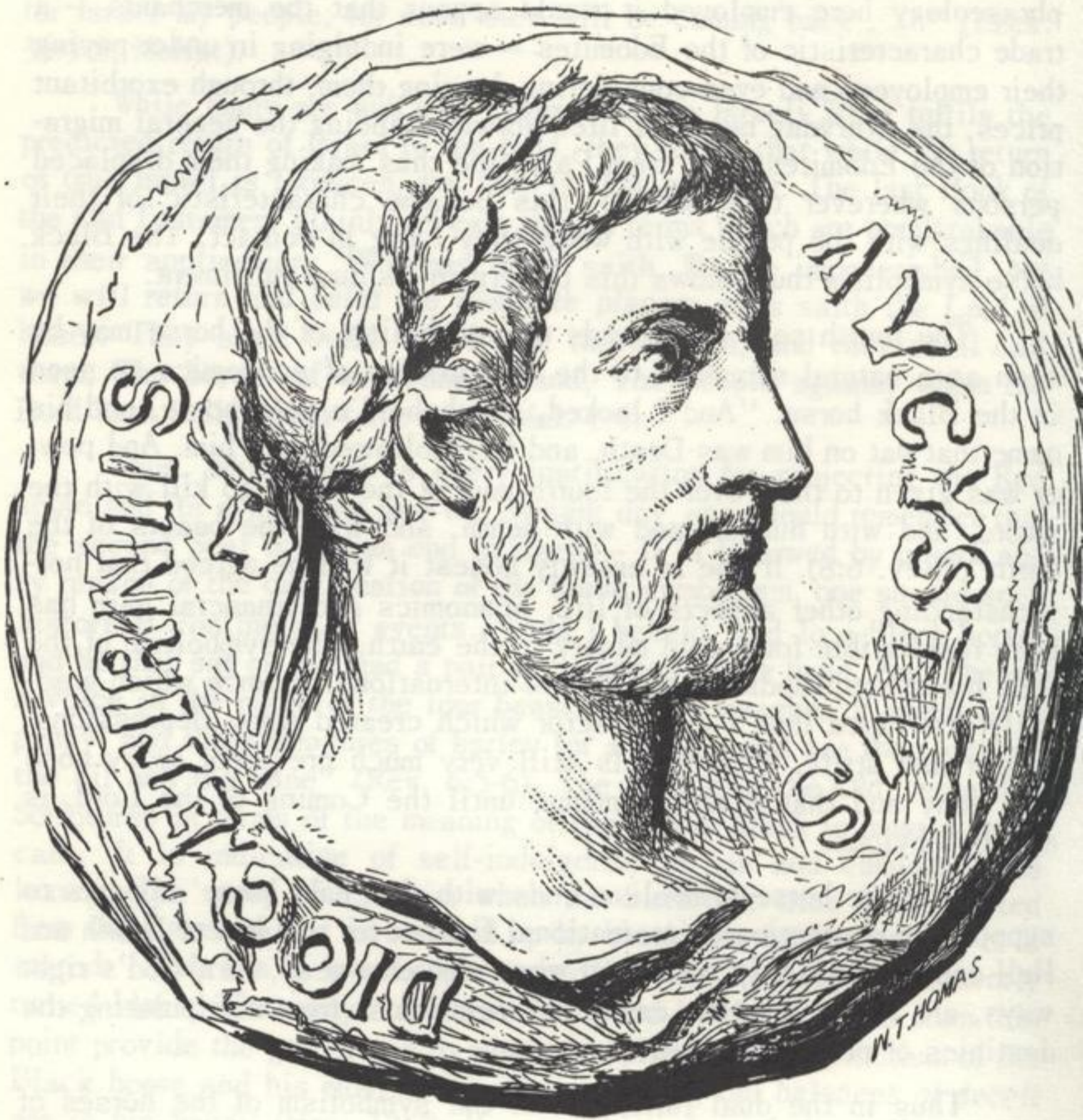
which implies that economic exploitation was taking place. The 'measure' or *choenix* of corn according to Herodotus was as much as was needed by a normal healthy person and the 'penny' or *denarius* was as much money as a working man could earn in a single day. From the phraseology here employed it would appear that the merchants – a trade characteristic of the Edomites – were indulging in under-paying their employees and even considering denying them, through exorbitant prices, the everyday needs of life. Notwithstanding the general migration of the Edomites away from Palestine thus making them displaced persons wherever they settled, this became characteristic of their dealings with the people with whom they came in contact. The Black horse symbolism thus shows this pattern in its dual fulfilment.

The fourth seal which ends the symbolism of the horse may be seen as a natural sequence to the exploitation of economics as seen in the Black horse. "And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given to them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6:8). If one is entirely honest it will be agreed that notwithstanding other aspects of life, economics and financial gain has been responsible for untold misery in the earth. The symbolism of the Pale horse could indicate the rise of international finance which gradually developed into a major factor which created wars, depressions, hunger and strife. That this is still very much prevalent today none will deny and that it will continue until the Coming of the Lord, is equally obvious.

That the horse symbolism ends with the 'pale horse' appears to support the contention of international finance for the grip of Death and Hell can and will only be broken when righteousness, i.e., God's right ways, are returned to the earth and men desist from manipulating the destinies of people for their own gain.

Thus in the dual fulfilment of the symbolism of the horses of different colours, one is able to follow the course of history as it is exposed by the light of the 'sure word of prophecy'.

\* \* \* \* \*



Diocletian

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FIFTH SEAL AND CHANGE

*“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held”* (Rev. 6:9).

In the primary fulfilments of the first four seals, it has been noted that the horses depicted four distinct phases in the Imperial Roman Empire covering the periods from Domitian in A.D. 96 to Diocletian in 300. The symbolism of the horse disappears in the fifth seal – an event which calls for attention and one finds this having its meaning in the person and reign of Diocletian. As has been noted previously, this Emperor differed from his predecessors in that as they were all depicted as national heroes based on their military prowess, Diocletian was a statesman indulging in diplomacy at a time when the Empire was disintegrating.

This fifth seal, in terms of time, runs parallel with the events depicted in the message to the assembly at Smyrna and in which they were told: “. . . and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). As has been noted in the historical events of the fourth century, this was literally fulfilled in ten literal years in which Diocletian yielded to the pressure of his pagan wife and persecuted Christianity in an unprecedented manner. Those numbers who were killed in this have no epitaph other than the record now in the fifth seal and who are depicted as being ‘under the altar’ and crying: “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”

As has been emphasised previously, the Book of the Revelation is written in symbolism and metaphor and the fifth seal is no exception to this. It will be recalled that Abel, whom Cain slew, provides a graphic illustration in such a context as to make the vision which John saw run uniformly with the whole body of revealed Scripture. In that

event it will be noted that 'Abel's blood' cried out unto the Lord and not Abel who was literally dead and hidden beneath the earth. In similar vein, the fact that many had suffered death under the Roman persecutions was itself a plea to Almighty God to bring an end to the bloodshed and tribulation. Thus, in the same manner as Abel's blood metaphorically cried out in supplication, in like manner the blood of those who suffered martyrdom in Diocletian's mad ten-year spree, cried out to the Lord.

The answer to the supplication of events was soon forthcoming and is recorded in the next, i.e., the sixth seal. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind."

There are, of course, literal earthquakes recorded in the Bible and one is reminded of that which occurred at the time when Elijah was on Horeb (I Kings 19:11) and also when the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary (Matt. 27:51) and also on the morning of His Resurrection (Matt. 28:2). However, the word 'earthquake' is also used in many places, as indeed are all the words of the sixth seal, to denote political upheaval and revolution. For instance, in Jeremiah 4:23,24 and 28 is the history of the overthrow of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the language used here to describe this is almost identical with that in Revelation. Other instances are: Isaiah 24:23; 34:4; Ezekiel 32:7-8; Hosea 10:7-8. Thus the words of the sixth seal in describing the darkening of the heavens to the accompaniment of the earthquake is, on the authority of the Old Testament, synonymous with political change and violent upheaval of the then prevailing system.

If this contention is to have any validity it should surely be borne out in history and particularly the history of events in Rome attendant on the passing of the ten-year period of the intense persecution of Diocletian. The era was begun in A.D. 303 and logically it should have ended in 313. In this year Constantine succeeded Diocletian and the persecutions were ended. This in itself became the starting point of the sixth seal for with his conversion to Christianity the whole Roman civilisation underwent such a change as to constitute a metaphorical earthquake.

For three centuries the Roman Emperor had been the Pontifex Maximus – the head priest of heathen paganism, the 'sun' around which the Empire revolved. With the advent of Constantine, the pagan 'sun'

was eclipsed, being replaced by the sign of the Cross which outshone and displaced the standards of paganism which embodied all the constellations. The edict of tolerance for Christians and his later edicts suppressing heathen sacrifices became the death-blow to paganism dealt by this new Emperor who calmly went about the business of dismantling the whole mechanism on which Imperial Rome had been built. Pagans were removed from office and replaced with those who professed the Christian faith until every responsible office in government was purged of those with pagan affiliations.

With the passing of Constantine, his legacy to Rome was the epitaph to Paganism as such, providing historians such as Edward Gibbon with an opportunity to describe it in words strangely reminiscent of the words recorded in the sixth seal. Gibbon wrote: "The ruin of paganism, in the age of Theodosius, is perhaps the only example of the total extirpation of any ancient and popular superstition and may therefore, deserve to be considered as a singular event in the history of the human mind. The ruin of the pagan religion is described by the Sophists as a dreadful and amazing prodigy, which covered the earth with darkness and restored the ancient dominion of chaos and of night." This latter phraseology may have been copied from the words of the Revelation so accurately does it depict the overthrow of paganism and the metaphorical earthquake which overtook the old Roman world. The pagan 'heavens' indeed became as 'sackcloth' departing as 'a scroll that is rolled up'.

The words of the people, crying in desperation, are recorded from the pagan standpoint in which panic-stricken inhabitants of the pagan empire saw the whole system crumbling with the ejection of one pagan official after the other. Gibbon again provides a fitting epilogue to this pagan downfall. "So rapid was the fall of paganism that only 28 years after the death of Theodosius (A.D. 395) its faint and minute vestiges were no longer visible to the eye of the legislator."

As one passes from this account of the great political earthquake which overtook the ancient Roman Empire, the Revelation draws attention to the next development which took place and which today may be verified by history. "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." While the convulsions depicted in the earthquake and the darkening of the pagan dominion over Rome gave way to a period of tranquil calm, four entities were ever straining on the borders in the Goths, the Huns, the Vandals and the Saracens. History records that in 322

the Goths made a tremendous attempt to reduce the Roman Empire which was then in the grip of the new reforms instituted by Constantine. They were repulsed in this but continued to make sporadic raids – indeed an ever-present menace on the borders, well described by Gibbon in the words: “The threatening tempests of the barbarians which so soon subverted the foundations of Roman greatness, hung suspended on the frontiers.” Following in historical continuity, is this not precisely the implication found in the holding back of the four winds recorded in the seventh chapter of Revelation?

The loosing of these ‘winds’ will be seen in the era of the Trumpets but for the present it suffices to note that a calm descended on the Roman world. The purpose for this is stated as being the ‘sealing’ of the ‘servants of our God in their foreheads’, the number of which was 144 000 of ‘all the tribes of the children of Israel’. This period is associated with the ‘Pergamos’ era of Church history in which, as has been seen, the Gospel of Christ was ‘married to power’. The message to that Church in that era was one which indicated that it was an accusation of insincerity and expediency. For a fuller appreciation of this the relevant portions should be re-read particularly verses 14 and 15 of the second chapter.

There can be no doubt that expediency played an important part in the events in Rome during the reign of Constantine. All official posts were given to those professing the Christian faith and in order to obtain some of these ‘plums’ many professed a conversion which was an expedient facade. Churches – as buildings – sprang up by the hundred and so-called conversions totalled an incredible number with public repudiations of the abominations of paganism becoming commonplace. The whole situation was most enticing for the Israel people who had suffered so much persecution at the hands of the Roman Emperors and who now saw a glimmer of hope in a ‘converted’ Roman world. All in all, in this period of quiet, it was the searching of the Holy Spirit seeking out the truly converted as against those who merely professed a conversion for the sake of personal advancement.

It should be noted that those to be sealed at that time, were called ‘the servants of our God’ and this is an expression reserved for Israel (Ex. 32:13; Lev. 25:55; Deut. 32:36,43; Isa.: 65:15; Dan. 3:26). The whole subject of the 144 000 is simply the sealing of true Israel at that time against the insidious and certainly spurious form of religion which had now been taken on by those who were never commissioned by the Lord to be His witnesses. It is, of course, held by some that this number has to do with the 144 000 individuals witnessing to

God in the present generation. However, in the Biblical and chronological context, this sealing took place during the period when the four angels held back the four winds which blew on the Roman earth. Merely making such a statement is not proof in itself but when it is confirmed by historical events, it takes on an authority which is infinitely greater than doctrine.

During the life of Theodosius who succeeded Constantine, a strange and inexplicable peace settled on the Roman world – a peace which lasted ‘about the space of half an hour’. In order to show chronological continuity it is necessary to pass to the 8th chapter and the loosing of the winds held by the four angels. “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. I saw seven angels and to them were given seven trumpets. And another came and stood at the altar having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense . . . with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God. And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar and cast it upon the earth: and there were voices and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake.”

### *THE TRUMPET*

Unlike the opening of the previous seals, the 7th seal is not followed by a vision foreshadowing some great historical epoch or crisis. It is merely a prelude to a new series of visions under the symbolism of trumpets. The ‘trumpet’ is symbolic of judgment and judgment was about to fall on those who had not received the mark of God in their forehead, i.e., had not been sealed. Thus one has firstly the holding back of the winds and the space of time to be followed by judgment which is certainly evident in the history of events as they transpired during the reign of Theodosius. During this pause, John saw the vision of the censer-angel which explains why judgment was about to fall – a pause which immediately recalls the Pergamos period and the illegal marriage of Christianity to Roman paganism.

The symbolism of the prelude to the seventh seal is unmistakable in that it directs one back to the Old Testament when, under the Old Covenant and in the context of Tabernacle worship, the high priest stood at the altar of sacrifice and there received gifts of incense from the children of Israel as part of their worship. The incense was not received by God unless it had been burned upon the altar and it was the function of the high priest to offer this on the golden altar before

the Holy of Holies. In John's vision, he saw this ordinance as it manifests itself in the Roman form of Christianity but he saw, too, the heavenly rejection of a ritual which had no validity and a practice which was as spurious as was the pretence of conversion.

The Bible makes it amply clear that priests as such are invalid and that since Calvary, there is only one Mediator between man and God and that is Christ Jesus the Lord. The seeking of mediation by so-called saints, martyrs or priests is thus a rejection of Biblical fact and, as such, is utterly rejected from on High. The elevation of martyrs to saints, the endowing of relics with supernatural power and the creation of shrines where formerly dwelt martyred Christians, were and are all forms of pseudo-Christianity and are totally rejected by God. It is interesting to note an historical comment on the situation as it affected Roman worship, written by Mosheim in his *Ecclesiastical History* and in which he observes: "Divine worship was now rising from one degree of pomp to another and degenerating more and more into a gaudy spectacle, only proper to attract the stupid admiration of a gazing populace."

Thus, as historical evidence mounts, one is able to see the unfolding of the Revelation which the Lord gave to John on the isle of Patmos – a revelation of history in its uninterrupted flow exposing the depths of Satan's ramification in presenting a form of godliness with associations which have their roots in abominable paganism. The 'Pergamos' story exposes this apostasy, the sixth seal re-emphasises it and the seventh carries the history on from that time.

As has been stated, the trumpet is symbolic of judgment and one may quite easily appreciate judgment on the perversion of Truth and the assumption of the Office of which the Lord Jesus Christ alone is the High Priest. It will be noted that Divine judgment fell in 'threes' and it is not without significance that three entities – Goth, Arab and Turk – each in turn invaded and scourged a 'third' part of the Empire thus covering the whole of it. From secular history one is able to see that the *land*, the *sea*, and the *rivers* of Rome all had their share of the invasions by the three entities mentioned above and it serves a very useful purpose to follow these as they form part of the judgments embodied in the Trumpets of Revelation 8.

In Revelation 8:7 it will be noted that a 'third part of trees was burnt up' and in Gibbon's account of the Gothic invasion of Rome is a graphic description of the first Trumpet. The devastations and the massacres occasioned by the Gothic usage of fire in their onslaught is



a grim reminder of the first Trumpet of judgment. On no less than three distinct occasions did Alaric the Bold, the Gothic leader, besiege Rome itself until finally, in 410 he succeeded in sacking the city. The sweep of the Goths was like a fire devouring the land which was ravished in much the same manner as the modern scorched earth practises.

The second Trumpet of judgment then follows and, it will be noted, is applicable to the seas. The Vandals, a branch of the Goths, were prominent in this and began their rampage in Gaul and Spain and crossing to Africa, took Carthage in 439. Genseric, their leader, then embarked on a 30-year period of devastation of the Roman fleets in the Mediterranean and this destroyed the might of Rome at sea. Thus was fulfilled the second Trumpet of judgment, the third being directed against the 'rivers and the fountains of waters'. It will be noted that this judgment is meteoric in duration and finds the fullest explanation in the Hunnish invasion under Attila whose name was 'the scourge of God'. The sub-Alpine provinces in north Italy are the 'rivers and fountains of waters' which were the scenes of the rapid thrusts of the Huns.

In the fourth Trumpet (Rev. 8:12) one finds again the metaphorical language used in the sixth seal in which the heavenly bodies are darkened indicating the overthrow of the then existing form of government. In the fourth Trumpet one may see the overthrow of the ruling powers in the tottering Roman Empire. The first three Trumpets foreshadowed the rapid declension of the Empire — her territories ravaged, her maritime possessions destroyed and all that remained to her were empty titles of her former sovereignty. Under the fourth Trumpet this, too, disappears.

The political overthrow of the Western Roman Empire was accomplished by Odoacer, the king of the Heruli who deposed Romulus Augustus, the last of the Western Roman Emperors in 476 A.D. From this date, the insignia of Roman authority was transferred to Constantinople whence an attempt at resuscitation was made by Justinian the Byzantine king in his invasion of Italy and his overthrow of the Ostrogoths. However, Imperial Rome was nearing the end of its road and nothing could prevent its utter demise as prescribed in the judgment of the Trumpets. Papal Rome, on the other hand, was growing and beginning to exercise considerable influence which was to be felt by the world in a later stage of history. This, too, was seen by John many centuries before it transpired and he was enabled to write of it and to expose it as part of the system which was both anti-God and anti-Christ.



A CONQUEROR'S COIN, this eighth-century silver dirham was minted by the first Umayyad caliph of Spain. The inscriptions read, in part, "There is no god but Allah" and state that the piece—roughly equivalent to a shilling in size and value—was struck in *al-Andalus*, as the Arabs called their Spanish domain.

## THE DEATH THROES OF IMPERIAL ROME

### The First "Woe" – the Saracens

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

The first four 'trumpets' of the eighth chapter of the Revelation provide a graphic picture of the dying Roman Empire, the seat of which was removed from Rome to Constantinople. However, while Roman officialdom was transferred eastwards, a religio-political entity which began to rival that at Constantinople developed in Rome and was founded on a corruption of Biblical Christianity. At this time, i.e., the commencement of the seventh century, the Christianity in Rome was such that if Diocletian had been resurrected, he would have found that there had been no appreciable difference in the religious conviction of the people. Prayers were offered to so-called 'saints'; there was the public use of images; veneration of relics belonging to pious men was rife; the priests were urging conformity to their religious dictates – the alternative being Purgatory; the vow of celibacy was being enforced and the universal use of the Latin tongue in Divine service was, according to the priesthood, the only procedure acceptable to God. It was on this situation that the fifth 'trumpet' of judgment sounded and the first 'woe' fell.

From the general context of the first 'woe' it would appear that Roman officialdom in Constantinople was not the main recipient of this for the assault of the 'locusts' was directed against those who had 'not the seal of God in their foreheads'. From this, it is both logical and historical to infer that the 'woe' was within the context of a religious war.

#### *The 'locusts' identified by history*

In the Old Testament Scriptures the term 'locust' or 'grasshopper' is used to denote numerous armies or hosts of men (Jer. 46:23; Nah. 3:15-17; Deut. 28:38-42; Psa. 75:46, etc.). Locusts are thus symbolic of destruction although in the Revelation context this entity was commanded not to destroy but to 'torment' for 'five months' (Rev. 8:5). While in the sixth trumpet the avenging host is depicted as the 'river Euphrates' (verse 14), the fifth trumpet merely describes it as 'locusts' and one is thus thrown back on secular history in order to ascertain the identity of the symbolism used.

In 612, Mohammed proclaimed his mission to wield the Sword of Islam against the infidels and Saracens by the score rallied to his call and countless horsemen from the deserts of Arabia (the home of the scorpion and the locust) began a prolonged attack on Christendom. They overran the whole of the Roman Empire exercising dominion as far westward as Spain and North Africa – a dominion which lasted until the decisive battle of Tours in A.D. 732 when Charles Martel the Frank challenged the Saracens. This battle marked the beginning of the end of the Saracen exploit which culminated in 762 A.D.

This campaign of the Saracens lasted exactly one hundred and fifty years and one is confirmed in the belief that they may be identified with the 'locusts' by this particular period. It will be noted that the Scripture provides the period of 'five months' for their 'tormenting' (verse 5) and as a Biblical month was thirty days, five times that period would be one hundred and fifty days. Prophetically, a 'day is a year' (Ezek. 4:6) and one would be very sceptical indeed if one could find no correlation between the one hundred and fifty year expedition of the Saracens and that period mentioned in the first 'woe'.

Should one claim, however, that the Saracen invasion of the West was very convenient and that it need not necessarily provide the clue to the identity of the locusts, other aspects of these Saracens add weight to the contention. Locusts and scorpions are, of course, indigenous to Arabia but as one reads the further description of these invaders, the more the evidence mounts in support of the identity. "And the shapes of the locusts were like horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns of gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle" (verses 7-9).

"Crowns like gold". Pliny once wrote that the Arabs wore their hair long and uncut as a sign of their manhood and in the most characteristic of Arab poems – *Antar* – yellow turbans were considered by the people as individual 'crowns'. It was a common conviction among the Arabs that God had bestowed four peculiar things on them: that their yellow turbans should be instead of diadems; their tents instead of walls and houses; their swords instead of entrenchments and their poems instead of written law. From this may be seen that the 'crowns of gold' and 'hair as the hair of women' were the peculiar characteristic of the Arabs who, wielding the Sword of Islam, behaved as was prescribed of the 'locusts'.

“Breastplates of iron”. In the traditional Arabic poem *Antar* one finds the following description of the Arabian warrior: “A warrior immersed in steel armour . . . 15 000 men armed with cuirasses and well accoutred for war . . . They are clothed in armour and brilliant cuirasses . . . Out of the dust appear horsemen clad in iron.” In the Koran it is stated that among God’s gifts “God hath given you coats of mail to defend you in your wars.”

The wealth of evidence is endless supporting the contention that the first ‘woe’ in Revelation 9 is identifiable with the Saracen invasion and it would serve no useful purpose to labour the point here. It will suffice to recapitulate the highlights as they support the thesis. The first ‘woe’ was likened to ‘locusts’ whose function was to ‘torment’ – not kill – those of the Roman earth. Mohammed proclaimed his mission in 612 and by 713 the Saracenic hordes had conquered Spain. The Battle of Tours in 732 was the first real opposition met by these people and this, together with problems in Syria, became the turning point in the incident. In 755 there appeared a division in the ranks of Islam with the Western Caliph challenging the authority of the Eastern. The history of 761 records the withdrawal from Spain and in 762 the Eastern Caliph moved the Mohammedan centre from Syria to Baghdad. This was exactly one hundred and fifty years after Mohammed had proclaimed his mission.

“One woe is past; and behold, there come two woes more hereafter.” The contrast between the end of the first ‘woe’ and the end of the second is very marked in terms of time for, while the third follows ‘quickly’, no mention is made of the time lapse between the first and second ‘woes’. From this one may gather that a period of respite intervenes – a fact which is borne out by secular history. Two centuries elapsed before the Turks – the sixth trumpet – burst forth from the Euphrates and destroyed the last remnant of the Imperial Roman Empire.

### *The Sixth Trumpet*

“And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice . . . Saying to the sixth angel . . . Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand . . . By these were the third part of men killed, by fire and by smoke and by brimstone which issued forth out of their mouths . . .” Arising out of the description of events pertaining to the sixth trumpet, one finds that there are five major points which



*Saracens and Crusaders meet - a painting  
by Stanley Wood.*

are highlighted and may be summed up as (1) the locality of origin of the force employed; (2) the numbers involved; (3) the function of this; (4) its duration and (5) the impact of this in Europe.

It will be noted that the Scripture directs attention to the 'great river Euphrates' from which one may reasonably expect the main actors in this drama to emerge from this region. In 1062 A.D. history records that hordes of Mongol Turks under the persuasion of the Islamic faith, poured across the Euphrates river on a very wide front. The objective of this invasion was obscure for in the north it appeared to be aimed at Constantinople while in the south it crystallized into a battle for the Holy Land. This, of course, was the era of the Crusades in which the 'Turkish' hordes were contained for almost two centuries. However, it was only after the downfall of the Crusader kingdom in 1291 A.D. that this 'Turkish' force struck at the tottering remnant of the Imperial Roman Empire.

While the general statistics of the numbers involved in this present the picture of 'two hundred thousand thousand', the literal translation of the Greek Scripture places this number as 'Two myriads of myriads' – phrases which not only give positive identity to those from the Euphrates, but also present the numbers in proportions which are more realistic. According to Gibbon, the Turks were in the habit of reckoning their forces in 'myriads' or *tomans* which consisted of a force of 10 000 men. In his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Gibbon focuses attention on Togrul who unified four sections, all of the house of Seljuk, and passed 'the Euphrates at the head of his cavalry the number of which was two hundred thousand.' While historians may differ as to the mathematics all agree that the numbers of horsemen involved in the Turkish invasion was infinitely greater than any of the contemporary armies of Europe at the close of the eleventh century.

As has been stated above, these armies commenced warring in the Holy Land in 1062 and, while being contained by the Crusaders for almost two centuries, broke through and commenced to destroy the component parts of the Eastern Roman Empire. In 1389 Bulgaria fell to them; in 1430 Salonika was taken; Serbia was next in 1483 and Greece in 1446. By 1452 the whole of the Eastern Roman Empire was in the hands of the Turks and on the 29th May, 1453, Constantinople, the eastern capital of the Roman Empire fell as a result of the sixth Trumpet.

It is significant that the duration of this judgment was prescribed as being for 'an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year' – a period

of three hundred and ninety-one literal years. Calculating this period from the emergence of the Turks from the Euphrates river in 1062, this sixth Trumpet should have accomplished its mission in 1453 – the precise date of the fall of Constantinople. There is, however, another amazing aspect to the fulfilment of the Scripture in respect of the downfall of Constantinople which should satisfy even the most ardent critic and it is found in weapons used by the forces of the sixth Trumpet. “By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued forth out of their mouths” (verse 18).

### *Gunpowder used by the Turks*

For over a thousand years Constantinople had been proof against attack from all quarters – Goths, Huns, Avars, Persians, Bulgarians and even the Ottoman Turks who on previous occasions had laid siege to the city. Gibbon, always the unconscious commentator on the historical aspect of the Revelation, presents the picture of Turkish artillery prepared at the foundry at Adrianople. He describes how “the volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound and the fire of the musketry and cannon” and to which he added that “the fortifications which had stood for ages against hostile violence were dismantled on all sides by the Ottoman canon, many breaches opened, and near the gate of St. Romanus, four towers levelled to the ground.” One may thus see the remarkable accuracy of prophecy not only in its chronology but also in its preview given in respect of the mechanism by which the events resulted.

There is another aspect of the fall of Constantinople which should be noted prior to passing on and which is relevant to a large number of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament which were housed in the city. When it became evident that the city was the focal point of the Turkish attack, many Greek scholars left, taking with them these manuscripts into Europe where they later came into the hands of Desiderius Erasmus who was thus enabled to produce the first complete Greek New Testament in 1516. This, as is well known, were the embers which were to add fire to the Reformation in which the Bible became an open Book and which is the general theme of the 10th chapter of the Revelation.

Thus, in summarising the sixth Trumpet, one notes that the Turks, bearing all the marks of identity with this, accomplished the task of ‘killing’ the last of the former Imperial Roman Empire although leaving Papal Rome to be dealt with at the appropriate time. One



would have thought that with the incredible events which saw the downfall of Constantinople in the manner prescribed in the Scripture, Rome would have taken a new look at the Scriptures which they guarded so jealously. However, the Scripture reveals that they would not repent and would indeed pursue their 'works' as beforetime (verses 20 and 21).

\* \* \* \* \*



**JOHN WICKLIFFE**

**1324 - 1384**

## CHAPTER 5

### THE 'LITTLE BOOK' OF REVELATION 10

After having provided a picture of the sixth Trumpet in an unmistakable light, the Revelation does not mention the end of the Turks at that stage. They were far from a spent force when they took Constantinople and history of the subsequent centuries reveals that they continued to harass the Eastern world but certainly not in the same manner as when they accomplished the task of 'killing' the last vestige of Roman rule. In 1699 and under the Treaty of Carlowitz their activity was limited although Turkish power continued to exist until 1924 when the Caliphate was dissolved and Turkey became a Republic. However, it should be remembered that they performed a service to Israel although inadvertently. They forced the Greek manuscripts of the Scripture into the Western European world in preparation for the time when the Lord said that He would 'raise up' His people and they would live in His sight (Hos. 6:1-2).

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth" (Rev. 10:1-2). At the commencement of this chapter, which is considered as 'parenthetical' by many Bible scholars, one notes that there is no striking revelation of events as had characterised the previous chapters. It is an exhortation — a message concerning activity in respect of the 'little book' which, in the light of the preceding chapter brings the era of the Reformation into focus.

As has been seen, the sixth Trumpet was active for 391 years and covered the period 1062 to 1453. During this period and in the 'isles of the west', John Wycliffe was moved to break some of the stranglehold of the Roman Church on the Scriptures. For nigh on a thousand years Christianity had been Latinised and in this, the Word

of God was a closed Book to those unfamiliar with the Latin tongue. They depended entirely on the interpretation of the priests for their religious instruction and as must be evident, whatever the priest taught was held to be God-spoken. Who, for instance, could contradict Pope Nicolas when he declared: "I am all in all; above all; so that God Himself and I, the Vicar of God have both one consistory, and am able to do almost all that God can do. It is said of me that I have a heavenly arbitrament, and therefore am able to change the nature of things and of nothing, to make things be . . . Wherefore, if those things which I do be said not to be done of man, but of God, *what can you make me but God?*"

Who could deny this claim and what evidence could be produced to expose this blasphemy as that spawned from hell itself? The Word of God was a closed Book and such was the inherent reverence for God in the hearts of true Israel now in the isles and western coastlands of Europe, that they continued to be deluded by the pretensions of Roman Christianity. Under this, they remained slaves to the dictates of Rome but the Lord God had promised 'a raising up' and this is nowhere better illustrated than in the 10th chapter of the Revelation which shows the 'little Book' open.

### THE 'SEVEN THUNDERS'

"And the angel cried with a loud voice as when a lion roared, and when he cried, seven thunders uttered their voices . . . I was about to write and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not . . ." It was certainly strange that John was commanded not to write the 'seven thunders' and one is tempted to ask the reason for this but even before the question is asked, the answer comes back from history – a history of the time when the Book of Life became an open Book in which the falsity of traditional Christianity was exposed. The 'thunders' of the Papal 'bulls' which pronounced dire judgment upon the heresy of Protestantism reverberated around the then known world attempting, through fear of eternal punishment, to draw the 'lost sheep' back into the wolves' fold. The seven-fold character of the Papacy is clearly set out in Revelation 17 where it is depicted as the Babylonian Harlot sitting on the seven-hilled city of Rome.

It is small wonder that John was commanded not to write the things spoken by the 'seven thunders' for, while he was commanded to 'write for *these words are true and faithful*' (Rev. 21:5) no place should be made for the erroneous mouthings of Rome's pretensions to Divine

prerogatives. The Open Book of Truth certainly exalted the true Israel people of the West for the French historian D'Aubigne wrote: "Just as the Papacy degraded the Spanish peninsula, so has the Gospel exalted the British Isles." This came about when, in obedience to the message of the 10th chapter, the people began to feel the urgency of the times when, in the words of the angel of the Lord, 'there should be time no longer' (verse 6).

With the 'eating of the little book' (verse 9) there were very few indeed who could not and did not quote the Scriptures and fewer still who did not believe its message. They saw for themselves the signs of the times – the sixth Trumpet in the invasion of Constantinople – the opening of the Book – the fact of time no longer with the sounding of the seventh Trumpet. It is small wonder that their thoughts were fixed on the Promise of the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ which became an integral part of the teaching of Protestant Christianity in the Isles. Time was indeed running out but the end was not yet for the 'beast' (Rev. 13) had not been subdued neither had the plan of Satan come to an end. These still lay in the future – a future which the subsequent chapters of the Revelation reveal.

### *THE RESISTANCE OF ROME*

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

As one passes to what may be termed the halfway mark in the Revelation, it is of singular interest to note the specific command of the angel of the Lord as it was given against the background of almost fifteen centuries of Christian history. While today segregation and discrimination are considered as 'unChristian' – indeed much of the Lord's action in the Old Testament is similarly branded – it is an undeniable fact that the angel of the Lord commanded a discrimination against the Gentiles in the outer court. It will be noted that a measuring 'reed' or 'rod' was provided for this task and if the same yardstick was provided today, one wonders what the sum total of the exercise would be.

As ever in the task of ascertaining the meaning of phrases and symbols employed in the Revelation, one must 'search the scriptures'

and the subject of the 'reed like unto a rod' in this context, as in most other instances, throws one right back into the Israel theme of the Old Testament. It will be noted that the Lord God promised His people: ". . . I will cause you to *pass under the rod* and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant . . ." (Ezek. 20:37) thus indicating that the 'rod' and the 'covenant' fall into the category of 'cause and effect' – the 'rod' having its natural effect in the promised covenant. In a nutshell, the 'rod' is the Word of God which is inextricably bound up with the subject of His covenant and in which one may see that the Lord assures that He will bring Israel under the influence of His Word thus enabling Him to fulfil His Covenant promises. It was because of God's assurance that this would transpire that Micah recorded the prayer: "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine inheritance" (Micah 7:14).

The word 'reed' is seen by many scholars as indicating the discipline of the Holy Scriptures for, it is asserted, the Hebrew word from which this has been translated in the Old Testament is *kannah* from which the English *canon* as applied to the Bible, derives its origin. This being so, the overall meaning of the opening phraseology in the eleventh chapter indicates a contrasting of Biblical doctrine with that commonly held and taught at that time. In point of fact it goes somewhat deeper in that it gives the lie to the many modern assertions which contend that 'it doesn't matter what one believes – as long as one believes'. The yardstick, the Word of God, allows for no such flexibility in faith and is uncompromising in its demands and dictates. Rome fell into the error of believing that God would accept counterfeit substitutes just as many today would project a 'form of godliness' heavenwards in the arrogant assumption that this would be acceptable in His Sight. However, the Lord has said that His Word would not return unto Him void but that it would prosper in the thing whereunto He sent it thus invalidating any interpretation of Scripture which is not in accord with the overall whole.

The 'measuring' in the eleventh chapter of the Revelation is undoubtedly expressive of the two so-called forms of Christianity as it obtained during the tumultuous years of the Reformation era. Rome, with its pseudo-Christian pretensions could not and still cannot measure up to the yardstick of the open Word of God while there were and still are many Protestants in a like condition who prefer traditional religion to Biblical exposition.

It is significant that the 'measuring' was to be made within 'the temple of God and the altar and them that worship therein' and which,

on analysis, will be found to be a specific dwelling place on the earth. The word 'temple' is translated from the Greek word *naio* which literally means to 'dwell' and as it is inconceivable that the angel of the Lord would command the measuring of the heavens – this cannot be done (Jer. 31:37) – one is left to ponder the subject of a dwelling place of their own . . .' (II Sam. 7:10). By correlating the evidence of the prophets, one is able to appreciate that this appointed place was Revelation symbolism, is to be found associated with the Israel people of God.

At a time when the Israel people were in the ascendancy under the reign of David, the Lord God informed the king that He had appointed ' . . . a place for my people Israel . . . that they may dwell in a place appointed by God on the earth. Such a place is very definitely mentioned in the Scriptures and, as with the ever-recurring pattern of to be the 'isles of the sea' (Isa. 49:1) in which, through the vicarious Sacrifice of the Lamb of God, the people would be called the 'sons of the living God' (Hos. 1:10). Thus then one is able to see that the Lord commanded that His Israel people, now in the appointed place, be measured in accordance with the requirement of Scripture in order to ascertain their readiness to receive the covenant promises from Him. This was the projection of the offer of the Lord spoken through Moses and incorporated in the Law of the Lord which states: "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them" (Deut. 4:30-31).

This 'measuring' was the most logical act at the time for while intensive missionary work had been done in Israel in dispersion at the instigation of the Lord (Matt. 10:6 and Acts 2:36), no tangible evidence exists to testify that the nation turned to the Lord. The inexorable march of the Seven Times punishment (Lev. 26:28) continued and at the time of the Reformation had still a further two centuries to run. With the open Word of God in hand, as a people they could now see that they were a redeemed nation with all the responsibility of this status before them – indeed an opportunity to put into operation the blue-print for world blessing as it was committed to the Patriarchs. The 'measuring', however, showed that while new light had been injected into the people and while there was evidence of a dawning knowledge of identity, the dominion of Papal influence over so long a period was still with them and they were reluctant to go all the way in the new liberty. Thus in

the 'measuring' the yardstick of the open Word of Truth revealed that Israel in its modern development was still not ready and the fulness of the punishment period had to run its course.

It will be noted that in the second verse of the eleventh chapter the stringent command not to measure the court of the Gentiles may be fully understood in the light of the interpretation provided above. How could Rome be measured against a yardstick which was only applicable to Israel? The reason is immediately forthcoming in that the Lord stated that these same people were responsible for the treading down of the 'holy city' for a period of forty-two months and in this activity could not possibly have a part to play in the overall Plan of God as laid down in His Word. Matthew 7:6 should be read in this context.

The period of the 'treading down' is interesting in that it not only identifies the Roman Church with the 'Gentiles' but it serves to corroborate the historical interpretation of the Book of the Revelation. Forty-two months is 1260 days calculated on the Biblical month of thirty days and as is made abundantly clear in prophetic chronology, a day is as a year (Ezek. 4:6). Working backwards from the date of the Parliamentary recognition of the Reformation in Britain (1553 A.D.) one is brought to the 'Pergamos' era in which the Christian Message was 'married to power' and assimilated into the general body of Roman paganism. Throughout the long centuries which followed, the Roman Church projected the image of Christianity – a task for which this foreign body was ill-equipped and certainly lacking in mandate from the Lord God Who had, in His Holy Word, prescribed that this would be the function of His Israel people (Isa. 43:21).

It was during this same period of 'treading down' that the Lord stated: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score years, clothed in sackcloth" (verse 3). The subject of identifying these two witnesses has perplexed Bible students over many years and has been propounded in many a context with the result of widening the confusion surrounding the subject. It is not intended here to claim infallibility in interpretation nor is it intended to dogmatise on conclusions reached but certain facets of the statement by the Lord do provide much food for thought and one can but follow the leads given.

In the first instance it should be noted that the Speaker thrusts His personality into the subject on two occasions by saying: ". . . and I will give" to be followed by the subject of the giving: "my two wit-



nesses” which immediately identifies the Speaker as the Lord Jesus Christ. The witnesses of the Lord were undoubtedly the Apostles – “And ye shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning” (John 15:27); “. . . and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). However, by limiting the witnesses to the New Testament one is denying the pre-existence of the Lord Who claimed this by stating: “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). The use of the Jehovah Name particularly in John 18:5 where the word ‘he’ is in italics, thus an interpolation, endorses the Lord’s usage of this Title and in the light of this, one may see Him blazoned across the history of the Old Testament. This being so, one is brought face to face with yet another aspect in the subject of the witnesses for, of Israel which was created and formed for the praise of Almighty God, the Lord states: “. . . ye are my witnesses that I am God” (Isa. 43:12).

It should thus be relatively easy to identify ‘my two witnesses’ as the Israel people of the Old Testament and the Apostles in the New – but Israel was under the punitive measure of the Law of the Lord during the 1260 years of the treading down and the Apostles were long since dead – this interpretation thus falls to the ground. In the fourth verse it is stated: “These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth” and significantly, commentators and Greek scholars aver that the literal rendering of this is; “These are the two oil trees and two lampstands before the Lord.” While the olive is the symbolism for Israel in both the Old and New Testaments and the candlesticks indicative of the Tabernacle within the nation, it should be noted that there was no oil in the lampstands therefore the fusion of the oil with the lamp had not provided the light by which men may see.

It should be borne in mind that Israel was measured and found wanting but the yardstick was the Word of God in both the Old and New Testaments and this *could* be the witnesses referred to by the Lord for verily this was trodden down during the period of Papal Dominion. Further, the Lord stated: “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). These were, of course, the Old Testament Scriptures alone but with the completion of the Mission of the Lord (Matt. 15:24) the New became the second witness in conformity with the Law which ever demands more than one testimony. Thus one is confronted with the two witnesses – the Old and New Testaments forming the Word of God which, without doubt, testified to the Person and Mission (both First and Second

Advents) of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“And if any man hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth (note a singular mouth denoting one common whole) and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in his manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy and have power over waters to turn them to blood.” History records the fulfilment of these symbolic words. Rome, which prior to Constantine persecuted Christianity, did not change its nature after it adopted the Christian faith. It thundered its interpretation of the Scriptures which was an admixture of paganism and superstition with Christian teaching, and persecuted all those who held opposing views, ignoring the many tangible evidences of the judgment which was falling on the Roman Empire and the Papal advocates. War and revolutions were ever present in Rome and other Papal countries which were no strangers to the sight of blood flowing and which was indeed as rivers drenching the land.

Showers of blessing certainly did not fall on Rome and as one reconsiders the Thyatira era mentioned previously, one is well able to appreciate the spiritual drought which accompanied the elevation of the Woman to the position of deity. These conditions obtained with a viciousness which could only be equated with the satanic instigation which prompted it and history indeed records its testimony of the ‘dark ages’ through which the civilised world then passed.

It will be noted that the ‘witnesses’ would be ‘trodden down’ for the period of 1260 years but within this period – indeed toward the end of it – it is stated that ‘the beast . . . shall make war against them and shall overcome them and kill them’ which appears to give the impression that during the prescribed period the treading down would follow a course of slow but sure repression of the Truth. However, it is obvious that something was to happen which would stimulate the ‘beast’ (Rome) into aggressive activity with intent to utterly destroy the witnesses. This activity was stirred up by men such as Wycliffe, Huss and Jerome who, through their contact with the Word of God, began to see the evils in Romanism and, rightly or wrongly, began to identify the Pope in Rome with the ‘man of sin – the son of perdition’. This was the commencement of an era of wild persecution for Rome now saw itself being exposed in a light which gave the lie to its much vaunted claims of being the very seat of God’s Kingdom on the earth.

A campaign of extermination was commenced and millions of men, women and children were butchered and towns razed to the ground



**MARTIN LUTHER**

1483 - 1546

by the rampaging beast who began to feel his dominion slipping from him under a new spirit which moved over the people. Such was the devastation wrought that Jerome of Bohemia, after the great tidal wave of destruction had subsided, sent representatives throughout Europe in order to ascertain if any of the same faith survived and with great sadness, the report was in the negative. However, a small pocket of the faithful still remained in Bohemia and such was their determination, that Rome issued an edict calling on Jerome and his followers to present themselves at the 9th Session of the 5th Lateran Council to be held on 5th May, 1514. This date should be borne in mind for it signifies the beginning of a period which was claimed by the Roman Church as indicating the death of all heresies in opposition to the Church.

The edict was a challenge to all opponents of the Roman faith to present their cases and, needless to say, Jerome and his followers did not avail themselves of the opportunity offered by the Roman hierarchy. At the next meeting of the Roman Church Council, a Papal communique was issued by Cardinal Pucci who stated: "There is an end of resistance to Papal rule and religion; nobody opposes us . . ." Outwardly Truth had been killed for there was no evidence of resistance to the Roman doctrines which at this time had become utterly saturated with Babylonian pagan ideals.

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt where also the Lord was crucified. And they of the people . . . and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell in the earth shall rejoice over them and make merry and shall send gifts to one another because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth." The early Reformers, and particularly John Wycliffe, identify the great city with Rome and their reasons, even today, are particularly valid. Rome was presented as 'Sodom' because of the impurity of its message and as 'Egypt' because of its idolatry. Because of its persecution of Christians and the Word of Truth, this church was guilty of re-crucifying Christ.

With resistance at an end, Papal Christendom gathered in Rome for a great festival which lasted for several years. During the course of this, the souls of the martyrs were continually cursed, excommunication threatened against all who thought to challenge the Papal dominion and the victory of Rome presented in festival fashion as reflecting the rejoicing in heaven. For three years this 'victory' was kept alive but the Scripture does not leave the picture there. "And after three

days and a half the spirit entered into them and they stood upon their feet and great fear fell upon them which saw it." It has been stated above that the 5th Lateran Council was held on May 5th, 1514 and the non-appearance of Protestants was the signal for proclaiming that resistance was dead. Exactly three and a half years later – on October 31st, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the Church in Wittenburg protesting against the unscriptural practices of the Church of Rome. Here was the 'coming to life' of the witnesses for from the Scriptures Luther was able to see and teach that the doctrines of Rome lacked conformity with the Word of Truth.

The rapidity with which Luther's protest spread was amazing. In less than a month most of Europe was roused against the Papacy so much so that the rulers of the countries became gripped by this new spiritual liberty which the Word of God now offered. The overall comment of the Scripture on this is to state: "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and behold the third cometh quickly." As has been noted previously, earthquakes in the Revelation denote political upheaval and this is graphically demonstrated in the history of Rome at the time of the Reformation. The tenth part of the 'great city' (Rome) which fell was Britain which was indeed the last addition to the Papal dominion. Henry VIII; Edward VI; Elizabeth I and James I all consolidated the 'falling away' with the Monarch of Britain becoming the Head of the Church in the land with the 39 Articles of Faith being ratified by an Act of Parliament severing the links which bound Britain to Rome.

Here was the prophecy of the eleventh chapter of the Revelation being fulfilled as were those recorded by Hosea and Ezekiel. The re-formation of Israel was beginning in precisely the pattern as prescribed by the Lord – an historical testimony showing that God is faithful in all His dealings with both nation and individual.

\* \* \* \* \*



*Ezekiel's vision of Israel's Resurrection*

## CHAPTER 6

### ISRAEL TO THE FORE

*“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever”* (Rev. 11:15).

In the *New Testament* based on the Greek text of Stephens (1550 A.D.), the following direct translation of the above verse is given as: “And the seventh angel sounded (his) trumpet and were voices great in the heaven, saying, Are become the kingdom (N.B. singular) of the world, our Lord’s and his Christ’s and he shall reign to the ages of ages.” While this translation may appear to be irrelevant, it will be found to have a direct bearing on the events as they are unfolded in the succeeding chapters of the Revelation.

As one studies the last four verses of the eleventh chapter, it is more than apparent that it is the era of the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ – a reign which is begun with the resurrection of the dead and Kingship of the Lord for a thousand years (Rev. 20:6). This is the period during which the Lord will rule until “. . . he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (I Cor. 15:24-25). This being so, it is patently obvious that the ‘kingdoms’ of this world – in a plural sense – are not the universal Kingdom of God at the Second Advent. It therefore follows that the ‘kingdom’ in a singular sense, operates during the millennium working toward the time when “. . . all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all” (I Cor. 15:28). It is of this kingdom and the nucleus of it that reference is made in the closing verses of the eleventh chapter.

As has been noted, this chapter covers the broad sweep of history from the period A.D. 313 to A.D. 1553 to be followed by the above quoted statement. As must be obvious, the Second Advent did not take

place after that period — judgment did not take place nor was Satan bound nor was this accompanied by the circumstance of the 'wolf dwelling with the lamb; the leopard lying down with the kid; the calf and the young lion and the fatling together and a little child leading them' (Isa. 11:6). On the contrary, the world entered a period of tremendous upheavals which were highlighted by revolution and unprecedented tribulation. In seeking an answer to this paradox, one passes on to find that, as always, the Word of God is complete in its Light and that the twelfth chapter identifies the entities involved in the course of history as it leads up to this time of the Second Advent and the many vicissitudes through which they would pass.

At the outset, identity is established in the vision given to John. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:" In the seventeenth chapter another 'woman' is described in such a manner as to reveal her as the personification of all evil and who is totally incompatible with the 'woman' of the twelfth chapter. This latter woman has marks of identity which are unmistakable in their application to the Israel 'woman' and is in complete harmony with the whole body of revealed Scripture.

It is consistent with the Old Testament Scriptures to claim that the Israel nation is ever referred to in the feminine gender. "For the Lord hath called thee (Israel) as a *woman* forsaken and grieved in spirit . . ." (Isa. 54:6). In the Book of Hosea, Israel is depicted as the '*adulterous wife*' while Jeremiah records the consequence of adultery in that the Lord gave Israel a 'bill of divorce' (Jer. 3:8).

The association of the sun, moon and stars with the 'woman' retains the consistency of this contention for it is found in Joseph's dream (Gen. 37:9) and in its second witness required by Biblical Law, is found in Jeremiah 31:35. "Thus saith the Lord which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night . . . If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever." Is it conceivable that the Lord, having thus established an unbiased and unchanging testimony to the national continuity of Israel should suddenly, and without further advice (Amos 3:7) use these ordinances to identify someone else? Israel, the covenanted nation — the oath-bound people of God's Honour (Heb. 6:13) — is here thrust into the limelight, playing its part in world events.

It will be noted that for all the mighty Promises and the Covenants which the Lord God made to Israel in the context of His world



Purpose, none of these was forthcoming in the history of the Old Testament. The nation was formed, schooled and established, but no blessing insofar as the nations of the earth were concerned (Gen. 18:18), was in evidence. The Old Testament history presents a sorry picture indeed if one were to leave it at that. The nation Israel is depicted as being scattered through disobedience, dead to the Purpose of God through transgression of the Law and with only one hope of recovery – redemption. In this situation, one may see that the nation thus formed to be a blessing and now languishing in the condition of being ‘without God’ (Hos. 1:9) could not produce the fruits of its calling.

“And she being with child, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered” (verse 2). The ‘she’ here cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be interpreted as indicating the Virgin Mary. The ‘she’ is the ‘woman’ who is identified by the ‘sun, moon and stars’ and while Mary was undoubtedly of the House of David (Luke 3:23-31), she could not be indicative of the whole house of Israel, the greater mass of which was in dispersion (James 1:1). Israel was ‘travailing in birth’ – a fact which was the subject of the writing of Isaiah the prophet who commented on this ‘barrenness’ of the Israel nation. “Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. . . For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited” (Isa. 54: 1-3). There can thus be no doubt that insofar as Israel is concerned, the ‘I will’ and ‘they shall’ of the Lord in the context of His world Purposes ensures, not only continuity but the realisation of the clauses of the Covenant of world blessing.

This being so, one turns again to the momentous introduction to the twelfth chapter with its announcement of the woman ‘travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered’. It is, of course, very convenient to simply claim that this refers to the Virgin Mary, however one is confronted with several difficulties in this interpretation for the Greek word here translated ‘woman’ is *gune* which is always used to denote a *married wife* which immediately destroys the one key mark of identity of the Lord Jesus Christ Who was to be born of a Virgin (Isa. 7:14 and Matt. 1:23). Other difficulties also encountered are found in the fifth verse which reads: “And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne.” Another difficulty, in this interpretation is found in the fact of the ‘great red dragon’ which ‘stood before the wo-

man which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”

It would serve a very useful purpose here to follow the events as they are given together with the identification of the main characters in order to arrive at an acceptable interpretation of the twelfth chapter. The second ‘wonder in heaven’ was “a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads” which immediately makes identification with Herod, who issued his decree for the murder of all babes under the age of two years, intolerable (Matt. 2:16). The ‘great red dragon’ is identified as one turns to Daniel 7 where four successive Gentile empires are depicted as ‘beasts’. Of the fourth empire, the following is Daniel’s description. “After this I saw a fourth beast and it had ten horns (just as in Revelation 12). . . and the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth” (Dan. 7:35). During John’s day this ‘beast’ is established as the Imperial Roman Empire with the ‘seven heads’ and ‘seven crowns’ establishing this without question. Five of the ‘heads’ had already fallen: (1) Kings; (2) Consuls; (3) Dictators; (4) Decimvers; (5) Military Tribunals and the sixth, Emperors, was now in control. The seventh and final ‘head’ was the rule of Despotic Military men which completed the picture of Rome.

As has been stated above, Rome had nothing to do with standing before Mary to devour her child as soon as it was born and it would be unsupported speculation to identify Herod or the Idumeans with the ‘red dragon’. There is thus obviously some other meaning to the overall picture and, on analysis, one finds that it has to do with resurrection in a national sense. It is singularly strange that in the seventeen verses of this chapter, only one deals with the birth of the ‘man child’ who was, as a ‘child’, ‘caught up unto God and to his throne’. Conversely, the ‘woman’, which brought forth the ‘man child’ is found to be the chief recipient of the satanic attack which forms the basis of the whole chapter and which could not possibly be Mary.

There can be no doubt that while the Israel ‘woman’ travailed in birth and pained to be delivered, satanic attention would not be warranted for the nation was ‘not my people’ (Hos. 1:9) and therefore relatively unimportant. However, when the fulness of the time was come and when the Word was made flesh taking ‘on him the seed of Abraham’ (Heb. 2:16) thus becoming Israel’s Kinsman Redeemer through meeting all the requirements of the Ordinances given exclusively to Israel, the separateness existing between God and His servant nation was healed (I Peter 2:9) thus once again making it possible for the ‘woman’ to function and to accomplish God’s world Purposes. Through the Vicar-

ious Sacrifice of the 'Son of David', the Israel nation, formerly dead in trespass and sin, was now once again living in the Sight of God having been brought 'out of darkness into his marvellous light' (I Peter 2:9).

It was immediately after she had been delivered that the woman 'fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days' (Rev. 12:6). Here is the corroborating evidence of that which was revealed in the eleventh chapter for the 'treading down' of the Truth was for this same period (verse 2) as was the area of measuring, namely, the 'temple of God and the altar'. Strangely enough, one finds that in the 14th verse similar phraseology is used to denote the movement of the woman into the 'wilderness' and one is left to ponder the reason for the repetition.

The only time when repetition is given in the Bible is to form the basis of conformity to the Law of witness and as this subject of an 'appointed place' has more than enough comment to establish its verity, one searches for a further meaning to the repetition in the 12th chapter. In its original Greek text, the phraseology used conveys the idea of the woman setting her face towards the wilderness or literally seeking an inhabitable land. This harmonises with the history of those early times for no mass migration of people is recorded until the Hunnish flood from the east began to drive people before it in the fourth century. Thus verse 6 presents the people preparing to move to the 'appointed place', whereas the 14th verse records the actual movement to the land of destiny. However, between the two events, the Revelation records: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." As ever, one should bear in mind that symbolism is the keynote of the Revelation and that to intrude literal translations only serves to create confusion. This story of Michael and his fight against the dragon too, falls into this category. The 'war' so clearly evident here took place in the political 'heaven' of that time which was the Roman Empire. The fact that this 'war' had been previously revealed in two streams of history, i.e., the church and Rome, is the reason why no descriptive language is used other than the symbolism of Michael and his angels.

As has been previously noted, Imperial pagan Rome fought Christianity from A.D. 64–313 and this is the 'war' referred to in the 12th chapter. That pagan Rome could not prevail is clearly depicted in both the sixth and the twelfth chapters, the former indicating the sixth Seal, the earthquake or political upheaval in the Roman Empire. When pagan-



*An early engraving depicting Satan in the earth.*

ism as such was abolished in Rome, Constantine had coins struck in commemoration of the event which clearly indicate the events of the 'war in heaven' for on the one side are the features of Constantine, while on the other side may be seen the serpent pinned to the ground by the Cross.

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." While it is quite common and generally correct to intimate that this applies to the present time with its vicious speed-up in disintegration of all things decent, it should be borne in mind that the knowledge of impending defeat had to be occasioned by some event of signal importance in history. The Redemption of the Woman was this signal for it reinstated Israel with God and opened the way for world blessing. The overthrow of pagan Rome was Satan's counter and through this mechanism he was ready to devour Israel within the toils of utter spiritual delusion and degradation. Had Rome been converted to Christ and the open Word of Truth, history would have been vastly different but this was indeed the 'woe' pronounced upon the inhabitants of the earth for within the machinations of satanic subtlety, it was contrived to establish religious worship along lines which had degraded the earliest civilisations.

The pattern of this is unmistakable. During the first satanic persecutions of Christianity, untold numbers of men, women and children suffered martyrdom at the hands of pagan Rome. This martyrdom now became the sphere of satanic operation in that those martyrs who had been publicly executed now became publicly honoured for their role in bringing about the downfall of paganism in Rome. The tribute thus paid grew completely out of proportion so that the impression was made on the populace of Rome that their 'deliverance' from paganism was due entirely to the intercession of the martyrs before God. Thus was begun martyr worship with pilgrimages to the places of execution and worship of relics and bones of the dead – indeed a religion or worship of the dead. There should be no need to remind any that this form of Christianity is utterly rejected from on High as is recorded in the 8th chapter of the Revelation.

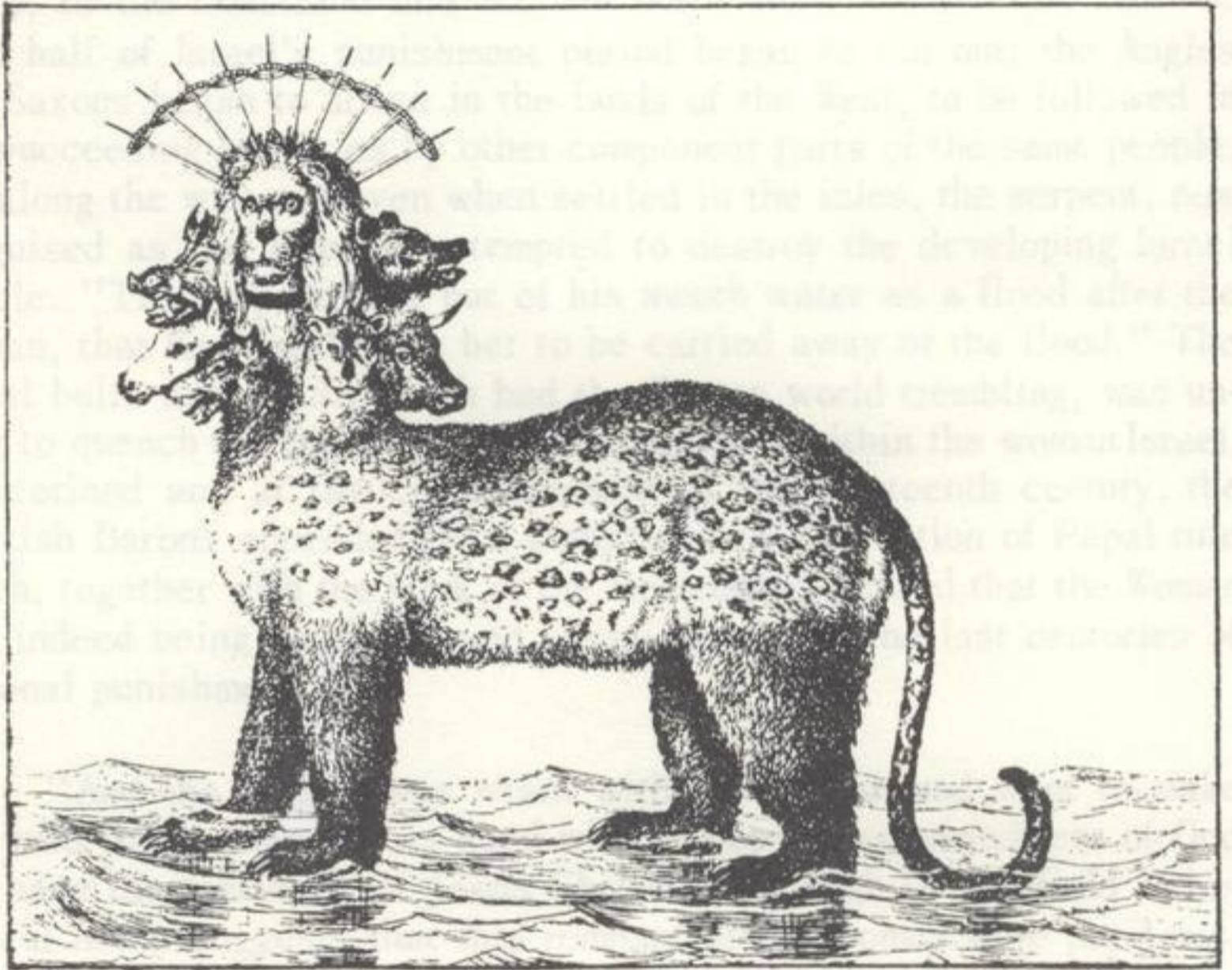
Having seen that his initial victory in crucifying Christ had been turned into defeat – Israel was now freed from her fetters of sin and reconciliation with God accomplished through the testimony of the Open Tomb – Satan's reaction was to resort to the insidious and this was the time in which ". . . to the woman were given the two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place

where she is nourished for a time, and times and half a time from the face of the serpent." The 'time, times and half a time' is, as related in the 6th verse, 1260 years which is the time of the 'treading down' of Revelation 11. Significantly, this is precisely half the prescribed captive period over Israel which, according to Leviticus 26:28 was to be for 'seven times', or 2520 literal years. The first half of this period was taken in migrating, firstly from captivity into the eastern section of the Roman Empire and secondly, after the wave of Hunnish invasions, to the coastland and islands north-west of Palestine. As the first half of Israel's punishment period began to run out, the Angles and Saxons began to arrive in the lands of the West, to be followed in the succeeding centuries by other component parts of the same people. All along the way and even when settled in the isles, the serpent, now disguised as the Papacy, attempted to destroy the developing Israel people. "The serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood." The Papal bulls and edicts which had the Roman world trembling, was unable to quench the fire which had been kindled within the woman Israel. In Scotland and at the commencement of the fourteenth century, the Scottish Barons appended their signatures to a rejection of Papal rule which, together with the work of the Reformers, showed that the Woman was indeed being nourished and sustained during the last centuries of national punishment.

"And the dragon was wrath with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandment of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Although Dr. Scofield in his helpful notes suggests that this remnant of the woman were the Jews, the continued rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ by these people plus their miscellaneous racial origins makes this contention untenable. The question of the identity of this remnant therefore remains obscure and *could* be the stragglers left in Europe en route to the 'appointed place'. While it is admittedly speculative, this remnant could be the Huguenots for many of the modern descendants of these people now living in South Africa bear family names which perpetuate Israel circumstances. For instance, there is the name 'van Niekerk' – literally, of 'no Church', originating at the time when the Huguenot resistance to Papal Rome caused such sorrow. Then the name 'Niemand' – 'nobody', arising out of the Hosea prophecy when Israel was 'not my people' (Hos. 1:9); 'van der Westhuizen' – of the West House; 'Oosthuizen' – East House; in which one is thrown back to the arrangement of the tribes of Israel round the Tabernacle in the Wilderness.

None will surely deny that the Huguenots were persecuted in a most diabolical manner as were other remnants of Israel in Europe. Thus, in the history of Europe during the era of the Reformation, one finds the last verse of the twelfth chapter of the Revelation being fulfilled.

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## CHAPTER 7

### THE BEAST

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

In the general description of the ‘beast’ of Revelation 13 it will be noted that “. . . , the dragon gave him his power and his seat, and great authority (verse 2) from which one may gather that this entity would, with all the subtlety of Satan, operate within the sphere of his ambition to “. . . be like the Most High” (Isa. 14:14). As a means of identification, John presents a crystallisation of Daniel’s beasts (Dan. 7:4-6) in that the beast which rose from the sea (peoples) was like a leopard, with the feet of a bear and mouth as the mouth of a lion – a description which tallies with the three Babylonian succession of Empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. The beast which John saw was undoubtedly that representing Rome which incorporated all the characteristics of the preceding Empires and exhibited a diabolism in excess of any that preceded it.

By way of further identification, John records that he saw one of the seven heads wounded unto death although which of the heads is not mentioned. As has been seen previously in this study, and under the context of the ‘dragon’ which stood ready to devour the ‘man child’ born of the Israel woman, the ‘seven heads’ were seen as the seven forms of government which dominated the Roman Empire from its inception until its decline and fall. The last of these was that of the ‘Despotic Emperors’ which received a mortal blow when Constantine succeeded to the throne in Rome and created a revolution which saw the passing of paganism and barbarity and ‘Christianity’ being instituted as the national way of life. However, as history makes abundantly clear, paganism was resuscitated after the death of Constantine which could be the meaning of the head that was ‘wounded unto death’ but whose deadly wound was healed (verse 3).

Another historical vindication of this could be in the events of the last quarter of the fifth century when, in the reign of Romulus Augustus, Imperial Rome ceased to be the capital of the Roman world – the seat of government being transferred to Constantinople, an act which indicated that the city, the seat of government, was indeed wounded unto death. Rome, however, grew again, not as the seat of a mighty military power, but as that of an insidious religious-cum-political one in which the ‘head’ wielded power which not only rivalled that of the Caesars, but actually surpassed it.

This ‘beast’ which suffered a tremendous blow and was on the point of death was revived and exercised a greater dominion than ever before by the very nature of its apparent resurrection so that ‘the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast’ (verses 3-4). Within the compass of ‘wordly’ adoration ‘. . . there was given him (the beast) a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven.’

It will be noted that the period of ‘forty and two months’ was the period allotted to the treading down of the Truth of God (Rev. 11:2) and that this was the duration of the ‘nourishment’ of the Israel woman (Rev. 12:6 and 14) from the face of the serpent. As has been noted, this was the era of the complete dominion by Papal Rome over the Christian message and may be taken as commencing when Justinian, the Eastern Roman Emperor officially acknowledged the Pope as head of all churches in A.D. 533. This was later ratified by Phocas in 607. These dates coincide with the migratory waves of Israelites arriving in the ‘isles of the west’.

While John did not record what the ‘mouth’ of the beast spoke, he summarily wrote that it spoke ‘great things and blasphemies’ which, if one examines the Greek text, are found to be doctrines which are diametrically opposed to those of God. Let the doctrines of the Roman Church identify this itself with the ‘great things and blasphemies’ of Revelation 13. Of the many documents used as the basis for Roman faith, that of *The Manual for the use of Confessors*, by Abbé Guame, is most illuminating. The following is an extract from this:

“What language of man can speak of the dignity and greatness of the Priest? The first man was great – Moses was great – Joshua was great – kings of the earth are great – but there stands a man

greater still. This is the man who every day – *when he pleases* (our italics) – opens the gates of heaven and addressing himself to the Son of the Eternal, to the Monarch of the Worlds, says to Him:- ‘Descend from the throne and come:’ Docile at the voice of this man, the Word of God, He by whom all things were made, instantly descends from His seat of Glory and incarnates Himself in the hands of this man, more powerful than kings, than angels, than the August Mary . . . and this man says to Him, ‘Thou art my victim . . .’” In what Bible or by what authority is such blasphemy vindicated?

However, this is not the end of such infamy for this work continues: “The Priest, powerful as God, can in an instant snatch the sinner from hell . . . God Himself is obliged to adhere to the judgment of the Priest.” As must be obvious to even the most naive, all this makes the First Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ an unnecessary encumbrance on the Christian faith for if the Priest has such power, the Agony of the Cross becomes a wasted effort.

In further ‘treading down’ the Truth of God, the Roman Church claimed and still claims the infallibility of the Church, the reason for which is given by the Rev. Bertrand L. Conway of the Paulist Fathers, in *The Question Box* in which he contends: “Because she alone represents Christ, the Divine, Infallible Teacher, in conduct, belief and worship. She alone says to the world as Christ did: “I am the Way (conduct), the Truth (belief) and the Life (worship). Reason and revelation alike demand that the teacher of the divine revelation of Christ speak as He did, infallibly, i.e., that she by divine guidance be ever kept free from the liability of error.”

This same work proceeds: “Once we admit that the Church is infallible, it follows that its head and mouthpiece must likewise be infallible. For if Peter and his successors, could as supreme pastors teach false doctrine, they would cease to be the rock foundation on which the Church was built . . .” However, the same Pope who in other works is called “The Lord God the Pope – the Most Holy Father” is only infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra*, i.e., ‘when he speaks as supreme pastor of the universal Church’, when ‘he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals’ and ‘when he intends to bind the whole Church’. This authority is supposedly derived from Peter of whom according to the Vatican Council (*On the Church*: chap. 2) declares: “St. Peter still lives, presides and judges in the person of his successors, the Bishops of Rome.”

Here indeed are matters which certainly do not enjoy the support of Holy Scripture. The Bible relates the words of Christ Himself Who

said: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24) which would then make the Roman Church the supplanters of Israel. Secondly, Peter never received a commission from the Lord to go to Rome or to be the 'first Bishop'. He was told to 'Feed my sheep' (John 21:16) – the 'sheep' being very definitely identified in Holy Scripture as the Israel servant nation of God (Ezek. 34:30-31 and Matt. 15:24). Peter's so-called presence in Rome is indeed a masterpiece of Satanic manipulation of the Scriptures for it is taken from the fact that he wrote his two epistles in 'Babylon' which Roman writers identify spiritually with Rome. That this is true is not denied but by what authority does the Roman Church suddenly make 'Babylon' in Peter's epistle a spiritual city when all else in his writing is literal? He wrote specifically to Israel in dispersion (I Peter 1:1) and reminded them that the conditions incurred through transgression and reported by Hosea (Hos. 1:6-9) were now obviated (I Peter 2:9-10) and that they were now ". . . returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" – Christ Jesus, not Peter.

The 'great things and blasphemies' spoken are clearly indicated in the claims of Rome not the least of which was and is the complete repudiation of the narrative of the Old Testament with its Oath-bound Covenants and Promises. Is it not blaspheming the Name of God (Rev. 13:6) to contend that His Holy Name which is bound up with the continuity of Israel (Jer. 31:35) was merely an expedient given at a time when God did not mean what He said and did not say what He meant? Is it not blasphemy to contend that the Lord never intended to perpetuate His Plan and Purpose which He committed to the Patriarchs? Is it not blasphemy to usurp authority and speak on behalf of God and in His Name to keep people in total submission to a priesthood which pretends to Divine Authority? This is the 'war' which was made on the 'saints' to keep them in ignorance of their destiny which was and is bound up in the Covenants which God made with their fathers (Heb. 6:13).

Within this 'war' one may read of the hideous atrocities perpetrated by the beast – the breaking of countless bodies of men, women and children to force them into an acceptance of the Roman faith and staining the pages of human history with the blood of innocent people. The list of Popes who encouraged this slaughter is long – Alexander 3rd; Paul 3rd; Gregory 13th to name but a few who waged this war against people whom they called 'heretics, wild beasts, children of the devil and the spawn of hell'. Was this war waged at the instigation of the Lord Jesus Christ in Whose Name the horror was perpetrated by

Rome? Did He advocate such measures against those who did not agree with Him? The answer is surely NO! for He said that if the people would not heed, His emissaries should merely wipe the dust off their feet and leave (Matt., 10:14). The Papal *modus operandi* certainly stamps it as the 'beast' of Revelation 13.

The Papacy undoubtedly held the whole of Christendom captive during the prescribed period of forty-two months when, as John recorded: "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity and he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword" (Rev. 13:10). If one accepts the starting point of the ravages of the 'beast' as commencing when the official acknowledgement of Papal supremacy was made in 533 A.D. the forty-two prophetic months or 1260 literal years would run out in 1793. This should be the acid test of identity for then one should expect to see some such event transpire within the context of the Papal 'head'.

The latter end of the 18th century saw the French Revolution break out at a time which marked the end of the forty-two months of the despotic pleasure of the 'beast'. Secular history records that *the Pope was taken captive* by French troops and subjected to every humiliation in a French prison with the colossal wealth of the Papacy confiscated. It is true that a new Pope was installed after the death of Napoleon but by 1870 the power of the Papacy was broken and Italy came under the dominion of a monarchy headed by Victor Immanuel. The Papal 'beast' was indeed 'taken captive' – *but it was not killed*. Its fangs were withdrawn for a while but, as will be seen in the 16th chapter, the 'beast' once again emerges on the scene – an emergence occasioned by Mussolini's decree restoring power to the Pope.

Bearing in mind that the 'beast' was the specific entity which the dragon endowed with his authority and power, it would be underestimating the subtlety of Satan to aver that he made no provision against the downfall of this outward manifestation of his world ambition. This he certainly did – a fact which was revealed to John on the isle of Patmos. "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon" (Rev. 13:11). As one reads on it becomes obvious that this other 'beast' was associated with and linked to the first 'beast' for ". . . he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (verse 15).

Here one finds a 'working party' within the framework of the 'beast' which had influence in both the religious and political fields

(the two horns). These were they who set up an 'image' to the 10-horned beast and one should not imagine that this was a literal image set up for the Papal Church had already a surfeit of images. An 'image' is a picture – a model or representation – and true to this interpretation, the Roman priesthood was responsible for setting up the *General Council of the Church of Rome* in which they had an official voice to echo through the world under the Papacy. Between the years 1153 and 1545, twelve such Councils were held which formulated further blasphemies in addition to those already in existence and which drew up laws in response to the rumblings of dissent evident in support for the Reformers. Thus, motivated by the Papal priesthood, the 'image' spoke, the decrees of the Council being absolute with any violation met with death. One instance of this was recorded in the Council of Constance in 1415 when Huss and Jerome were condemned to death by burning because of their refusal to obey the resolutions of the 'image'.

As the Reformation developed into a tangible reality, the second 'beast' became increasingly active and received a 'charter' from Pope Paul III in 1540 to form the 'Society of Jesus' under which a free pardon was granted for all methods used to suppress the spirit of religious freedom which had begun to burn in the hearts of the modern development of Israel. For a hundred and fifty years the Jesuits worked to stave off the effect of the Reformation, during which time they became a powerful force taking over political and religious affairs in many Papal States. Such was their influence that the Papacy found it necessary, through a 'Bull of Excommunication', to annul the original Charter and to disband the Society.

Roman Catholic countries responded by hounding the Jesuits and expelling them wherever they operated until it appeared that all traces of the Society had been exterminated. However, they emerged from the 'underground' as the 'Illuminati' which had tentacles in the highest places within all Roman Catholic countries and which eventually created the French Revolution which, in turn, was the beginning of the limitation of the power of the ten-horned Roman Beast. Napoleon was trained in a Jesuit school and his dealing with the Papacy may be seen as an operation against the 'Bull of Excommunication' which had been issued against the Jesuits. This 'Bull' was repealed in 1814 – an exercise indicating that the second 'beast' still owed allegiance to the first 'beast' – with the Jesuits 'white-anting' the now fully emerged Israel people in all spheres of national and international life.

From the closing verses of the 13th chapter, one may gather that

the second 'beast' was dedicated to furthering the mechanics of the dominion of the first 'beast' which, in a nutshell, was the dominion of the dragon himself. It will be noted that the second 'beast' initiated sanctions against all and sundry who were opposed to the first 'beast'. "And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save that he had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred three score and six" (verses 16-18). The sanctions enforced by the second beast were nothing less than the projection of the same custom which had been introduced by the beast during its forty-two months reign of terror. Complete and unreserved obedience to all Papal decrees was demanded and acquiescence to these was indicative of having the mark of the master either in the right hand or in the forehead. Any refusal or revolt was 'heretical' and as such the dissidents were not permitted to buy or sell and so were deprived of all the benefits of civil society. One such instance in history was recorded by Roger Hoveden who wrote of William the Conqueror that "such was his fidelity that he would not permit any one in his power to buy or sell any thing, whom he found disobedient to the apostolic see."

A similar incident was recorded of the Council of Lateran under Pope Alexander III who charged the Waldenses and Albigenses with heresy, decreeing that "upon the pain of anathema, no man presume to entertain or cherish them in his house or land, or exercise traffic with them." The Synod of Tours in France, under the same Pope, decreed ". . . no man should presume to receive or assist them, no not so much as to hold communion with them in selling or buying, that being deprived of the comfort of humanity, they may be compelled to repent of the error of their way." Pope Martin V, in his 'Bull' set out after the Council of Constance, commanded that ". . . they permit not the heretics to have houses in their districts, or enter into contracts, or carry on commerce, or enjoy the comforts of humanity with Christians." Here indeed was the projection of the edict of Diocletian (300 A.D.) whose sanctions were perpetrated in the 'Hymn of Justin Martyr' - "They had not the power of buying or selling any thing, nor were they allowed the liberty of drawing water itself, before they had offered incense to detestable idols." This, of course, was the pattern followed by the Jesuits - the second beast - who saw to it that sanctions were applied to all who would not acknowledge the supremacy of the Papal See.

## SIX-SIX-SIX

Historically, the practice of signifying men or objects in numbers, is well attested to. Toth, the Egyptian Mercury, was signified by the number 1218 while Jupiter or 'the beginning of things' was recorded by the number of 717 and the sun, or the author of the rain was represented by the number 608. Irenaeus, who lived shortly after John's time and was said to have been the disciple of Polycarp, who himself was reputed to have been John's disciple, wrote: "*Sed et Lateinos nomen habet sexcentorum sexaginta sex numerum: et valde verisimile est, quoniam novissimum regnum hoc habet vocabulum. Latini enim sunt qui nunc regnant: sed non in hoc nos gloriabimur.*" A literal translation of this is: "The name *Lateinos* contains the number of 666, and it is very likely, because the last kingdom is so called, for they are Latins who now reign; but in this we will not glory." Pope Vitallian issued his decree that Latin was the only language to be used in worship and thus earned for himself the historical name of *Lateinos* and inheriting for himself the number of the beast.

This, however, may not be the full implication of the number for 666 is undoubtedly involved in economics. This figure heads the list of the practices of Solomon which resulted in his downfall and the division of the twelve tribes of Israel.

### THE BEAST AND POWER POLITICS

"*And I looked, and lo, A Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads*" (Rev. 14:1).

A significant feature of the closing verses of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation is that no mention is made of the end of the activities of the greater or the lesser beast. The chapter ends with the provision of the defensive mechanism whereby men may identify the diabolical ramifications of the beast and, having been so equipped, are able to appreciate that 'power politics' was the policy of Satan's assault. That this is currently the *modus operandi* within the world's political sphere is indeed a wonderful testimony to the veracity of the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

With the introduction of politically coercive tactics – 'no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark of the beast' – the Lord resorted to the same faith-engendering mechanism previously noted in the context of Satan's subtlety when he joined the prodigious resources of Pagan Rome to the Christian Message (Rev. 7). It will be noted that the one hundred and forty four thousand again make their appearance



and in such a manner as to place them in diametrical opposition to the beast for they had the 'name of God' written in their foreheads. While much confusion surrounds the subject of the 144 000 this has only arisen because men will not accept the clues provided by the Lord Who never poses a problem without providing the answer.

"And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: *and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth*" (Rev. 14:3). Here indeed is the clue for, as in the case of the seventh chapter, the nation Israel is thrust unmistakably to the fore. Who, in terms of Bible revelation received the Name of God as an integral part of their national structure? "And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel and I will bless them" (Num. 6:27). Who was redeemed by the Lord? "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:68).

It will be noted that *only the 144 000 could understand the song which was sung* – a fact which thrusts the nations of the Reformation into this role for with the Open Bible in their hands, they could be stimulated into further action by appreciating that they were Israel. This realisation could initiate the implementation of the 'everlasting gospel' which surely had as its objective, the blessing of all the 'families and nations of the earth'.

That this message was received and understood is borne out by history which reveals that tremendous revivals swept through Anglo-Saxondom. The writings and teachings of the Reformers who certainly recognised their position in the great stream of the Revelation – the exhortation of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom as a witness to all nations (Matt. 24:14) – this certainly provided the impetus which resulted in unprecedented Biblical exposition in a vein and context hitherto unknown in Christian evangelism.

While this was progressing, it should be remembered that the power politics of the beast was in operation – a mechanism which, arising out of Satan's recognition of the 'Philadelphia' era, was aimed at creating diversionary tactics. Had the 'Philadelphia' era been permitted to continue uninterrupted the course of world history would have been entirely different to that which has characterised the road of human relations. In the short period of one hundred and fifty years (middle 18th and nineteenth centuries) the unbiased record of world history re-

veals an almost frantic effort to spread the knowledge of God among the nations of the world and significantly, these efforts revolved, in the main, round the Hope of the Second Advent of the Lord. This may have had some relationship to the fact that in the 14th chapter of the Revelation is mentioned that the judgment of God was impending (verse 7). Be that as it may, one feature is certain and that is that Israel in Anglo-Saxondom was very definitely involved in 'shewing forth my praise' (Isa. 43:21) at a time when Rome and its related institutions were manipulating the power political machine as a counter to all that was taking place in the modern development of the Israel of God.

As one proceeds with the 14th chapter which is indeed a parenthetical one, one notes that 'Babylon' is mentioned for the first time in the Revelation. "And there followed another angel saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (verse 8). That 'Babylon' is associated with the 'beast' cannot be denied for in the rapid succession of messages which highlight the remainder of the 14th chapter, the two become synonymous with the exhortation to Israel to remain outside of the web being woven by manipulators of power politics. "And the third angel followed them saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image and receive his mark . . . the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God."

While this was very definitely a warning to Israel at a time when they were beginning to expand their activities, it is one which is projected through the duration of the beast's activity and serves as a directive against such foolhardiness as has been witnessed in Britain's membership with the Common Market or 'Treaty of Rome'.

The closing message of the parenthetical chapter projects the end of the age scene to the fore and while it portrays, in grim detail, the wrath of God in judgment, it does not fail to provide encouragement. One may see from the 14th chapter and its message to Israel that it was directed to a people prepared by the Lord and as an exhortation to go forward in the face of adversity zealously guarding the Word of Truth against the universal falsity as propagated by the beast. It was intended as an instrument of assurance against the incredible subtlety of the power politics of the Babylonian beast and even today, continues to provide hope in an otherwise hopeless situation.

Bearing in mind that the machinery of coercion is depicted as continuing until the time when 'one like unto the Son of man' would come with a 'sharp sickle' in his hand (Rev. 14:14), the succeeding



*Early drawing  
of the defeat  
of the Spanish  
Armada.*



*Queen Elizabeth  
gives thanks in  
St. Paul's  
Cathedral for  
deliverance.*

chapters are evidently a portrayal of the events which led up to this great climax. The fifteenth chapter, comprising eight verses in all, serves as an introduction to the Seven Vials of the Wrath of God which are poured out upon 'the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image' (Rev. 16:2). "And I saw another sign in heaven . . . seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image and over his mark . . . stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints . . ." (Rev. 15:1-3).

Here again Israel is thrust to the fore and in such a manner as to make this identification unassailable. It will be noted that those who sang the 'song of Moses' were those who had 'gotten the victory over the beast' – phraseology which draws attention to the breakdown of the absolute power wielded by the Papacy. From the middle of the seventeenth century when anti-Papacy feelings were running very high in Britain and the Continent, the Jesuits were unleashed in order to recover the lost ground. Their insidious manipulation of power politics recovered considerable Continental support for the Pope but only served to strengthen the opposition in Britain. The churches in England and Scotland rejected the 'voice of the image' by incorporating in their constitutional articles of faith safeguards which only traitors would violate. By an Act of Parliament, Latin was abolished as a medium of worship and the people could worship God in their own language. The beast and his 'gestapo' were not finished by any means for the history of those years shows one thrust after the other in all spheres of national life aimed at returning the 'sheep to the Papal fold'.

Finding the people disenchanted with the Papal system and almost entirely unresponsive to the overtures made to them, attention was focused on the aristocracy and the Monarch. However, national safeguards were created to ensure the continued victory over the beast. The *Test Act* of 1673 ensured that all governors or government officials as such could owe allegiance to none other than the Sovereign of England. In this, all officials were required to partake of Communion in the Church of England adding to this association a public denial of the Roman institution known as the doctrine of transubstantiation. In this doctrine, the Roman priesthood claimed to have the power of changing the elements of bread and wine into the literal body and blood of the

Lord Jesus Christ.

The *Parliamentary Test Act* of 1678 was another demonstration of the determination of Israel in the isles to perpetuate the victory over the beast for this Act required all Members of the English Parliament to publicly repudiate the worship of the Virgin Mary and the Sacrifice of the Mass. So precious had this victory become that even the Monarch, James II, lost his throne because of an apparent leaning toward Papal convictions. This 'leaning' brought yet another Act into being – the Act of Settlement an extract of which, because of its far-reaching implication, is now provided: “. . . *whereas it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety of this protestant kingdom to be governed by a popish prince . . . the said Lord, Spiritual and Temporal and Commons do further pray that it be enacted that all and every person that should hold communion with the see or the church of Rome, or shall profess the Popish religion, shall be excluded and forever incapable to inherit, possess or enjoy the crown and government of this realm and the dominions thereto belonging.*”

Since the Act was passed in 1699, all British Monarchs have been required to take this oath at their coronations in which they swear to uphold the Act of Settlement and to Defend the Faith which prompted it. It is a sad evidence of the declining 'victory over the beast' that not only the British Monarch, but ecclesiastical and political leaders have, in recent years, made contact with the Pope himself. This, however, is a far cry from the time when Israel had 'gotten the victory over the beast' and must be left for further consideration when the stream of history as unveiled by the Revelation, presents the end of the age scene.

As one passes on, it will be noted that the victorious people stood 'alongside the sea of glass' – an expression which can only be fully appreciated if the historical sequence of events has been followed through the Revelation. 'Seas' are indicative of people and 'glass' is equated with brittleness. While Israel in the isles was consolidating its victory over Rome, across the literal sea and in France, the brittle nature of the people was being demonstrated in the Revolution – a remarkable situation which, as with so many other historical events, testifies to the accuracy of prophecy.

While France writhed under revolution, British history shows an incredible development of the prophetic pattern. It will be noted that those who had 'gotten the victory over the beast', sang the 'song of Moses', the meaning of which must remain obscure until the pages of

the Old Testament are once again opened and accepted as true. It will be found that there are two 'songs of Moses' in the Old Testament each being relevant to the two features in the 3rd verse of the 15th chapter. The one song concerns the *works* of the Lord while the other embraces *His Way*.

The *works* of the Lord was the subject of the 'song of Moses' who praised Him for His deliverance of the children of Israel from the pursuing Egyptian hosts (Ex. 15:10). In praising the Lord, Moses said: "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters." Was it purely coincidental that the people in the isles, having been given their freedom from Papal dominion in much the same manner as Israel had received this from the Egyptians, were 'pursued' by the Papal minion Philip of Spain? Again, under the Providence of God, the victory was Israel's and the then Monarch of England, Queen Elizabeth I, sang the 'song of Moses', using words almost identical to those of Moses on a commemorative medal which was struck to perpetuate the memory of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The Queen acknowledged: "He blew with His winds and they were scattered."

The second 'song of Moses' has to do with *God's way* which is described as 'just and true'. Quite contrary to usual explanations which appear to centre around the Character and Nature of God as found within the context of 'love', this 'song' has to do with God's way of accomplishing His Plan in the earth. In the chapter which is theologically headed as 'the song of Moses', i.e., Deuteronomy 32, one finds Moses exhorting the people to "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father and he will shew thee; thy elders and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deut. 32:7-9).

Here, in unmistakable terms, one reads of land allocation for the sons of Jacob – land reserved for Israel's occupancy in close proximity to other nations of the earth. This second 'song of Moses' takes on greater importance when it is realised that the Papal beast had attempted to play the role of God in parcelling out land to its Latin minion nations. Both Spain and France, under the authority of the Pope, appeared set to become mighty empires but, 'The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.' The Lord had determined that *His people* would expand through the earth and be a blessing to

all the nations. History records that Spain was defeated in such a manner as to preclude any further aspirations to a world empire and France, the second bow to the Papal string, became riven by internal strife.

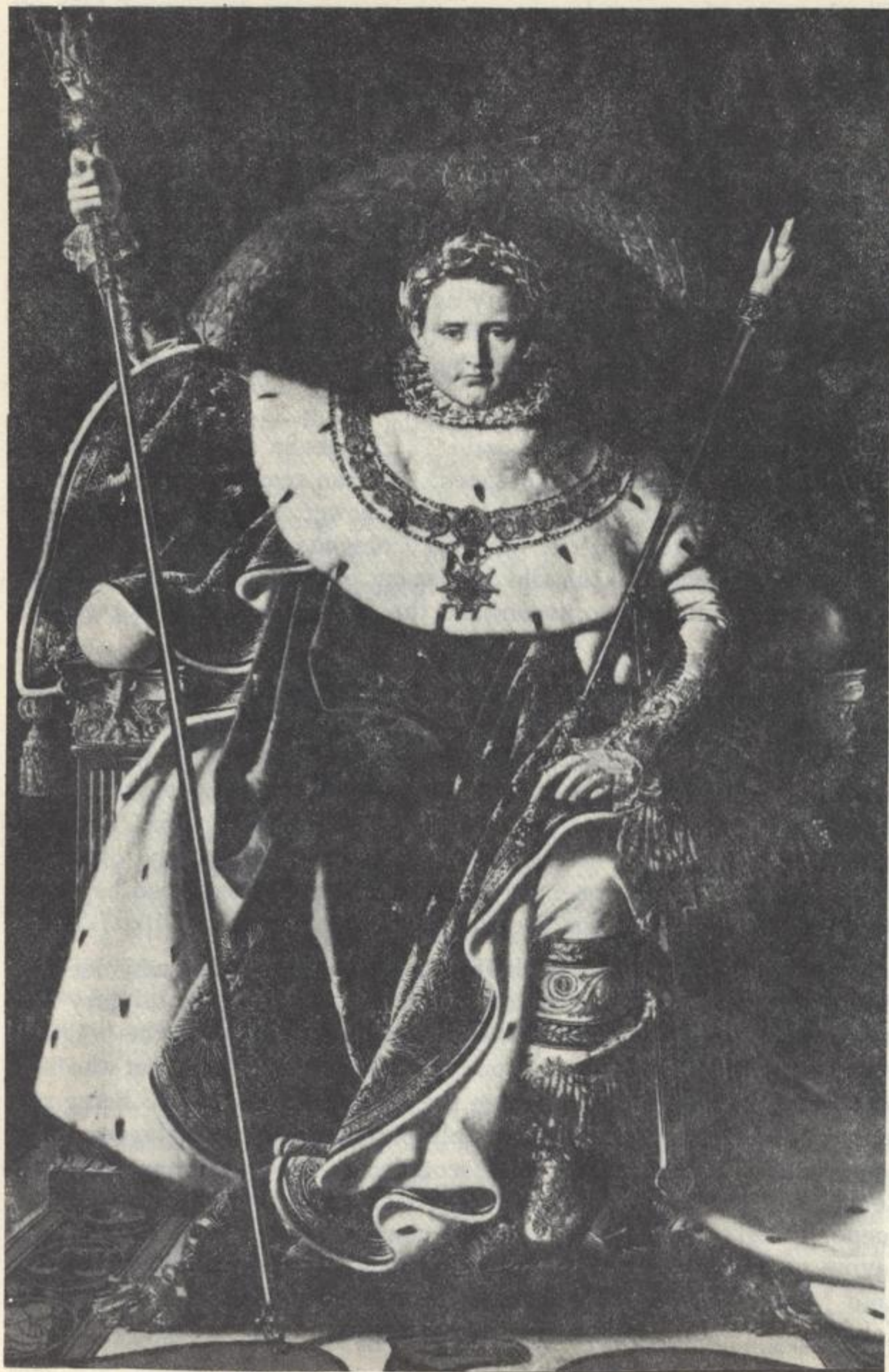
The expansion of Britain at this time was one of those improbabilities which became a reality. She was outnumbered at every turn and yet, in spite of everything, became one of the greatest world empires of history. She became 'a great and mighty nation' (Gen. 18:18); she became 'a nation and a company of nations' (Gen. 35:10) and indeed put on the mantle of Israel identity as no other people have ever done. The 'song of Moses' was indeed sung – but more, both became translated into political action which became inscribed in the annals of world history.

"And after that I looked and . . . the seven angels came out of the temple having the seven plagues. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power: and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues . . . were fulfilled." Having been directed to the Old Testament by the 'song of Moses' one is kept in that context to understand the closing message of the 15th chapter.

In Numbers 16 is the record, in phraseology almost identical to that in Revelation 15, of unauthorised persons attempting to perform service to God. The 'gainsaying of Korah' is here explained. Those who sought the implementation of man's concepts attempted to perform the priestly office and were immediately slain (Num. 16:32) with a great plague spreading among the Israel people. Aaron, the duly appointed priest, 'made atonement for the people and he stood between the living and the dead; and the plague was stayed' (Num. 16:47-50).

In this reference to the Old Testament narrative, one may see the Papal priesthood or the agencies of the beast attempting to carry out the priest's office – an office to which they had no right. In the plagues which were about to be poured out on those on the Continent who accepted the imposters, one may see the record of Numbers 16 being re-enacted. Literally thousands of people perished when the plagues were poured out – a devastation fully recorded in the 16th chapter of the Revelation. However, while convulsion characterised the Continental scene, Israel in the isles remained comparatively safe, the plagues having no effect because of the faithful high-priestly Ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of the people whom He had redeemed on Calvary.

\* \* \* \* \*



*Napoleon - the modern Caesar*



## CHAPTER 8

### SETTING THE SCENE FOR THE END OF THE AGE

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

As one looks at the closing verses of the 15th chapter of the Revelation, an unmistakable picture begins to emerge – a picture of opportunity provided but a retarding mechanism in operation mitigating against the full benefits to be derived from this. It is only as one keeps the Israel factor in mind that one can fully appreciate the significance of this. The sons of Jacob, having given tangible reality to the ‘songs of Moses’ (Rev. 15:3), i.e., having translated this into political action, were now poised to bless the nations of the earth by demonstrating their ‘wisdom and understanding’ (Deut. 4:5-6) under the Providence of God. However, ‘wisdom’ in the context of the Hebrew meaning of the word, implied an intelligence based on all the relevant facts – the most important of which was national identity. That this was lacking in the true modern development of Israel and that this void would continue is graphically illustrated in the last verse of the 15th chapter.

It is an undeniable scriptural fact, emphasised in both the Old and New Testaments, that Israel would suffer the consequences of national blindness (Isa. 42:19; 59:10 and Rom. 11:25) and this was the retarding mechanism which resulted in the ‘seven plagues’ being poured out on those who served the ‘beast’. The history of Anglo-Saxondom from the beginning of the 16th century to that of the 18th, carried more than enough evidence to reawaken the people to a realisation of national identity. There were, of course, men who came to know that they were indeed the modern development of Israel! – a knowledge which took root particularly among the sons of Jacob who ‘spread abroad’. In America and as early as 1630, John Winthrop, who became Governor of the colony of Boston, firmly rooted in the belief of Israel

identity and the need to keep the Law of the Lord, said: “. . . wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us . . . when hee shall make us a prayse and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations: the Lord make it like that of New England: for wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are upon us.” John Winthrop further told his people: “. . . Beloved, there is now set before us life and good, death and evil, in that we are commanded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another, to walk in His ways and to keep His Commandments and His Ordinances, and His Laws, and the articles of our covenant with Him, that we may live and be multiplied, and that the Lord our God may bless us in that land whither we go to possess it.” Winthrop was one out of so many who knew the identity of Anglo-Saxondom among whom were several clergymen who merely lacked sufficient courage to press the subject. However, the majority of the shepherds were loath to divorce their teaching from that which had characterised the Papal Roman counterfeit with the result that Israel remained in ignorance of her identity and her mission in the earth. She was, as it were, a technician into whose hands were thrust the tools of his trade but who did not know what to do with them nor why they had been given to him.

One wonders what the course of human history would have been had Israel come to a realisation of her identity three centuries ago when all the signs – all the God-given marks – were taking very real shape in Anglo-Saxondom. While one may speculate over this, the record of European history shows the ‘seven vials of the wrath of God’ as a mechanism of protection against the consequences of Israel’s blindness.

### THE SEVEN PLAGUES

“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth” (Rev. 16:1). It will be noted that these ‘vials of wrath’ were poured out on the similar sphere as that which is recorded in the 8th chapter of the Revelation and which is summarised as the ‘Trumpets of Judgment’. These ‘judgments’ took place on (1) the earth; (2) the sea; (3) the rivers and fountains of waters; and (4) the sun. Now note the same area of operation in Revelation 16. “And the first went and poured out his vial upon *the earth*; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast and upon them which worshipped his image” (verse 2). Thus, the first vial was poured out on the earth but not in a universal sense in that it was limited to those who were associated with the ‘beast’ and were subservient to

its dictates.

As one looks at the history of those who remained servile to the 'beast' one finds that the Western European countries were suddenly afflicted by a 'noisome and grievous sore' – revolution. Rousseau and Voltaire had previously laid the foundation for this by their revolutionary doctrines in France – doctrines which later were translated into violent revolution in which was released the bestial nature in man and which left a trail of horror as an attestation of the 'noisome sore' of the first vial. In 1793, France declared war on the ruling classes of the other Latin nations with the result that Europe was plunged into the bloodiest war since the fall of Rome.

### *THE SECOND 'VIAL' – the Sea*

"And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea and it became as the blood of a dead man and every living soul died in the sea." This vial is translated by the incredible sea actions which were fought and in which those nations serving the 'beast' lost all control of the sea lanes. One thinks of the French fleet assembled at Brest to carry out a projected invasion of England and which was finally destroyed in the battle of Quiberon Bay with tremendous loss of life. One thinks, too, of Lord Hood, Lord Howe and Nelson of Trafalgar – names which recall monumental sea battles during which the seas were stained with blood until the French and Spanish ships feared to set sail because of this second vial of wrath.

### *THE THIRD VIAL – the rivers and fountains of waters*

"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and the fountains of waters; and they became as blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art and wast and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets and thou hast given them blood to drink for they are worthy" (verses 5-6). It has been noted previously when the third Trumpet was considered, that the same symbolism was used to describe the Hunnish invasion of the northern boundaries of Italy and the countries watered by the rivers Rhone and Danube – indeed all the sub-Alpine provinces of Italy.

The activity of the 'noisome sore' began to spread further afield and one finds that the French revolution spilled over and covered the same regions as did the Hunnish invasion those many centuries earlier and left a record of bloodshed unparalleled in the history of the valleys of the Danube and the Po. This region had previously witnessed the merciless death of tens of thousands under the Papal decree of

suppression and now, under the assault of the French revolutionary forces, the reverse was happening – indeed the vial of the wrath of God on the 'rivers and fountains of waters'.

#### *THE FOURTH VIAL – the sun*

“And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun and power was given him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which had power over these plagues and they repented not to give him glory (verses 8-9). Under the symbolism of the fourth Trumpet (Rev. 8:12) judgment fell on Rome and, as with the sixth Seal (Rev. 6:12) this was translated by the overthrow of the ruling powers. However, there is a difference in that with the fourth Trumpet and the sixth Seal the 'sun was darkened' whereas in the fourth 'vial', this was poured upon the sun presenting a picture of a sun bursting with excessive brilliance and exercising a destructive and baneful influence. In the events of those times, Napoleon had an influence which was identical with that of the vial being poured on the sun for his was indeed a 'scorching' heat on those of the ruling classes among the nations who continued to be subservient to the 'beast'. Wherever he established his authority, he placed despotic governors in charge who deprived the people of every shred of liberty and justice. No better description of the role of Napoleon than that which, in Revelation symbolism, is depicted as the 'scorching heat' of the sun can be found adequate enough to portray this man.

#### *ISRAEL DURING THE 'VIALS OF WRATH'*

While Napoleon's 'scorching heat' ravaged the people who subscribed to the 'beast's' authority, it is most significant that the Lord God afforded Israel in the isles further evidences of His Faithfulness. His Word, recorded by the prophet Isaiah – 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper' – was once again vindicated for Napoleon certainly forged an immense invasion weapon which came to naught. A camp of one hundred thousand men was formed at Boulogne which, together with the host of flat-bottomed boats was intended to set England alight with Napoleon's particular brand of government. Napoleon declared: "Let us be masters of the Channel for six hours and we are masters of the world" but this was denied to him by two factors – (1) timely death of the Admiral in charge of the operation and (2) the incredible victory of Nelson who, at Trafalgar, put paid to Napoleon's dreams of the invasion of England.

#### *THE FIFTH VIAL – the seat of the beast darkened*

Whereas the first four 'Vials' were poured out on those who had

the 'mark of the beast', the fifth was directed against the 'seat of the beast'. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores and repented not of their deeds" (verses 10-11). It should be noted that this vial was directed, not upon the 'beast' himself, but rather upon his 'seat', i.e., the main platform through which he was manifest. History once again interprets this for in 1798, French troops having concentrated against the city of Rome, finally took the city and arrested Pope Pius 6th. He was subjected to all forms of abuse and finally committed to prison. Napoleon then declared the Pope's temporal reign at an end by proclaiming a Roman Republic with Rome itself elevated to the position of 'second city of the French Empire'.

Napoleon died in 1815 and it appeared as though the 'scorching heat' of the fourth Vial was turned away from the 'seat of the beast' for temporal power was again restored to the Pope who ruled for a further 55 years without any further challenge. However, in 1848, the Pope was forced to flee from Rome because of threatening forces but was returned and restored to his position by Marshal Oudinot of the French Army. In 1860, Sardinians under Victor Emmanuel, invaded the Papal States and, after defeating the Papal troops, established Italy as a kingdom under a monarchy thus finally terminating the temporal power of the Papacy.

#### *THE SIXTH VIAL – the Euphrates dries up*

"And the sixth angel poured out his vial on the great river Euphrates and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared" (verse 12). As has been noted, the fifth Vial of God's Wrath resulted in the termination of the temporal power of the Papacy which was accomplished by the year 1870. It was from this period that, notwithstanding national blindness, true modern Israel in Anglo-Saxondom was thrust on to the world scene in such a manner that only the full weight of satanic propaganda could prevent the nation's realisation of its identity. During the Victorian era, the words of God's Promises to the patriarchs were translated into the tangible reality of Anglo-Saxon experience – a mighty modern event which was ignored because of Satan's build-up of his counterfeit Israel in World Zionism. Whatever modern teachers and preachers might think of the subject of chronological prophecy, Satan is a firm believer for he knew that the sands of time were running out and the Victorian expansion of true Israel was about to be capped by the crowning experience of the

delivery of Jerusalem by the true sons of Jacob.

It is generally agreed that wars do not 'just happen' but are carefully planned against some long-term objective and the First World War was no exception. As one looks back, one may see that satanic ingenuity had contrived this in order to establish a pseudo-Israel State in Palestine – the original home of true Israel and it is in this context that the sixth Vial finds its meaning. It will be noted that the 'vial' was poured upon the 'great river Euphrates' and as this literal river still contains a considerable amount of water, the meaning of the sixth Vial must be sought in its symbolic context.

In the 'sixth Trumpet' of judgment (Rev. 9:13), history identified this 'second woe' which was released upon the dying Imperial Roman Empire as the Turks who, as an instrument of destruction, originated from the river Euphrates in 1061. The Turks were thus identified by the 'river Euphrates'. In 1453, and according to the prescribed period allotted to the sixth Trumpet, the Turks accomplished the downfall of Constantinople – the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire – but the continued existence of this instrument under the Revelation symbolism of the 'river Euphrates' was assured until its 'waters' were dried up by either political or military action.

The decline of Turkish power was not in evidence until the end of the 19th century – a decline which was accelerated by Turkey's alignment with Germany in the First World War. With the prophetically significant deliverance of Jerusalem by General Allenby in 1917, the end of the Empire symbolised by the 'river Euphrates' was in sight. By March 1924, the Empire had ceased to exist and the 'waters' had dried up. Thus, in these historical events, one has an unmistakable time factor, in comparatively modern times, to deal with.

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:13-14). Many commentators have described the record of the 'three spirits like frogs' as parenthetical, i.e., a supplementary record of events which, while not being of the sixth Vial of wrath, are complementary to it. True to this, contemporary history reveals the emergence of a trinity of evil which, since the second decade of the 20th century has created a situation which can only be unravelled by the direct intervention of Almighty God.

Many interpretations have appeared in print identifying the trinity of evil, all of which stimulate study of the 16th chapter of the Revelation for it undoubtedly deals with the present and immediate future. As one looks at the first of this trinity, indeed at each of them, it becomes obvious that propaganda would be the keynote of their activity for in each instance, the 'unclean spirits came out of the mouth'. The first, it will be noted, came out of the mouth of the dragon and, as has been noted previously, the 'dragon' symbolised Pagan Rome under *Dictatorship*. Dictatorship, as has been proved in modern experience, is not limited to individual exercise of totalitarianism as in the cases of Mussolini and Hitler but also embraces ideology. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1728-78) in close collaboration with Voltaire provided the theoretical background for this when he spread the doctrine of rejection of the notion that the 'state is an association of individuals each pursuing his own best ends'. He propagated that the state was a corporate being with a general will which was always right and above the sum of individual wills which was invariably wrong. Thus, dictatorship by a system known as totalitarianism, is equally compatible with the concept of dictatorships in the bygone era of Roman Imperialism.

Significantly, such a totalitarianism rose at the very time when the 'river Euphrates' began to dry up in Palestine for in 1917, in the exact month when General Allenby delivered Jerusalem, the Bolsheviks overthrew the Socialist government of Kerensky in Moscow which, earlier that year, had deposed the Tsar. None will surely deny that since that time Communism has made tremendous capital out of its borrowed technology to fool the great masses of the under-developed people of the world with their delusions. It has certainly been in the forefront of the anti-God forces in the world radiating a propaganda which is leading the nations of the world into a confrontation with God just as appears in the 14th verse of Revelation 16.

It will be recalled that the Russian astronaut, Gherman Titoy, after his return from what modern man calls 'space', said: "Some people say there is a God out there . . . but in my travels around the earth all day long, I looked around and didn't see Him . . . I saw no God nor angels. The rocket was made by our own people. I don't believe in God. I believe in man, his strength, his possibilities, his reason." Here, indeed, is evidence of the existence of the unclean spirit like the frog which came out of the mouth of the dragon and which had its modern beginning when the Turkish Empire began to dry up.

Bearing in mind the definition previously given for the beast, i.e., a malignancy which is not only imposing but controls nations and

peoples, an entity which adopts many forms and is sometimes religious and sometimes completely atheistic; is on occasions cultured and elegant and on others brutal and barbarous, such a factor certainly emerged on the world scene as a tangible mechanism over a period commencing in 1922.

The 'false prophet' or literally the 'religious imposter' which is the direct English translation of the Greek *pseudoprophetes*, cannot be, as so many students aver, the Islamic religion for, in the Arabic context, there is nothing pseudo about it and further, it did not have any need for re-emergence having enjoyed a continuity since the seventh century when Mohammed presented the Koran as the religious textbook for his people. The 'religious imposter' must, of necessity, be one who had previously been in operation but whose activity was curtailed and which fits the office of the Pope. It has been demonstrated previously in this study that the Pope, and indeed the Papal priesthood, held views and taught doctrines which were the projection of the ancient Babylonian 'mysteries' into the Christian context thus revealing the Roman faith as a counterfeit, therefore a religious humbug.

It will be recalled that in 1870 the Papacy, already weakened by the Reformation, received a tremendous blow when the temporal power of the Pope was abrogated. In 1929, the Pope was endowed with new power by Mussolini, the Italian dictator, and from that time the influence of the Papacy has increased until today it effectively controls an army which rivals not only that of the United States of America but of the Soviet Union as well.

This trinity, in the parenthetical verses of Revelation 16, is responsible for gathering the rulers of the world together in a one-world, satanically-sponsored kingdom under which the Israel witness nation of God would be irretrievably lost to both Him and His World Purpose. That Israel, still hopelessly blind to her identity, would become enmeshed in this is all too plain, not only from the subsequent chapters of the Revelation but from the writings of the prophets of the Old Testament for did not the Lord, through Ezekiel the prophet say: "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel" (Ezek. 36:32). However, while the current position of true Israel, as distinct from the pseudo-Israel now masquerading as God's people in both Palestine and the world, is very precarious and outwardly hopeless, the promise of God, in the Revelation of His Son, is that in a time, already predetermined by the Father, He will react against the evil trinity and its minions to destroy its work in the earth. This surely is a great



hope in this otherwise hopeless era.

## ARMAGEDDON

*“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great”* (Rev. 16:17-18).

While there are many subjects in Holy Scripture which suffer abuse because of man's interpretation, that pertaining to the subject of Armageddon is foremost in the casualties. More often than not, it is presented as the scene of tremendous carnage in Palestine at a time when God deals with a rebellious Creation which is accompanied by fantastic physical changes in the topography of the land. This interpretation has arisen because men have failed to 'search the scriptures' and have ignored the Biblical meaning of words used.

Attention is very carefully focused on the Hebrew word 'Armageddon' in the Revelation and significantly, it appears in this form only once which fact should encourage a fuller investigation of the subject. If Megiddo of the Old Testament is to be the scene of this great gathering of nations and people who have come under the persuasion of the evil trinity of Dragon, Beast and False Prophet, it becomes more than a little difficult to visualise. Megiddo was the southern rim of the plain of Esdraelon which plain is twenty miles long and fourteen in width and in the Old Testament was the scene of the death of the kings Saul and Josiah (I Sam. 31:8 and II Kings 23:29-30).

In the Hebrew language, the word *megiddo* means a *rendezvous* and in the plainest of language, Revelation 16:16 indicates the process, on a universal scale, which leads to the direct intervention of God and which, in turn, is seen in the physical upheavals in the earth. However, the phrase Armageddon indicates the fact of an event rather than a place – a preparation so to speak, which calls for the attention of the Lord God Almighty. This is the process of which Joel wrote: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles (Heb. *goyim* – nations); Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong . . . Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:9-14).

This is undoubtedly the work of the evil trinity of Revelation 16: 13 whose ecclesiastical, economic and militant deviousness goes

'forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, *to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*'

Against this contention, there are no doubt many who would immediately point to the Old Testament statements which indicate that Palestine is to be the scene of tremendous carnage in the great and dreadful Day of the Lord and which cannot be forced into a metaphorical context. This is undoubtedly true for there is no possible justification for interpreting Ezekiel 38:19-22 in any context other than a literal one. "Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down . . . And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone." This, of course, is God's reaction to those who seek to implement the 'evil thought' which Satan's imposters attempt in the holy land (Ezek.38:10).

Another indication of a very literal reaction is to be found in Joel's preview of the end of the age. ". . . the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness . . ." (Joel 2:1-2). The effect of this situation upon men is further described by the prophet who states: "They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run up the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining" (Joel 2:9-10).

While it is admittedly difficult to visualise a man running up a wall just as it is to comprehend a situation in which the sun and moon shall be dark, this is no reason for supposing that Joel was using metaphorical language. It is clearly evident that Peter was not of the opinion that Joel was using this form of communicating a spiritual experience for, in quoting Joel's prophecy, he said: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord" (Acts 2:19-20). The context here is, as Peter clearly indicates, the 'wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath.'

There can thus be no doubt that the earth is heading for a rendezvous with tremendous physical change - a change which Zechariah

describes in detail (Zech. 14:4-8) – but this does not necessarily mean that the seventh Vial or 'Armageddon' depicts the same sequence of physical upheavals which the Old Testament prophets describe. There is no indication in the 16th chapter of the Revelation which suggests that the student, having been led to accept the fact that the Book and its information is provided in symbolism, should suddenly change by intruding a literal meaning because the symbolism has become obscure. There is nothing obscure about the seventh Vial if one continues to apply the principle of symbolism which, up to the last portion of the 16th chapter, has provided an accurate account of history as this has been enacted by men in the then known world.

### *THE JUDGMENT OF THE SEVENTH VIAL*

The last words in the parenthetical verses of the sixth Vial imply the process of gathering the people and nations of the world to their rendezvous with God. The seventh Vial is in this context and one should note that initially, there are four great highlights which may be summarised as (1) the vial poured out in the air accompanied by (2) voices and thunderings; (3) a great earthquake, and (4) the falling of great hailstones.

One may today well appreciate the force of the metaphor of the vial poured out in the air for both national and social atmospheres have become polluted and contaminated by the poison of the trinity which, having commenced their activity when the metaphorical 'Euphrates' dried up, have utilised every device at their command to reach all the inhabitants of the earth to coerce them into the mould of change. The utilisation of the metaphor of 'voices and thunders', as has been noted previously (Rev. 10:3), thrusts one into the realm of propaganda through which the Truth has become subverted in accordance with the policy of one-worldism initiated by the 'dragon', the 'beast' and the 'false prophet'.

It does not require an exceptionally perceptive genius to note that the pattern of modern propaganda is directed toward creating a one-world planet – at a price – and this price is the surrender of God-given privileges for a mess of temporal pottage. There can be absolutely no doubt that the Utopian end of the prevailing struggles which thunder through society via the propaganda media is nothing less than the proverbial red herring which detracts from the real motive of world dictatorship by the trinity of evil.

### *THE MIGHTY EARTHQUAKE*

It will be noted that in the context of the seventh Vial and co-

inciding with the 'voices and thunders', there was an 'earthquake' unprecedented in human experience. Is it mere coincidence that since the emergence of the 'three spirits like frogs' the world and world politics have undergone such a radical change? As has been noted previously, earthquakes in the Revelation denote political upheavals, the interpretation of which metaphor is vindicated when one recalls the decline and fall of the Roman Empire as depicted in Revelation 6: 12-15.

Since the termination of the Second World War, world politics have undergone such a change that one cannot explain it as a natural sequence of events. Even before the end of hostilities eastern European countries were consigned to the arena of political change whether they wanted this or not for at the Yalta Conference (7th–12th February 1945), totalitarian Russia bargained for their incorporation into the Communist sphere of influence as the price for that country's entry into the war against Japan. That some diabolical forces were at work cannot be doubted for Russia declared war on Japan only two days before that country surrendered to the Allies. What possible motivation could have been behind the Yalta betrayal of eastern Europe into Communist hands when Russia's assistance in the Far Eastern War was not needed? The old order in Europe was passing and the ripples of a universal political upheaval was already in evidence.

From 1947 until the mid-60s one may see the 'earthquake' of the seventh Vial in operation. No less than 53 countries, formerly maintained and governed by what is today known as the 'colonial powers', demanded and obtained 'independence' – changes which created a complete metamorphosis in the political order of events. The main instrument for this was, of course, the United Nations Organisation – a convenient body through which the 'spirits like frogs' could initiate their devious plans for world dominion.

"And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" (Rev. 16:19). Whereas previously in the Revelation, the phrase 'the great city' had its identifying marks of 'Sodom and Egypt' thus presenting Rome as the main theatre of operation (Rev. 11:8), in the context of the seventh Vial no such qualifying mark of identity is provided and one is left to search for its meaning in the context of the seventh Vial.

As is obvious, the sphere of operation of the trinity of evil is the world for no country or people is today free from the insidious coercion

of the one-world propaganda. The world is likewise divided into three parts (1) the Communist section; (2) the so-called free world; and (3) the uncommitted nations. However, it is stated that the tripartition of the world was reminiscent of 'great Babylon' – an order of existence which has a familiarity not to be missed today. In its heyday, Babylon exercised a threefold influence on all who came within its compass which may be summed up as Ecclesiastical, Economic and Militant.

In its ecclesiastical control, Babylon demanded complete submission for entrance into the city was only possible through the two gates, the Ishtar and Marduk gates, at which priests demanded reverence for the gods of the Babylonians. In the modern context, ecclesiastical dominion is on a par with that of the Babylonian priests for none is permitted membership of the community unless subscribing to man's image of God – any other acceptance of Deity is immediately ostracised. The World Council of Churches (more concerned with politics than the Bible) has shown that it fully supports the 'earthquake' of the seventh Vial and condemns and assaults any people who do not make obeisance to the god of their imagination.

The setting up of the golden image on the plains of Dura (Dan. 3:1) by Nebuchadnezzar served a two-fold purpose in that apart from indulging in an ecumenical movement based on self-deification, it was indicative of economic controls which emanated from this wonder of the ancient world. As one reads the writings of the minor prophets as these concern the remnant of Judah and Benjamin on their return from the Babylonian captivity, one may see greed for possession of wealth and the power which this gives (Hag. 2:7). Being the commercial centre of the world, even if only for a brief span of seventy years, one is able to perceive the influence of the economic control wielded by the Babylonians which has been perpetuated down the centuries until the present time. The boycotts and sanctions currently initiated through the United Nations have all the hallmarks of procedures in operation when the great city of Babylon exercised dominion in Mesopotamia.

Babylon's military machine worked in collaboration with the two other entities and was used to ensure the perpetuation of Babylonian aspirations just as today military might is conscripted in the service of one-worldism. One blatant instance of this is to be found in Africa when after the Congo had written its chapter of bestiality on the record of human depravity, the copper-rich Katanga refused incorporation in this. United Nations troops were dispatched to force an amalgamation whether or not the Africans wanted this. Here indeed, one is able to see why 'great Babylon came in remembrance before God' for the anti-

God aspirations of the trinity of evil today follow the same pattern as was in evidence when Babylon of old challenged the dominion of God in Israel those many millennia ago.

### *GOD ACCEPTS THE CHALLENGE*

In all that is related in the 16th chapter, it would appear that the Israel people are a forgotten factor as no mention is made of them. However, as has been stated previously, the 15th chapter reveals that because of national blindness in Israel, the full benefits of the Abrahamic Covenant could not be realised and consequently, the nations and families of the earth were prevented from participating in this. Capitalising on the continued ignorance of national identity in Israel, Satan's minions press on under the umbrella of the propaganda machine confident that the turmoil created by emergent nationalism in all parts of the world will successfully occupy the attention of Anglo-Saxondom thus denying them the opportunity of coming to a realisation of identity.

As is obvious, modern propaganda in all its modern tentacles is aimed at Anglo-Saxondom which, without knowing it, has been motivated by a desire to act as servants of the Most High God. The equalitarian dogma is intended to eradicate from the national consciousness of true Israel the exalted position which she occupies in the Service of God by claiming that all men are equal and that God, if He exists, has no chosen people. Added to this incredible barrage on the mind, is the emphasis and over-emphasis of the story of the emergent nations who are clamouring for 'a place in the sun' which, because of Anglo-Saxondom's mythical exploitation, was denied to them.

Within this assault have come the economic pressures and with a tottering economy in Britain and indeed in all Anglo-Saxon countries, emphasis has been laid on national survival which depends on economic salvation at the hands of those who have created the chaos. Battered and bewildered, the modern development of true Israel does not know which way to go and, as recent events indicate, is quite prepared to commit national suicide by bowing the knee to Satan's trinity of evil.

The present situation in Anglo-Saxondom is indeed a challenge to the Lord God Almighty for He has ever pointed to His salvation which the nation has experienced when threatened by satanic forces. In the context of the events related in the seventh Vial, He is none the less concerned over Israel because of her complete dominion by the evil trinity and the danger of impending national suicide which is quite contrary to His assurance concerning the nation (Jer. 31:35). He acts by giving to the trinity 'the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his

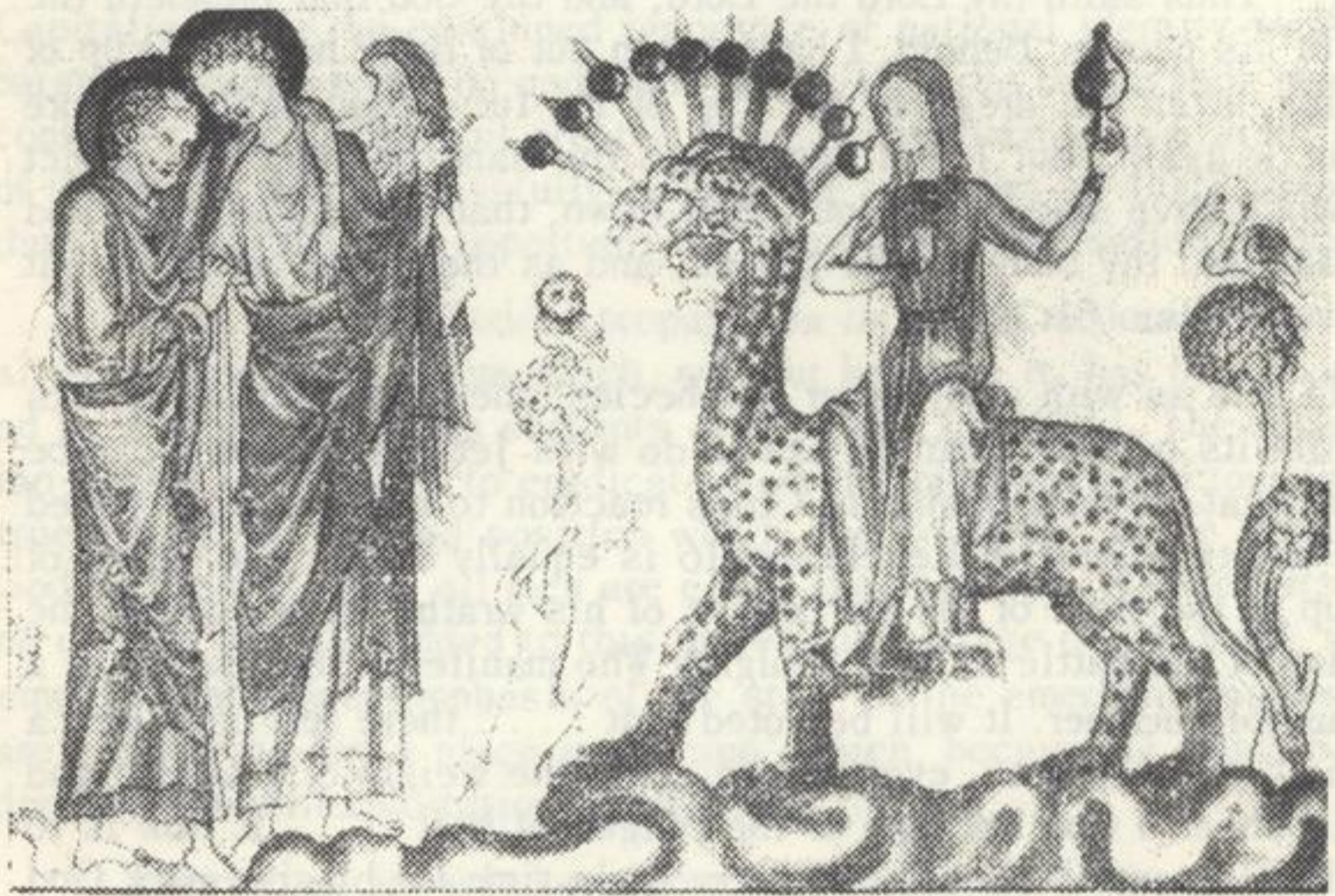
wrath'.

Babylon, which in the 17th chapter is on record as having made the inhabitants of the earth 'drunk' with the wine of her fornication (Rev. 17:2) now receives the 'cup' of God's reaction which, in point of fact, is the same mechanism of destruction forced on Israel. It is most significant that the prophet Isaiah made reference to this in a chapter which called on Israel to 'Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you.' Isaiah calls on Israel: "Awake, awake, put on strength O arm of the Lord . . ." thus indicating that great danger lay in blindness and death in continued ignorance. He ends his call by stating: "Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink of it again: But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over; and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over" (Isa. 51:22-23).

In this as with many other prophecies, there are two fulfilments and while its primary meaning has to do with Jerusalem, there can be no doubt that its relationship to God's reaction to the challenge posed by the trinity of evil in Revelation 16 is equally valid. The effect of the 'cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath' is, of course, the great day of the battle of God Almighty Who manifests His answer in a very tangible manner. It will be noted that ". . . there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of hail . . ." If this is to be a literal event there would be very little time for blaspheming God as men would either be dead or too busy dodging a ninety-three and three-quarter pound hailstone from heaven (a talent is this weight). This 'hail' which falls on men who blaspheme the experience is no haphazard visitation but by reason of the wording in the Revelation, is measured and specific. In the plainest of language, God's reaction is His direct intervention precisely along lines which He has prescribed in the writing of the prophets and the establishment of His Kingdom which is in conformity with His Divine Law.

As is obvious, the righteousness of God's Law is anathema to those whose main assault on the things of God is lawlessness and with this 'writing on the wall' one may well appreciate the resistance of those who believed that world salvation lay in the machinery of one-worldism and the subtle control of the minions of the devil.

\* \* \* \* \*



*The other woman.*



## CHAPTER 9

### THE OTHER 'WOMAN'

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

As has been noted throughout this study, the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ is an all-embracing one which, through its symbolism, penetrates the future and then returns to the point in history which commences the circumstances which have a direct bearing on the event portrayed. The sixteenth chapter, with its description of the work of the trinity of evil, unfolds God's reaction to the world situation created by the 'three unclean spirits like frogs' and in which 'great Babylon came in remembrance before God . . .' Continuing the pattern already referred to, the seventeenth chapter returns into history concentrating on the loathsome course of another character in the great drama.

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." In the Old Testament record, the 'woman' who dominates the narrative is, of course, Israel who is designated as a 'harlot' and who is depicted as following 'after her lovers' (Hos. 2:2-7). Israel had prostituted her faith — a fact which called forth the comment of the Lord Who said: ". . . it is an evil thing and and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts. For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot" (Jer. 2:19-20).

The Books of the prophets are full to overflowing with the accounts of Israel's adulteries and no attempt is made to justify her departure from the Directives of God. Yet running through the whole

narrative, one finds the promise of restoration for the Lord said: "Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more" (Isa. 54:4).

In the New Testament, one finds the Israel 'woman' once again in evidence and in order to establish her identity, thus precluding any misunderstanding, the vision which John saw was highlighted by the witnesses which the Lord had appointed as evidence of His Faithfulness to His Covenant people. The New Testament 'woman' was clothed with the 'sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars' (Rev. 12:1 and Jer. 31:35). This 'woman' fled into the wilderness where 'she hath a place prepared of God' and where, notwithstanding her continuing national blindness, she was protected against a return to her former 'harlot' condition.

The second 'woman' who emerges in the Revelation, while having points of similarity with Israel of the Old Testament, is the very antithesis of what God said Israel would be. This 'woman' is introduced in such a manner and at such a time as to indicate that the Revelation spotlight had now swept backwards in time as a build-up to the tremendous climax of the age when the Lord takes a very definite hand in the affairs of the world. This 'woman' is introduced as sitting 'upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.' It is the description of the 'beast' which establishes the time which leads to the identification of the 'woman' as the Church of Rome.

It will be noted that the beast has seven heads and ten horns – a picture already familiar to John who saw this beast rise up out of the sea (Rev. 13:1). However, there is a subtle difference to be seen when contrasting the two accounts for the beast with the seven heads and ten horns which came out of the sea had crowns denoting rulership and sovereignty which is missing in the account of the beast which the woman rode. As has been noted previously, the Roman world was the outward manifestation of the beast and that the insignia of imperial authority was missing, surely indicates the period in time when the dominion and grandeur of Imperial Rome had vanished. The process by which this state was achieved has already been commented on as fulfilling the six Trumpets of judgment recorded in the 8th and 9th chapters of the Revelation – a process which was completed in 1452 when Constantinople fell to the Turks. It was during this time that the 'woman' makes her appearance and rides upon the 'scarlet beast'.

An interesting sidelight on this is to be found in the book *Ceremoniale Romanum* by the Roman Archbishop Marcelles who, in the 16th century, dedicated his work to Pope Leo X. In this he describes the Papal robes which will be found to be nothing less than the same description of the clothes of the 'whore' who sat upon the beast. However, it would appear that the ceremonial of 'adoration of the Pope' was determined to complete the picture of the 'woman' riding the 'scarlet beast' for, after the third adoration, the Pope was carried by chairmen all of whom wore long scarlet robes which reached the floor. The picture of the Pope, gloriously bedecked in the most incredible finery, riding upon a mass of scarlet is surely one in keeping with that which John saw so long ago.

Significantly, the time factor, i.e., when Rome was being shorn of its imperial authority, immediately refutes any notion that this 'woman' could be Israel for this was the period during which Israel was being 'nourished' from 'the face of the serpent' (Rev. 12:14). Further to which, Israel in the isles has never been in the position by which she could ride upon or control anything associated with Rome.

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." In John's day the harlots carried their names written on a label on their foreheads where everyone but themselves could see and read and while the Roman Church protests its association with the harlot, history has written that name across Papal Rome for all to see and understand. The phraseology written on the forehead of the 'woman' is most interesting for it immediately throws the Papal church into sharp relief as the continuation of the early Chaldean idolatries.

The word 'MYSTERY' which prefaces the name was, according to Elliot's *Horae Apocalypticae* (Vol. 6 page 35) written on the Pope's tiara until it was removed by Julius III. However, scholars who have studied the religions of ancient times have noted that the religion of ancient Babylon was simply called 'Mystery' the reason for which centres around the Tower of Babel which was not merely a tower of refuge from another flood, but the central headquarters of an idolatrous religion. When the Tower of Babel was overthrown by the judgment and intervention of God, the perpetrators of this idolatry re-established their religion but did so in secret and simply took the name 'Mystery'.

The Rev. Alexander Hislop, in his *Two Babylons*, drew attention to this subject by writing: "The Chaldean Mysteries can be traced up

to the days of Semiramis who lived only a few centuries after the flood, and who is known to have impressed upon them the image of her own depraved and polluted mind. That beautiful but abandoned queen of Babylon was not only herself a paragon of unbridled lust and licentiousness, but in the mysteries which she had a chief hand in forming, she was worshipped as Rhea, the great 'mother' of the gods, with such rites as identify her with Venus, the mother of all impurity, and raised the very city where she reigned to a bad eminence among the nations, as the grand seat at once of idolatry and prostitution. Thus was this Chaldean queen a fit and remarkable prototype of the 'woman' in the Apocalypse, with the golden cup in her hand, and the name on her forehead, 'Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.'

John records his utter amazement at this new development. Being an Israelite, he fully appreciated the significance of the vision of the 'woman' which he had previously seen – it should be recalled that this 'wonder' did not fill him with amazement – but this second 'woman' parading on the beast and displaying a 'golden cup' which was full of abominations caused him to be shattered at the dimensions of Satan's temerity. Being a true apostle and having seen the things which were attendant on the Mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, he was amazed when the beast of Revelation 13 was 'wounded unto death' but was resurrected (verse 3) and now he saw the harlot making a mockery of the 'cup' which, to an Israelite, meant the institution of the New Covenant – the symbol of the Faithfulness of God to His promise.

"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." The angel then immediately proceeded to clarify the situation by stating that the beast was an entity – a mechanism of destruction – 'that was' in the diabolism which operated to destroy the Truth as it was centred in the Lord Jesus Christ, 'and is not' in John's time because of the overthrow of paganism, and 'yet is' to be resuscitated in the future. By way of amplification, the angel said: "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." It would appear that the angel used this phraseology to establish the specific area of operation as Rome for the Vatican City is very definitely associated with seven hills – Equilinus, Aventinus, Palatinus, Capitolinus, Quirimalis, Viminalis and Caelinus.

However, 'mountains' in the symbolism of the Revelation are expressive of kingdoms and as history makes abundantly clear, Papal

Rome controlled seven specific kingdoms from the middle of the 8th century until the time of the French Revolution. These were the Franks, the House of Saxony, Franconia, the House of Suabia, Spain, Austria and France. This exposition of the 'seven heads' appears to have, as its main objective, the dominion of the woman for the angel then proceeds to draw attention to the beast.

"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." As has been noted previously in this study, Roman historians have left on record the fact that ancient Rome was ruled successively by seven forms of government which have been summed up as (1) Kings; (2) Consuls; (3) Dictators; (4) Decimvers; (5) Military tribunes; (6) Emperors; and (7) Despotic Emperors. It should be noted that the angel stated that 'five are fallen' and in vindication of this, five had indeed fallen in John's day. The angel then used the present tense by stating 'and one is', i.e., the sixth form of government, Emperors, was in operation in John's day — a fact which John could confirm by reason of his imprisonment on Patmos. The seventh form of government was that of the Despotic Emperors and the enquiring student will naturally seek an explanation as to the differentiation between the Emperors and the Despotic Emperors.

It was the historian Gibbon who drew attention to the change in form of rule which took place when Diocletian became Emperor in Rome. Prior to Diocletian, the Emperors wore the laurel crown and were the *Stephanos* crowned Caesars whereas Diocletian discarded this and wore the *diadem* which was the badge of despotic Asiatic sovereignty. This line of Emperors indeed continued for 'a short space' and ended in 476 A.D. with the abdication of Romulus Augustus. Thus the seven forms of government or 'kings' came to an end but the angel related that there was to be an 'eighth' and, true to this, history indicates that when the Papacy rose to political power the Caesars lived again in the Popes.

In *The Holy Roman Empire*, by Lord Bryce, the picture of the eighth form of government is clearly painted on the occasion of the celebration of Pope Boniface's Jubilee in 1300 for, seated on the throne of Constantine, arrayed with crown, sceptre and sword, this Pope declared: "I am Caesar! I am Emperor!" Here indeed one is able to see the historical tribute to the accuracy of the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The eighth 'head', as it were, may be said to come into operation in the middle of the 8th century for it was at this time

that the Papacy assumed the dictatorial right to impose its prerogatives over the political leadership of nations. Charlemagne, it will be recalled, received his crown at the hands of Pope Leo III and was told that his position as Caesar was bestowed *only* because the Pope willed it in the Name of God.

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.” This subject of the ‘ten horns’ has puzzled commentators ever since the Bible became an open Book and today remains, to a certain degree, an enigma. However, there are certain points which provide the basis for study and may be summed up as (a) the time when the ten horns are effective; (b) the sphere of operation, and (c) whether they depict a succession or are contemporary.

It will be noted that unlike the heads which very clearly indicate a succession – ‘five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come’ – the ten horns appear to be contemporary, i.e., they exist together at the same time. The fact that they had received no kingdom or dominion ‘as yet’ – at the time when John received the vision – would appear to thrust their existence into the then future. The angel does not state on which of the seven heads the ten horns appeared but the phraseology used limits this to two – the seventh or eighth. By reason of the explanation given to John of the vision of the ‘woman’ riding the beast, it would therefore appear that the ten horns were associated with the eighth beast and indeed contribute to the overall strength of the beast.

This, however, does not pinpoint the time factor for, as has been noted, the beast, controlled and dominated by the woman, commenced in the middle of the eighth century and continues until the end of the age when it goes ‘into perdition’ (verse 8). However, the fact that the beast, dominated by the ‘woman’, made ‘war with the Lamb’ would appear to refer to the earlier vision given to John of the ‘beast’ which, having been wounded unto death, revived and blasphemed against God and made war with the saints (Rev. 13:3-7). It is at this stage that the angel begins to draw in the threads of history for this was undoubtedly the time of the Reformation in which ten Papal kingdoms were used to put down the embers of religious freedom – the political mechanism of the beast used by the ‘woman’ to retain her position.

As has been noted, in the 16th chapter of the Revelation the kingdoms which were formerly subservient to the Papacy were turned against her and the ‘seat of the beast’ – note it was not the ‘beast’

which was darkened but the 'seat' where the 'woman' sat (Rev. 16:10) – was assailed by the revolutionary forces of Napoleon. It is in these events that one is able to see something of the beast again in operation in comparatively modern times. The malignant forces of totalitarianism which ironically marched under the banner of 'liberty, equality, fraternity' in the assault on the 'woman' in the French Revolution, was that which had, since the eighth century, been nurtured and schooled by the Papacy in the 'woman's' dominion over the beast's lands.

That the 'woman' was in fact the target of the revolutionary forces which in the main comprised the ten horns of the beast, is confirmed by the angel of the Lord for he said that the ten would turn on the 'woman', hating her and tearing her to pieces. This is surely indicative of a process of disintegration which is supported by comparatively modern history. With the 'darkening' of the 'seat of the beast' one finds the temporal power of the Papacy removed but it did not indicate the death of the 'woman'. Italy and the 'seven hills' came under the control of Victor Emmanuel in 1860 but the 'woman' once again appeared in 1929 when, under the decree of the Italian dictator Mussolini, the Pope was endowed with new power. Since that time and in conjunction with the 'dragon' and the 'beast', she has played her part in the tragedy which is the modern experience and which is leading the world to its rendezvous with God.

However, prior to the climax of the age, it would appear that the Papacy is to pass through considerable tribulation at the hands of her former suppliants. ". . . these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." That this is taking place today, none will surely deny for countries which formerly were Roman Catholic are today more tolerant of Communism (totalitarianism) than of Romanism and where once the voice of the Pope was law, Papal decrees are only effective when they are in line with the doctrines of the 'dragon' and the 'beast'.

Thus did the angel of the Lord clarify the picture of the 'mother of harlots' who was the third in the trinity of evil which, capitalising on the blindness of Israel and the reluctance of the genuine 'woman' of Holy Scripture to show forth God's praise (Isa. 43:21), fills the earth with satanic propaganda. The scene is thus set for the final act in the great drama of the ages when the Lord takes a hand and commences the machinery which culminates in the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the earth.



ANCIENT HEBREW BILL OF DIVORCEMENT.



## CHAPTER 10

### THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

*“And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand . . .” (Rev. 19:1-2).*

The fall of Babylon, in all its phases, is, of course, in the future and from all the signs of the times as they currently obtain, one is encouraged in the belief that this future is not too far hence. The 19th chapter of the Revelation too deals with matters which are in the future and unless one is prepared to be guided by the Holy Scriptures, private interpretation could lead to an expectation which bears absolutely no resemblance to the events which the Lord has prescribed.

Among many other subjects, that of the ‘marriage supper of the Lamb’ suffers most from interpretations which arise because students will not accept that God meant what He said and said what He meant. It suffers because the Old Testament is discounted in the New Testament dispensation with the result that the ‘Bride’ is identified with the ‘Church’ – an identification which carries implications which are uncomplimentary to God. However, in order to appreciate the magnitude of this, it is necessary to follow the course of events as they are unfolded by the nineteenth chapter.

The first feature which impressed itself on John, was the fact of the Sovereignty of God. As the twenty-four elders and the four ‘living creatures’ fell down and worshipped God, John heard a voice saying: “Praise our God, all ye *his servants*, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord omnipotent reigneth.”

Protestant interpretation of Prophecy.

“In London, the Institute for the Study of Conflict has published its most recent study entitled *Marxism and the Church of Rome*. This admittedly ‘controversial’ report has been prepared by a journalist who has been accredited to the Vatican for twelve years.

“The report begins by quoting Monsignor Casaroli, Secretary of the Council of Public Affairs of the Church, who stated during a visit to Cuba that he saw no contradiction between the teaching of Marxism as a means of social education, of scientific discipline, of critical spirit, and the teaching of religion as spiritual education, etc. These statements were neither denied nor modified when Monsignor Casaroli returned to Rome and they only add weight to speculation that Pope Paul VI wishes to make more rapid progress and create an irreversible situation of understanding with the ‘socialist’ countries (I.S.C. Report, Page 1).

“The writer contends that these pro-Marxist postures of the Papacy are not merely another example of Communist infiltration parallel with the socialist and humanist statements of modernist Protestant clerics, but that any attempted agreement between the Vatican and Moscow is of great prophetic import, to be viewed in the light of the convictions of the Reformers, and to be tried by the Word of God.

“Returning to the I.S.C. Report, the journalist who is French, naturally approaches the topic from his own national standpoint. He puts great stress on the well documented failure of the post-war French worker-priest movement and concludes: ‘Quickly seduced by the anti-capitalist bias on the factory floor, they dignified the concept of the working class with a value which it did not possess and soon regarded themselves as the prophets of a future evangelical community. In this way they were led gradually to identify the proletariat with Marxism, class warfare with revolutionary agitation, to the extent that within a few years they were appearing in the front ranks of Communist demonstrations!’ (I.S.C., page 5).

“The journalist also singles out Teilhard de Chardin for his contribution toward a more favourable Romanist attitude to Communism, quoting from *Quelques Reflexions sur La Conversion du Monde*, where Chardin wrote: ‘The Christian God on High and the Marxist God of Progress are reconciled in Christ.’ As the I.S.C. Report comments: ‘Bearing in mind the extraordinary intellectual prestige of Teilhard de Chardin during the decade of the 1950s, one can understand the strength which his para-Marxism gave to the socialist ideas in Christian thought.

Moreover he was not the only member of the Society of Jesus to offer protective cover to revolution!' (I.S.C. page 5).

"In the 1960s Pope John XXIII, through a friend of President Kennedy's, Norman Cousins, made contact with the Russians Shumeiko and Feodorov, who in turn were friends of Khrushchev. The official attempt by the Vatican to 'melt the Russian ice' had begun, and in consequence the Italian Communist Party recruited one million more votes at the next election (28:4:1963).

"Vatican II was marked in particular, by a determination on the part of some powerful clerics, to ensure that there would be no attempt to condemn Communism anew. Instead of issuing just such a condemnation according to the I.S.C. Report, Vatican II 'served as a platform for its (Communism's) aims.' H. Fesquet in his *Journal de Concile* quotes Cardinal Alfrink (page 682) as stating: 'A great number of men adhere to Communism for reasons of social justice', and on page 274 the Bishop of Verdun stated: 'Marxists have been more faithful to Scripture by giving bread to those who are hungry.'

"The Report brings the pro-Communist realignment of the Vatican up to date with a review of Pope Paul's personal background. This 'lone-wolf' had his origins in the liberal Catholic culture of Lombardy, and is known to have supported a little left-wing journal called *La Fronde*, as well as the worker-priest movement and the New Theology. Pope Paul VI is promoting a Papal policy which lends justification to Communist subversion.

"It is little wonder that the Archbishop of Malmes-Brussels has given his approval to Mgr. Joseph Comblin's thesis entitled *The Theology of Revolution* in which it is claimed among other outlandish pro-Communist statements that 'the principles of Christian faith are the motors of modern revolution'."

## THE END OF BABYLON

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Rev. 18:1-2).

The seventeenth chapter of the Revelation has such an abundance of information that one might be forgiven for labouring the point. One should ever bear in mind that the events described in the various

chapters may not be taken out of context for this would fall within the sphere of 'private interpretation' and could be made to fit any circumstance and any period in history. As has been shown, the seventeenth chapter is an amplification of the previous one and the characters in the drama are obviously identified with the 'three evil spirits like frogs' whose activity is responsible for Divine Action and intervention.

Significantly, it is stated that 'great Babylon came in remembrance before God . . . ' – a statement which leads one to conclude that the events in the earth immediately prior to God's intervention, would be similar in nature to those which obtained when the Babylonian succession of empires was set up. As has been noted, Babylon, in its heyday, exercised a threefold influence on all who came within its compass – ecclesiastical, economic and militant. All three were bound up in one so as to complete the mechanism of Babylonian dominion.

This was no new situation but merely a perpetuation of the system which had been founded by Nimrod – the son of Cush (Gen. 10:8) – who instituted the Cabal, a secret order of *political priests*. The Rev. Alexander Hislop in his *The Two Babylons* provides a graphic account of this early Babylonian system which, apart from its priestly political impact on the then known nations of the world, may be said to have instituted an economic system which was the forerunner of the modern world banking procedures.

*The Encyclopaedia Britannica* opens its account of the history of banking in these words: "A bank, in its simplest form, is an institution where money may be deposited for safe-keeping; but banks are usually established to lend as well as receive money; and the profits of a banker are commonly derived from the excess of the interest he receives from those indebted to him over the interest he allows, so far as he allows any, to those who have deposited money with him." This, of course, is a simplification of the whole modern structure of banking but it is significant to note that a bank is not a charitable institution and originally derived its finance from 'interest' alone.

That this practice was in operation and had become an integral part of the way of life prior to Israel's organisation at Sinai is all too obvious from the fact that in the Law of the Lord, an Israelite was forbidden to indulge in this where his kinsmen were concerned. "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury" (Ex. 22:25). Thus is established the fact that this iniquitous system was flourishing among the nations of the Middle East when Israel was formed into nationhood by God.

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR CRYSTALLISES NIMROD'S CABAL

When the Babylonian Empire became the first in a succession of empires to hold dominion in the earth while the 'Seven Times' punishment (Lev. 26:28) over Israel ran its course, Nebuchadnezzar set the pattern on Nimrod's Cabal and instituted gold as the medium of exchange. It is interesting to note Daniel's account of the setting up of the image of gold on the plains of Dura. "Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up" (Dan. 3:2). Whichever way one may look at this gathering, it bore all the marks of an economic conference for those specifically invited were all involved, to a lesser or greater degree, with commerce. From that time, commerce and gold were bound together and as the Babylonian succession of empires progressed so too did the enslavement of people under a system which the Lord gave to His people Israel. Small wonder that Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego – three Hebrew captives in Babylon – refused to bow the knee to 'Mammon' which, the Lord Jesus Christ said at a later stage, no man can serve and worship and follow God (Luke 16:11-13).

Just as the monetary system of Nebuchadnezzar progressed with each passing empire, so too did his Cabal and as the world passed into the Christian dispensation, one finds the Roman Church perpetuating the Cabal exercising the same authority as did the 'political priests' of Nimrod's original system. All the nations who were dominated by the Papacy, *with the exception of Britain*, practised Nimrod's banking system. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* provides a graphic account of this in operation.

## BANKING BUSINESS INTRODUCED INTO BRITAIN

The Reformation Era figures very prominently in the earlier chapters of the Revelation and while Henry VIII is associated with this, it was Elizabeth I who set the seal on the Reformation. Rome, of course, through Spain, in typical Babylonian fashion, tried to invade Britain and return Israel in the Isles to the Papal fold. Through Divine intervention, this attempt failed and while the Papacy sought to subvert certain nobles in the land, a more subtle Babylonian threat was forthcoming in that in the 17th century, the business of banking was introduced into Britain and was undertaken by the Goldsmiths in London who appear to have borrowed it from Holland.

Mr. Gilbart, in his *History and Principles of Banking*, quotes from

a pamphlet published in 1676, entitled *The Mystery of the New-Fashioned Goldsmiths or Bankers Discovered*. The following is a quote from the pamphlet:

“Much about the same time – the time of the civil commotion – the goldsmiths (or new-fashioned bankers) began to receive the rents of gentlemen’s estates remitted to town, and to allow them, and others who put cash into their hands, some interest for it if it remained but a single month in their hands, or even a lesser time. This was a great allurements for people to put money into their hands, which would bear interest till the day they wanted it; and they could also draw it out by one hundred pounds or fifty pounds, at a time as they wanted it, with infinitely less trouble than if they had lent it out on either real or personal security.”

The Bank of England as such was founded in 1694 and arose because of the need of the Government for public funds. A loan of one million, two hundred thousand pounds was made available to the subscribers who received 8 percent on the sum advanced. The Charter for the Bank of England, dated 27th July, 1694, stated, among other things, that it ‘. . . be capable, in law, to purchase, enjoy, and retain to them and their successors, any moneys, lands, rents, tenements, and possessions whatsoever; and to purchase, wherein they are not restrained by Act of Parliament; and also to grant, demise, and dispose of the same.’

This was the beginning of the involvement, by the modern development of Israel, in the economic system instituted by Nebuchadnezzar. Having thrown off the ecclesiastical yoke by the Reformation Act, Israel, because of blindness, could not see that the Divine protection afforded Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego when they refused to submit to Nebuchadnezzar’s system, would be theirs if they remained steadfast in the light of the now opened Scriptures. This is that to which reference is made in the fifteenth chapter of the Revelation and which prevented men from entering into the Glory of God (Rev. 15:8).

### **COMMERCE AND ECONOMICS CONTROLLED BY ONE-WORLDEERS**

As one looks at the world of today, one may see why indeed ‘. . . great Babylon came in remembrance before God’ for Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom and all his aspirations of a one-world government under the influence of the threefold mechanism of religion, economics and military control is once again in evidence on a global scale. Israel, now dispersed through the world, is hopelessly lost within the coils of this satanic instrument of destruction. To indicate something of the nature

of this, it is necessary to recall Anglo-Saxondom's involvement with the United Nations Organisation. As is well known, one of the chief architects in formulating the *machinery* of the United Nations was Alger Hiss who, in 1950 was exposed as a Communist espionage agent. Thus Nebuchadnezzar's political wing was more than slightly responsible for setting up a machinery which demanded Israel's subservience to it.

The International Monetary Fund, established under the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944 and ratified by Britain in 1945, is the economic wing of the same system. Here again one finds exactly the same set-up. A key figure in this was Harry Dexter White who was the chairman of the Bretton Woods Conference which was attended by representatives of forty-four nations and who had a starting capital of 8 billion dollars to work with. Harry Dexter White was later proved to be a member of the Soviet spy ring known as the 'Ware cell' which comprised, among other convicted Communist spies, the same Alger Hiss who was involved with the formulation of the United Nations Organisation. From these facts one may glean something of the web of subversion which has entrapped, not only the modern nation and company of nations of Israel, but the whole world.

It is no exaggeration to state that Britain, having been 'conned' into association with the two wings of Nebuchadnezzar's system, is rapidly returning to the ecclesiastical fold with Church dignitaries violating British law and 'holding communication with the See of Rome'.

### *THE LORD'S COMMAND TO HIS PEOPLE*

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). Here indeed is a warning to God's Israel people – a warning which is given in the context of one specific period in time when the Lord promises to take positive action when all else has failed. Through Ezekiel the prophet, the Lord draws attention to all that is embodied in the 'Gog' name which is associated with the 'three spirits like frogs', and His intervention. "Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this is the day whereof I have spoken" (Ezek. 39:8).

If one is to understand the 18th chapter of the Revelation, it is imperative that one accepts the veracity of the Old Testament Scriptures for it is only in these Scriptures that one may appreciate something of the magnitude of the events which attend the destruction of the system which currently threatens to invalidate God's Plan on the earth. In the first instance, Isaiah the prophet records the same call as is



*Isaiah as depicted by the 14th Century sculptor Claus Sluter*



recorded in Revelation 18:4. "Come my people (note: not just any people, but specifically 'my people' as in the Revelation scripture), enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (Isa. 26:20). This 'indignation' is the main theme of Jeremiah 51:6 which, too, is a call to 'come out'. "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence." Lest any should charge that this does not apply to the end of the age, it should be recalled that John hears the angel of the Lord describing Babylon in these terms: "O thou that dwellest upon many waters" (Rev. 17:1) while Jeremiah writes: "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness" (Jer. 51:13).

In the forty-fifth verse of the same chapter, i.e., 51, one finds another instance of identification with the Revelation. "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord", while in verses 63-64, one finds the end of Babylon recorded in words which have an unmistakable parallel with the Revelation. "It shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates. And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her" (Jer. 51:63-64). "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (Rev. 18:21).

The prophet Isaiah records God's warning to the 'Mother of Harlots' (Rev. 17:5) in these words: "Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called The lady of kingdoms. I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance (see here Deut. 32:9), and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am (note the usage of the Jehovah Name), and none else beside me, I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children. But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood . . ." (Isa. 47:5-9).

## TIME FACTORS IN THE DEMISE OF BABYLON

Isaiah's reference to the period 'one day' could be identical with the 'one day' of Revelation 18:8 for in the Revelation it states: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day . . ." A 'day' in prophecy usually denotes a period of 360 years and there can be no doubting that Babylonian plagues certainly afflicted the people of true modern Israel from the time of Elizabeth I. However, the 'judgment' on the Babylonian system is referred to in the tenth verse: "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in *one hour* is thy judgment come."

The starting point in chronological prophecy is not always easy to determine and this 'one hour' factor is no exception. However, if one accepts that the Babylonian system commenced in 606 B.C. with the commencement of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, certain comparatively modern events will fall into place. The span of time allocated to the Babylonian succession of empires was that of the 'seven times' punishment of Israel, i.e., 2520 years. This period should commence to run out in 1914 which is 'seven times' from 606 B.C.

One hour is one twenty-fourth part of a day and as one day is calculated as 360 years in prophecy, one hour should be calculated as one twenty-fourth part of that period and is thus fifteen years. If one adds fifteen years to 1914, i.e., the termination of the 'seven times' commencing with 606 B.C., this introduces 1929 – a year which saw the beginning of financial judgment on the economic system which reverberated throughout the world. Financiers indeed wailed as Wall Street crashed and since that period, economic conferences have been called with increasing frequency in order to bolster the crumbling economic wing of Nebuchadnezzar's system.

At the same time, judgments were meted out to the now resuscitated Roman Church – an occurrence, in terms of timing, which makes the events more than a coincidence. It will be noted that in the sixth verse of the 18th chapter, that a judgment is passed in words which cannot be understood unless one follows the historical development of events. "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works . . ." In Foxe's *Book of the Martyrs* and among accounts of many horrors perpetrated on all who opposed the Roman system, is the one in which the Duke of Savoy opened the prisons and let loose the scum of the Papal earth who butchered the Protestants. In 1936, a like reward was meted out to Papists in Spain.

In that year, the Government in Spain did precisely what the Duke of Savoy had done earlier. They loosed the scum of Spanish prisons

who butchered Roman Catholics without mercy. Foxe adds to the picture by describing how Papists violated and desecrated the bodies of Protestants in Seville and Toledo in Spain and one wonders if it was pure coincidence that the Pope, on the 15th September, 1936, lamented the 'profanation of Catholic tombs in Spain'. Throughout that year, history records that it was a year of unusual activity insofar as the Roman Church was concerned for to use the Pope's own words, it was a 'year of unprecedented horror' for Catholics in the Argentine, France, Spain and Ireland.

However, despite the warning signs of the times, there is neither an awakening in true Israel nor is there any evidence that those involved with 'great Babylon' have recognised the 'writing on the wall'. The dominion of the Babylonian trinity is intensifying and one may trust in the Word of the Lord that the time will yet come, and is not too far off when the words of the angel of the Lord will be a reality indeed — "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen . . ."

\* \* \* \* \*

## MUSTERING SATANIC FORCES

*“These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast”* (Rev. 17:13).

The ‘great wrath’ which is unleashed by Satan on the inhabitants of the earth (Rev. 12:12) can only be fully appreciated if one follows, in detail, the whole account of the end of the age scene as given by the Lord in His Revelation. While the seventeenth chapter, as has been noted, deals mainly with the ‘mother of harlots’, the extent of her dominion and the revolt of the ‘ten horns’ of the beast, it should be recalled that this chapter is a recapitulation of history as this contributes to the overall context in which the trinity of evil appears. The three ‘evil spirits like frogs’, while working for the same goal, are not said to work in unison nor are they stated to be deliberately collaborating with each other in their one-world purpose. In a nutshell, one may understand that this trinity is satanically energised for the express purpose of completing Satan’s dominion in the earth which is held up and contained by the existence of the Israel woman who is God’s Own property (Isa. 43:1).

In the section dealing with the fifteenth chapter of the Revelation, comment was made on the tremendous opportunity which was given to Israel for the realisation of her true identity and which she failed to grasp and which resulted in the seven plagues of the wrath of God. Satan, in the full realisation of what was transpiring, created this trinity of evil and aimed it at the incorporation of the Israel woman into his world kingdoms.

The means whereby this was to be achieved was basically through deceptions (Matt. 24:24) and no better modern illustration of this can be found than in the apparent conflict between each of the powers which are aiming for world dominion. The Roman Church, perhaps the greatest authoritarian institution of all time, appears to be at variance with the totalitarian states and is presented, through the communication media, as the greatest opponent of materialistic atheism. The ‘harlot’ of history, according to world propaganda, has been transformed from the Papacy of the Inquisition into a benevolent institution which is dedicated to world peace. Make no mistake here. Rome has never shifted its objective nor has it altered in character. The complete subjugation of body and soul of the whole world still remains its objective.

Little dolls are still paraded through the world and endowed with spiritual virtues to which Roman adherents are required to pay homage

– and a part of their wealth. One may still read of journalists' accounts of the homage demanded by these little dolls of Papal fantasy, not the least of which is the statue of the Lady of Fatima. The story of Fatima commenced in 1917 and during the period in which Papal ambitions were contained by the effect of the revolt of the 'ten horns' in the middle of the 19th century. According to Papal propaganda, three children in Fatima in Portugal were 'blessed' by a visit from the Virgin Mary and were told that she guaranteed the ultimate triumph of the Roman Church and that she would assist it in the struggle against Communism.

When power was restored to the Papacy in 1929 by Mussolini, the parading of the 'Lady of Fatima' through the streets of so-called Christendom was invariably attended by some startling announcement of Roman Catholic struggles with Communism. The image of Rome was being built up as the defender of Christianity against the atheistic ravages of materialism with Protestant and Romanist looking with considerable support on Rome's claims. However, notwithstanding the propaganda, the 'woman' of Revelation 17 is far from dead and her alliances with the other members of the trinity of evil are still in evidence and may be seen as contributing to the whole which is aimed at the complete destruction of the Israel 'woman' in Anglo-Saxondom.

In support of this the following has been contributed by Clifford Smyth of Belfast and which is included as a vindication of the above:

"For much of the Twentieth Century the Roman Catholic Church has been looked upon as an opponent of Atheistic Communism. On this reading of events, some Bible believing Christians have entered into alliances and into fellowship with Roman Catholics in a joint effort to uphold patriotic causes and oppose the many manifestations of the of the Communist Conspiracy.

"In the United States the Protestant interpretation of history taught by the European Reformers of the 16th century hardly seemed relevant. With the passing of the years, Protestants in the United States disregarded or reinterpreted those passages of Bible prophecy which the Reformers, and indeed Christian scholars of medieval times, believed, clearly exposed the Papacy as the Antichrist system. After all the United States was at one time removed from the passions, turmoil, and suffering of previous generations who had taken part in the religious and constitutional conflicts that marked out the Reformation in the history of Europe. Now the para-Marxist position which the Papacy is adopting forces our attention once more on the Historist

## THE REALITY OF THE ONE TRUE GOD ESTABLISHED

The mighty anthem of praise is only fully appreciated when one considers the situation as it obtains today with the trinity of evil capitalising on the 'social gospel' which is taught by a panic-stricken clergy who view empty pews with alarm. One has become familiar with the doctrine which suggests that the God of the Old Testament has been displaced by a God of Love Who has become the God of the New Testament Dispensation. The implication here, of course, is that the God Who created the world and Who was active throughout the Old dispensation, could not measure up to what man required of Deity – man having been indoctrinated with a nebulous emotion called Love, required that the object of his worship should conform with this. Thus the God Who 'made the world and all things therein . . . and made all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek after the Lord, if haply they might feel after him . . .' (Acts 17:24-27) – this God is displaced *by men* because they cannot reconcile Him *with what they imagine God should be*.

One is thus confronted by a plurality of gods which, although it may be vigorously denied, is merely a sophistication of the old pagan religion whose priests, having found that the old god was no longer compatible with the 'enlightened intellectualism', merely created a new god which was. However, the current situation goes infinitely deeper. Not content with arrogantly disposing of the God of the Old Testament as no longer relevant in an era of love, they have presumed to create a doctrine which, they claim, arises from an understanding of the Mind of Christ – a doctrine which masquerades under the name of the 'social gospel'.

While the advocates of this 'gospel' may not realise it, this doctrine, in its evolution, is leading to the same *cul-de-sac* as do Socialism and Communism – a one-world totalitarian State in which God has no place. The 'social gospel' in its present state, shows a remarkable affinity with the 'Aims, Objects and Principles of the Socialist Party of Great Britain' although, *at this stage*, it is unlikely that its advocates would subscribe *in toto* to the Labour Manifesto. However, being set firmly on the road to what may be termed 'Christian Socialism', the advocates of this policy should note the official viewpoint on the subject of religion generally and Christianity particularly. The following is taken from 'The Declaration of Principles' of 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain – 1922' under the heading of 'Socialism and Religion'.

Under the sub-heading "*The Natural History of Religion*", this

resumé is provided: "As a belief, religion was the outcome of man's ignorance of Nature's working, and of the mastery which awful and un-comprehended natural forces had over him, while as rites and ceremonies it reflected the forms, customs and unchanging nature of primitive society. Thus the obscurity of material conditions is the source of religion; God did not create man, man created God in his own image.

"By the inertia of the mind, religion tends to persist, even through vast changes in the environment, in so far as it serves some interest and does not directly conflict with new conditions. But in spite of this tendency to independent existence, religion has been modified continuously as the result of changing conditions and interests; while, notwithstanding repeated endeavours to adapt the ancient legends to modern requirements, its influence has waned. Nevertheless, in the degree that it survives, religion reacts upon society; it is the paralysing hand of the dead past upon the living present."

Then, under the sub-title '*Is Socialism antagonistic to religion*', the following is the official reply: "If a man supports the Church, or in any respect allows religious ideas to stand in the way of the principles of Socialism or the activity of the Party, he proves thereby that he does not accept Socialism as fundamentally true and of the first importance, and his place is outside. No man can be consistently both a Socialist and a Christian . . ."

It is therefore obvious that within the Socialist policy, God has no place and while the advocates of the 'social gospel' would deny any affiliation with the principles of political socialism, the road leads to the same end with the same consequences. It should be noted, as has been stated above, that modern teachers have 'changed Gods' – the God of the Old Testament being equated with a 'primitive era' in which vengeance was the keynote, has been abandoned for a God of Love in the modern era of enlightenment. This procedure should be compared with the quotation above as issued by the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

Be that as it may, the point to note is that the trinity of evil of Revelation 16:13-14 is stated as being directed to the same end as prescribed above. The fall of Babylon, however, is such that whatever theories men might entertain, these will be displaced by the tangible demonstration of His Reality. It should be noted again that there is no ambiguity in the anthem of praise for it establishes the reality of the Lord God – a phraseology which dominates the Old Testament narrative and vindicates the scriptural statement which assures that He is

the unchanging God (Mal. 3:6). Another feature in this is that it once again thrusts Israel, His witness nation (Isa. 43:12), to the fore, for while Israel rejected the Kingship of God (I Sam. 8:7), He never relinquished the right to be their King. Thus the anthem of praise dispels the ambiguity of the role of Psychologist which men have bestowed on the Lord and once again places Him as Sovereign. It serves also to introduce the main actors in the great climax of the age – the marriage supper of the Lamb.

### THE IDENTITY OF THE BRIDE

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” Prior to passing on to the identity of the ‘wife’, one should note that John heard the angel of the Lord exhorting the twenty four elders and four living creatures to ‘give honour to him’, i.e., the Lord God. Thus, whatever follows must be God-honouring and in line with what God has promised. In the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation, John saw ‘the bride, the Lamb’s wife’ which was that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God’. The Greek word which has been translated ‘city’ is *polis* which, according to Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon* means the arrangement of government rather than a walled city and which meaning gives credence to Abraham’s faith for he ‘looked for a city (*polis* – arrangement of government) which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God’ (Heb. 11:10).

This, of course, runs contrary to many interpretations placed on the identity of the ‘wife of the Lamb’ but, as has been stated above, the trend to act as spokesman for God and to prescribe for His Kingdom will undergo a drastic change when God reveals Himself at the end of the age. The New Jerusalem which John saw was nothing less than the world order or arrangement for which Israel had been formed and for which the Lord had bound Himself by Oath-Covenant to them.

If one examines the Greek text again, particularly in respect of the ‘wife’ who had made herself ready, it will be noted that the theological identification of the Church in this role simply does not hold water. Dr. Scofield, in his exposition of the subject of the ‘wife’, says: “The Lamb’s wife here is the ‘bride’ the Church, identified with the heavenly Jerusalem and to be distinguished from Israel, the adulterous and repudiated wife of Jehovah, yet to be restored, who is identified with the earth. A forgiven and restored wife could not be called either a virgin, or a bride.” One would suggest, in answer to this statement, that the Church of the Laodicean age (Rev. 3:14-22) certainly does not



qualify, for apart from lacking the 'white raiment' of God's righteousness, this organisation is nowhere called the 'wife of God' whereas Israel was.

The word 'wife' in the Greek text of Revelation 19:7 is *gune* which means 'specifically a wife' as distinct from *nupto* which means 'a betrothed' or 'a bride'. It should be noted, too, that '. . . to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.' Had she been a 'virgin' there would have been no need for the grace which permitted the wearing of fine white linen – it would have been her right to do so. There is, of course, much more. God is no polygamist which He must be if the Church is indeed the 'bride' of the Lamb. In the Old Testament, Israel was the 'wife' of the Lord: "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called" (Isa. 54:5). It is absolutely true that, because of apostasy in the nation, God invoked the 'Law of divorce' (Deut. 24:1-4) and was estranged from his 'wife' (Jer. 3:8) but because of His Commitments, established under the Oath-Covenant, He promised reconciliation with Israel. "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness (the Law), and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies" (Hos. 2:19).

Running through the writings of the prophets and through the Gospel accounts is the fact of the Redemption of Israel, the faithless 'wife' and if the 'marriage of the Lamb' does not involve the Redeemed Israel people, one is tempted to ask why the Christ of God had to suffer the agony of the Cross? If the supercilious answer to this is that it was to accomplish salvation – the Scripture very definitely establishes that salvation was available without the Sacrifice (Luke 19:9). If, as the angel of the Lord exhorts, one must give 'honour' unto the Lord, surely the 'wife' must be identified by the Scriptures as Israel!

### THE MARRIAGE SUPPER

"And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Prior to a consideration of those invited to this marriage supper, it would serve a useful purpose to review the *four great suppers* which appear in God's Holy Word. The first of these was The Passover in which Israel slew and ate the lamb after marking the door-posts and lintels of their homes with its blood. The overall meaning of this 'supper' was all too clear for on the night of the death of Egypt's firstborn, Israel was safe having been justified in their faith and belief. An era had come to an end and Israel was about to go for-

ward to take its God-promised inheritance.

The Second great Supper was when the Lord Jesus Christ was gathered together with His disciples in the upper room to eat the Passover. Another era was coming to an end – an era which tied Israel to Jerusalem in the bonds of sacrificial death. During the Mosaic dispensation, sacrificial propitiation for sin was confined to the Tabernacle of the Lord which was housed in Jerusalem. Israel, being under the 'bill of divorce', could not return to this place and in consequence was deprived of the mechanism by which God could be reconciled with His adulterous 'wife'. The great supper in the upper room was the prelude to the end of the sacrificial ordinances breaking the tie that bound Israel, now on her way to the 'appointed place' (I Sam. 7:10), to Jerusalem and the Temple ritual.

At this Supper, the Redeemer, after breaking the bread and giving the disciples both bread and wine said: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29). This leads one to the Third Supper which is that of the marriage of the Lamb. It is surely obvious that as Israel was intimately involved in each of the two preceding Suppers and as the promise of the Lord was made to His disciples who were Israelites, the same identity must be in evidence in the Third Supper. The Fourth Supper is that to which the fowls of the air are invited that they might 'eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit on them . . .'" (Rev. 19:18). This 'feast' has to do with the 'great and terrible day of the Lord'.

As to those invited to the 'marriage supper of the Lamb' many have indicated that the background to this event is the oriental custom in which the bridegroom entertained his friends to a supper at the end of which, he claimed his bride. Instances of this are found in the story of Jacob who had laboured for seven years for Rachel and it was only after the supper or feast, indeed on the following morning, that he found that Laban had given him Leah in place of Rachel. Another instance of this is found in the story of Samson. After entertaining Philistine guests at his marriage supper, he became incensed at their trickery and left before the conclusion of the supper and so did not take his bride to wife. When he later returned, he found that she had been given to another (Judges 14 and 15). Does this same practice obtain in respect of the 'marriage supper of the Lamb'? It is highly unlikely. It should be recalled that Israel passed out of the sphere of oriental customs when she left the Middle East and to apply the early customs of

the East to Israel in the West would merely add chaos to confusion.

This is the time when, in vindication of the words of Gabriel to Mary, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is given 'the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end' (Luke 1:32-33). These are indeed the 'true sayings of God' the magnitude of which caused John to fall at the angel's feet in worship. However, the angel restrained him. "See that thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." It was to this end that the Lord God created and formed Israel and the angel exhorted John to worship God for His faithfulness in bringing to pass those things which He had spoken of His people Israel. The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus Christ, in vindication of the word of prophecy, will show that all these things promised concerning Israel were no idle words, but an expression of Divine Intention in the earth.

#### **THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD**

*"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself" (Rev. 19:11-12).*

One of the greatest triumphs of the trilogy of evil in gathering the nations for their rendezvous with God (Rev. 16:14), is its success in the sphere of the destruction of faith in God and His Word. There was a time in human experience when Israel, God's servant nation, believed, without any mental reservation, that God meant precisely what He said and whose spokesmen refuted any suggestion of ambiguity in terms of God's Covenants. The great king David expressed this faith when he said: ". . . what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God" (II Sam. 7:23-24).

There is no gainsaying the fact that this faith in God's Word waned as the priestly integrity wilted under the satanic attack (Mal. 2:1-8), but it is equally evident that there were some in the nation who recognised the 'signs of the times' (I Chron. 12:32) and knew 'what



*Pagan Rome and Christianity*

Israel ought to do' and consequently, throughout the Old Testament and into the New, there were those who waited for God to manifest His faithfulness (Luke 2:25-32) – not as theology conceived this, but in the precise manner as the Lord had declared it. No better illustration and certainly no more adequate vindication of this is the statement by Zacharias who praised God for doing exactly what He had promised with, and to the people who were the recipients of His promises (Luke 1:68-73).

### *THE ERA OF DISSIPATION OF TRUTH*

One would have thought that the years immediately after the conclusion of the Lord's First Advent Mission would have recorded a blossoming of faith in the Word of God. However, history records no such event. A mere three decades after the Ascension of the Lord, Jude found it necessary to 'exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints' (Jude 3) – an exhortation which arose because of the spread of religious philosophies which, in fact, were displacing the historical reality and the scriptural context of the First Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Revelation of the Lord Himself makes it abundantly clear that the Truth was in the process of being dissipated and that it was being effected by 'self-appointed apostles' who did not measure up to the yardstick of apostleship (John 15:27 and Acts 1:21-22). The true apostles of the Lord, having been instructed by Him, would not have gone to Ephesus and indulged in the 'deeds of the Nicolaitanes' (proselytism) which thing, the Lord said He hated (Rev. 2:6 and 3:15). The assault by these 'apostles' resulted in a religious philosophy which was the very antithesis of the Mission of the First Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ and most certainly derogatory to it. It is small wonder that Jude wrote of ". . . ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4) for the Truth of God and His Word were being subverted by numerous religious philosophies which all insisted on being a fuller and more expanded version of God's intention in the earth.

When Rome, under Constantine, embraced the Christian faith, God's Truth, or what was left of it after the 'self-appointed apostles' had finished with it, became further subverted by the infusion of Babylonian idolatry. The Pope assumed the role of God's spokesman and whenever he spoke 'ex cathedra', it was taken as the 'Voice of God' and held as greater in authority than any of the previously written Scriptures. In the process of time, relics and shrines were venerated and new mediators whose intercession was sought in some cause or

other were invented. The simple Biblical Truth became encrusted with ceremonial ritual to such an extent that the ritual itself became more important than the event which it commemorated.

When the fulness of the time was come which had been written of by Hosea the prophet (Hos. 6:2), the era of the Reformation dawned and God's Holy Truth was freed from the fetters of Papal imagery. However, as the Revelation makes it abundantly clear (Rev. 15), the respite from the religious pretensions of Rome was not sufficient to re-establish God's revealed Truth as this was associated with His Israel people. The demonstration of faithfulness to His words of Covenant Promise in causing Israel to spread abroad, creating a great and mighty nation passed unheeded with the result that Satan was enabled to unleash his trilogy of evil in a mad orgy of destruction. Under the assault which revels in the title of 'humanism', all discipline which is exhorted by the Law of the Lord has disappeared with all humanity cast into the melting pot of universalism ready to spawn racial amalgams which conform to the principles of Satan's kingdom on the earth.

#### ***THE NAME WHICH NO MAN KNEW***

The above has been provided as a background which indicates the trend away from God's revealed Truth and the embracing of philosophy as a substitute for this. It is no exaggeration to state that there is an ever-diminishing circle of people who want to know anything about God and an even smaller circle of men and women who are prepared to accept God's Word for what it is. It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain an Authorised Version of the Bible – the forty-nine other modern English translations, each purporting to be better than its predecessor are more acceptable, not because of Truth, but because they have been translated in a way which is acceptable to modern ethics. Just as man insists on giving God an image which is compatible with what he would like Him to be, so too with His Word which is only acceptable if it teaches doctrines which condone the permissiveness of modern thought.

In the light of this, one may appreciate that the Coming of the Lord is associated with the unknown, particularly in respect of the self-revelation of God Himself. It will be recalled that the Rider of the White horse had a Name written that no man knew but himself and that Name is called *The Word of God* (Rev. 19:13). The Word of God spoken by Peter assures that God will “. . . send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:20-21). At the time

of the Ascension, the 'two men in white apparel' said: "... this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Prior to His Crucifixion, the Lord Himself had spoken about His Coming again in words which are unmistakable. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations . . ." (Matt. 25:31-32). There can thus be no mistaking the nature of the Second Advent nor its consummation in fulfilment of the words of Gabriel when he advised Mary concerning the destiny of the Son about to be born to her. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

None of these scriptural statements is accepted today for men have seen fit to place 'private interpretations' on them which, when they fall down, are simply abandoned as irrelevant in the Christian philosophy. The Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the only hope in an otherwise hopeless situation, finds little or no mention in modern preaching and if it just *happens* to intrude, it is invariably spiritualised in such a manner as to provide no hope for the world. It is taught that the Lord returns every time a believer is converted or, alternatively, when a believer dies – but very few would dare to assert that He is Coming Again to inaugurate the Kingdom of God on the earth. The reason behind this reluctance is that it would involve a revolution in theological thinking – a revolution is surely needed – for it would mean that national and political affairs would have once again to be considered as integral parts of the Bible. The Word of God teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ will be given 'the throne of his father David' and that He will 'reign over the house of Jacob for ever' – the 'throne' being a tangible historical reality as is the 'house of Jacob'. The God-proclaimed sphere of the rule of the Lord is utterly rejected today in consequence of which, it is small wonder that the '*Word of God*' is an unknown factor at the time of the Second Advent.

"And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15-16). There are two features in this quotation to be considered and which centre on the 'sharp sword' which proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord and 'the nations' who come under His rule with 'a rod of iron'.

The Biblical symbolism of the 'sword' is invariably associated with the "Word of God" (Eph. 6:17) – an association which certainly clarifies the 'mystery of iniquity' in II Thessalonians 2:7. It will be recalled that this 'mystery' was already at work in A.D. 54 and as has been stated earlier, the dissipation of God's Truth had already proceeded at an alarming rate by this time (Jude 3). It centred on man substituting for God while his doctrine of lawlessness displaced the Commandments, Statutes and Judgments of the Lord. "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the *spirit of his mouth* and shall *destroy* with the brightness of his coming" (II Thes. 2:8). A very rewarding exercise is to examine the Greek text in this context for it will be found that the English word 'destroy' does not impart the same meaning as does the Greek *katargeo*. If total destruction was intended, the Greek word *olothreuo* would have been used for this carries that meaning whereas *katargeo*, meaning 'to invalidate' or 'make of none effect' was written. As the 'mystery of iniquity' is said to operate within the sphere of God and the things of God and as has been shown this is very definitely so, the overall activity of the Lord, at His Return, will be to invalidate the spurious doctrines and the religious pretensions which ravage God's Truth in the lives of His people.

Thus, with the Coming of the Lord, the very Personification of the Word, all theories and interpretations of no matter what source, will be exposed by the Presence of the Living Word Himself. That He is called 'Faithful and True' is an indication that all that is written in the Word of God will be found to be the express Will, Wish and Command of the Ever-living God. No more will preachers and teachers dismiss the Old Testament as irrelevant; no more will they reject the revelation of the God of the Old Testament; no more will they presume to advise God as to how He should go about the business of world rehabilitation; no more will they ridicule the means whereby the Lord has declared He will fulfil His Plan in the earth.

## THE NATIONS

The nations who come within the sphere of the 'sharp sword', i.e., the Word of God, are obviously the nations who are involved in the Bible. The original Greek text here has been literally translated and no manuscript exists which suggests that ALL the nations of the earth are involved. It is common practice among the English speaking nations to scatter the article 'the' throughout their vocabulary as though it were going out of fashion and very few take notice of the word. How-



ever, in the Greek and Hebrew languages, the definite article 'the' in front of something indicates speciality and not generalisation. In Luke 18:8 one finds an example of this for in the Authorised Version it is translated: "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" As one examines all the relevant prophecies dealing with the end of the age, the answer to this question would be 'yes' for faith in various things dominates the scene. Man has faith in man; man has faith in his sciences; man has faith in his religious convictions (pretentious though they may be); man has faith in himself – all manner of faith does obtain today and will continue to obtain.

As has been said, the overall situation makes the Lord's question irrelevant but when the definite article which appears in the Greek text is inserted, the question takes on a new and very definite meaning. ". . . shall he find THE faith?" – the faith once delivered to the saints. It is that particular and peculiar faith which accepts God without any reservation and with child-like trust, believes "all which the Lord hath spoken." This is THE faith.

Another instance of the omission of the definite article 'the' is to be found in what is commonly called 'The Lord's Prayer'. In the direct translation of the Greek text of Stephens 1550, the Prayer reads: "Our Father who art in THE heavens, Hallowed be thy THE Name; Thy THE Kingdom come; Thy THE Will be done as in Heaven, so on earth; Give us this day our THE portion of THE bread . . ." From this it will be apparent that the article specifies some peculiar something. The Father is in THE heavens; His is THE Name; His is THE Kingdom; His Will is the only One to obey and THE bread is THE specific Word of God.

In like manner THE nations who are to be 'pummelled' (literal translation) by the Word of God cannot be simply any of all nations but some specific nations, i.e., those who were promised to Abraham (Gen. 17:6). As one reads through the New Testament, one finds that unhappily, the translators simply ignored the article 'the' and translated 'ethnos' as 'Gentiles' thus losing sight of the faithfulness of God to His promises wherein He assured *national continuity to Israel*. The nations who are to be pummelled by the Word of God are the Israel nations which are to be 'shepherded' with a 'sceptre of persuasion'. It will be noted that the Authorised Version translation ". . . shall rule them with a rod of iron" has been replaced with 'shepherded' and 'sceptre of persuasion' which are the literal translations of the relevant Greek words and which is confirmed by *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and *Liddell and Scotts: Greek-English Lexicon*.

That the Israel nations are to be 'shepherded' by the 'sceptre of persuasion', i.e., the Word of God, is indeed in keeping with the 'faithfulness' and 'true-ness' of Almighty God – the Lord is thus called in the eleventh verse of the nineteenth chapter. This being so, it is incumbent on all believers to 'search the scriptures' and to verify that this particular event is confirmed. "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule (shepherd) for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. 40:10-11). "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them: I the Lord have spoken it. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them . . ." (Ezek. 34:23-24).

### THE SHEPHERD – KING

While the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation deals with the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ in fulfilment of those things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets (Acts 3:21), being a fulfilment cannot be fully appreciated unless *that which is fulfilled is understood*. In other words, it is a consummation of the deliberate Plan of God which had its beginning when He gave His Law to His people at Sinai. It was Jehovah, King in Israel, Who gave that Law and His rule was carried forward in accordance with that Law. When Israel rejected the Theocratic Order (I Sam. 8:7), the King appointed the Davidic household as custodians of His Throne which household represented Jehovah in the sphere of government in the kingdom.

It is significant that the Lord Jesus Christ, at His Second Advent, is not to be the successor of Jehovah upon His throne but rather that of His father David – "the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever" (Luke 1:32-33). Thus reigning or 'shepherding' from the 'throne of his father David', the Lord Jesus Christ will bring in the perfect administration of the Law of the Lord *in Israel*.

This will indeed be the time foreseen by David who wrote of the tremendous activities which would result from the 'shepherding' of the Word of God. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases: Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the

children of Israel . . . Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul" (Psa. 103). This is that which John saw when the Rider upon the white horse came to *the* nations which He would 'shepherd' with the 'sceptre of righteousness'.

### **THE MILLENNIUM**

*"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone"* (Rev. 19:19-20).

The above scripture is the sequel to the great climax which is written of as the 'battle of that great day of God Almighty' (Rev. 16:14) – a sequel which is written in other parts of Holy Scripture as 'the day of the Lord'. As has already been noted, with the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Name blazoned for all to see – the Word of God – all pretentious claims, whether political or religious in nature, are exposed for what they are – Satan's counterfeit for the Truth. This counterfeit, which currently grips the nations of the world and dominates the intellect of men by reason of incredible propaganda is indeed the bulwark of Satan's claim of the kingdoms of this world.

It will be noted that both the 'beast' and the 'false prophet' fall as casualties in the triumphal Return of the Lord with no mention made of the 'dragon' whose fate is related in the following chapter. Thus, with the assurance of the termination of the outward evidences of two-thirds of the trilogy of evil, one may pass on to consider the twentieth chapter and the inauguration of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth.

### **THE NAMES OF THE 'ADVERSARY'**

*"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."* In these opening verses of the chapter which unveils the era of Kingdom witness, it is significant that Satan's identity is exposed under his various titles. He is called 'that old serpent' which identifies him as the conspirator in the Garden of Eden

who subverted the words which the Lord God had spoken to Adam. Again it is significant that the 'rider on the white horse' is called 'the Word of God' and the first identification is in the context in which he first introduced a note of speculation into what God had said – 'hath God said?'

The second mark of identity is the name 'the Devil' (Greek: *diabolos*, accuser) – a form which the Old Testament account equates with demonology. In the Hebrew language, the word *saiyr* is translated as 'devil' and literally means 'shaggy; hairy' or as a noun, a 'he goat', the worship of which animal followed the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt (Jos. 24:14 and Ezek. 20:7).

The term *satan* is used extensively in the Old Testament in its generic sense as for instance in the account in I Kings 11:14. "The Lord stirred up an adversary (*satan*) unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite . . ." However, the name is also used as the personality of the Evil One; the Angel of the Bottomless Pit; the Prince of this World; Apollyon; Abaddon; Belial; Beelzebub; and the Devil. He is, as the name indicates, the 'opponent and adversary' and does not hesitate to enter into argument with God on the matter of true faith as the story of Job confirms. In Zechariah 3:1 one finds Satan as a person who sought to introduce a hindering mechanism within the true remnant of Israel which returned from the Babylonian captivity and who asserted that 'a just God' could not reconstitute the unworthy Israel as a 'kingdom of priests'. God's answer to this however, was that the 'filthy garments' of Israel were to be removed and the nation to receive reinstatement according to His Covenant Promises. From this account in Zechariah one may perceive that though Satan never appears openly as the enemy of God, his works, through devious channels, are to be seen in a negating aspect designed to destroy what God had built. A testimony to this may be seen in the history of the remnant which returned and the incredible metamorphosis in Truth which surrounded the Jews' claim to Israel identity and mission.

Another name, which although not mentioned in the Revelation, equally relevant in this context, is that of Lucifer. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His First Advent Ministry once said: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18) – a statement which could allude to Isaiah 14:12 in which Lucifer (brightness), 'son of the morning' fell from heaven. Isaiah's account is a symbolical representation of the king of Babylon in his pride, splendour and fall but the passage goes infinitely deeper in revealing Satan and his power-system as motivating the successive world rulers of Tyre, Babylon, Persia, Greece

and Rome.

Ezekiel, too, uses the same analogy although he does not use the name Lucifer when, under the figure of the king of Tyre, he writes of Satan in his glorious and splendid unfallen state until evil was found in him. In both Isaiah's and Ezekiel's writings the representation is not of Satan as confined to his own person, but as working in and consummating his plan through earthly kings and potentates.

His right to appear before the Throne in Eternity as the 'accuser of our brethren' (Rev. 12:10) appears to have ended when he entered into conflict with Michael and his angels but this did not constrain him insofar as his perversion of the nations of the earth was concerned. It is only with the commencement of the thousand year reign of the Lord on the earth that Satan is restrained from 'deceiving the nations of the earth'.

### THE THOUSAND YEARS

As one considers the first three verses of the twentieth chapter, an unusual feature insofar as time factors are concerned, emerges. In the previous chapters of the Revelation, time is communicated in the prophetic scale. In Revelation 2:10 for instance, the tribulation of the assembly at Smyrna was revealed as obtaining for 'ten days'; in Revelation 9:10, the 'first woe' was for 'five months'; in Revelation 11:2, the 'holy city' was trodden underfoot for 'forty-two months' and the 'two witnesses' would remain dead for 'three and a half days' (verse 9); in Revelation 12:14, the 'woman' was nourished for 'a time, times and half a time' – all factors given in the prophetic chronological code of a 'day for a year' (Ezek. 4:4-6). Now, however, years are mentioned by name for the first time and the specific number of years is mentioned no less than six times in this chapter.

### CONCEALMENT NO LONGER NECESSARY

The reason for the departure from the previous symbolism in terms of time factors is simplicity itself when one considers the facts. The need for concealment would now be past for the Lord Himself will have returned as the Word Personified with all being made clear. Gone will be the need for the 'day-year' time scale as will be the need for the enigmatical 'time, times and half a time.' All will, from this moment in time, be under the direct control of the Lord Who shall order events within His Kingdom according to His Infinite Wisdom.

There are, of course, those who are opposed to a Personal Reign of the Lord *on the earth* and who insist that His Kingdom must be

either up in the clouds or in heaven itself. It is contended that the earth, during this period of a thousand years, will be a charred mass – the domicile of Satan himself who will have no one to tempt nor any works to destroy. This theory arises out of the statement by Peter who wrote in his second epistle: “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (II Peter 3:10). However, as always, texts should not be removed from context and very definitely should never be isolated from the general body of revealed Scripture.

### THE REVEALED SCRIPTURE

That a ‘charred and devastated earth’ would be the very antithesis of the Old Testament preview of God’s Kingdom on the earth is all too obvious. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice *in the earth*” (Jer. 23:5). “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for *the earth* shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9). “And the Lord shall be king over *all the earth*” (Zech. 14:9). Thus, in the Old Testament narrative, *the earth* is the projected sphere of the ‘reign of righteousness’ – an overall picture which is diametrically opposed to the imagined burned-out mass of this globe.

In answer to this, some may be tempted to aver that all this will take place after the thousand years are ended and that it will be a ‘new heaven and a new earth’ in which ‘mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands’ (Isa. 65:17-25). In answer to this contention one is tempted to ask the reason why *the earth should lay waste for a thousand years* and for whose benefit this will be so? With Satan’s fate irrevocably sealed (Rev. 20:10) the purpose of the whole thousand year exercise is undeniably man who, if he is no longer on the earth, ceases to be concerned with time factors and is certainly not limited to the twenty-four hour day nor the 365 day, 6 hour, 9 minute, fifty-three second sidereal year which obtains on the earth.

Significantly, Peter’s writing which forms the basis for the ‘charred earth’ theory, i.e., II Peter 3, throws one back into the Old Testament in such a manner as to elucidate the true meaning of his description of the ‘day of the Lord’. The object of his writing was directed against the ‘scoffers, walking after their own lusts’ in the last days who would become the casualties in the propaganda war by the trilogy of evil. He wrote: “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the

word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (II Peter 3:5-6). The 'world' that then was and which perished could not have been the terrestrial ball on which God Created man in His own image for the world has continued down the centuries and remains the habitat of both the Adamic as well as the non-Adamic creation.

There are three Greek words which have been translated as *world* and which are (1) *aion*; (2) *Oikoumene*; and (3) *kosmos*. *Aion* or 'age' is a dispensational word and may be found at the commencement of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:3) where it appears in the question by the disciples to the Lord: ". . . what shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world (Greek: *aion*, age). *Oikoumene* is found in the context of the decree by Augustus Caesar who demanded that ". . . all the world (*oikoumene*, the inhabited world under Rome's control) be taxed" (Luke 2:1), and thus refers to literal territories inhabited by man. *Kosmos*, as is found in II Peter 3:6 reads: "Whereby the world (*kosmos*, world system or arrangement) that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." If one re-reads the original account of the Flood, it will be noted that the permissive structure of Adam's society was the cause for the judgment by water as ". . . all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:12). The whole subject is one which reflects the 'imagination of the thoughts' of men's hearts which was 'only evil continually'. While the scripture undoubtedly makes references to changes which took place after the Flood, the world, in the accepted meaning of the word, remained the same. It was the 'arrangement' or 'system' of life by which the Adamic race lived which passed away leaving the eight survivors of *that family* to face a new order of authority which was bestowed on them by God (Gen. 9:1-6). The 'world that then was' is Peter's phraseology in describing a system of politics which arose in the Adamic family as a direct result of Satan's psychological assault in distorting and perverting the Commands of the Lord.

### THE 'ELEMENTS' WHICH PASS AWAY

By directing attention to the 'kosmos that then was', Peter provided a background to the events as they culminated in the 'day of the Lord' or the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this, he provided the second of the legal requirement of two witnesses for it will be recalled that the Lord, in His Olivet Discourse, had also drawn attention to those far-off days of Noah. He had stated: "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37).

Just as the perverted Adamic order of life perished and passed away, so too a similarly perverted way of life would pass with the Return of the Lord.

This fact has already been stressed when dealing with the Coming of the Lord as the 'Word of God' and His impact on the 'mystery of iniquity' which gave rise to both religious and political philosophies which were in opposition to the Truth of God's Holy Word. However, as one continues with Peter's writing, the word 'elements', which are to be dissolved, appears to strike a discordant note. This word conjures up a picture of earth, water, air and fire including the seventy or more other chemical substances which are opening new horizons in scientific fields of research. If these 'elements' are to be dissolved (II Peter 3:11) then it would appear that the need for the nullification of the current doctrines of men becomes irrelevant. In a charred and burnt-out earth mass, doctrine, sound or otherwise, would be a valueless commodity with no human sphere to operate in. As has been stated previously, the Old Testament does not support the picture of the earth as a devastated mass which immediately places Peter at variance with the Scriptures which the Lord Jesus Christ endorsed as Truth (John 17:17).

This being so, one is directed to an investigation of the Greek text of Peter's writing for a possible clue as to this apparent contradiction. As always, such an investigation reveals that when the New Testament *appears* to be at variance with the Old Testament, it has arisen because of translators' errors. In this instance, the word 'elements', in its accepted meaning, is a very poor and definitely misleading one. In the Greek, the word is *stoicheion* from the base *steicho* which means 'to range in regular line'; 'to conform' and 'orderly arrangement', or in other words 'rules'. In other portions of the New Testament, this word has been translated in the context of 'principles' which is in keeping with its true meaning.

In Hebrews 5:12 the same word *stoicheion* appears in the Greek text and has been translated within the context of teaching. "For when the time ye ought to be *teachers*, ye have need that one *teach* you again which be the first *principles (stoicheion)* of the oracles of God". In Galatians 4, *stoicheion* is again translated as 'elements' and as such, is left for readers to note how obscure the translation makes the statement. "For so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the *elements* of the world (*kosmos*, world system) . . . But now, after that ye have known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly *elements*, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" If the word 'principles' was inserted in place of 'elements', the whole message



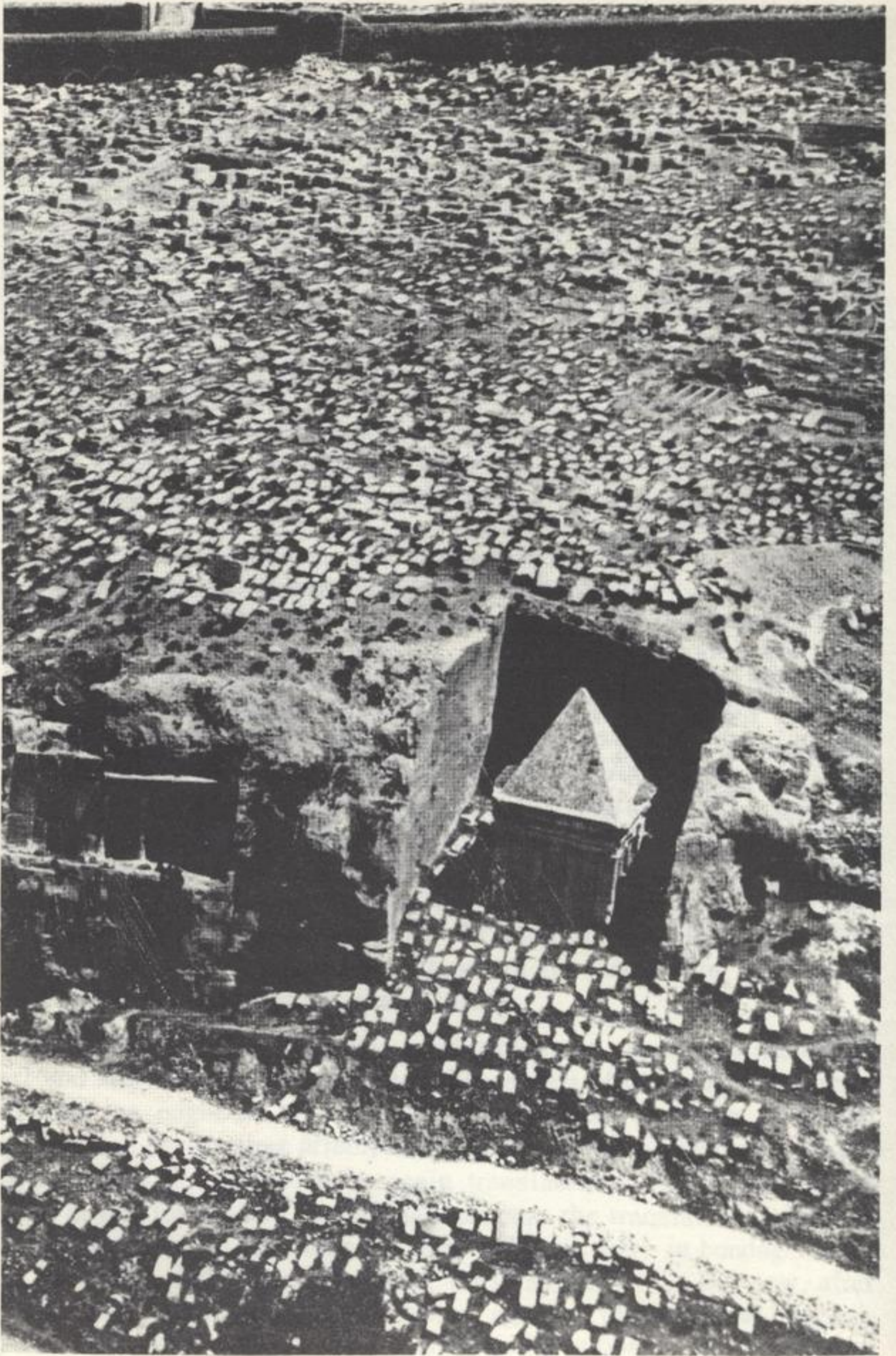
would fall into its correct perspective.

### **NATIONS DECEIVED NO MORE**

In returning to the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, and the 'sealing' of Satan, at the commencement of the thousand year period, it is stated that the binding of the adversary is for the express purpose of ending his deception of 'the nations'. This means, unless words have lost their meaning, that there will still be *nations* in existence which immediately precludes 'heaven' as the scene of the thousand year reign. Angelic beings are spoken of as being both sexless and raceless. Further to this, the Greek word used here is *ethnos* which, according to Dr. Strong, means 'race' – a subject which has no meaning in the heavenly spheres. The 'nations' in this context are all the nations of the world for it should be remembered that Satan's activity, while being primarily directed against Israel, God's Witness nation, has also encompassed all nations in his bid for absolute sovereignty over all God's Creation.

However, in the binding of Satan, God's promised 'covenant of peace' comes into action and once again, while this covenant is made with, and embraces Israel (Ezek. 34:24-26; Isa. 9:7), the satanically engineered animosities between the families of the earth will cease and they too will know peace. This is the beginning of the Kingdom Age when Israel acts as the Kingdom nation and lives and moves and has its being in the 'Son of David', now the King. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even for ever" (Isa. 9:7).

\* \* \* \* \*



*Cemetery on the slopes of the Mount of Olives*

## CHAPTER 11

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

*“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their right hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”* (Rev. 20:4).

Having first dealt with the destiny of ‘the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan’ in terms of the thousand years, John then proceeded to record the details of the Administrative body which would operate during this period. Two points immediately thrust themselves to the fore and demand attention and are (1) *the plurality of thrones*, and (2) *the identity of those who sat upon them*. The fact that John saw more than one throne in his vision establishes that Heaven, as this term is usually understood, is not the locale of the events about to be unfolded. In Heaven, *there is only one throne* and this is occupied by the Father. The Son, it will be recalled, was ‘set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens’ (Heb. 8:1). Thus the scene of the thousand year Reign of the Son which is associated with the plurality of thrones, is obviously some other sphere and which, although having relationship to the Heavenly throne, in no way diminishes the August Majesty of the Father on High.

Further light is thrown on this when the identity of the occupants of the thrones is considered. The word ‘thrones’ (Greek, *thronos*) literally means ‘a stately seat of power’ and of which, John records that there will be a plurality exercising the function normally attendant on sovereignty. This function is recorded as ‘judgment’ (Greek, *krima*), a word which covers a considerable field including that of ‘administration’. This, together with the fact that no positive identification is given to these occupants of the thrones, demands that one searches the Scriptures in order to ascertain precisely who shall be seated upon them.

In turning back the pages of Holy Scripture, one finds the Promise of the Lord made to Israel through Isaiah the prophet in which something of the nature of the events recorded by John may be seen. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin; And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors, as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isa. 1:25). This statement, it will be found, is in the same context as those events previously discussed and which lead up to the thousand year reign of the Lord in the earth. It will be recalled that comment has already been made on Peter's record as to the passing of the 'elements' which, as has been noted, has a direct reference to the passing of the 'rules' or 'principles' which are accepted as the norm in the society at the end of the age. The Greek word *stoicheion* translated as 'elements' does not mean the physical world of this planet called the Earth. The purging of Israel's 'dross and tin' is in the context of refining – the process of which removes all impurities and leaves one with a pure object. The point to note here is that Isaiah points unerringly to the reinstatement of the Theocracy in which the kingdom was administered by 'judges' – a picture identical with that presented by John in the Revelation.

While this information provides light indicating the reinstatement of the Theocracy in which a plurality of 'judges' would be involved in administration, it does not answer the question of the identity of those 'judges'. Bearing in mind that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Revelator and John merely the chronicler, it is inconceivable that He would have made a statement which was not readily and easily understood by John and those for whom the Revelation was written. It will be recalled that John was numbered among those to whom the Lord, during His First Advent, had said: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). Here indeed is a momentous Promise which not only confirms the Promise made through Isaiah the prophet, but also shows that despite modern censorship of the Word of God and the spiritualising of its contents, God will be proved Faithful to His Words of Promise made to the patriarchs concerning the perpetuity of Israel.

#### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBERS – THE TWELVE THRONES**

Dr. Bullinger, in *The Companion Bible*, devotes considerable space to a consideration of the significance of numbers in the Bible

with particular reference to the figure *twelve* which dominates the last two chapters of the Revelation. Of this number, Dr. Bullinger writes: "Twelve. Denotes *Governmental Perfection*. It is the number or factor of all numbers connected with government: whether by tribes or apostles, or in measurements of time, or in things which have to do with government in the heavens and the earth." Thus, when the Lord promised His disciples that they would 'sit upon twelve thrones (Greek, *thronos* as in Revelation 20:4) judging the twelve tribes of Israel', He indicated that the 'regeneration' would be in Israel and that *Governmental Perfection* would operate within that nucleus.

While on the subject of numbers, Dr. Bullinger's comment on the figure *thirteen* is of such importance that it deserves comment here. "Thirteen. Denotes *rebellion, apostasy, defection, disintegration, revolution*, etc. It, and its multiples, are seen in all numbers, and in the Gematria of all names and passages that are associated with rebellion etc." This, of course, is very interesting particularly when considering the 'Governmental Perfection' which is symbolised in the *twelve thrones* which administer the kingdom in Israel. If one adds the Lord's Throne, i.e., the 'throne of his father David' to that number, it makes *thirteen* – a number which would immediately detract from the perfection embodied in the figure twelve. However, this contingency had been foreseen and as one considers the story of Judas Iscariot, one is able to realise that the 'throne of David' of the tribe of Judah, would replace that of Judas which was forfeited because of his transgression.

### JUDAS ISCARIOT

It is impossible to trace the tribal origins of each of the twelve apostles – the only exception being Judas Iscariot whose name, for some strange reason and of all the apostles, carries his tribal identity and city of birth. His first name, Judas, is written in Greek as *Ioudas* which is the equivalent of the Hebrew *Judah*. His surname was Iscariot (Greek, *Iskariotes*) and literally means 'an inhabitant of Kerioth' – a southern town in the territory of Judah. Thus, no matter in which way one may look at the man and his name, it is an inescapable fact that the tribe of Judah is thrust into one's consciousness.

The Promise made to Mary was that her Son would be given 'the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever . . .' (Luke 1:32-33) and as the genealogies of both the Old and New Testaments confirm, the Davidic household was drawn from the 'sceptre tribe' of Judah (Gen. 49:10). Thus, in order to maintain the

number of Governmental Perfection in the Kingdom Age, it is quite possible that the twelfth throne of Administration will be that of David and occupied by David's Greater Son.

### THE ADMINISTRATIVE BODY

While John saw the Administrative Body as a *fait accompli*, i.e., the thrones and their occupants plus those who 'were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God' and merely sums it up by calling it 'the first resurrection' (Rev. 20:5), he leaves the student to once again search the Scriptures for the account of the resurrection of the dead. It is most significant that in the Olivet Discourse, and as the consummation of the signs of the times, the Lord revealed His Second Advent at which ". . . shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:30-31). A literal translation of the last portion of this statement according to *The Greek Text of Stephens 1550* reads: "And he shall send his angels with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the extremities of the heavens and to the extremities of them."

Once again two points of extreme interest emerge from this portion of Scripture and are (1) the sound of a single trumpet, and (2) the extremities of the *heavens*. The sound of a single trumpet is for the gathering of the 'elect' and while theology is more than content to identify the 'elect' as all and sundry 'saved persons', the Bible categorically asserts that Israel is the elect of God (Isa. 45:4). The Trumpet, too, has a meaning which is only elucidated when considered in the context of the Israel people.

The Egyptian oppression and tribulation through which Israel passed, was followed by the Divine Instruction as to the pattern of events which preceded the setting up of the Israel kingdom. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee *two trumpets* of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them. that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Num. 10:1-3). From this, one may gather that the sound of *two trumpets* at that time, had a specific meaning which was not to be confused with later trumpet calls. In II Chronicles 5:12 the number of trumpets was enlarged to one hundred and twenty and were used for war and for the an-

nouncement of feasts. However, the two silver trumpets were used specifically to call the whole congregation of Israel into 'assembly', i.e., a context in which one may recognise the people in their civil character.

However, the sound of one trumpet had a different meaning. "And if they blow but *one trumpet*, then the princes, which are the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee" (Num. 10: 4). If one projects this into the New Testament and the statement by the Lord concerning the gathering of His elect, one is given to understand that the 'princes' or the 'heads' from among the elect shall be gathered first.

The statement concerning the 'extremities of the heavens' can only be fully appreciated if one accepts that the phraseology covers *time and not space*. The subject of 'heaven'; 'heavens'; 'the heaven and the heavens' is too vast to be included in this study but the student is asked to note that throughout the New Testament and in the Greek Text which is most emphatic in all that it says, these terms are not interchangeable nor do they mean the same thing. Two illustrations should serve to confirm this and stimulate the student into further research into this subject.

The literal translation of the Greek Text of The Lord's Prayer reads: "Our Father, Who art in *the heavens*, Sanctified be Thy the Name, Thy the Kingdom come; Thy the will be done, As in *heaven*, so on earth . . ." The first reference here in respect of 'the heavens' has to do with the Omnipresence of God, i.e., He is not limited to time as are inhabitants of the earth. The Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, being the 'express image of the Father' (Heb. 1:3), introduced something of this Omnipresence when He said: ". . . Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). Thus, in the Lord's Prayer one is acknowledging God's Presence in all the ages and paying tribute to His great Omnipresence. The reference to His Will being done on earth as in heaven (singular), is a petition that the perfection of God's Law, as it obtains in the Universe, should operate in the earth and so bring in the Kingdom.

The second illustration designed to create interest and stimulate further research, is found in Matthew 5:20: ". . . For I say unto you that unless your righteousness shall abound above the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of *the heavens* (note plural)." This 'kingdom of the heavens' is obviously the goal for which men have been striving but its plurality need not cause dismay nor confusion. If one reflects on II Peter 3

again, it will be noted that he provides the key when referring to the passing away of the first 'heavens' and which, as he elucidates, was the world system as it obtained in the days of Noah – a system which ended in the judgment by water. This was the 'first heavens'. The second 'heavens' covers the period from the time of the Flood, from the time when the Noahic family was endowed with the authority to administer judgment (Gen. 9:5-6), until this authority would be removed and placed on the Shoulder of the 'Prince of Peace' (Isa. 9:7). This second 'heavens' – or day of man – ends with the Day of the Lord Who shall inaugurate the 'third heavens' to which Paul made reference in II Corinthians 12:2, and what is commonly called 'the Millennium'.

Having thus provided the basis for a sincere scriptural research for the diligent student, attention is once again drawn to the phraseology used by the Lord concerning the gathering of the 'elect' from the 'extremities of the heavens'. This has to do with all those who, down the ages and through the various periods of time, died in the Service of God's Kingdom. These are to be the 'princes' or the 'heads'. In respect of the others, i.e., ". . . the souls of them that are beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God" and all those who have died doing the 'will of my Father' (Matt. 7:21), will "hear his voice. And come forth; they that have done good, (the first resurrection) unto the resurrection of life; and they (after the Millennium) that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). The first of these are the overcomers in Israel who shall live and reign with Israel's King for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4). This will be the time when the fulness of God's Covenant Promises, made to the Patriarchs, shall be realised in their entirety.

### **ANTI-MILLENNIALISTS**

There are, of course, those who are vigorously anti-Millennialists and who aver that this era has already passed into history. However, if one reckons the thousands from the time of the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ or if, as Grotius avers, from the time of Constantine, it will be seen that neither of these periods corresponds with the character of the Millennium as depicted in the Revelation. If one thinks back over this study commencing with the pagan Roman persecutions of the Truth and continuing with Papal Rome, the Saracens and their bloody conflicts and the subsequent idolatry and cruelty of the Church of Rome; the Reformation era, the period of the Vials of the Wrath of God; the emergence of the Triology of evil – one fails to find anything remotely like the picture of the Revelation as it depicts the Day of the Lord or the thousand year reign over Israel. In Daniel 7:27,





*Sculpture depicting Daniel the Prophet*

it is stated: “. . . the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven (literal) shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.” *This has not happened*. It yet remains for the future – a hope for the present generation which, through the ministration of Satan and his minions, has been bereft of any faith in the future.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (Rev. 20:7-8). As has been noted previously, the reason for the binding of Satan is that he should ‘deceive the nations no more’ – the nations *have* been deceived right through the Christian dispensation and this once again refutes any contention that the Millennium is past – but during the thousand year Israel witness, the nations are ‘on their own’ as it were without Satan’s bias against the things of God injected into their general behaviour.

There are, however, as Scripture makes abundantly clear, those who are inherently evil and wicked (Isa. 26:10), a fact which is confirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ Who charged: “O generation of vipers, how can ye, *being evil* speak good things . . .” (Matt. 12:34). It is patently obvious that even the ‘children of the devil’ (John 8:44) are not all destroyed in the Battle of the great Day of God Almighty and even they are offered the opportunity of accepting the rule of God’s Kingdom during that Millennium.

The sorting out, which is what the Millennium is all about, will continue for the thousand years and while it is not specifically detailed as such, it would appear that this will follow the line of the principle of genetics. It would appear, too, that life expectancy during this period will be extended from the present three score and ten to one hundred years (Isa. 65:20) and with the cleansing of the effect of miscegenation requiring ten generations, one may see the thousand years as a logical and very necessary period in which to invalidate Satan’s mongrelisation campaign.

At the end of this period, Satan is again loosed to make one more effort to re-establish his kingdom and significantly the names of Gog and Magog are once again mentioned. This is not a reiteration of the Ezekiel chapters where these names are recorded for while Ezekiel pinpoints the locale of Gog and Magog specifically in the *north*, the Revelation account puts them in the four corners of the earth. Gog and

Magog together with the other nations who, despite the glory of the Kingdom demonstration, align themselves against this Kingdom thus showing an inherent antagonism which can never be removed. Satan's brood thus persists throughout the Millennium and are found as supporting Satan in his last bid for dominion.

“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Rev. 20:9). The ‘camp’ of the saints is that ‘city of righteousness’ – a polity based on the implementation of God’s Laws – which is not limited to one particular geographical area on the earth for, it will be noted, this polity is to be upon ‘the breadth of the earth’. The evil nations and people thus identify themselves as outside the bounds of conversion and fittingly are destroyed. “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

The long and bitter conflict of the ages now comes to an end and while men may speculate over the ultimate fate of Satan, the beast and the false prophet in terms of the epilogue just quoted, one should be content to note that in the succeeding verses wherein is recorded paradise regained, no evil intrudes itself nor is there any wickedness to mar its perfection.

\* \* \* \* \*



#### ANCIENT HEBREW SCROLLS

The scroll is what the Millennium is all about, will continue for 1000 years and while it is not specifically detailed as such, it would appear that this will follow the line of the principle of justice. It would appear, too, that life expectancy during this period will be extended from the present three score and ten to one hundred years (Isa. 65:20) and with the cleansing of the effect of miscegenation occurring ten generations, one may see the thousand years as a logical and very necessary period in which to invalidate Satan's mangrelization campaign.

At the end of this period, Satan is again forced to make desperate effort to re-establish his kingdom and significantly the names of Gog and Magog are once again mentioned. This is once again a reference to the Ezekiel chapters where these names are recalled, while Ezekiel prophesies the locale of Gog and Magog specifically in the north, the Revelation account puts them in the four corners of the earth. Gog and

## CHAPTER 12

### THE BOOKS OPENED

*“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. 20:11-12).*

With the opening of the ‘books’ one is confronted with the subject of ‘judgment’ in which – thank God – human values and concepts play no part. Down through the ages, men have devoted their lives to ‘good works’ in the sincere belief that they have worked within the compass of God’s Will. Through the era of the dominion of Rome and notwithstanding the Biblical condemnation of *that system*, men and women *believed* without any mental reservation, that their lives conformed with the Commandments of God as these embraced human living. This falls within the sphere which one may categorise as ‘the faiths which men live by’. Were they wrong? Was the Roman centurion wrong when he hurled hundreds of Christians to the lions? Were the Saracens wrong in committing atrocities in their ‘holy war’ against Rome generally and Roman Christianity specifically? These are extremely sensitive questions which the average human conscience of today is incapable of answering – in the context of *righteous judgment*. The Roman centurion – the Saracen warrior – these took human life within the framework of their faith. The Roman believed in the divinity of the Caesar; the Saracen believed in his ‘holy war’ and it is pointless to argue that human conscience should have mitigated against the horrors perpetrated by both Roman and Saracen. Human conscience today is incredibly inactive when one considers the behaviour of the World Council of Churches in their sponsorship of terrorism, which terrorism has left trails of mutilation and misery which, compared with Roman times, shows a devolution to the status of beasts.

Paul wrote: “. . . for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23) and it should be noted that he did not specify which faith – the article ‘the’ does not appear in the Greek text making it a specific faith – thus denying his converts the right to point an accusing finger at the behaviour of others. The Roman did his duty within the framework of his *faith* – is he to be condemned for this? Christian judgment will demand punishment and the Roman, in the second resurrection, will be utterly bewildered at such castigation because *what he did, he did within the framework of his faith*. Had he not done so, and according to Paul, he would have been guilty of sin – an act which would demand punishment.

According to the Lord Jesus Christ, there would also be many Christians who would do ‘works’ which they considered as ‘good’ but who would not be acceptable as participants in the First Resurrection. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of the heavens, i.e., the ‘day of the Lord’ or the Millennium); but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:21-23). It is only as one accepts the true meaning of the phrase ‘the kingdom of the heavens’ is one able to understand what otherwise appears to be a total rejection of works done in the Lord’s name. The ‘works’ enumerated by the Lord are not denounced as evil but are done within the framework of a mental attitude or belief that the Law of God has no validity. The Lord said: “. . . depart from me, ye that work iniquity” or literally: “. . . ye who work lawlessness.” The ‘good works’ are not lawlessness but because they are done without the guidance of the Law, they earn the disapproval of the Lord voiced above.

However, having been thoroughly convinced that the Law was invalidated by the Lord through the teaching of men and having been persuaded that they are under a nebulous ‘grace’, the judgment of the Lord – “depart from me” – merely disqualifies participation in the First Resurrection. At the Second Resurrection, they, and all the dead will be judged *according to their works*. “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:13-15). It will be noted that those

who have already partaken of the First Resurrection do not come within the scope of the Second, which, of course, is the last judgment.

The Second Resurrection is not only the Resurrection to 'damnation' – this applies to 'whosoever was not found written in the book of life' from which one may gather that there will be those who, because of 'their works', pass into the fellowship of the Kingdom. However, there is an ominous warning for those whose names are not written in the 'book of life' and those who deliberately reject the Kingdom Message that "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah . . ." than for those in that day (Matt. 10:15). They shall be aligned with the 'angels which kept not their first estate' and who had been 'reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day' (Jude 6).

Thus, those who are not found worthy, in the judgment of God, are to be cast into the 'lake of fire' into which are also cast 'death and hell'. This is merely another way of saying that *temporal death* which has exercised dominion over the inhabitants of the earth will be totally abolished and in respect of those judged as unworthy, converted into eternal death.

### *John and the New Order of the Ages*

In the first chapter of the Revelation, John very clearly establishes the point in time from which the Revelation was given to him. He was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day' and by reason of no further elucidation as to whether this 'day' was either the first or the seventh day of the week, one may only assume that he had been transported in time, to the 'Day of the Lord' (II Peter 3:10) in which all the events leading up to this passed in historical parade before him. Having now seen the consummation of the 'Day of the Lord' and having witnessed the sequence of events in which 'Death is swallowed up in victory' (I Cor. 15:54), John then saw "a new heaven and a new earth" – terminology which was used in Old Testament times by Isaiah the prophet who wrote the words of the Lord Who Promised: ". . . there shall be a new heaven and the earth shall be new: and they shall no more remember the former things, nor shall they ever come again into their mind" (Isa. 65:17, Sept.). Whether or not John's reference ". . . and there was no more sea" is to be taken as literal or symbolic remains for the future to reveal. Seas, in the Revelation, usually represent people in agitation and may indicate that this disrupting factor will no longer intrude itself into the order of things but while this point may be open to speculation, it is patently obvious that 'seas' in a literal sense, obtained immediately prior to the Second Resurrection. It will be re-

called that the 'sea gave up the dead which were in it' in the context of the 'judgment' which presupposes that literal seas will be in existence up to that time.

Apart from the bare mention that 'there was no more sea', John concentrates on a definition of life in the new order. This is preceded by the 'holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven' – phraseology which implies that the new order in the earth originates from God and has a very tangible and physical impact upon people. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." This glorious state of existence is to be achieved by the deliberate action of God and not as the end product of man's technology. There are, of course, those who aver that God will use man to bring about a Utopian existence on the earth but the Revelation makes it abundantly clear that God will achieve His Goals in the earth and that these will be finalised by Him exclusively. John records the words of the Lord Who said: "Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

Throughout the Scriptures, in both Old and New Testaments, one is confronted by statements which are made by non-Israel nations and even individuals within the nation to the effect that they are doubtful of the reality of the God of Israel – "Where is their God?" (Joel 2:17) say the 'heathen'; "Where is the promise of his coming?" (II Pet. 3:4) says the Israelite 'scoffer'. These are but two out of the many instances in which the Israel people permitted the Name of God to be in jeopardy through their loose living and association with other people. The Lord, through the prophets, accuses them of 'profaning' His Holy Name (Ezek. 36:23) – an act which destroys faith in God when it is perpetrated by the nation which He constituted as 'his witnesses' (Isa. 43:10). "*Write: for these words are true and faithful*" – as though to emphasise this 'faithfulness', this statement was made immediately after the Lord had promised to remove 'tears, suffering, sorrow and death' – a promise which He had made to Israel in Old Testament times when the nation was fully conversant with this situation (Isa. 65:18-19).

### *The Mountain of the Lord*

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had given the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and



shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God . . .” (Rev. 21:9-10). It has been suggested that this portion is out of context in the Authorised Version and should be a portion of the nineteenth chapter. However, it is where it is for a very good reason. It will be noted that John refers back to the ‘seven angels which had the seven vials full of the wrath of God’ – an angelic company which was mentioned in the fifteenth chapter dealing with the direct intervention of God because of Israel’s blindness. In the eighteenth chapter, one of this angelic company carried John into the ‘wilderness’ and showed him the ‘woman’ seated on the ‘scarlet beast’ and the ‘abominations’ which emanated from this situation. In the symbolism of the harlot of Rome, the Lord unveiled something of the nature of Satan’s working as it affected nationally blind Israel. Israel, too, it will be recalled, had been drawn into the ‘wilderness’ (Rev. 12:14 and Hosea 2:14) – the place prepared for her by God where Satan’s counterfeit for the Israel woman – the Papal Church and his imitation of Israel’s political system – the beast, are seen as devastating Israel.

Now, and as a result of the Second Advent of the Lord, the situation changes. John is taken, by another of the angelic company on to a ‘high mountain’ and that which he sees in detail, is that which the prophet Micah saw in general. The Old Testament prophet wrote of the time when “. . . the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and the people shall flow unto it” (Mic. 4:1). This is the very antithesis of the picture which John saw in the ‘wilderness’ for it indicates a situation in which people are not coerced as in the rampage of the ‘mother of harlots’ but in a deliberate and voluntary action ‘flow’ into it.

The ‘mountain of the house of the Lord’ has nothing to do with the so-called ‘church universal’ but specifically with the Israel nation. In the first instance, and as has been stated throughout this study, the word ‘mountain’, when not associated with an outcrop of rock, is invariably indicative of a ‘kingdom’ or ‘an empire of great power’. The phrase, the ‘house of the Lord’, is elucidated by first examining the Name to which the ‘house’ belongs – Jehovah. It will be noted that the Name ‘Lord’, in the Authorised Version, is written in capital letters – a practice observed throughout the Old Testament whenever the Name Jehovah is used. The word ‘house’ – Hebrew: *bayith* – indicates a ‘household’ or ‘family’ as distinct from a building constructed of bricks and mortar. Further, as the context reveals, this ‘household’ is not a heterogeneous family of faith, but one specific family for the Name of

Jehovah was only put upon the Israel people (Num. 6:23-27) and to associate It with all and sundry is to do violence to the whole body of revealed Scripture.

That John was taken to a 'high mountain' confirms the Micah prophecy for in the latter, it will be noted that 'the mountain of the Lord' was 'established in the top of the mountains'. In the same vision John saw nations walking in the light of this 'mountain' (Rev. 21:24) — yet another confirmation of Micah's statement concerning the 'people' who would 'flow into it'. "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:2).

The 'great city, the holy Jerusalem' which John saw is very definitely equated with Israel. The Apostle described it in its initial aspect as "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." As has been noted above, Micah projects Israel into the 'mountain of the Lord' and in similar vein, Isaiah the prophet does likewise. "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as the lamp that burneth . . . Thou (Israel) shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God" (Isa. 62:1-3). In later verses, the prophet equates Israel as Jerusalem which, says the Lord, He would make 'a praise in the earth' (vv. 6-7).

As John proceeds with his description of the 'city' or 'polity', he wrote that it had ". . . a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and the names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:12-14). The first point which emerges here is the figure twelve which, as has been noted previously, has to do with perfect government. The fact that the gates bore the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, plus the twelve foundations bearing the names of the apostles, plus the overall arrangement once again draws Israel into the picture. The twelve gates, three on each side of the square, is identical with the pattern of Israel around the Tabernacle of the Lord in the wilderness. In the second chapter of the Book of Numbers, it will be

noted that Judah occupied the eastern position with the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun in attendance. In the south, Reuben dominated this region with Simeon and Gad while in the north, Dan, together with Asher and Naphtali and in the west, Ephraim with Manasseh and Benjamin completed the national arrangement of order around God's Tabernacle. The picture as seen by John was identical with this.

The foundations of the walls bore the names of the apostles and, as one appreciates, these men were sent to the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matt. 10:6) and passed the commission on to 'let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made this same Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ' (Acts 2:36). Through Isaiah the prophet, the Lord drew Israel's attention to the then far distant time when "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Isa. 60:18-19). The Message of God's 'Salvation' (deliverance) centred as this was in Christ Jesus the Lord, was the Message taught by the apostles although, because of the 'mystery of iniquity' (II Thes. 2:7) it became distorted and misdirected and in consequence, Israel was lost sight of and remained in obscurity until the 'times of the restitution of all things' when they could see the structure of their witness being laid on the Message of the apostles.

As has been intimated at the commencement of this study of the Book of the Revelation, while the apostles themselves were undoubtedly faithful to their commission, the succeeding generations saw fit to intrude their own interpretations of this commission which resulted in a 'darkening' of God's revealed Truth as this embraced His Plan and Purpose in Israel. The whole emphasis of God's dealing in the earth was swung away from what He had declared, to embrace the purely individual sphere in its personal relationship to the Father. In the light of this, the *nation Israel* forgot its commission of 'blessing all the nations of the earth' and became a fragmented and aimless entity. Significantly, John records the reversal of this when he wrote: "And the city (Greek - *polis*) had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23).

As has been noted in previous chapters, the 'sun, moon and stars' - in the Revelation symbolism, indicate government and general civil direction (Rev. 8:12). In the Kingdom Age and under the Personal

Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ, as *institutions*, these fall away. The Law of the Lord – the Kingdom Constitution – written on the heart and in the mind of the Israel people in terms of the New Covenant (Heb. 8:10), will become operative and no other mechanism will be able to guide and direct them. Isaiah, in his writing on the same subject, also drew on the same symbolism and used the personal pronoun as this applied to Israel: “*Thy* sun shall no more go down; neither shall *thy* moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be *thine* everlasting light, and the days of *thy* mourning shall be ended” (Isa. 60:20).

### *The Dimensions of the ‘City’*

“And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.” The first point to be noted here is that the ‘city’ is presented as a cube which is the highest geometric expression of perfection. The next point of importance is the actual size of the ‘city’. If it is to be a literal city, it is patently obvious that Palestine, even with the additional land promised to Abraham, i.e., ‘from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates’ (Gen. 15:18), would not be big enough to hold it. A ‘furlong’ (Greek: *stadia*) is generally accepted as being one-eighth of a mile which would then imply that the ‘city’ would be one thousand, five hundred miles long by one thousand, five hundred miles broad and one thousand, five hundred miles high! Even, if as some writers contend, the furlong in Biblical days, i.e., New Testament times, was one-tenth of the present mile, this would constitute an incredible structure which few lands could house.

However, all such problems cease to be problems when one considers that the ‘new Jerusalem’ is a ‘polity’ or an arrangement of perfection which is ushered in when the Lord God Almighty ‘tabernacles’ with His people, in the earth.

\* \* \* \* \*



*The Story began with the expulsion from the garden of Eden.*

## CHAPTER 13

### THE END

As the prodigious Revelation of the Lord to John drew to its close, the 'apostle whom the Lord loved' was more than a little moved to see the writings of the prophets of his people vindicated. If there had been any doubt in his mind as to the veracity of Peter's statement that 'holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (II Peter 1:21), that which he saw in the closing stages of the Revelation dispelled it. The prophet Isaiah had written concerning the things which John now saw and being a man well versed in the Scriptures – it will be recalled that the Lord had 'opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures' (Luke 24:45) – John would recall that the prophet had written: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isa. 60:1-2). This is precisely what John saw for he wrote: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23).

Isaiah had written of the sequel to the Glory of the Lord as this rose on Israel: "And the Gentiles (Hebrew: Goy, nations) shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising" and John now saw 'the nations' (the words 'which are saved' are not in the original text) walking in the light of this Glory. The Holy Spirit moved Isaiah to continue with the prophetic preview: "Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces (wealth) of the Gentiles shall come unto thee . . . Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night; that men may bring unto thee the forces (wealth) of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought" (Isa. 60:5 and 11). This again was the picture which John saw in which 'there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but

they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.' This was indeed the summing up of Isaiah of "The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel" in which 'violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise . . . Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified' (Isa. 60:14,18,21).

### *The last chapter – Revelation explained*

"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." As the penultimate chapter of the Revelation ends, and as has been stated above, prophecy is seen, not as 'cunningly devised fables', but as the faithful account of the revealed foreknowledge of God – a fact now established in the last chapter of the Revelation. The Lord foreknew precisely how men would handle the subject of prophecy – He foreknew that men would introduce the doctrine of Praeterism or a contention that all the events of prophecy were fulfilled in the time in which they were uttered; He foreknew too that another school, known as Futurism, would arise in which it would be taught that all prophetic fulfilment would be held in abeyance until the appearance of 'the man of sin' whose covenant with the Jews would trigger off the fulfilment of each and every one of the, as yet, unfulfilled prophecies of the Bible. The Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ refutes these teachings and provides a continual flow of historical fulfilment, without interruption, from the dawn of the Christian dispensation until the establishment of the Kingdom at His Second Advent.

It is more than merely an interesting exercise to note something of the circumstances as they provided the foundation for great deceptions against which the Lord countered with His Revelation to John on the isle of Patmos. It will be recalled that what is referred to as 'the mystery of iniquity' arose subsequent to the Ascension of the Lord into heaven. While this is a specific term related to 'lawlessness' – Dr. James Strong, in his Concordance, emphasises that 'iniquity' is, in fact, 'lawlessness' – this was not the only form of the Satanic attack on the Truth as this was centred in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was thus against this background that the last verses in the Gospel of John were written.

In His Glorified, Resurrected Body, the Triumphant Lord Jesus Christ re-affirmed His original Commission to the disciples concerning the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' when He said to Peter: "Feed

my lambs . . . Feed my sheep . . . Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). Having thus received the renewal of his appointment and for some strange reason, Peter then asked concerning John, the apostle 'whom Jesus loved'. ". . . and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John 21:21-23). This statement can only be fully appreciated when one realises something of the magnitude of the events as they would develop and crystallise as a result of Satan's counter to the Plan of the Lord. The whole of Palestine became a veritable 'babel' with false claims to apostleship (Rev. 2:2) which resulted in doctrines, two of which were singled out for special mention because of their particular abhorrence in the sight of the Lord. These were the 'doctrine of Balaam' (Rev. 2:14) which involved miscegenation (Num. 25) and the 'doctrine of the Nicolaitanes' – proselytism. This doctrine had its foundations in Nicolaus, a native of Antioch who was converted to Pharisaism and later to Christianity which then invented a 'grace' which invalidated the Law in order to accommodate this proselyte. Nicolaus is mentioned in Acts 6:5.

John was thus to 'tarry' while the multitudes of doctrines wreaked havoc with the Truth and in A.D. 96, during the reign of Domitian, the apostle was given the Revelation in order to provide a faith-sustaining mechanism against the spurious pretension of men and the arrogance of the 'mystery of iniquity'. He was transported in time, into the 'Lord's Day', i.e., the Millennium, and was permitted to look back in time over the centuries and see the events which would lead up to the necessity of the Second Advent. He was privileged to see the Kingdom Age in all its perfection and witnessed the new order, the New Jerusalem, filling the earth with its beauty and peace.

### *John and A.D. 96*

As one studies the last chapter of the Bible, it is clearly evident that John is once again on the isle of Patmos and still a prisoner. In the last few chapters, i.e., from the nineteenth to the twenty-first, the account of the Revelation is written from a point in time when the Lord has come and His Millennial Reign is on the earth. However, in the last chapter, this event is still in the future for the promise is: "*Behold I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book*" and in verse twenty: "*He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.*" It is thus very evident that John,



having been granted the prodigious preview of events as they culminated in the Mighty Second Advent of the Lord at some future time and as the result of desperate necessity, now found himself with the problems of his then immediate present.

In the first instance he was told: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." Secondly, John was told: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be." This was John's return to the cold reality of his present time in which unrighteousness was still the order of the day as was the 'filthiness' of those who permitted Satan to have his way in their lives. However, the Divine invitation which is certainly not extended at the end of the Millennium, is there: "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." Conversely, and as a result of the 'mystery of iniquity', there is the grim warning to all irrespective of status: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book (The Revelation), If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." If there had been no meddling with the Scriptures and if this had not been the main objective of the Satanic attack, there would surely have been no reason for such an ominous warning concerning the contents of the Revelation.

As one looks at the Bible again as a whole, while it may not have occurred to John, his record provides the conclusion of the Plan of God which was originally recorded in the first Book of the Bible, Genesis (Gen. 3:15). Very briefly, Genesis is the history of the creation of the world, the sun, moon and stars and the various forms of life which inhabited the earth. Man (adam) was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26) and later, 'the' adam was placed in a 'garden' (Gen. 2:8) which was watered by a river (Gen. 2:10). This 'adam' was commanded not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17) and was subsequently given a 'helpmeet' to assist in the task of tending the 'garden'. Satan entered the garden and injected a rebellion against God (Gen. 3:1) and sin entered, the tree of life being denied to them (Gen. 3:24). Sorrow, suffering and death became the adam's experience — an experience which all his descendants have passed through since then.

However, in the Revelation recorded by John, one finds the complete reversal of the evil which followed transgression. A new heaven and a new earth is recorded (Rev. 21:1); Satan's last rebellion and defeat is recorded (Rev. 20:3,7,10); a pure river of water of life is given (Rev. 22:1); no more curse (Rev. 22:3); no more sorrow (Rev. 21:4); no more death (Rev. 21:4) and the right to the tree of life is bestowed (Rev. 22:14).

Between the first and last Books of the Bible, the Lord has caused to be written the many vicissitudes which attended His Plan for the rehabilitation of the earth and while the retarding mechanisms receive considerable prominence, His promise has remained sure throughout. He has promised that His Word would not return unto Him void but that it would prosper in the thing whereunto He sent it (Isa. 55:11) and in the Revelation, with all the conviction of having witnessed, not the *words* of prophecy, but their *actual fulfilment*, John could only pray: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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