

JAMES G. HURST

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TALKS

on

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

by

WILLIAM B. HOGG

"Josiah Hopkins"

Pastor of the

Country Church of Hollywood

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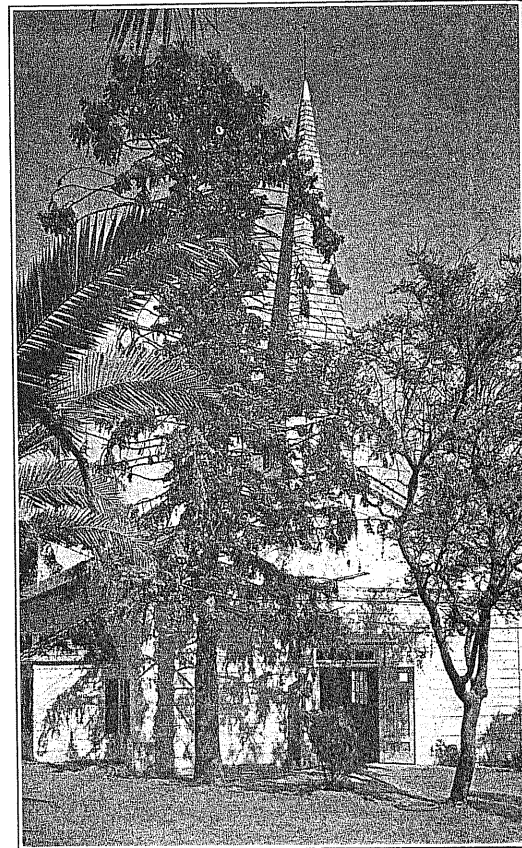
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WILLIAM B. HOGG



COUNTRY CHURCH OF HOLLYWOOD
Hollywood, California

HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH OF HOLLYWOOD

This quaint, old-fashioned church was dedicated to God on April 15, 1934, as a memorial to the simple life and sincere faith of our forefathers.

The church is constructed of pine and redwood and is only thirty-five feet by seventy feet, seating two hundred and ninety-nine persons. It has a steeple and a real old-fashioned bell which calls the neighbors to worship each morning.

The building is located on a beautifully wooded two-acre tract of well-terraced land in the heart of Hollywood, where Argyle and Yucca Streets meet. It is only a block and a half from the well-known intersection of Vine Street and Hollywood Boulevard.

Parson Hopkins and his wife, Sarah, who is known as the President of the Ladies' Aid Society of the Country Church, really were country preacher and wife in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains. While the Parson was in a hospital in France during the World War, he realized that the world needs to get back to the old faith and the simple life. This dream of a country church for multiplied thousands was made possible by the radio.

The Country Church of Hollywood is chartered under the laws of California as a non-profit corporation. It is non-sectarian and has no church membership, only a fellowship as Goose Creek neighbors. The two acres comprising the Country Church site is known as "Goose Creek".

The services are released through the Columbia-Don Lee network each week day morning from 8:00 to 8:30 and on Sunday morning from 9:30 to 10:00.

Address all mail to: The Country Church of Hollywood, Hollywood, California.

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The First Talk

THE PROLOGUE TO THE BOOK

REVELATION 1:1-3

THE book of Revelation is one of the most peculiar books in all the world. It is the cornerstone of Bible truth. In Zechariah 4:7, the Word speaks of the stone of truth, the capstone. That is exactly what the book of Revelation is. One should think of the Bible as a building. The foundation is the Pentateuch of Moses. The next story is the covenant dealings of God with Israel; the next story, the liturgy, the Psalms; after that, the prophetic visions; then, on top of that is the four Gospels; then, the Book of Acts. Away up toward the top of the sky-scraper, one finds himself in the lovely Epistles, and on the very pinnacle, one finds the book of Revelation.

The books of Daniel and Revelation are fundamentally and vitally different in the fact that Daniel was a sealed book. It said, "Seal this book till the time of the end" (Daniel 12:9). However, Revelation says (22:10), "Seal not the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand." The book of Daniel has been sealed until the end time, and we are just now beginning to find out its meaning, but, remember that Revelation never was locked up. John had hardly finished writing when things that he wrote about began to unfold. But, Daniel wrote away back in the times when one could see but dimly the panorama of coming events. I believe the Holy Ghost is now letting men find out what Daniel describes, because we are in the last days. The Holy Ghost sealed Daniel, and the Holy Ghost is unsealing it as He opens it up to the minds of men.

There are three schools of thought regarding the book of Revelation. You can always pigeon-hole a preacher by his attitude toward Revelation: (1) The futurist; (2) The historic; (3) The preterist. Most preachers are preterists; they believe that somebody by the name of John wrote a religio-political book of consolation to the Jews so they would not get the blues and figure that sometime they would come back to their home—some of it true, some untrue, but highly symbolical and full of politics and religion.

The next is the historical school. They believe that it has all been fulfilled, most of it is all over. Many of them say that the Catholic Church in its past history was all portrayed here, fulfilled and unrolled. In other words, it is human history. They are getting closer to the truth, but their mistake is in putting it all in the past.

The school that we shall follow is known as the position of the futurist. Dr. Ironside is a futurist; G. Campbell Morgan is a futurist; Dr. Mark Mathews is a futurist. The term means that the fulfillment of Revelation is yet to be.

This is a unique book in that it pronounces a blessing on everybody that reads it, believes it, and keeps the saying in it. The book begins with a benediction, and it closes in the 22nd chapter by repeating this blessing.

The college professor was wrong who told me to leave Revelation alone, because it was a sealed book. Why, it was not sealed but kept wide open. God not only kept it open but urges us to read it and promises a blessing for such. There never has been a man or woman since John wrote it under the breath of the Holy Ghost who has read it through sincerely or heard it read prayerfully that did not get a blessing. Would God tell you to read a book you could not understand? Suppose your little girl should ask for a book to read, would you give her a copy of Calculus or of Pure Logic or Pure Ethics? God would not say blessed is he that reads it, if one could not understand it. My Heavenly Father loves me, therefore my heart leaps with joy that He has given me this book. I believe the Holy Spirit is hovering over this book to interpret it to anybody who will honestly read it with an open mind.

The book is not "The Revelation of St. John, the Divine". That name has caused a lot of disturbance among preachers. That name is wrong; it is not in the original. It is not the revelation of John, but it is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The word, "revelation", comes from the Greek word, "apocalupsis" (the reason it is sometimes called the Apocalypse), which means "taking the veil off"—the unveiling of Jesus Christ. He is the theme of Revelation. You will see Him unveiled in three ways: (1) You will see Him in this dispensation among the churches, like the center of a golden lampstand; (2) You will see Him in the next dispensation as the returned and glorified King; and (3) you get glimpses of Him all through the

book as the bleeding and rejected Lamb waiting to come back to reign.

Have you ever thought of the Bible as an unbroken circle? The circle starts with the Pentateuch, God's dealings with His covenant people, then the Psalms, Prophecy, Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Revelation. Revelation dove-tails with Genesis and completes the circle. You can never understand Revelation until you know Genesis.

In Genesis, there is the creation of heaven and earth, and in Revelation, there is the creation of the new heaven and the new earth. In Genesis, it speaks of the creation of a Paradise with a blessed river, which is the tree of life on earth, and in Revelation, it speaks of the River that is pure as crystal, gushing out under the Throne of God, and on each side of it the Tree of Life. The first man and his wife, to whom God gave dominion over the fowls and fishes and the earth, are spoken of in Genesis. In Revelation we hear of the second Man and His Bride having dominion over the world redeemed by His Blood. In Genesis, it tells of the first typical sacrificial lamb; in Revelation, it tells of the bleeding Lamb on the Throne.

In Genesis, it tells you of the beginning of sin caused by a serpent; in Revelation, it tells you of the ending of sin by the Blood and the casting of the serpent into the lake of fire. We read of the first murder, the first polygamy (Adam had one wife—polygamy came in with paganism), the first drunkard, the first dictator, the first of all kinds of sin, and we find that all who sin and refuse salvation by grace are banished from God's presence. We read in Genesis of the rise of Babylon; in Revelation, we witness its fall. In Genesis it tells you how death, sin, sickness, crime, and disease started, how pain began, how sorrow and toil started. The book of Revelation never closes until you see God wiping the tears away and taking the redeemed above the curse into His blessed presence, where they never dig a grave, and nobody ever heaves a sigh! Glorious Genesis and Revelation, a complete circle!

The Holy Ghost cannot make Revelation plain to you until you know your Bible. You notice in the first verse it reads, "He sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." Signified means "to use symbols". One is helpless in geometry without a blackboard or a piece of paper. There is not a symbol used in the book of

Revelation that is not used somewhere else in the Bible and explained. That explains the fact that nobody yet has given us the perfect interpretation of Revelation. If someone knew every symbol and every meaning in its minuteness and would throw the skylight of his soul open to the Holy Ghost, he would write the complete, perfect explanation of Revelation.

What is the origin of Revelation? It started with God. God gave it to His Son, and told His Son, Jesus, to send an angel to tell John, who in turn was to tell the servants of the Lord down through the ages. God drew off the veil of the second Member of the Godhead and viewed it Himself; then, God told Jesus! "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him"—God revealed Christ to Christ, Himself!

God revealed to His Son His Calvary program and the redemptive plan. Do you remember the incident when God told Abraham to take his little boy for a walk? Have you ever seen Calvary in that? And they walked three days. Rather significant, isn't it? For three days was Christ in the ground! Do you catch the significance, now? It was on that identical spot that the temple was built later, and where Abraham built the altar upon which sacrifices were offered for years to come. As Abraham lifted up his hand to sacrifice Isaac, God stopped him and said, "I won't let you do it, but I am going to do just that! Your doing it will avail nothing. I have to redeem man. No father's love can do it; it will take a divine love." Then, Abraham told Isaac all about it.

That is just exactly what happened when the Father revealed to the Son the whole plan of Calvary. Why, they may have talked about it for a million years; there is no telling how many times Jesus Christ and Jehovah, the Father, sat and talked it all over. That adds depth of meaning to the words, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass."

The first three verses gave us the introduction to Revelation. The next part of the first chapter is a wonderful vision. As you get into the second and third chapters, you see the things that are going on in this dispensation. As you get into the fourth chapter, you leave this dispensation; the Church is raptured, that is, taken up in the air, and the word, "church", is not used any more. From the

fourth through the last chapter of Revelation, you see the things that are yet to come to pass. The fourth chapter starts, "After this I looked." The Church Age is over. "As I looked, a door was opened in heaven." The redeemed were gone. That is the way God is going to end the first part of the drama of His golden age. Like a beautiful pageant out on the hillside with girls in white with garlands of flowers, the curtain is drawn back, and the announcement is made, "This is the prologue". The first thing you know the pageant of the ages is going to take place, and the prologue will be the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and you and I will be gone—if we are ready. "To them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin unto Salvation."

The Second Talk

THE SALUTATION

REVELATION 1:4-8

THE 4th to the 8th verses of the first chapter of Revelation are the salutation or the greeting. Notice that it is addressed to the "seven churches which are in Asia". The first temptation of a person the least bit critical would be to say, "That does not mean me; that is not my letter. Send it back to Asia." Asia, at that time, was a little country forty or fifty miles across, and out of this small territory Jesus picks out seven churches. These seven churches represent the professing church in historical order down through the centuries from the time of the Apostles to the ending of the testimony of the church on earth. This book is addressed to every professed Christian in the true spiritual church. There is a difference between the professed church and the "true" church; the professed church is made up of those who are saved and those who are pretending to be: the true church is the group of only born-again believers. They are the ones who will go up in the rapture according to I Thessalonians 4:17. Not all the people who are interested in the taking up of the Saints are going to be so lifted out of the world. The matter of importance is to believe the fundamentals of true christianity. You will be surprised how few things there are that you have to believe. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God". That is the Primary Room. Then, you move out into depths like this, "You shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses." That is the Primary Department. In the High School, you can say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." When you are taking the post-graduate courses, you believe that God supplies all your need, mental, financial, physical, and spiritual.

Notice from whom this letter is written. It is from the Triune Godhead, "from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come". That is Jehovah. Then, it says it is "from the seven Spirits which are before his throne". These "seven Spirits" are the seven-

fold manifestation of the Holy Ghost. In this connection read Isaiah 11:1-3, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots," and it says on Him (that is, Jesus) will be the "spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord". This seven-fold spirit means spiritual perfection.

Man and all that he can do is symbolized by the number six. The numbers, 666, are the highest trinity of devil and man and the superman. One six is for the Antichrist, pure humanity raised to its highest personality; another, for the False Prophet; and the other is for the devil. If you want to express man at his highest, put down "six", the Antichrist. If you want to express the organized church with God left out, write a "six" again, and you have the false prophet. If you want to express the biggest that the devil will ever do when he is at his highest and his broadest, his deepest and his deadliest, just put down a "six". What a symbol, 666, meaning Devil!

The number, 666, is going to be put on a certain group of people after the saints have been taken up, and it is going to be the most popular number on this earth. After the rapture, it is going to be the greatest honor to have this number. Women will wear it in their ear-rings; men will wear it as necktie pins. It will be popularized by the church; it will be the sign of the Antichrist and the False Prophet. It will be in the palm of the hand, just as sailors often are tattooed. In revolting, atheistic, and anarchistic Russia and Italy, the salute is the showing of the palm of the hand. This number will also be on the forehead. We are beginning, more and more, to magnify education and are making a god out of instruction. However, more of this later.

This letter is coming "—from the seven Spirits (that is, the Holy Ghost).....and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." In this sentence you see the whole career of Jesus on this earth. Born in Bethlehem of Judea, God's love-letter wrapped up in a fleshly envelope, He walked around here for thirty-three years to witness that He was the promised Messiah.

He is the "prince of the kings of this earth". Soon, He is going

to show us how to run this old earth. God has given man six chances at it, and he has ruined every one of them. These six chances were the six dispensations. We are living in the sixth one now, and it will terminate with the 666-organization and company domination on the earth. This is man's dispensation, showing off his education; therefore, we have agnosticism, atheism, and modernism. We are making a fetish out of colleges, building million-dollar churches, and calling home our missionaries. It is the dispensation when the devil will pull his best tricks, and it will end with the battle of Armageddon. No wonder we had a panic! No wonder we have industrial unrest! No wonder we have wars and rumors of war! No wonder governments are snapping at each other like dogs with hydrophobia! We are living in the sixth dispensation, 666.

The seventh one is going to be God's dispensation. He will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The nations that go into the Millennium will be the nations that pay homage to Jesus Christ. To go further into that matter, read the 25th chapter of Matthew, "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; and he shall separate them one from another (nations, not men) as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall say to them, Inasmuch as ye have done it—" Who? The nations that go into the Millennium. There is a possibility that the Stars and Stripes will never come down. However, if we keep fooling with modernism, atheism, anarchy, and red radicalism, the United States may never see the Millennium. It says that, primarily, the nations are going in on the basis of their treatment of the Jews. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these *My brethren*" refers to the Jews.

Then, John saw Christ unveiled in His fullness, and he broke out to shouting and praising God. As he looked at Him unveiled, the Holy Ghost revealed to John that he was "looking at Christ who loved us and who washed us from our sins in his blood". If you are saved, you are really washed in His blood.

"There is a fountain filled with Blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."

Have you a spot in your memory? No purely mental process can ever cause that spot to disappear, but I know something that can do it. "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." When he forgives you, He forgives it all. We try to make exceptions and say, "Well, Lord, how about that sin? You had better forgive me again; there is a spot there". He does not deal with it that way; it all goes at once.

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God." You didn't know that I am a king? Somebody asked me the other day why I was always laughing. I said, "You will find out in Heaven! I won't have time to tell you now, but you are looking at a prince of God, by Scripture." When I am tempted to have the blues, when the devil gets after me, I have a certain line of reading marked in my Bible with a lead pencil, and I go through this and show the devil who I am. It will do you good sometime to hand him your visiting card and say, "I want you to meet me". Here is a sample of our conversation:

"How do you know you are saved?"

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that His is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

"Have you ever thought how many mouths you have to feed?"

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

"But wait a minute," the devil says to me, "you are just a little old tin-horn country preacher with three-fourths government disability!" Then, I pull out the card with the King's arms on it!

I was in London once, and the King came down to see our troops pass through. As King George stood there looking at us, our commanding officer said, "Attention! Eyes right!", and I saw the king coming down the line, and as he got in front of us—I can hear it now—"Front!" One of His chamberlains handed each one of us his personal card with his crest on the corner. When the devil tells me I am a little old country preacher, run down at the heels, broken and poor, I just say, "the Bible says we are Sons of God and if sons, then heirs,"—priests and kings with God forever!

The Third Talk

JOHN'S VISION OF CHRIST

REVELATION 1:7-16

"**B**EHOLD, he cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

Wail? Who is going to wail? One would think that they would be glad to have Him come back. Read Zechariah 12:10 and the following verses, and you will understand it. Christ is talking. He says, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for me". And also it says, "All the families of Israel will wail because of me." David's family will go off to itself and go mourning, and all the tribes of Israel will mourn separately, and the wives will get away from their houses and mourn. And the tribes will separate themselves and mourn. These mourners are the Jews when they find out what they did when they crucified Christ.

I spoke to a Hebrew friend of mine the other day, and he laughed at me. He was kind, but he said, "Oh no, the Jews are not worrying about your Christ. But I am interested, especially when you say He is coming back." The Jews are always interested in that. As I walked away, the Holy Spirit whispered to me, "The next time you talk to a Jew, read him Zechariah 12:10, 11, 12—when the tribes of Israel are going to mourn because of Him, they are going to wail over lost opportunities."

"He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him." What part of the Second Coming is that? That is not the Rapture, because every eye will not see Him when He comes in the Rapture for His Saints. It is the glorious return of Christ to set up the Millennial Kingdom on this earth: then, every eye is going to see Him. That is going to be a miracle, since this earth is a sphere.

I can tell you how that could happen: in fact, it could happen tonight. There is a piece of mechanism in use at the present that would make it possible for everyone on earth to see Jesus Christ at

the same time. That is television. However, the Lord may not have to resort to that. If a man can make a piece of machinery that will let you see the face of a radio speaker a thousand miles away, God Almighty can certainly make a piece of machinery that can let the whole earth see Christ at the same time. I have stood in front of such an instrument for a television broadcast. It is a most peculiar thing. There are little rays of light that flow all over you, and the light resembles that which shines through an old-fashioned window blind. The lights seem to crawl right over your face, and it is very annoying now, because television is in its infancy. As I talked, and the flashes kept coming over my face, people heard my speech, saw my face, saw my lips move. Thousands all over a great city saw it.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Alpha is the first letter, the "A" of the Greek alphabet; Omega is at the end of the Greek alphabet. Jesus Christ says, "I was in the beginning, and don't get worried. I will be here when it is all over." When you hear the words, "Alpha" and "Omega", you ought to say, "Glory to God!" It is the permanence, the indestructibility, and the eternal nature of Jesus Christ.

In Daniel 7:9 you see the Ancient of Days, Jehovah, with snow-white hair. He has been existing so long that He is called the Ancient of Days. Someone is talking to the Ancient of Days, and the Word says that it is the Son of Man. Does that mean that God has been in existence longer than Jesus Christ? If you will read on in the first chapter of Revelation, you will find in the 14th verse that here Jesus is the Ancient of Days; He has the snow-white hair. He has been existent just as long as Jehovah has. They are co-equal; They started together; They existed together; and They will be together at the end of all that this planet will experience. One cannot explain it. One cannot conceive of Three Persons being in One, but when we get to Heaven, it will be as understandable as two and two make four. Take it on naked faith when it says Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! When Jesus says, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me," that settles it for me. At the Baptism of Jesus, all three were there, and each doing a different thing. The Father was there saying, "This is my beloved Son"; The Holy

Ghost was there descending as a dove; Jesus was there standing in the water being baptised.

This little old world is strutting now; it is magnifying education and political government; it is marching around with helmets on, shooting cannons, killing each other; making boundary lines and rubbing them out; making treaties, and breaking them. When they all get through, He will be here. He was here before they started, and He will be here when they are all through. Alpha and Omega. How that does comfort me! Every building in our great cities is either going to fall down, burn down, or rot down. It does my heart so much good when I can read it here and see Jesus smiling across the top of the centuries as He says it, "I was in the beginning, Alpha, and I will be here when Omega is said."

I wonder why the Phoenician first and last letters were not used? Or the first and last letters of the Hittite alphabet, or those of the Hebrew? Greek meant scholarship. Greek meant erudition. Before there was any learning, Jesus says that He was here, and when the last university has fallen down, and the last college professor has admitted that he is an ignoramus, then Christ will be here as Omega. He and I have a friendship that lasts through time; He and I have a love affair that will have no end; He and I are partners in an enterprise that will never fail!

In the ninth verse, the Lord is preparing to draw the curtains back. John says, "I John." He identifies himself. He is the Apostle John, "who also am your brother (brother in Christ), and companion in tribulation." They beat John, hounded him, drove him around, and when he wrote this book and looked down through the centuries, he doubtless knew that we would be in tribulation also. Has anyone abused you for Jesus' sake? If so, you had better prize that experience, for it is a mighty good credential. Has anybody ever thrown rocks at you because Christ is in you? If so, you should prize that beyond a college diploma, for He said, "Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you and shall revile you and shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely*". Don't forget that He said "*falsely*". Do you know what the word "blessed" means in the New Testament? It is the Greek word, "machroi", which means laughingly happy! "Machroi", laughingly, gloriously happy! That is hard to do among a shower of brickbats! He says further, "I am

your companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." Patience comes from a Latin word, "patior", which means to suffer. John means suffering in gentleness and in silence.

"I was on the Isle of Patmos on the Lord's day." Find the Isle of Patmos on the map. It is a little island out in the Mediterranean Sea; it is nothing but rock where the hot sun shone down and possessing no vegetables. Domitian, the emperor of Rome, exiled John to this island when he was ninety-six years old. I have read in some of the writings of the Latin fathers that John would go around from place to place, exhausted from his many persecutions and holding up trembling hands, would say, "Little children, love one another." Tradition says that he was thrown in a pot of boiling oil when he was ninety-two years old, and the Lord so preserved him that the oil did not so much as scorch him! If they had not exiled John, we might never have received this blessed book of Revelation. There is going to come a time when you will thank God for the persecution; it will bring out a lot of the sweetness in your life. Do you know how attar of roses is made? They crush rose leaves. The sweetest perfume of a Christian life comes out under persecution.

If John had been doing only the apostolic work or ordaining deacons and putting his hands on the heads of the people in benediction, he would have been doing a great work, but without Satan's persecution, this old world might have had to go on without the book of Revelation. I do not believe the world has lost anything by the persecution of any saint. What religion we have that is spiritual has brought us the Truth. Do you know how the Gospel got to the western coast? Pioneers came in covered wagons, living on a little muddy water out of some water hole, following the trails across the plains. The original thirteen colonies were settled by pioneers who were driven from Europe, most of them for religious convictions!

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." Do not confuse "the day of the Lord" and "the Lord's day." They are two different things. The "day of the Lord" is the day of the Lord's judgment on this earth. That has to do with the pre-millennial coming of Jesus Christ. Some terrible things are going to happen in "the day of the Lord." The "Lord's Day" is the first day of the week, that is, Sunday. Have you ever thought of the real reason for the change

of the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday? In the first place, Jesus was in the tomb on the Sabbath, and in the 28th chapter of Matthew, first verse, it says, "When the Sabbath was past came Mary Magdalene and another Mary to see the sepulcher", and Jesus Christ was resurrected in the night after the Sabbath was past. Now that, if there were nothing else would be significant to me. It is the day of my Lord's resurrection. There is much meaning in the phrase, "When the Sabbath was past," for that meant that the old law, the old Sabbath, and the whole old regime were past, also. When Jesus arose on the first day of the week, He inaugurated a new era of the New Testament, this blessed dispensation in which we are living now. It also says in the Bible that on the first day of the week the disciples gathered to break bread. That is the day on which they had their sacrament of the Lord's supper. In First Corinthians 16:2, Paul says, "On the first days of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." On that day they brought their offerings and tithes to the Lord. The writers for the first 300 or 400 years of the early Christian Church referred to the day after the Sabbath as the Lord's Day. I believe those men back there close to Jesus knew what they were talking about. Therefore, I am content to take the first day of the week as the day of worship for this New Testament Dispensation of Truth.

John saw someone like the Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, representing the churches, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Laodicea. Jesus right in the middle of them! What a picture! Today, Christ is in the midst of his churches! He had on a long priestly robe, representing the High Priest making intercession. He wore a golden girdle. Gold is the symbol of divinity. He saw Jesus girdled with divinity and ready to serve the church. All of His blessed power is at your disposal. "Ask and you shall receive."

John describes His voice as "like the sound of many waters." Have you ever heard the roar of the Pacific ocean? John heard the voice that is going to open every grave. He is coming from Heaven with a shout, and He is going to break open the graves of the believers, and they will rise to meet the Lord. A thousand years later that same voice is going to unseal the tombs for the sleeping un-

saved, and He is going to say, "Come forth," and they are coming out before the great White Throne. What a voice! This is the voice that is going to stop the Battle of Armageddon. It says that He is going to slay the Antichrist with one word.

The other day, I read of a loud speaker that if it were put off 2000 miles from this earth and properly magnified would explode the earth with the whisper of a child! They have loud speakers now that can raise your hair a mile away. That is just man playing with his toys. Christ is going to say one word and slay the Antichrist. John says, "I heard that voice." If he had not been in the Spirit, it would have killed him. He had to be enswathed in the Spirit so that he could see Jesus and live. If a man without spiritual eyes would see Jesus, it would burn his eyes up like a piece of bacon rind on a red hot stove! God had to fix John's ears up to hear the voice of God, and had to touch his eyes so the divine story would not sear his brain. John says of Jesus, "His eyes were as a flame of fire." He has eyes that pierce to the secrets of the soul, eyes that see the hidden sin that is in your life, eyes that see through ceilings, through thick brick walls and see the deep unfathomable place of your being!

"His feet were like brass." Remember that in the Bible every symbol is explained. Brass is always used symbolically for judgment. Those are the feet that are going to walk over some things on this earth. The Bible speaks of the "winepress of the wrath of God." Do you know how they trod the winepress, how they walked on the grapes with their bare feet? Thus Christ is going to walk over some things after a while; it will be the winepress of the wrath of God. God pity the men and women who are going to be left here in that winepress when the feet of the blessed Christ, who is the Prince of Peace today, will walk over this earth in judgment.

Mark the effect of this vision on John. Paul and John were effected very much alike when they saw the Glory of our Lord. When the curtain was drawn back, and Paul looked on the Lord, he says of this experience, "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And

when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice." He saw what John saw—Christ—and he heard the same voice. Both fell prostrate at his feet. John says, "I fell as dead." John saw Him without any such reaction down here walking along the Via Dolorosa to Golgotha. But, when John and Paul saw Him in the splendor of the heavenly glory, they both fell beneath the weight of the glory of that vision.

That is the way we are going to see Him some day! We shall see the nailprints in His Hands and the thorn marks on His brow, but also, we shall see Him in the splendor of the regal glory of the City that is beyond the curse. What a beautiful vision is in store for the children of God!

The Fourth Talk

JOHN'S VISION OF CHRIST

(Continued)

REVELATION 1:17-20

UPON reading verse 17 of Chapter 1, we are struck with the effect of the vision of Christ upon John. He says, "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." How different is this experience from the time when the apostle laid his head upon the breast of his Lord! There can be but one explanation of this change in the appearance of the Christ. When Jesus was resurrected or when He ascended from Olivet, or upon His arrival at the former seat of heavenly glory and power, some indescribable change took place in His appearance. Do you recall John's words in verse 10 of this first chapter, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day"? The apostle had to be spiritualized before his eyes could look on the beauty and radiance of the Son of God and yet live. Surely his brain, yea, his whole body was so filled with the Holy Spirit that he was enabled to behold the Glory of the Lord without being destroyed by the incandescence that glowed in his brain as he beheld the Revelation scenes and the Triune Godhead in unveiled splendor and uncovered divinity. Small wonder that a triple blessing awaits all who hear the story of the unveiling of God, who tell it, and who keep "those things which are written therein".

"Fear not: I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." In all the transcending changes that have taken place in the discarding of the grave clothes for garments of eternal glory; in exchanging the crown of thorns for that of universal sovereignty; in loosing His hold on the broken reed that was placed in mockery in his hands by the scoffing soldiers to take up the scepter of unlimited power in all the cosmic universe, in all these transformations His love and tenderness remain the same! Here He is comforting John with the words often used during the days of His flesh, "Fear not!" Oh, that His tender voice could drive all the haunting fears from the hearts of the world today!



In one sweeping sentence Jesus carries our dizzy finite minds across the abysses of time and eternity. He declares, "I am He that liveth." The ageless Life of the uncreated Son, Life that defied mortality, time, the spears, nails, and rigors of His mortal body, was not affected by His tabernacling in a human body, but burst the grave, shaking off the shroud, and arose from Olivet to resume His place in the "ivory palaces" of the Eternal City. Oh, what Life! And this is the Life that He loved to call "abundant".

Then, He takes up the horrifying word that casts such a paralyzing spell upon mortals saying, "And was dead". How different that terrifying word sounds on His lips! Yet, He was "dead" for three days! Where was the Eternal Spirit of the Christ when He was under the sentence of the dread term, "death"? No one who enjoys a reasonable use of even the feeblest faculties of the human brain could possibly believe that the divine Son of God lay in that rock-hewn tomb three days! Could granite walls imprison Him who tied in the wedlock of atoms the minute particles of His prison walls? No! The universe was still His own! It may have been while His human body lay helplessly wounded to so-called death that He preached to the spirits in prison (1 Peter 3:19). Let us be content now to know that He holds in His pierced hands the keys of hell and death! Yes, high above this little planet doomed for a time to suffer death and decay, He held in triumph the keys that are symbolical of hope and fear. Fear for every soul that may dare to hope that Hades can hide them from the final judgments of God! Hope for all the saints who ever fell asleep or who will ever fall asleep, pillowing their heads upon the Christian's hope in Christ as Saviour, Mediator, Redeemer, and Coming King! Yes, hope blossoms into assurance that the cruel locks on the tomb are powerless to hold the sleeping dust of Christian bodies as long as the Lord of Life holds in His wounded hands the key that will one day unlock every grave. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55).

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." Notice the three divisions in this command to John to write: first, the things which John had seen; second, the events which were then taking place; third, the scroll of time yet to unfold. Many scholars divide the subject

matter of the Book of Revelation into the same division as follows: first, Chapter 1:1-20; second, the church life of that time, namely, the seven messages to seven typical churches, Chapter 2:1 to Chapter 3:2. It is of at least some significance that the word, "church", is not mentioned in chapters five through eighteen. The third division by this method is from Chapter 3:22 to the end of the book. It may not be out of place here to mention my favorite division of this marvelous book. Mr. W. J. Erdman says that the book falls naturally into a division of SEVEN SEVENS. The first is the seven churches (from the beginning through the 3rd chapter); the second, the seven seals (4:1 through 8:1); third, the seven trumpets (8:2 through 11:19); fourth, the seven personages (12:1 through 14:20); fifth, the seven vials (15:1 through 16:21); sixth, the seven dooms (17:1 through 20:15); seventh, the seven new things (21:1 through 22:21).

Verse 20: "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand and the seven golden candlesticks." The word, "mystery", is of great interest to earnest Bible students. It ordinarily means something not understood. The editor of the Schofield Bible says, "In scripture a mystery is a previously hidden truth, now divinely revealed, but in which a supernatural element still remains despite the revelation". The author here is not referring to the book, Revelation, but is using the word, "revelation", in the common sense of "an explanation". Some of the great Bible mysteries are as follows: the kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 13:3 to 50); Israel's blindness today (Rom. 11:25); the mystery of the translation of living saints at the end of this dispensation (1 Cor. 15:51, 52 and 1 Thess. 4:14-17); the mystery of the New Testament Church as composed of Jews and Gentiles, yet one body (Eph. 3:1-11); the mystery of Christ as Absolute God, yet in a human body (Col. 2:2-9); the mystery of the seven stars (Rev. 1:20); and the mystery of Babylon (Rev. 17:5-7).

Notice that instead of giving us an explanation of the mystery of the seven stars as the seven angels in the churches mentioned, we are still in uncertainty as to the identity of these seven angels. The most probable explanation is that they were outstanding saints known in those churches at that time. For example, John spent much

time in Ephesus, so it would be easy for me to know him as the angel of the church of Ephesus.

There has been much discussion of the meaning of the "Seven Churches". For nearly eighteen hundred years it was the common belief that the seven churches meant nothing more than the churches or groups of believers in the seven cities mentioned. Then, a group of devout men set about finding a key to unlock this mystery under the guiding of the Holy Spirit. They began a study of the actual meaning of the names of the cities. For instance, "Ephesus" was found to mean "acceptable"; "Smyrna" meant "perfume pressed out"; "Pergamos" meant "married and elevated"; "Sardis" was found to mean "continual sacrifice", etc. These scholars compared the conditions in those individual churches with the meanings of the names of the cities where they were located. The result was amazing. Therefore, they were led to conclude that, while there was a message intended for the churches themselves at the time the Revelation was given to John, there was an additional meaning in the messages to these seven churches. They also describe the condition of the professing church to the end of this dispensation. Ephesus, then, became to these godly men, the description of the Apostolic church from Pentecost to the persecutions under Nero, and each name of a city mentioned in connection with a church described the succeeding church eras down to the church of the last days before Christ's coming, that of the church of the Laodicea.

Let us remember that the word, "church", in the language in which the New Testament is written was "Ekklesia" or "the called out ones". That does not mean "called out" from some denomination, but rather "called out" from the world. The implication here is the teaching of scripture that a born-again believer has not, nor can have, any real partnership or fellowship with a world that is doomed to death and destruction. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4). Yet, there will always be the false who will "come out" and affiliate itself with the true. This is clearly taught in the parables in Matthew, 13th chapter. The TRUE church always was and always will be a group in the "called out ones" that really are new creations in Christ Jesus. Some one has pointedly said that the true church in this world is the hope of it, but the world in the professing church is the shame of it.

Let us turn back to verses 12 and 13 of the first chapter, "And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks: and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man." This is a glorious picture of Christ amidst the churches of that day, or the "candlesticks", and in the church down the centuries. While we know that today He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, we must also realize that through the Third Person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, He is still with us as really as if we heard His footsteps by our side. He is not an absentee Lord but an ever-present Saviour in all the Glory that John beheld in this beautiful vision. His "golden girdle" still attests His undiminished divinity and consequent power to do the things today that He did when He left footprints in the sand on the shores of Galilee. "The white hairs" are yet symbolical of His timeless being and changeless nature. His flaming eyes are now looking "within the cup", reading the hearts in pulpit and pew, delving deep into the purposes that throb in the bosoms of church officials and boards in every denomination. Still, there is nothing hidden from His searching eyes! His feet are glistening now in brazen beauty reminding us that He will one day tread down all that is false and eventually walk in judgment over this tragic earth. His blessed voice with "the sound of many waters" is still calling across the centuries, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". Oh, that everyone of us may hear that voice today! He is still in the true church, refining and polishing His own for the day of which Malachi spoke when he said (Chap. 3:17), "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels".

The Fifth Talk

MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES

REVELATION 2

THERE surely must have been a message to the groups of Christians in these several churches at the time that John wrote this marvelous book, but there is every reason to believe that Christ, who was seen in the first chapter of Revelation standing amidst the churches, was interested in all the groups of real and professing Christians down the ages. The first verse of the book declares that God gave the Revelation of Jesus Christ to Christ, Himself, expressly "to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass". This plainly adds the element of futurity to the contents of the message; that is, it deals not only with the present conditions in the churches mentioned, but with the churches of the future also. The only question left to us is to determine how far into the future does its prophetic rays pierce. The natural conclusion is that Christ, standing amidst the churches (the seven golden candlesticks in Chap, 1:13, 14) and declaring that He was Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, would naturally include all churches until the end.

The names of the cities where these seven churches were located are very interesting to an earnest student of the book. Ephesus means "desired" or "accepted"; Smyrna means "myrrh" or a "sweet savour"; Pergamos, "marriage"; Thyratira, "continual sacrifice"; Sardis, "remnant"; Philadelphia, "brotherly love"; and Laodicea, "rights of the people".

It is more than a coincidence that the literal meaning of the names of the seven cities describe the seven eras of the Christian church. From the Crucifixion of Christ in 33 A. D. to 100 A. D. is commonly known as the Apostolic Period; from 100 A. D. to 316, the Martyr Period; from 311 to 590, the Pagan Roman Period; from 590 to 1517, the Papal Roman Period; from 1517 to 1775, the Protestant Period; from 1775 to 1850, the Revival Period; and from

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1850 to the present, the Falling-away Period. Now, take the translated names of these seven cities where the seven Churches of Revelation, chapters two and three, were located and place the literal meaning by these seven periods of church history. Here is what you will have::

- Ephesus—"desired"—33 A. D. to 100 A. D.—Apostolic.
 Smyrna—"myrrh"—100 A. D. to 316 A. D.—Martyr.
 Pergamos—"marriage"—311 A. D. to 590 A. D.—Pagan
 Rome.
 Thyatira—"continual sacrifice"—590 to 1517—Papal Rome.
 Sardis—"remnant"—1517 to 1775 A. D.—Protestant.
 Philadelphia—"brotherly love"—1750 to 1850—Revival Period.
 Laodicea—"rights of the people"—1850 on—Falling Away.

EPHESUS

When one takes up the message to each church, additional light is thrown on the full meaning of the message of Christ to the church of the ages. Notice first the message addressed to Ephesus. Remember that the apostles were living through the first part of this era, and after their deaths the influence of their holy lives lingered like a halo over every group of believers. Tradition tells us that each one, save John, died a martyr's death, and that the writer of Revelation was thrown into a pot of boiling oil, but God preserved him for the blessed work of recording this last book in our Bible. Many of the persons who made up this first division of the church had seen the Lord, had heard His messages, and had even felt His hot breath upon them as He said, "Receive the Holy Ghost." Surely, many of them were present on Olivet when He ascended into glory and went to the upper room in Jerusalem to await the falling of the tongues of flame upon them. This apostolic group saw the church at its high water mark.

Note the message to this church: "I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience, and canst not bear them which are evil." Sin and hypocrisy in any form was easily detected and thoroughly hated. Their tireless service of testimony and the proclamation of the gospel brought words of praise from Christ. Yet, the latter part of the period, removed a few decades from the burning passion that

characterized them immediately after the ascension of the Lord, found the zeal of this church cooling somewhat. This explains the condemnation, "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Martyrdom had frozen the hearts of the more timid ones, paganism had made inroads into some homes where saints had lived and suffered the price of discipleship in the days when it was worth one's life to be baptized in the name of Jesus. Speedy repentance was offered as the only hope to individuals and the whole body of believers to save them from losing their glory as the apostolic church.

It is worthwhile to notice the presence of persons who were known as Nicolaitanes, and they were hated by the true believers. There is no historical record of such a sect. We find abundant information about the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and in secular history, the Essenes, the Epicureans, the followers of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, etc., but nothing about the Nicolaitanes. When we take the word to pieces to determine its meaning, we find that it is derived from two Greek words, one of which means to "rule", and the other, "people". So, we naturally conclude that this sect was made up of persons who attempted to dominate the common herd, or laity. To my mind, this marks the beginning of ecclesiastical domination, or the monopolizing of the rights and privileges of the gospel by a self-selected and impowered group. It marks the rift that grew into a chasm later in church history and divided the clergy from the congregation.

In this first, or apostolic, the Ephesian church, we find the Nicolaitanes mentioned simply by their "deeds" (Chap. 2:6), but by the time the church had come to the period known by the name Pergamos, the Nicolaitanes had grown bold and prominent enough to have a "doctrine" (Chap. 2:15).

To the over-comers of this first group, God offered the privilege of eating of the Tree of Life. How fitting was this reward for those saints who placed no price upon life itself in their loyalty to the Prince of Life!

Before we take up the study of the next church, we should keep in our minds the probability of a three-fold message in each of these statements addressed to the seven churches: first, to the group of professing believers, real and false, who actually made up the "ek-

klesia", or "called out ones", in each city named; second, to the churches that would make up the different eras of the Christian church through the dispensation; also, a third, the message to all the individual groups that would make the mass of professing Christians during each era of the church on this earth. Certainly, there were during each era of the church some individual congregations that were like the group at Ephesus, others like Pergamos, and on down even to luke-warm Laodicea. It will give us a more balanced interpretation of the seven churches to keep this three-fold message in mind during the study of each one of them.

SMYRNA

Now, let us take up the message to the second church, that at Smyrna. This was the suffering church, or the period of the greatest martyrdom in the history of Christianity. How significant is the name Smyrna, literally meaning, "perfume pressed out". How the cruel oppression under the pagan Roman emperors pressed out the sweet incense of the lives of these people who made up the body of Christians during this era! The next says (verse 9), "I know thy tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." So they suffered persecution from persons falsely claiming to be Jews as well as from Roman emperors. This double message is manifest in the reference to the announcement that some would be cast into prison which is political punishment as well as the religious persecution by the Jews.

There is a peculiar reference in the message to this church expressed in the enigmatical sentence, "And ye shall have tribulation ten days". History informs us that there were ten Roman emperors who issued ten edicts of persecution from Nero to Diocletian in this church era. There is a historical record that 5000 Christians were burned in one night! Do you wonder that the Lord said to this church in substance: "Do not fear their tortures to death. I suffered a cruel death, and I know how to comfort you and sustain you in such an hour! Neither fear what happens after death. I was dead, and am alive again. I will be waiting on the other side of the grave to lay upon your scarred brow a crown of life!"

Incidentally, Smyrna was the only church against whom He

uttered no condemnation! This little group in the city of Smyrna was pressed until their holy lives yielded up sweet incense to God. The era from 100 A. D. to 316 A. D. witnessed such a general persecution of the followers of Christ that the term, "Myrrh" or "incense", characterized the period. In every era of the Christian faith there have been groups who have paid the Smyrna price for their experience. Persecution has always multiplied believers and fanned the flames of their zeal. Truly, "the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church!"

PERGAMOS

As we read on in the second chapter of Revelation, we hear the rustle of the pages of church history turned by the hand of Prophecy. Pergamos means literally "married and elevated". Let us examine the contents of the message to this group to see where is the connection between the conditions in Pergamos and the era in church history that immediately followed the persecution of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian, in 316 A. D. We find in history that three men were pitted against each other for the possession of Rome, the fast-growing capital of the world. They were Maxentius, Galerius, and Constantine. Constantine won by pretending to see in the sky a cross bearing these words, "In hoc signo vinces", meaning "By this sign, you conquer". He immediately baptized his whole army, we are told, by sprinkling them with a limb dipped in water. Constantine married the sword to the cross and did for the devil what Nero and Diocletian could never do with the sword alone. This so-called Christian emperor began to rule the church by promoting ministers to be bishops and by conferring civil as well as ecclesiastical power on his favorites. These crowned bishops later placed in the hands of one of their number the scepter of pope and named him the successor to St. Peter! Thus, we find the meaning of "Pergamos", literally, "when the world was married to the church".

Then, too, it was in this period that the council at Nice was convened. About 320 A. D. a man named Arius, who was a member of this council, raised the question as to whether Christ was literally God or very much like God. It is interesting, at least, to know how the debate was settled at Nice. When it looked as though

Arius would win, and the church would have its creed that Jesus was only like God and not God, an aged monk, clad in a leopard skin arose before all the excited clergy and, laying aside his skin-cloak, exhibited the scars he had received from claws and teeth of the wild beast who had torn him when he had been cast into the arena for his faith in the divinity of Christ. He cried, "Do you think for one moment that I would suffer scars like these for a mere man, however god-like? No, but I would do it all over for Jesus Christ, my Saviour and my God!"

The council leaped to its feet and voted overwhelmingly what we know as the Nicene creed that fixes in its historic phrasing the statement of the divinity of Christ!

The man who opposed Arius in the debate at Nice was Athanasius. When the council had recorded its faith in the divinity of Christ, Constantine called Athanasius before him and demanded the vote be changed, saying, "The world is against you".

The intrepid Athanasius answered his challenge with the words, "Then I am against the world". That statement caused his banishment and persecution under the iron hand of imperial Rome. Jesus glanced across the tops of the centuries and seeing all these things unfold, sent this message to the group of Pergamos and to the churches of the ages, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, and where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name". He must have seen the debate and vote at Nice! Then, He adds, "Even in those days wherein *Antipas* was my faithful martyr". Could Athanasius have been *Antipas*?

Here we see in the message to Pergamos the doctrine of the hated Nicolaitanes, the doctrine of the renegade clergy married to the Roman empire under Constantine, *that Christ was only man!*

The doctrine of Balaam is condemned in the message to this church at Pergamos. Read Numbers 22:2 to 25:8 to find the meaning of the doctrine of Balaam. It manifestly is a lack of determination to do God's whole will together with a compromise with the enemies of Jehovah. This latter defection leads to the offering of sacrifices counter to God's law.

To the overcomers is offered a double reward, to eat of the hidden manna and the gift of a mysterious white stone containing a new name. The meaning is that God will provide an eternal gift

of life to the victors through Christ, life that means as much to the eternal spirit of man as the divinely provided manna meant to the bodies of the Israelites in the wilderness. To those who suffered the humiliation of a clerical debate as to the true name or nature of the Lamb of God, He will give the true meaning of the name that is above every name, and with it an identification that will be personal, and one that the child of God will possess through all the endless cycles of eternal bliss!

The Sixth Talk

MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES

(Continued)

REVELATION 3

NAPOLÉON Bonaparte said, "History is a fable that everybody believes." While some historical records are colored by the prejudices of the historians, there is much more that is reliable. The era included in the years, 500 A. D. to 1500 A. D., is memorable because it gave the church its first political pope, witnessed the development of the mass and the worship of the Virgin Mary.

Constantine had made the church rich and powerful; in this period (500-1500 A. D.) the twin enemies of real spirituality, power and riches, bore disastrous fruit. It is easy to explain the origin of the papacy (the elevation of a bishop to supreme pontiff or pope). The apostle Peter never dreamed of such power and never gave evidence of such a thing unless it was during his defection when he grasped a sword on the night of Jesus' trial and cut off the ear of the servant of the High Priest! One naturally asks who is then responsible for the office of a Holy Father in the ecclesiastical system?

In the early Christian church there was an equality in believers; the record in Acts tells us that they had all things in common. Among these were the apostles who had been with Jesus during His earthly ministry, had witnessed the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, and had been personally selected for their fitness. The Lord said of this group, "Have not I chosen you?" The Blessed Master left nothing undone to root out any feeling of supremacy, going so far as to wash the disciples' feet and declaring, "He that will be great among you, let him be your servant". We find no basis in the New Testament for a pope, not even the oft-quoted passage where Jesus says to Peter, "Thou art Peter and on this rock will I build my church". The Greek word for little rock is "petra". Jesus laid hold on the similarity of Simon's other name, Peter, to enforce the basis of organization of the true church and to announce its per-

manence. The fact is, what Jesus meant was the very opposite idea, namely, that His church would *not* be built on any mere man, or human organization, but on a profession of simple faith in Himself as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God".

In the first century after the crucifixion, each group of believers, known as an "ecclesia" (the called-out ones), had at least one to whom they looked with respect and reverence because of his age, holiness, or scars for Christ's sake. Naturally, the more thickly settled communities had larger groups and more generally beloved saints, and in this way some cities acquired more voice on the deliberations when councils were held. The bishops in such cities were given exceptional homage. Rome was the capital of the world, and its bishops unquestionably had preeminence in deliberative bodies. As spirituality decreased, the thirst for power and riches increased.

This led to widening of the difference between clergy and laity, or ministers and common people. Soon, all the privileges of the church were in the hands of ministers, and the word, "minister", began to lose some of its real meaning, "servant", and became more and more to mean a holder of special privilege and ecclesiastical power. The logical development in such a system, particularly when persecution died out, and the mere profession of Christianity became a badge of honor, was to create a head for the system—hence a pope!

This development of a cap-stone in the church organization reached its highest point in the seventh century or about one hundred years after this period began.

With a human head of the church on earth, it was an easy step to elevate the mother of our Lord to a place of divine power as the sacred Virgin, who would naturally have easy access to her own Son, now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. This worship reached its climax around 1500 A. D. For fifteen hundred years Mary had been only a woman; now she became a goddess!

With a human head to the church and the mother of Christ becoming divine, it was an easy and logical step to attribute to the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper attributes that would lift it above common bread—hence the doctrine of trans-substantiation, or the changing of the bread and wine into the actual flesh and blood of Jesus! Keep in mind that this, too, had to be

done by the accredited clergy, thus keeping the breach between the common people and the ministry fixed in its impassable width. This is the origin of the Mass, when the changed bread is lifted up and worshiped as the actual flesh of Christ. Of course, this created a "continual sacrifice", not the doctrine that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many", but a continual crucifying of the Lord.

THYATIRA

Now that we have examined the historical record of the time from 500 to 1500 A. D. and noted the development of the power of the clergy, the doctrine and deeds so condemned as that of the "Nicolaitanes", let us turn to the study of the message to the church at Thyatira and the warning and promise to this group.

The word, "Thyatira", means "continual sacrifice". This of itself is significant! In the theory that the messages to these seven churches is a triple message—one for the churches then existing; to similar groups down the ages; and, also, to the whole church as the pages of history unfold—Thyatira typifies the era that will develop a continual sacrifice.

Christ's message to this church commends the works, charity, service, and faith. Such a system of sacrifice would naturally produce charity and all manner of social and religious "works"; it would create faith in the project and patience under ecclesiastical domination on the part of the common people. But note the warning about a woman, called here "Jezebel", after the notorious wife of Ahab who stirred him up to do more to provoke the Lord to anger than all the kings and men that preceded him. Many faithful students of the Bible declare that this is a reference to the undue elevation of the mother of our Lord to a place of equality at His side in Heaven.

It is interesting to the student of this blessed book of Revelation to note that each reward that is spoken of is in keeping with the particular temptation of the period. When the church offered salvation through works and power for loyalty to the ecclesiastical system, the Lord offered spiritual power over the nations and the gift of the morning star! When the spiritual power had waned, and the church had been secularized, owning billions of dollars worth of property, ruled by a pope in Rome who made and unmade kings, and the common people were crushed under unbearable taxation and

ecclesiastical domination, out of Heaven came an assuring message to "him that overcometh and keepeth my words". Yea, when the power of the world was all but sweeping the true church out to sea, God offered to the awed and bewildered church real power on the basis of faithfulness to Him and the permanence and brilliance of the star of the morning!

SARDIS

The third chapter of the Revelation begins with the message to the church at Sardis. Let us again refresh our memory by recalling the position taken by the writer concerning the content and purpose of the messages to these seven churches: there was, first, a message to the churches by these names existing at the time of the delivery of the Revelation to the apostle John; second, there was included a message to every similar group of professing Christians through the centuries; and, third, there was a forecast of the seven periods through which the church on this earth would pass before the Lord's return.

The reader is impressed with the presence of two groups in this church at Sardis: one is described as "living but dead"; and the other group spoken of as "a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments". The former group characterized the cold, dead ecclesiastical organization known as the church, but with the fires of passion all but died out and their spiritual thermometer dropping dangerously near the zero point.

This condition has always existed in many groups of professing Christians since the apostolic era, but this came more and more to describe the state of the church as a whole up until the period arrived in church history known as the Protestant Era. Thus, we have no fear in applying the name "Sardis" to the church on earth from about 1517 A. D. to 1775 A. D. It is more than a mere co-incidence again that the word, "Sardis", means "remnant". This is the period when the "remnant" came out of the professing church and became the "ecclesia" or "called out ones". The word, protestant, is derived from the verb that means "to protest" and means a protest against the secularizing of the church and the consequent influx of the world into the body of true believers.

This period is known in secular history as the "Era of Reform-

ation". While there had been individuals who had written their convictions about the apostate condition of the church, it was left to Martin Luther to make the break with the Catholic Church that started the Reformation. Wycliffe is called the "morning star" of the Reformation, but Martin Luther was the "blazing sun" of that period. Luther was a sincere priest who wanted the inner witness of an experience of regeneration. He went to his father confessor for instruction and was told to go to Rome and do penance. He went there seeking the witness of the Holy Ghost in his heart. When he did not have this assurance in his heart, he asked another priest. He was told this time to climb Pilate's stair-case in Rome on his knees. When he was about half-way up, he prayed, "O Spirit of God, illumine me!" God heard his prayer and spoke this verse to his heart, "The just shall live by faith". He believed that he was saved not by works, lest any man should boast, but by faith in the work of Jesus Christ! He immediately began to preach this doctrine and defied the world and the organized church. Thus, actually began the Reformation!

Note the promise to this group of the faithful, the gift of white raiment and to walk in the fellowship of God, and the promise that, although the ecclesiastical authorities may excommunicate and damn them for heresy, God would not blot their names out of the Book of Life.

The Seventh Talk

MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES

(Continued)

REVELATION 3

IN the former chapter we noted that the "Sardis" period of church history witnessed the reformation climaxing in the protest of Martin Luther against salvation by works and his proclaiming, even under threat of death, that the "Just shall live by faith". Europe was filled with Protestant leaders such as Wycliff, Luther, and Calvin, but the creeds of Protestantism written during the era which we know as the Sardis period of church history were cold and, in the absence of warm-hearted leaders, witnessed the refrigeration of the professing church. The writing of a creed is like mixing gelatin—it soon cools and congeals: it is sweet to taste but has not warmth and life, and, therefore, no power in it. Protestantism was honey-combed by worldliness, state-craft, and politics, and the people were in many cases about as bad off as they had been during the period before the reformation.

Such conditions always bring forth spiritual leaders under the anointing of God who pay the price of leading the common people back to fundamental truth. In an Episcopal church home at Epworth, England, God raised up a real mother who gave birth to nineteen children, but who, nevertheless, found time for the religious instructions of each one of them. A meager salary and the hardships brought on by heartless creditors created just the atmosphere where real faith is born. Out of this home came John and Charles Wesley. Through great sacrifice John was sent to Oxford University, and there, by the providence of God, he was brought in touch with a group of young men who sincerely sought holiness of life. This little group of earnest young men became the flowering plant of a revival that shook the eighteenth century.

John Wesley came dangerously near ending his career because of the failure of a missionary project in Savannah, Georgia. He went back to England in disgrace because of indiscretions and his

enforcement of discipline, although there was no question of honesty or morality involved. If it had not been for his meeting with Peter Bohler, a Moravian missionary saint, John Wesley's name might never have been known, but he was led by the Spirit of God to go to a prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street Church. While Peter Bohler read Martin Luther's preface to the Book of Romans, John Wesley's heart was strangely warmed, and he felt, perhaps for the first time, a real heart assurance that the death of Christ on Calvary was a personal transaction between the Lord and his own soul.

PHILADELPHIA

It is more than an accident that Martin Luther's writing in the former period of church history should kindle a divine spark in the soul of the man who led the awakening during the period in church history known as the church of Philadelphia. There is no way to estimate the benefit to the world of the Wesleyan revival, and every time I pass a Methodist church, whether it be a humble mission or a great metropolitan temple, I feel moved to take off my hat in memory of the power of God that swept through the Wesleys to bless the world. Oh, that Methodism could turn back the pages of history, taking with it its wealth, the brilliant personnel of its ministry, and the millions of its members—take them all back to the eighteenth century when Methodists were consumed with a passion to live a holy life and spread the Gospel throughout the world! Standing on the sky-line of the eighteenth century, we can still see John Wesley, a preacher's boy, with his clean-cut, earnest, scholarly face, crying to us, "the world is my parish."

When I was a student at Vanderbilt University, I used to walk into the Wesley Chapel for a few moments of devotion. At that time I was a circuit-rider, walking my charge because I had no horse or buggy, "living by Faith", as the neighbors say. I would walk two miles down to the station at Chatmansborough, take the Tennessee Central Train for a twenty-five mile ride to the station in Nashville, then walk a mile and a half over to the Vanderbilt University campus. After this long trip I used to love to go into the quiet and reverent atmosphere of Wesley Hall, and I would sit for long periods at a time and look at the beautiful paintings of John Wesley that hung just behind the pulpit.

On one of these occasions I slipped into the chapel quietly and was shocked to see a young man lying there full length on the floor beneath this picture of Wesley. He cried again and again, "John Wesley, tell me what to do! They tell me what to do! They tell me that some of my Bible is not divine; others tell me we are saved by education. Spirit of John Wesley, speak to me!"

The mistake this young man made—he was a young theological student—was his appeal to the spirit of John Wesley instead of to the Holy Spirit of God. He left the room, and a little later, the ministry.

John Calvin wrote a creed that gripped the mind of Europe, but, like all other creeds, "it had not power to create life"; and the Calvinistic church grew cold during the Sardis period. However, they found a great spiritual leader in the golden voice and noble soul of George Whitefield. It is said that no man, since Christ hung on Calvary so swayed the hearts of his audience as did George Whitefield. He and Wesley were great friends until theological questions separated them. Wesley was an Armenian; Whitefield, a Calvinist. The Armenian doctrine teaches that one is saved by the free act of his own faith, and that one has the ability to depart from it. In short, Armenism represents the possibility of apostacy, a falling away from God. Calvinism teaches that the source of salvation is in the person of the Holy Spirit who puts into the heart of the believer saving faith, and who is able to keep him from failing. In short, it represents the impossibility of apostacy. However, it is interesting to us to know that under the brooding person of the Holy Spirit these two young men from Oxford University went out to stir a century, one with his eloquence, the other with his organizing ability, and both with definite spiritual experiences. Had Whitefield possessed the ability to conserve his work that John Wesley had, the century might have been characterized by the Whitefield revival rather than the Wesleyan awakening.

We must not forget in the study of the great awakening to pay homage to the sweet singer, Charles Wesley. He averaged the production of an outstanding hymn for every three days of his long and useful life.

While the world will never be the same after the revival under the Wesleys and Whitefield, the fires soon died out, and the next pe-

riod of church history known as that of "Laodicea" was ushered in and placed upon the calendar of the world.

Let us notice for a moment before we pass to the next period some of the contents of this message to the church of Philadelphia. Notice the reference to a "Key of David". This evidently refers to the covenant-keeping character of God. Wherever God makes a covenant, He holds in His hand a key that will one day unlock all the blessings and benefits that will come from Him. Time makes no difference with God, and, as the scroll of human his story unfolds, every century, every decade, and even every day finds this old earth moving closer to the fulfillment of every prophecy. The covenant made to David was that "of his kingdom there would be no end, and that his descendants would sit upon the throne of Israel in Jerusalem". This, so far as we know, can only be fulfilled by the return of Christ to this earth and His occupancy of the Davidic throne of Jerusalem. We know that Jesus hung upon a cross when He was on earth, that He sits in His Father's throne in Heaven now, and that He will have to come back again if ever He actually sits on the Throne of David.

In verse ten of the third chapter of Revelation, it refers "to the hours of temptations which will come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth", and there is added, also, a very significant warning in the next verse, "Behold I come quickly". These verses definitely indicate that, when the period of church history known as "Philadelphia" comes in human history, the tribulation that will fall upon the earth, and the subsequent return of Christ is drawing very near.

Notice the promise of God to the over-comers of this period. The first reward is to "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God". This was a most comforting message to that period when everything seemed to be crumbling, and the spiritual church seemed an out-cast on the earth. God promised to each individual the fixedness of a pillar in the temple of God. At that time when the followers of Wesley were called "Methodists" in derision, and Calvinists were hounded and hunted, and Calvin, himself, was exiled, God also promised that He would write upon them His name and the name of the city, the New Jerusalem! No one is certain what that means, but to me it carries the thought that

when Christ is revealed in the fullness of His victory and the indescribable glory of His real Lordship of the universe, He will give to His faithful followers a share in the new glory and power, "when His righteousness shall cover this earth, as the waters cover the sea".

LAODICEA

We come now to the period described as the "church of the Laodiceans". Note the change in the person to whom this message was sent; it is not to the church *in* Laodicea, nor to the church of *Laodicea*, but to the *church of the Laodiceans*. It implies that they had made the church or had brought the church of God down to their human level.

If the message to the other churches suggested an outline of church history, this church of the Laodiceans is descriptive of the last days of this dispensation. It describes a time of luke-warm church life—"neither cold nor hot"—and the awful sentence is uttered, "so then because thou art luke-warm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth". It seems to be a divine repudiation for lukewarmness. If the churches were all cold, there would be room for the convicting power of the Holy Ghost to create a great revival as was done in the former period in the eighteenth century. However, there is enough heat in a lukewarm church to keep it from feeling backslidden and enough coldness to keep it from power. The message also indicts the church of this last period for its boastfulness and self-satisfaction—"because thou sayest I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked". What a picture of the general professing church today! Countless millions worth of church property and no revival power! Great church colleges and universities many of whom are teaching modernism and some even atheism! There are churches burdened with mortgages on the buildings while missionaries are being called home from "the firing line".

Thank God for the hope that is in the twentieth verse of the third chapter, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me!" This is not only a promise to indi-

viduals and to church groups that if they will let Him in, He will come in, but there is also a faintly hidden warning here that the day of His coming is at hand. In no other of these messages does He place Himself at the door close enough to be knocking. This one posture of Jesus should make every reader ask himself the question, "Am I ready for His coming?"

The Lord says that He will sup with the one who lets Him in. That means that the Lord will sit down at his table, however bare and however meager the food, but He also adds that He will allow the one at whose table He sits to sup with Him when the Lord, Himself, is the host. This last promise is suggestive of the time so near in this church period when the true church will sit down at the Lord's table, as He says in the Gospels, and sup with Him again in the new dispensation which we know now as the Millennium.

The promise to this church period is that the overcomer will not only sit at the table to sup with the Lord but will also sit with Him in His throne! This passage is especially interesting because it tells of the location of Jesus now in these words, "Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and I am set down with my Father in His throne".

Those who through faith in and the presence of the Holy Spirit can live a victorious Christian life in this day of indifferences, worldliness, and atheism have the promise of sitting with the overcoming Christ in His own throne when all the earth and cosmic universe crown Him Victor and King. With what tremendous force does the warning benediction fall when we read at the close of the message to the seven churches these words:

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the church."

The Eighth Talk

THE CHURCH TRANSLATED

REVELATION 4

REVELATION 4:1. "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was as if it were a trumpet talking with me; which said, come hither, and I will show you things which must be hereafter."

The fourth chapter is one of the outstanding chapters of the Book of Revelation. You can realize that there is a change of scenes from what has been going on in the earth to a pageant in Heaven.

The chapter begins with the words, "After this". After what? It is after the church age which we have studied in the preceding messages under the names of the seven churches from that of Ephesus to the church of the Laodiceans. Between these two characteristic church conditions lie all the church activities from the ascension of Jesus to the end of the present Dispensation of Grace. We know that the time of the church period typed by that in Ephesus was the church of the Apostles and their immediate successors, or from the year, 33, to about the year, 100. We know with reasonable assurance that the period of church history described by the term, "Laodicean", began about 1850 when the revival fires kindled by the Wesleys and Whitfield had begun to die out. However, we do not know the time of the closing of this last period of the church on earth. If we knew that, we could work out a chronology concerning the rapture and give a reasonable date for the second personal appearance of Christ on this earth. But God has left the closing of the Laodicean church age to His own will, and no man knows the time of the peculiar experience of the church which is called the "rapture" by Bible students.

The word, "rapture", literally means "seizure" or a "taking out". This doctrine is held by many devout Bible students and is based upon such passages of Scripture as 1 Thess. 4:16-18:

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Nothing could be plainer than this passage which draws a very clear description between the rapture of the dead and the catching up of those "which are alive and remain". Then the Lord went into detail about this peculiar experience for a certain group of born-again Christians, saying in Matthew 24:36-42:

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

"For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.

"And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

"Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

"Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

Here, Jesus refers to this experience as the coming of the Son of Man. We may safely conclude that the coming of Jesus again will be the actual taking of the living who have been born-again along with the bodies of the Christians who have died through the centuries; and the second phase will be the actual, visible, bodily appearing of Jesus on this earth at sometime following this first phase. Devout Bible students who have made prayerful study of the closing scenes of this dispensation use the Greek word which means the "appearance" of Christ for the first experience which is commonly known as the "rapture", and the "unveiling" of Christ for the second period when He shall personally appear on the earth again. This is commonly known as the Second Coming of Christ. Incidentally, the word for unveiling in the Greek is "apokolupsis", and that is the term that is commonly applied to the Book of Revela-

tion, the "unveiling" of Jesus Christ. That will become literally true when the heavens part, and our glorious, returning Lord becomes visible to every eye. The Bible teaches that while the rapture, or the sudden taking out of a certain group of Christians at the end of the church age, will be known only to a limited number, the personal appearance of Christ will be seen by every eye on the earth.

If one can keep these two phases of the Second Coming of Christ clear in mind, many confusing passages of Scripture will be better understood.

Now, we can understand more clearly the opening words of the fourth chapter of Revelation, "After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven".

Thank God for that open door! That is the way out for all the troubled and harassed hearts of this earth, and how welcome will be that open door at the end of a church condition described by Jesus in Matthew 24:9-13 with these words:

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

"And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

Now, we are in a place to understand what Jesus meant when He said, "He that endureth to the end, shall be saved". They shall be saved by the opening of this door described in the first verse of Revelation, the fourth chapter. There is no reason to wonder, now that we think of these truths, that Jesus warned those to whom He spoke and said that two men shall be sleeping in one bed, and one would be taken, and the other left; two women would be grinding at the mill, one would be taken and the other left. It is no wonder that He closed this description of the rapture with the warning words of Matthew 24:42,

"Watch therefore; for you know not what hour the Lord doth come."

We can now also understand the parable of the foolish virgins in Matthew 25 who took their lamps and had no oil with them, clear-

ly implying that the oil, used here for the Holy Spirit, was the one thing lacking that kept them from being with their Lord. How the church should hunger and thirst for the Holy Spirit in these last, trying days so that nothing may be lacking should this taking-out time come upon us!

Jesus says that this time is coming unexpectedly, in fact, so quickly that one on the house-top at the time of the rapture would not have time to call the other members of the family to repentance. There is no other way to face this experience than to do what Jesus said when He cried, "Be ye also ready, for at such a time as ye think not, the Son of man shall come".

Remember, now, the activities in Revelation are changed from the earth to scenes in Glory, because the implication is that the earth with the people who were not ready to be taken out in the rapture has been left to the terrible scourge of the tribulation which no human tongue could possibly describe, but the thread of the story following God's people continues in heaven.

Notice in the second verse of the fourth chapter that John says, "And immediately I was in the Spirit". God had to spiritualize John again to get his optic nerves and brain cells fortified for what He was about to see and for the glory that was to be poured through his brain.

He beheld a throne, and One, to whom he gives no name, was seated upon it. He described this Occupant of the throne in these words:

"And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment: and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

Notice that the appearance of the One upon the throne suggested jasper and a sardine stone. Jasper is immaculately white; sardine stone is red. One naturally thinks of the holiness of God as described by the jasper stone, and the sardine stone suggests the blood which is to be brought into the story in the next chapter. The rainbow was round the throne. Thank God for its completeness! In this world we see only the segments of rainbows. No one on this

planet ever sees a complete rainbow unless it be an aviator looking down on falling rain drops, or some explorer of dizzy heights who has the same privilege of altitude. Yes, you see the complete rainbow only from great altitudes. When we get to heaven we will be so high above the falling teardrops of this old earth, that we can see a complete iridescent circle around the throne of God!

The twenty-four elders have always interested me. I wonder who they were? Seventy-two, which was a sacred number among the Jews, is six times twelve. Then, there were twelve apostles, and one wonders from where these two twelves of elders will come? Have they always been there? Or are they made up of twelve apostles and some other twelve, for instance, the saints of this age or of the patriarchal age? But, anyway, John saw them there and tells us of their functions and their white raiment. Their activities seem to be not only to wear the crowns of gold, but to cast their crowns before the throne and cry, "Thou art worthy, oh, Lord, to receive glory, and honor and power". Oh, that we would use our time and our money and any talent that we may have, as those white robed elders used their crowns—simply lay all at His feet.

Notice that here in the fourth chapter there is no blood visible and no mention of the Lamb of God. The only intimation of anything that would look like mercy against the background of God's holiness and justice is that veiled allusion to a red color in the sardine stone.

John saw, clearly, lightnings proceeding out of the throne and heard the thundering and voices. He saw, also, seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, and it tells us that they are the seven spirits of God. What a picture of the justice and the holiness of God! One thinks of Mt. Sinai when reading the fifth verse of the fourth chapter of Revelation. One can hear the thundering commandments and see the flashing of judgment and behold the flashing "lamps". This picture to us is of the seven-fold incandescence of the Holy Spirit flashing throughout the universe, searching out sin and condemning it. John saw, also, before the throne a sea of glass. I have never been satisfied with what little I know about this peculiar and interesting part of the scene. Students of prophecy have many theories about this, but we have very little knowledge that is certain. Everytime I read the sixth verse and come to the word, "sea", I

want to think of tempests and surging waves, but the phrase that follows it, "of glass like unto crystal", rebukes any thought of restlessness and drives from me any association with any sea this broken-hearted planet has ever known. It is good for us to remember in our study of this book to recall that Revelation is highly symbolical, and that it was symbolized or signified to John, according to the first verse of the book. All through the Bible the sea is used to denote restlessness and particularly the masses of people who know not God. One of the promises towards the close of the book in Chapter 21 is that in the remaking of this planet there will be no more sea. I cannot refrain from associating with this sea of glass a peace and tranquility in heaven with not even the faintest zephyr of disturbance to ripple its crystal surface. What must it mean to be in a city where a sea can be so calm, never a worry, never a care. Oh, wonderful City of God!

Notice particularly the descriptions of the four beasts full of eyes before and behind. One was like unto a lion, another like a calf, a third had the face of a man, and the fourth was a flying eagle. We read in the eighth verse that these beasts had six wings each, and that they rest not day nor night crying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come". Their function is to praise the Triune Godhead. Note the three ascriptions of praise: "Holy" for the Father; "Holy" for the Son; "Holy" for the Holy Spirit. When they were praising God, they spoke of the past in the words, "which was", and the present in the words, "which is", but also spoke of the future coming of One of the God-head and used the words, "and is to come". A student of Revelation must keep in mind that the book, "Revelation", is the unveiling of Christ in His past, present, and future ministry, and that much is said about His second return to this earth. I have found that the word, "beasts", would be more clear to us if it were translated, "living creature". These symbols of a lion, etc., may possibly suggest some of the characteristics of that to which they are likened: for instance, the lion might suggest strength; the calf, sacrifice; the man would suggest a high order of intelligence; and the flying eagle, ability to move gloriously to superlative heights.

When you read this marvelous chapter several times, you are impressed with the majesty of the Throne of God, but you are made

to wonder if there is any hope for a sinner before such a throne? On the throne sits One in immaculate white with only a suggestion of a crimson stain. Above Him is a complete rainbow suggesting the fulfillment of every promise to the human soul. Around the throne twenty-four elders are casting their gold crowns at the feet of the throne upon the slightest hint of praise from the living creatures. Above the throne is the flashing light of omniscience. Out of all the glories, the praises, and adoration in and around the throne, lightnings were flashing, and thunders were sounding! What hope would an uncleansed sinner have before a throne like that? Remember that the fourth chapter is a prelude to the glorious fifth in which the Lamb of God appears before the Throne, bleeding from sacrificial wounds. To me, the fourth chapter is a resumé of heavenly eons of praise and adoration, but absolute justice and immaculate holiness, up to the time of Calvary. There is no cross, no blood, no Redeemer in Revelation 4. This horrible thought all but paralyzes my brain! What if God's dealings with the human race had ended with the fourth chapter of Revelation! Thank God that in the fifth chapter we find that the song of our fathers and mothers is true:

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emanuel's vein,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my guilt away.

"But drops of grief can n'er repay
The debt of love I owe.
Dear Lord, I give myself away
'Tis all that I can do."

The Ninth Talk

THE CANCELLED MORTGAGE

REVELATION 5

IN the Delta of the Mississippi River, that marvelously fertile spot between the Yazoo and the Mississippi Rivers, alluvial soil left by rich overflow deposits is found to be thirty feet deep in spots. For countless centuries the Father of Waters has annually left a fresh layer of fertile soil washed down from the hills. For about two thousand years the streams of blessings have flowed from Calvary, leaving incalculable blessings over the earth where its blessed waters have been allowed to go. Many who have not tasted of the life-giving water have walked over the blessings it has left.

One has but to travel through some of earth's spiritual deserts to realize what Christianity has left in our land. In non-christian lands children are sold like live-stock; women have little or no rights; there is no pity for the underprivileged, the sick, the insane, or the orphaned. In such lands there are few smiles; life is dull and drab, and often an unbearably bleak existence. In lands where the Gospel has been known for any length of time, it has left its blessed deposit in ethics, morals, education, politics, and a fuller life as a whole. Notwithstanding, a large percentage of the so-called Christian people have refused to drink of this life-giving river but content themselves with enjoying the blessings it has bestowed all about them.

We find it all but impossible to think back behind Calvary, yet the fourth chapter of Revelation takes the startled soul back to the pre-Calvary ages where absolute Justice ruled the universe. There was no Redemption, no Lamb of God, no atoning blood!

When we read this fourth chapter we find that there were two almost hidden sources of hope in this scene that is characterized by celestial beauty and holiness and justice: one is the color in the sardine stone; another is the analogy of the rainbow. The all but hidden red in the sardine stone hints at a purpose deep in the heart of Him on the throne, and the rainbow surely meant a promise that lay in the heart of God.

The description of the Occupant of the throne, as One "who is, who was, and is to come", points out either that it was Jesus or Jehovah with the plan of the promised Messiah uppermost in the Triune Godhead.

If there are Grace and Redemption here in this fourth chapter, they are heavily veiled in joint symbols. How terrible if God had revealed no more of His love!

How bleak and barren would be our life today without a Calvary! How must a soul feel who has no hope! Yet, there are millions on this planet today who have never heard that Jesus died to give eternal life to lost souls. There are thousands, too, all about us, on whose souls the night of hopelessness has settled, because no one has ever shown them the real gospel of Grace as a way out and up!

Doubtless, the fourth chapter of Revelation was given to John as a world with no Calvary, only a promise. Every sacrifice, every tabernacle and temple symbol pointed to the Lamb of God—but only in promise. Think of the millions before Christ who lived and suffered and died without the "better thing" (Hebrews 11:40) that is ours today!

John says in Revelation 5:1 that he saw "A Book" in the hand of One who sat on the throne in chapter four. He adds that the book was "written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals". John saw, too, a strange angel crying with a loud voice for one to open the mysterious book. No one was found worthy to open or even to look into this book of mystery, not even to open its official seals.

The key that unlocks this mystery of the book in the hand of Him on the throne is one word in the fifth verse, "Redeemed".

The twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus tells how an inheritance or a person may be redeemed or bought back. The one who redeems, the redeemer, must be a kinsman (Leviticus 25:48, 49; Ruth 3:12, 13; Galatians 4:4, Hebrews 2:14, 15); he must also be able to pay in full (Leviticus 25:27; I Peter 1:18, 19; Galatians 3:18). The New Testament, in following out this figure of one who is to buy back or redeem the person or the inheritance, speaks of humanity as "sold under sin" (Romans 7:14), under sentence of death (John 3:18), and also points out that the purchase price is not money

or property but the Blood of the Redeemer who died in our stead (Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 20:28).

Now, we can see that the "Book" in God's hand is the mortgage against the human race! This fearful document was forced into God's hand when man fell in the Garden of Eden. Satan pressed that document into His hand. Satan was once the wonderful being called in Heaven, "Lucifer, son of the morning". Isaiah 14:13, 14 recites the course of his fall:

"Thou has said in thine heart, I WILL ascend into Heaven,

"I WILL exalt my throne above the stars of God;

"I WILL sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the side of the north:

"I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds;

"I WILL be like the most High."

Five dagger-like thrusts of a stubborn will into the heart of God! God immediately sentenced the first sinner to be brought down to hell. When Adam and Eve sinned, Satan, meaning "The Accuser", cried out to the justice of the Godhead:

"You thrust me out for sin: these creatures, even of your love, must be condemned by your absolute justice!"

The mortgage was written "within and on the backside". Within was the itemized list of lost souls and inheritances; on the backside were the witnesses in all the cosmic universe. The document was sealed by the omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal God-head. The penalty for sin was eternal banishment from communion with God, the DEATH of the Bible. Physical death is but a resultant incident in the eternal exile of a soul from God and his home.

The strong angel in this scene has searched the universe for a redeemer, one who can meet the conditions of this terrible document. He must be able and willing to pay in full! He must give a life to satisfy this mortgage's demand. He must suffer not for one soul, but for all the souls that will ever live on this planet under the curse of its sin. He must offer a sinless soul to take the place of the sinful souls of humanity. It must also be a soul and a life worth all the souls and lives included in the document!

Through all Heaven this angelic searcher went crying until every recess of the celestial regions echoed with his cry, "Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?" Through-

out the earth and beneath went this messenger in his fruitless search. No redeemer was found among all the created beings in the entire universe. The messenger returned to announce to the throne of God his failure.

What folly for one self-centered or self-righteous person today to think himself able to satisfy the demands of God's justice and righteousness by self-denial, human works, or human goodness, when one of Heaven's strongest angels has searched the universe for such a being! This archangel's failure has forever precluded any substitute for redemption by the Lamb of God!

Do you wonder that John wept? Not only for himself did he weep but for a hopeless humanity. There was no way out. If this angel could find no redeemer, then humanity, including his own soul, was lost. Down through the ages this cry has been often heard. In Eden Adam and Eve wept as angels drove them from the garden and God's companionship; we hear Moses begging that his name be blotted out from God's remembrance in the hope of Israel's forgiveness (Ex. 32:32); we find Paul crying, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:19). What hope have the teeming millions on earth if Christ be only another man, and this mortgage is still unpaid? What hope have you here today if Christ be not your own personal Saviour?

"Weep not!" It is the voice of one of the twenty-four elders robed in white and crowned with gold. These words of comfort come not from human lips alone nor only from angels in glory, but from one who had sat in the councils of the great Throne Room of Glory! Many voices seek to have our souls take their ease, to eat, drink, and be merry, but they are voices of devils or of poor, finite, suffering, miserable souls of this little earth. Here is news from the midst of the throne that is circled by a rainbow and radiant with eternal light!

The comforting elder continues, "The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof". The Messiah promised down through the centuries from the blood-line humanity of Adam, Seth, Abraham, Isaac, and David had been found. One who would come down to

this earth as a human "kinsman", flesh of the human blood-line, but also a Divine Redeemer.

An infinite person, capable of infinite sufferings, sinking His omnipotence, omnipresence, and divinity into one sacrifice, was the only redeemer who could pay in full the mortgage that was held in the hand of Eternal Justice. One who was absolutely holy was the only substitute that could offset the sin of the human race! A way had been found to satisfy justice, redeem humanity, and pay that terrible mortgage!

Suddenly amidst the glories of the Throne Room there appeared a Person that was stained with blood, as a lamb had been slain. His seven horns and seven eyes inform us of His complete and absolute power and His position as the second Person of the Trinity. This wounded, bleeding Redeemer approached the Throne and took the book, or the mortgage, out of the great hand of God. That act signified that He assumed all the debt involved in the cancelling of that mortgage. He took the book, He took all the sin and all the shame and all the suffering of every man and woman of the human race from Adam to the last person that will be saved. What an inconceivable mass of guilt and shame rolled onto that wounded Lamb of God as He stood as the Redeemer of the human soul!

Instantly, every heavenly personality in the scene burst into praise. The twenty-four Elders fell down before the Lamb as they had been falling before the Throne, having every one of them harps and "golden vials full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints". As the harps sweetly accompanied, and the prayers of the saints of all ages from this blessed moment arose like the perfume of rare flowers in the Throne Room of God, the Heavenly Host burst into a new song. Remember, it was absolutely new. Never had its sweet story been told on any planet in the universe. Never before had the universe heard the story of redemption. God, Himself, has paid the debt of humanity with the blood of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. John has preserved for us the words of this wonderful anthem, "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation".

What a reason for rejoicing! Jesus had redeemed the whole lost

race of men, regardless of the color of the pigment of their skin, the depth of their depravity, or the denseness of their ignorance. Oh, that every tribe and nation could learn to sing that song today! However, we can never hope to hear it universally sung until Jesus Christ comes back in His second glorious advent to sit upon the Throne of David and to reign for a thousand years.

Notice that these Elders cried out that redemption had made it possible for them to be kings and priests, and that they would reign on the earth. The fulness of the meaning of this marvelous statement will never be known until our celestial joy begins in the meeting of saints in the air, soon to be followed by the millennial reign of Christ upon this earth.

The angels innumerable, the living creatures around the Throne, and the Elders robed in white join in the redemption chorus, until all the universe echoed with their anthem of praise, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour and glory and blessing".

The song spreads in ever widening circles of praise, until every creature in Heaven, on earth, under the earth, and such as are in the sea lifts up his voice to praise the Lamb of God for redemption. Every particle of matter found a tongue to praise its God; every star flashed its message of praise. The whole universe praises the Lamb of God, saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

If only the story could be closed here! But, the seals were taken from the mortgage, officially redeeming humanity, but one by one, and then dropped in their seven world judgments upon the godless and unrepentant nations on earth. Notice there were seven seals making a perfect mortgage of man that left him no hope, but all seven were torn off, thereby completely and perfectly canceling man's debt and enabling him as he personally accepts Jesus, the bleeding Lamb of God and the Redeemer of his soul, to say,

"Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe,
Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow."

The Tenth Talk

THE FIRST SIX SEALS

REVELATION 6

THE reader notices in Chapter 6 that the seals which were dropped upon the earth were taken from the "mortgage", or the book which John saw in the hands of Him who sat upon a throne. After the angel had flown throughout the cosmic universe, and no one was found in heaven or on earth or under the earth who was worthy to open the book, the Lamb of God approached the throne, covered with the blood of His sacrifice, and He paid the price for the redemption of a lost humanity. These seals were taken from the book which condemned the human race. When we realize the origin of these seals, we are prepared to understand what havoc they will work upon the inhabitants of this earth who have refused to accept the price which was paid by the bleeding Lamb of God. Seven seals were dropped upon the earth and its inhabitants, the seventh one producing the pageant which we know as the "seven trumpets".

To the accompaniment of thunder, while one of the living creatures cried, "come and see", the pageant of the beginning of the end of this dispensation is presented.

First, a white horse comes into view, and the rider has a bow, but no mention is made of arrows, yet he wore a crown, and he "went forth conquering, and to conquer". This first seal is descriptive of an era of false peace which shall come upon the world following the taking out of the saints, according to the fourth chapter of Revelation, after the rapture of the saints, spoken of by Jesus when He told of two men sleeping in one bed, one taken, and the other left. This will naturally be the case when the earth is rid of all disturbances of unlicensed orgies. There will be a tremendous spending of money and launching of programs for pleasure; the churches which will extend beyond the rapture will be devoid of any movement of the Holy Spirit, for He will naturally depart from this planet with the ascending host of born-again believers and the bodies of the resurrected saints.

The second seal, a red horse, comes into view which is evi-

dently a picture of war that will follow the unleashing of restrained passion among men. This will follow the era of false peace under the white horse. Notice that the rider had power to "take peace from the earth" and carried a great sword, and he stirred up people to kill one another. What a picture of universal hatred and world-wide war!

The next seal discloses a black horse and describes most vividly the conditions of a world-wide famine, for the rider of the black horse carried a pair of balances in his hand and measured wheat and barley at a price that is astounding when one considers the purchasing value of a coin in that day. Some Bible students find in the statement of the writer, "hurt not the oil and the wine", a protection of the rich and the well-to-do during this period that has followed war, and that the workers will find the necessities of life at prohibited prices. The logical conclusion is that following war and famine death would be a spectre that will haunt this earth.

Thus, we find the fourth seal describing a "pale" horse whose name is death. Perhaps, we would obtain the full meaning of this description if we make a freer translation of the word, "pale". "Livid" or "corpse-like" is nearer to the original meaning of the word. Under the fourth seal we behold death riding a horse the color of a corpse. Death and hell followed behind this horse to fill their hungry mouths with the victims. Verse eight tells us that one-fourth of the population of the earth will perish during this seal. Note that the beasts of the field moved undisturbed among the starving millions. What a condition of horror will come upon this earth under the fourth seal!

When the fifth seal is opened, a strange company comes to view as we behold the martyrs who had been slain for the word of God. Notice their pitiful lament:

"O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

What a company whose bodies were left in this earth awaiting the vindication of their testimony! During the last days just before the rapture Jesus intimates in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew that persecution and martyrdom will be on the increase as brother betrays brother, and men will be slain for the word of their testimony. However, the eleventh verse of the sixth chapter

of Revelation tells us that white robes were awaiting everyone of them.

Verse twelve describes the opening of the sixth seal. An earthquake came upon the earth; the sun wore sackcloth of hair; and the moon turned red as blood. Here, the judgment has fallen upon atoms and suns so that the physical universe is made to suffer for the sins of men. How horrible will be the sight when, according to the thirteenth verse, the heavens will be filled with falling stars "even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind".

The heavens rolled back like a scroll, and even the earth is moved as mountains and islands are shifted out of their places. The fifteenth verse describes the effect of this horrible catastrophe upon the population of this earth as it describes "rich men, chief captains, mighty men, bondmen, free man" trying to hide themselves in the dens and the rocks of the shaking mountains.

Many Bible students think that "mountain" here means institutions that were thought to be as firm as the eternal hills. They were shaken from the foundation, and no man found refuge in old ritual and false hopes. This same group of scholars tells us that the word "sun" here means military rulers who have been hurled from their places of security and power, but, regardless of what interpretation we may place upon this sixth seal, the catastrophe is universal. The elements of the heavens have been changed; all levels of human living brought to its knees under this judgment of God and made to recognize that all source of power rests in Him who sits upon the throne of heaven, and that judgment for the sin of humanity has its origin in the councils of the Godhead.

One can hardly think of such a term as "wrath" being applied to Him whom we know on this earth as the "Carpenter", "The Lily of the Valley", the "Rose of Sharon", the "Prince of Peace", the "Morning Star", and the "Blessed Meek and Lowly Lamb of God". This change from meekness to wrath came because this earth repudiated the blood of Christ too long! Its governments had been run on militaristic plans, and pleasure had been the goal of humanity. What a change will take place among the millions on this earth when men find that the great day of His wrath is come and ask, "Who shall be able to stand?"

The Eleventh Talk

THE TIME BETWEEN THE SIXTH
AND SEVENTH SEAL

REVELATION 7

THE *seventh* chapter of Revelation is a parenthetical statement recorded between the sixth and the seventh seals. There is a diversion of opinion among Bible students as to the meaning of these parenthetical statements in Revelation, but there are two things of which we can be certain in our study of this chapter. The first is that the numeral, seven, when applied to judgment, indicates something that will be so severe and final that we can call it an absolute judgment. In the same use of the word to describe power as in the expression, "the seven spirits of God", it again means the absolute. Therefore, we can be safe in concluding that this interim of time between the sixth and seventh seals may be to emphasize the passage of some time between the last two seals and to accentuate the devastating nature of the next stage in God's dealing with a reprobate world.

Another fact discovered in this chapter, and one that bares out the thought just advanced that there may be considerable time between the sixth and the seventh seals is the picture given us in the first verse of the seventh chapter where we see four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth. This suggests angelic restraint in the program of judgment.

The third verse tells us why the devastating powers are held in check: to give another angel a chance to seal the servants of God in their foreheads. The fourth verse gives us the number of those who are sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand and all of them out of the tribes of the children of Israel. So, this group will all be Jews, saved in the Tribulation between the sixth and seventh epochs of God's judgment upon this world.

It is significant that at this particular time John is allowed to see a great "multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stand before the throne, and

before the Lamb clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands; and who cry with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb".

The fourth verse of this seventh chapter of Revelation identifies this numberless multitude out of all nations, or Gentiles, for when John asked who they were, the angel said:

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

We can safely draw two conclusions from this statement about the interval that lapses between the sixth and seventh seals in the method of God's judgment in this world. First, one hundred and forty-four thousand Jews will be saved, and this is during the Tribulation and after the rapture which took place in the fourth chapter of Revelation and before the tribulation began. The next thing that we can safely conclude about the salvation of people during the tribulation is that there will be an innumerable multitude of Gentile saved and notice that they stand before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple. The assurance is given that all the trials which they suffered during the tribulation, described under the periods of the preceding six seals, have come to an end, and from this promise we may get a vague idea about some of the terrors the earth will suffer during this period. These tribulation saints are promised immunity from the hunger which they must have suffered under the third seal, or the famine period. During some of the time water must have been scarce, and the sun's heat must have been unbearable, for they are promised that there will be no more thirst nor scorching sun rays.

There is a tenderness in the comfort expressed in the assurance that the Lamb, Jesus Christ, their Saviour, "shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes".

It is dangerous to offer any hope to humanity that would in any way cause a soul to be misled in these last days, basing their hope for salvation upon a chance after the rapture. The Lord certainly would never have said, "Watch, for you know not the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh", if He had not intended to convey to the minds of His hearers and through them to the whole world that a man is foolish and playing with tragedy who

dares to hope for any blessing after the saints are taken out according to 1 Thess. 4:17. However, the seventh chapter of Revelation leaves at least a suggestion which is almost a positive statement that a great group of Jews and an innumerable multitude of Gentiles will be taken out of this world between the sixth and seventh seals. It may be that these are people who had accepted the Lord but were so taken up with the world and its program of pleasure and folly that they were not ready when the first group went out.

There is an interesting thought suggested by the fifteenth verse in this seventh chapter when it declares that this innumerable company of Gentiles are before the throne of God. This makes one think that they have been taken out of the earth and might possibly lead one to conclude that the group that will go out through the open door in the first verse of the fourth chapter are not the only souls that will be taken out of the earth before the bodily coming of the Lord. On the other hand, the one hundred and forty-four thousand Jews were evidently on the earth when they were sealed, for the third verse of the seventh chapter says, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads". It doesn't say that this group of Jews was taken out of the earth at this time; therefore, we must not go beyond the bare statement here lest we veer into speculation, the method of so-called Bible study that has confused so many earnest Bible students.

We are ready now to go into the eighth chapter of Revelation and take up the study of what happened under the period known as the seventh seal.

The first statement in the eighth chapter is astounding, "There was silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour". This is evidently mentioned by the Holy Spirit to impress us with the tenseness even in Glory when the trumpets of doom were about to sound. It is somewhat like the silence that precedes a tornado. Doubtless, there was this peculiar phenomenon throughout the whole universe with one exception. The activities upon this earth in its mad quest for pleasure, sensuality, and world programs, unmindful of the approaching doom, were going on with no interruptions.

We notice that two of the angels, "which stood before God", were given the seven trumpets, and another angel, standing at the

altar and having a golden censer, offered much incense "with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne". The second phase of judgment, known as the trumpet judgment, began with a service of prayer and worship on the golden altar in the presence of God! Thus will all judgment start and break in terrible penalty upon a rebel world. Notice that while prayer and incense featured the worship before the throne, fire from the altar was cast into the earth to the accompaniment of "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake". This is another illustration of the statement that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is a "savor unto life, but of death unto death". That means that the Gospel is life invigorating where there is spiritual life, but it adds to the tragedy of death where there is no divinely imparted life.

One of the most terrifying sentences in Revelation to me is the sixth verse of the eighth chapter of Revelation. Listen to it:

"And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

What a sentence of doom! Do you wonder that all heaven was silent for the space of half an hour? Do you wonder that an offering of prayer and incense was made before the execution of the trumpet judgment? And to think that a thoughtless world rolled on to its doom! Bloodless churches and godless nations went on with their programs hoping that out of the maelstrom of human misery some beneficent plan might be evolved even while the angel poised in Glory, prepared to sound the doom of everything on this planet that had been left out from under the Blood.

This reminds me of a story told of Peter the Great, in Russia. He had issued an order that no one was to light a fire of any kind because of the nearness of his troops to the enemy whom he hoped to surprise at dawn. With his unusual attention to details, the great commander drew his military coat about him and moved incognito among the tents and camps of his troops to see if his order had been carried out. To his consternation he saw the flicker of a candle in a tent. Stealthily, he approached the tent where the candle blazed, and looking over the shoulder of a young soldier, saw him writing these words:

"And, mother, the commander has given orders that no light be lit tonight, but I am daring to disobey it to write you a last word

before we go into battle at dawn tomorrow, and this may be my last letter."

At that moment Peter, the Great, touched the young man on the shoulder, and, as the horrified young man turned to look into the face of the general whose orders he had disobeyed, he heard these words pronounced slowly by the enraged commander:

"Young man, finish your letter and then add a postscript at the bottom, saying, 'And I will be shot a half-hour before dawn for disobedience to my general's orders'."

Just so will the world go on in its mad folly during that thirty minutes of silence in heaven even when the angelic host will tremble at the thought of the catastrophe that will follow the blast of those seven trumpets. Yea, even while the trumpets are pressed to the lips of the waiting angels, a pleasure-mad planet plunged on toward its doom.

SIX OF THE TRUMPET JUDGMENTS

REVELATION 8 and 9

IN the eighth chapter of Revelation and the fifth verse it tells us that "the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it in to the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake". We are taught here that the judgments delivered in the form of the seven trumpets had their origin in heaven and are associated with the altar. On the altar the blood was placed. The worship and the blessings of God entered in and were associated with the altar. Thus, we can safely conclude that whatever happened under the seven trumpets was caused by a rejection of the altar of God and all that is associated with it. Centuries mean nothing to God; a thousand years to Him are but as yesterday, but as certainly as God exists, everything turning away from God's plan of redemption will always bring, sometime, somewhere, a consequent penalty.

Let us keep in mind that the seven trumpet judgments came out of the seventh seal, and, later, the vials of wrath came out of the blast of the seventh trumpet. So, we are taught a continuity of symbolical sequence in God's final dealing with this earth.

The first trumpet's blast released "hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burned up, and all green grass was burned up". There is no reference to direct judgment against any form of life by a terrific hail and a scorching cleansing of the earth and the grass that covers it. This is the first degree of punishment and cleansing.

The next trumpet dealt with the sea when a great flaming torch, comparable to a burning mountain, fell into the sea, and a third part of the sea became blood. The ninth verse specifically states that one-third of all marine life was destroyed, and a third part of the shipping on the sea was annihilated. Animal life paid a penalty, but there is no reference to a direct judgment against humanity, only the destruction of shipping when God was dealing with

the sea. The tenth verse announces that a great "star" fell from heaven aflame, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers and the fountains of water. The text names this star, "Wormwood". Here is the first mention of human life being destroyed, but only because they drank of the poisoned water.

Some commentators maintain that a "star" is a symbolical term for some great personage. If this be true, some great world leader in religion or politics who has drawn after him a great following, poisoned and wrecked by the "wormwood" teaching of his stellar mind, was overthrown.

Some students who are more literal in their interpretation claim that the text means exactly what it says. They believe that some heavenly body, possibly a comet, will crash into the earth just as in the former judgment "a great mountain burning with fire fell into the earth". The Sunday magazines are filled with accounts of the possible destruction of the earth by just such a catastrophe. At any rate, scientists are certain that a great meteor fell in Arizona at some remote time and left a disc or raised dirt six hundred feet high and two miles across. This celestial missile evidently struck at an angle and plowed so deeply into the earth to one side that they have never been able to locate it. However, the remains of everything that vanished in a blast of flame lie scattered for miles about the scene of the tragedy. Some great scientist tells us that all human life was destroyed in a radius of five hundred miles, and that the earth was shaken as if by a super-earthquake. This may account for the discovery of so many fossils of pre-historic life within five hundred miles of this scar on the plains of Arizona. However true or false the details of this story may be, it prepares the mind of every thinker to accept some such event as possible, yea, probable, just such a catastrophe as is described in the tenth verse of this eighth chapter of Revelation.

The twelfth verse tells us that when the fourth angel sounded "the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened". Every astronomer has been thinking about, and many of them have expressed themselves in scientific articles or in syndicate stories of the press, just such a phenomenon as is described here in the twelfth verse. Spots on the sun have been re-

curing with terrifying frequencies of late and increasing intensity. I noticed one astronomer said that recently cyclones of heat, possibly thirty thousand degrees Fahrenheit, swept over the sun during such a disturbance and licked out their tongues as far as two hundred thousand miles above the sun. Keep in mind that if the sun were a hollow ball, one and one-quarter million worlds the size of ours could be placed within it. Imagine this mass burning with indescribable intensity! One cannot escape the conclusion that this trumpet scene pictures the burning out of not only a part of the sun but parts of stars which are suns. When we realize that practically all the heavenly bodies except the nine planets that circle around this earth are all flaming suns in various degrees of combustion, we are prepared to not only understand but to accept this story of the closing pageant of this age.

The thirteenth verse chills one's blood when an angel is seen "flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound"! Notice that just as there is the ascription of triple praise, "Holy, holy, holy", to the Triune Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,—so here is a triple annunciation of doom to a rebel planet that has refused God's plan for redemption. They are three cries of woe associated with the judgment of vengeance of the Triune Godhead. I know of no passage of Scripture that contains as much warning to man as this thirteenth verse of the eighth chapter of Revelation.

Now, we pass into the *ninth chapter*. In the three trumpet judgments which we have just noted, the grass, trees, the sea, and all animal life, have all paid a terrible penalty, but man has escaped any direct judgment from God. The sounding of the triple woe announces a change in the program of judgment, for the fifth angel portrays another falling "star" from heaven, and here the "star" is clearly identified with a personality, for it says that to "him was given a key to the bottomless pit". This, evidently is a fallen angel, perhaps Lucifer, whom Isaiah 14:12-15 tells us fell from heaven because of his daring ambition to be like the Most High. At any rate, this personage opened the bottomless pit to release "locusts" upon the earth with a deadly sting, under orders not to hurt any green

thing nor tree but only men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. These "locusts" certainly do not resemble in any way the insects we know today who live solely upon vegetation. These "locusts" are evidently devils or demoniacally possessed men and were not to kill but to torment for a period of five months. In as much as we have been told in a former chapter that one hundred and forty-four thousand Jews were to be sealed during the tribulation, we might naturally conclude that this will be a terrific persecution of Israel who has not accepted the coming Messiah, and it may be that such a thing as Hitler is doing now in Germany may be the beginning of the torment by this hord of scorpions that will be released in the last days.

The sixth verse of the ninth chapter of Revelation describes what will happen to those who are to be tormented, for it says:

"In those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

The seventh verse describes with more detail the locusts, declaring that they were like unto horses prepared unto battle, and that they wore crowns of gold, and we have positive identification of them as men, for the verse says that "their faces were as the faces of men". One interesting detail of their appearance is that they had the hair of women and the teeth of lions. This describes, possibly, a feminine and scholarly appearance, or characteristic on one hand and the power and willingness to destroy on the other. The identification goes on with the description of their breast plates which are of iron and their advance on "wings". This may be a description of squadrons of airplanes. The eleventh verse gives the climax of the situation by announcing that they will have a king over them which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name is "Abaddon" or "Apollyon". Then, comes the horrible announcement that while one "woe" is past, two more are yet to come.

The sixth angel deals with the loosing of four angels which had been bound and announces that they were prepared for an hour and a day, a month and a year to slay the third part of men. Can it be that this describes the marshaling of a terrific host of men who have been inert and apparently docile in the east or in some way associated with the river declared to be the Euphrates? Russia would fit such a picture, and it is possible that it is referring to the millions

of China and the East. Keep this fact in mind, neighbors, that if all the human race were in a straight line, every fourth man would be Chinese or Japanese!

The sixteenth verse announces that the number of the horsemen of this army will be two million. We are told that their breast plates will be of the hue of flame, suggestion of red, and that they will kill a third part of the men of the earth. Notice that the source of their power was in their mouth, which suggests some doctrine, and in the poison of their tails, a program of destructive propaganda.

The ninth chapter ends with the startling announcement that all these horrible things had not changed the hard hearts of the earth who trusted in silver, gold, brass, stone, and wood and repented not of their evils. This statement leads us to conclude that the heart of humanity will become harder and harder as they trust a machine age and destructive propaganda under political dictators instead of looking unto Jesus Christ for the redemption of humanity and the saving of this world.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

The Thirteenth Talk

**THE INTERIM BEFORE THE
SEVENTH TRUMPET SOUNDETH**

REVELATION 10 and 11

WE notice that in the study of the Book of Revelation that before the seventh seal was opened, there was an interim; likewise, before the seventh trumpet was blown, there was a similar parenthetical statement. The seals and the vials that follow the trumpets are degrees of God's dealing with this world in judgment at or toward the close of this Dispensation of Grace.

We want to distinguish this rainbow angel in the tenth chapter of Revelation from the third angel who cried, "Woe, woe, woe", and ushered in the general judgment (Chapter 11:15-18). This angel in the tenth chapter is a special messenger appearing on the earth with the awful message that the end of time is near, and that when the seventh trumpet begins to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, and there shall be no more time.

There are various interpretations, naturally, of this rainbow angel who will bring such a message of warning to the earth and also of the little book that he was commanded to eat. Some of this angel's message is not disclosed to us, but his lion-like roaring was accompanied by "seven thunders". To me, this means that the messenger uttered warnings which, if we know in detail, would positively identify the day and the hour when the Lord will come. In other words, he describes certain conditions that were we to know them we could complete the chronology of the dispensation of Grace to the split second. However, God allowed this message to be lost in the reverberations of the seven thunders, and only the warning was passed on to us, that when the seventh angel sounds time will be no more. That means, time as we know it now. What a dreadful thought, and what a tremendous warning for our time!

There are various interpretations of what the little book means. Some learned commentators hold that it is symbolical of last-day preaching. At the time it shall be given during the tribulation, the

earth shall be so hungry for it that it will be very sweet to the taste. Keep in mind that there has been no preaching since the seals began to be broken in the sixth chapter. This Gospel truth, which many writers claim here is symbolized by a book, however, when it is received during the days of the tribulation will be terribly bitter because of the persecutions that it will bring upon one who receives it. The Lord described with minute detail the persecutions of the last days:

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

"And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

"But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

We have no way of even imagining the terrors of the last days on this earth, and what it will cost one to really take the Gospel. It seems to me that this is the real meaning of the tenth chapter of Revelation.

Notice that in the last verse of the tenth chapter the rainbow angel announces to John, the author of Revelation, that he is "to prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings". This bears out the interpretation that this tenth chapter has a message connected with the Gospel in witnessing to the people of this earth.

The *eleventh chapter* is most interesting, indeed, to the Bible student! Three outstanding events are described in it: first, the measuring of the temple of God, apparently in Jerusalem; second, the appearance of two mysterious witnesses and their death at the hands of the beasts and their resurrection after three and one-half days and their ascension into heaven; third, we are introduced to the indescribable solemnity accompanying the seventh trumpet blast.

Much has been written about the meaning of the measuring of the temple of God. It is evidently in Jerusalem and not in Heaven, for we are told here that the court outside the temple is not to be measured, because it is given unto the Gentiles and is in the holy

city, which is Jerusalem, which the Gentiles tread under foot for forty-two months.

There is one fact of which we may be certain, that God goes out of His way to put emphasis on the temple here in Jerusalem during the closing scenes of the tribulation judgments. This manifestly means that there will be great activity at this time in the closing chapter of the world's history about the temple which will have been erected in Jerusalem by the Jews. It is more than a co-incidence that devout Jews are returning to Palestine in numbers that astound us, and that without question a movement is not only launched but well under way among the Jews to rebuild their temple on the site of the old one on Mount Moriah.

All persons who are conversant with the activities of the Jews for the last four years are well-informed about these matters and that the Jews have been given remarkable consideration in Palestine by the British Government who has a mandate over it. In fact, some historians of the World War have gone so far as to say that the Jews were the only people who won anything out of that disastrous world conflict. While they were not in it as a nation, the British Government presented to them, almost on a silver platter, their nation, their homeland, and they have been encouraged to return to it. Students of happenings in Palestine also know that from time immemorial God has been depositing the minerals from a great basin in the Dead Sea, where they have waited through the centuries for the rehabilitation of Palestine according to Bible prophecies. Now, Scripture has been fulfilled in that the Jordan Valley is blossoming like a garden, and that some of the richest soil on earth is to be found in Palestine, because phosphates and other minerals have been taken out of the Dead Sea and dumped over these barren lands that have lain for centuries in utter desolation. Today, beautiful truck gardens and citrus orchards line well-built boulevards throughout the country that has long been predicted in the Bible to be the site of the Lord's actual return to this earth. It is more than a co-incidence that these things are happening in Palestine. It is natural, also, that these Jews who will become prosperous, will perfect their plans now under way for the rebuilding of their temple. It is very probable that this activity in the last days is what is described here under the figure of a measuring rod around the temple in Jerusalem.

The unusual command for John not to measure the court of the Gentiles, or the outside court where other than Jews were allowed to come, indicates that there is to be some hostile movement of the Gentiles about this temple. The reason for the conflict is given; the duration is set at forty and two months. Many devout Bible students believe that this describes the prelude to the Lord's coming when a great battle is to take place which is known as Armageddon. Of course, no one can be certain of these interpretations, but it is highly probable that there will be a great world movement against the Jews in the last days, and that armies will march against Palestine when dictatorial atheism has united its national forces to drive any reference to God and any offering of blood as a sacrifice from the face of the earth.

Just at this time appear two persons whom the Lord calls "my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth". Just who these two personages are no one is certain. They may be two spiritual persons who will denounce the combined forces of atheism as this world rolls on towards its mid-night experience. The majority of Bible students think that it refers to two persons who will have to come back here to complete some phase of their work or to enter into the testimony during the last days. They are often identified as being possibly Elijah and Enoch, two men who were taken out of this earth without having to suffer the penalty of physical death, which the Bible tells us was passed as a curse upon all humanity in the fall of man in Eden. We know well that the Lord, Himself, went through the agonies of a most terrible physical death. Other interpretations suggest that these two witnesses may be Moses, preaching the law, and Elijah, representing the prophets who foretold the doom of the world.

It is worth while here to notice that the grave of Moses has never been visited by man according to Scripture, and that in the book of Jude in its one short chapter it informs us that "yet Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses and durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee". In this ninth verse of Jude we are told that for some unaccountable reason Satan disputed with an archangel over the body of Moses. Some students of Reve-

lation think that this is indication that Moses will come back to appear with some other person as one of these witnesses. However, the outstanding matter for the student of Revelation to remember is that there will be pure, spiritual preaching just before the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

It is significant to notice that these two witnesses will be put to death by the anti-Christ, and we are shocked to note that the condition of the planet will be such that according to the tenth verse of this eleventh chapter of Revelation, "they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth".

These will be the worst hated of men in the closing drama of judgment. They will be hated by their brothers for the beauty of their holiness and for their pure preaching of God's Word together with the warning of impending judgments.

The reader of this eleventh chapter of Revelation is startled to notice that after three and a half days God's Spirit enters into these two dead witnesses, and they stand upon their feet! What consternation will follow all that have been making merry and exchanging gifts because these men who tormented their conscience were slain.

From Heaven comes the invitation to ascend to its glory with the invitation, "Come up hither". We are struck with the repetition of the same words that were used in the fourth chapter of Revelation when John saw a door opened in Heaven, and a voice cried, "Come up hither". So, this is clearly another rapture when two shall be taken out of this world while their enemies behold them.

As these two resurrected witnesses were going out in a cloud of glory to be forever with the Lord, a great earthquake shook Jerusalem, and the tenth of the city was destroyed. The record tells us that seven thousand men were slain. Notice that the terrified remnant gave glory to God. The record here makes no comment on whether their appeal to Heaven was heard or not. If it were sincere, it must have been heard in Glory; but, the story continues in the fourteenth verse with "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded".

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

REVELATION 12

TO refresh our minds as to the prelude to this interval between the sounding of the seventh trumpet in Revelation 11:15 and the pouring out of the first vial in Chapter 16, let us recall what was said when 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 forever and ever."

This significant statement gives us the key to all that shall follow after the seventh trumpet is blown to the time of the coming of the Lord.

We must remember that the Book of Revelation was "signified" to John (Revelation 1:1) which means that it is highly symbolical. One who has the aid of the Holy Spirit and a knowledge of the use of Bible symbols elsewhere in the Book finds that these dissolve like fog before the rays of the rising sun, and there is disclosed to our enraptured view marvelous truths.

The twelfth chapter of Revelation is a recapitulation of Jewish history and its Messiah. The first verse is, in my opinion, notwithstanding that many have suggested that it is a portrayal of Mary, the mother of Jesus, a description of Israel or the Hebrew race. The second verse describes the Messianic hope under the figure of a mother with child and emphasizes the long period when Israel groaned for a Deliverer who would be its Messiah.

In the third verse John beheld in this pageant of Israelitish history a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon its head. Let us remember, first, that the number, "seven", denotes perfection. Thus, the seven heads would mean complete military or political domination, and the seven crowns denote absolute authority. Again, the heads and crowns and horns have to do with rulers and principalities that have constituted this highly organized and perfectly militarized empire. It is easy for the student

of history to identify this red dragon, not as the Catholic Church which many have it, but as the Roman Empire of which the Catholic Church is only the religious element.

The fourth verse tells us of the terrific destruction of the "stars of Heaven". This means to me the personages who are here described under the symbol of "stars" which have been destroyed or persecuted through the ages.

One wonders how the Roman Empire, which is supposed to have fallen in 476 A. D., can have a part in the last scenes of the earthly pageant before the coming of Christ. The fact is that while the Roman Empire fell, it still contained within its ruins all the germs of power and waited only favorable watering to spring into visible life again. Any unbiased student of history will bear witness to the fact that the eagles of the Roman Empire have never died and are alive today like the fabled bird, the phoenix, which when burned would arise from its ashes. Just so have the Roman eagles startled the world again and again by rising from the ashes of wrecked empires and subdued provinces and have again and again threatened the religious and political power of the world.

Notice the enmity of this red dragon to the child of the woman. This child is the Jewish Messiah, a lineal descendant of the Israelitish race.

The fifth verse of this twelfth chapter of Revelation foretells the mission of Christ in His second advent when He shall fulfill prophecy and rule all nations with a rod of iron. One wonders why Revelation puts an iron rod in the hand of the gentle Christ who held a white lily in His hand and preached the law of no resistance. The fact is that Christ will judge this world, and the seals and trumpets which we have studied and the vials of wrath which we are soon to examine closely have a part in Christ's judgment on a world that would not have His reign over them. After the vials have spread their forces, and the earth has been cleansed from sin, with Satan bound in a "bottomless pit" for a thousand years according to Revelation, then Christ will rule this world in righteousness, which will be as unyielding as an iron sceptre in a monarch's hand, but with characteristic gentleness.

The sixth verse describes the flight of Israel, its exile, and scattering through the nations of the earth.

The seventh verse describes the conflict in the heavens; on the one side is Michael, whom Daniel tells us stands up for the Jews, and on the other side, this red dragon, whom we have identified as the Roman Empire, which is evidently the last of the four great Gentile nations which were shown to Nebuchadnezzar in the image of the Book of Daniel.

The fourteenth verse is significant, and I think it refers to the time of which Jesus spoke in Matthew 24, when He described certain tribulations that will befall the Jews, and He tells them that when this time occurs, they should fly to the mountains. In some way, God is going to provide a hiding place for the hunted and hounded Jews who have been left upon the earth. Even the time is fixed here in this fourteenth verse as "a time, and times, and half a time". Many Bible students interpret this to mean a year, "a time"; two years, "times"; and six months, "a half time". This would come to a total of three and a half years when Israel will have to hide from the face of the red dragon.

What this "flood" means, I am not certain, but evidently in the last days some cataclysm or attack will be launched over the earth against the Jews. There are evidences today of such anti-semitic activities over the earth.

The sixteenth verse declares that the earth helped the woman. Some Bible students think that there will be hiding places in the ground provided miraculously for the hunted Jews at this time.

The seventeenth verse mentions war between the dragon and the Jewish race and declares that the Jews will be made up of a remnant who have kept the commands of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The Fifteenth Talk

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

REVELATION 13

THE thirteenth chapter of Revelation has caused more comment in late years than perhaps any other chapter in the Bible. In this chapter of the marvelous book which we have been studying for some time there is a description of two "beasts". The first one comes out of the sea, the second one out of the earth. The first beast had seven heads and ten horns upon which were ten crowns. The second beast had two horns like a lamb, but he exercised all the power of the first beast and caused all them that dwell in the earth to worship the first beast. Therefore, we are certain that these are two personalities. Evidently, one of them is the person who has been described through the ages by the term, "Antichrist", and the other must be very closely allied to him. Bible students contend that when the term, "sea", is used symbolically in Scripture, it refers to human power, the restlessness of human hopes, and governments. The phrase describing the source of the second beast, "out of the earth", may possibly mean that the second person in this thirteenth chapter will be the reincarnation of some former enemy of Jesus Christ. Some prophetic students go so far as to identify the resurrected spirit as that of Judas Iscariot, whom the Lord called the "son of perdition".

To get this chapter properly before us, let us try to solve some of its mysteries by identifying the first beast, the one with the seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns, as the last head this earth will know during the dispensation of Grace, and the second beast as the Anti-Christ or the ecclesiastical head during the last days. There are many persons well versed in Scriptural interpretation who claim that the first beast, the one with the two horns and like unto a lamb, is the false prophet, but I am persuaded that the first beast is the civil head but not the Anti-Christ, while the second beast is the Anti-Christ and the false prophet in one.

If this supposition be true, and I think it is supported by the

statements in this 13th chapter, it is futile to look to such rulers as Mussolini, Stalin, and Hitler for the person to be identified as the Anti-Christ, but we should rather look for some false religious leader who will fit the picture of this second beast who resembles a lamb and yet speaks as a dragon, but derives his power from the first beast. I think we are safe in concluding that the political powers of this earth (Rev. 13:1), who will wear the name of blasphemy on their crowns, will grant a dictatorship or permit one to assume such a role, and he is to be the civil head or political dictator of practically the entire world when the end of the present age is to come upon this earth.

Verse five describes his speech as blasphemous and limits his time to forty-two months. It is certainly more than a coincidence that the time of his ascendancy corresponds to the time that the hunted Jews in the fourteenth verse of the preceding chapter are refugees in the mountains for forty-two months, or three and a half years.

If you will turn to the seventh chapter of Daniel, you will find that he saw the saints of Heaven strive with the "sea" and that out of the sea came four great beasts. One was like a lion and had eagle's wings; another, a leopard; and the others were dreadful and terrible and exceedingly strong, having iron teeth and ten horns and stamped the others with his feet. In this case, Daniel was given the explanation that the great beasts were four kings which shall arise out of the earth. The implication is that the ten horns of the last beast were the ten kingdoms over which a head ruled. You will notice, also, that the twenty-first verse of the 7th chapter of Daniel describes the little horn that Daniel saw among the ten horns and of which Daniel says,

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them:

"Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

Daniel 7:23 says that this fourth beast, the one with the iron teeth and out of which came the "little horn", will be the fourth kingdom that shall dominate this earth. Any student of history can readily see that the first kingdom was that of Babylon; the second

was Media-Persia; the third, Greece under Alexander; the fourth, the Roman Empire. That enables us to conclude that the "little horn" that Daniel saw among the ten kingdoms will come out of the Roman Empire and is most probably the same person as the beast whom John saw rising out of the sea in the 13th chapter, the one who will make war against the saints. Therefore, in the light of Daniel seven and Revelation thirteen, if we are in the last days, as many believe we are, it will be prophetically interesting to look for the nations which we may identify as the ten horns or ten little kingdoms that have descended from the old Roman World-empire, and, also, to look for some dictator to come out of one of these kingdoms who will prepare the way for the second beast who will persecute the saints and play his part as the false prophet or the Anti-Christ.

It is more than interesting to note that the Roman Empire has never ceased to exist but has persisted through the centuries in one form or another, and that the Roman Eagle has never ceased to be the symbol of Roman power. In Italy today Mussolini is making a heroic gesture towards reestablishing the Roman glory as it was under the great Augustus. In fact, he boasts of such a purpose and has gone far towards accomplishing it. The symbol that he uses to identify the Fascists is the Roman "fasces", which was the bundle of rods and an axe bound together and was carried by officers, "lic-tors", who were the super-police under the Caesars. The Black Eagles of Austria are the same brood of birds that hovered over the Roman standards under the great Julius and Augustus when Roman glory covered the known world. We know that the iron teeth seen by Daniel in the fourth beast of his vision was Roman authority which clamped down upon the bleeding Lamb of God.

Thus, we may be sure from Daniel and from Revelation that there will arise in the last days of human government a super-dictator who will have absolute power and lay this at the feet of a false religious leader for the persecution of the saints of the world.

The world is in a state of collapse; governments have crumbled like so many sand houses; age-old traditions have been thrown to the winds; nations are armed to the teeth and are glaring at each other like so many wild animals while they build armaments that will be used to tear each other to pieces at the slightest indication of hostility. Such a world condition was pictured by the Lord in the

24th chapter of Matthew when He answered the question asked by His disciples concerning the time of the end of this age. Such conditions throughout the planet make dictatorships necessary. I would not say that such a form of powerful government is wrong for the days in which we live, but I would have to be blind to every prophetic indication to deny that the dictatorship idea is fulfillment of prophecy concerning the form of government during the last days.

Now, for the study of the mark of the beast we look into the closing verses of the 13th chapter of Revelation. It is used by the second beast, the Anti-Christ, as an identification before anyone could buy or sell. However, the power to do this together with all his powers was delegated to him by the first beast, the world's political head at the time.

In Soviet Russia one has to have an identification from the Stalin dictatorship before he can even eat. It is practically the same under Mussolini and becoming rapidly so under the other dictators. However, none of these marks are world-wide. My conclusion is that no one of them can be identified as the 666, the mark of the beast in the 12th chapter of Revelation, but that all of them are signboards pointing in the direction of the world-wide domination of the first beast of Revelation and the ecclesiastical domination under the second beast.

There are many opinions as to the actual meaning of the term, "666". Some maintain that it is descriptive of the unholy trinity just as 777 would indicate Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Throughout the Bible, seven is known as the symbol of divinity, while six is the symbol of man, humanity at its best. For instance, the giant brother of Goliath is described in the Old Testament as having six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, and he was looked upon as the maximum man.

The unholy trinity, if such should ever be on this earth, would be made up of Satan, the world political ruler, and the false prophet or the Anti-Christ.

Notice that in the description of this second beast in the 11th verse of the 13th chapter of Revelation he is said to have two horns like a lamb which is clearly an attempted likeness of Christ as the Lamb of God even with humility, but his voice, that of a dragon, betrays his true nature. This person will manifestly leave out any

efficacy of the Cross of Jesus Christ and will laugh to scorn any theory of the Blood atonement. Such a movement will climax in the production of a super-person who will be Anti-Christian, and that is the man in whom the world will see the dreaded fulfillment of the Anti-Christ. It will be this man working in conjunction with a world political dictator who will cause some symbol or mark which Revelation herein indicates as "666" to be placed upon "all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond".

Notice that verse fourteen describes the miracles which this lamb-like beast will work, such as making fire come down from heaven, and will cause the people to make an image to the dictator. He will go further and cause the image of the dictator to speak, and the limit of his authority will be reached when he puts the mark of "666" on all the followers of the dictator.

The Sixteenth Talk

ANOTHER VISION OF CHRIST

REVELATION 14

THE fourteenth chapter of Revelation gives us a view of the Lamb of God and a great company of His saints who have the Father's name written in their foreheads. It must have been a beautiful scene beheld by John in addition to the one hundred and forty-four thousand saints. John was shown a group of harpers who chanted to the accompaniment of these heavenly harps as they sang a new song before the throne.

This group of one hundred and forty-four thousand are described as persons who had never been defiled, and to them was granted the blessed privilege of following the Lamb of God, that is, the Lord, wherever He went. It is said of them here in the fifth verse that they were without fault before the throne of God. What a glorious company!

Verse six discloses another angel flying in the midst of heaven preaching what is called the "everlasting gospel" to them on the earth. Notice what the theme is, "Fear God and give glory to Him". It may be that this is the gospel call at this time, and that the persons who accept this call are ushered soon into the heavenly Presence, free from all temptation and persecution.

Then, we are told that another angel announced the fall of Babylon. We don't know whether or not this is a preview of the destruction of Babylon in Chapter 18, or whether the determination of God to bring the race of Babylon to an end had become known in heaven. The angelic hosts know the will of God, doubtless, far in advance of its being carried out on this planet. Another angel followed, announcing the punishment for those who receive the mark of the beast in their foreheads. The horrible punishment was that they were made to drink of the wine of the wrath of God. This is a horrible thought and is, doubtless, the most terrifying sentence in the entire Bible. We are told that concerning this group who drink of the wine of the wrath of God that the smoke of their torment will ascend forever and ever, and they shall have no rest day or night.

It is impossible for one to draw any conclusions from such a passage that there will be a complete annihilation of the personalities of such as these. The text is too clear in its meaning, and the punishment is manifestly eternal.

The scene shifts, and John was allowed to view the sainted dead who died in the Lord, and he told of their patience as they wait through the unfolding centuries for the vindication of their testimony and their faith in God.

Then, comes the unfolding of a pageant which, doubtless, was described as the punishment of wickedness on this earth. An angel comes out of the temple in heaven crying to One who sits upon a cloud. "Thrust in thy sickle and reap for the harvest of the world is ripe". A second angel came out of the temple having a sharp sickle, evidently to assist in the reaping. Then, an angel appears, having "power over fire" and urges the angels with the sickles to thrust in and gather the clusters of the vines of the earth. Following out the figure of a vineyard and wine-press, we are told that "the wine-press was trodden without the city and the blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs".

The explanation of this is to be found, evidently, in a series of catastrophes which will lead up to a climaxing event, evidently, the Battle of Armageddon, when blood will flow down the valley of Jehosaphat scores and scores of miles. We are led to believe that this is the culmination of God's judgment upon the world-wide plans of conquests and subjugation, which will culminate in one devastating conflict, pictured here under the figure of a winepress. God pictures avenging Justice, treading upon a rebellious humanity as the winepress worker would walk over clusters of grapes, but instead of juice running from the grapes, the picture tells us it will be blood. The inference is this: God has offered the Blood of Christ to cleanse a rebellious race, but when it persists in repudiating God's sacrificial Blood of Calvary, God will let the winepress of retribution take its toll of human blood in the most terrible struggle this planet will ever know.

The Seventeenth Talk

THE SEVEN VIALS

REVELATIONS 15 and 16

THE opening verse of this fifteenth chapter is enough to freeze one's blood. Listen to it:

"Seven angels having the seven last plagues: for in them is filled up the wrath of God".

These are the seven vials that begin to be poured out in the next chapter. Whatever these "vials" or "bowls" mean, we can be sure that they indicate the consummation of God's punishment of sin on this planet. Let your mind linger for a moment on this sentence in the first verse, "for in them is filled up the wrath of God".

Sin has a long and damnable history on this earth. Every tear, every heart-ache, every insult to the Blood, every sneer in the face of God will all be dealt with by the contents of these seven angels. Every audacious monarch, every Godless assembly, every racketeering plunderer, all these will receive his full measure from these seven vials. What a fool a man is to face the wrath of God without the covering of the ceremonial Blood as offered by Jesus Christ on Calvary!

The second verse of this fifteenth chapter shows us the greatest contrast possible, "a sea of glass". What a picture of placid, calm, and undisturbed peace! There is much divergence of opinion as to what the phrase, "mingled with fire", means here. However, the following part of the picture which shows us the saints who had obtained victory over the beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name, standing on the "sea of glass" with the harps of God in their hands, all this leads us to believe that the fire certainly contains no suggestion of punishment or trial, but rather is a symbol of their victory through the fiery tests of the days of tribulation when the beast and the false prophet were sorely trying the Children of Israel.

Next, we notice that in the fourth verse John, whose mind had been moving at high altitude through the preceding fourteenth chapter, burst into an exclamation of warning in the words:

"Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?"

As we read the warnings of this fifteenth chapter in the disclosure of those mysterious and terrifying vials followed by a placid sea of glass on which victorious souls are praising God with golden harps, we find ourselves wishing that we had the ear of humanity into which we might cry today the warning of John!

Notice that the seven angels came out of a temple called "The Tabernacle of Testimony" in heaven. There is no way of knowing all that is in that beautiful temple nor the testimony that lies there awaiting the day when those who paid the price of suffering, that followed full surrender, are vindicated and honored.

But, let us keep in mind that the seven angels bearing the seven vials and wearing immaculate white linen and bound with golden girdles, came out of this holy place to pour the vials of God's wrath upon this planet. All judgment begins with God and is the twin-sister of righteousness. Wherever we find somebody in any age taking a stand for God and paying the price of a full surrender, we don't have to wait long to find the avenging angels pouring out punishment upon those who persecute such a saint.

It was one of the four living creatures who stood before God's throne who handed the vials to these seven angels. Notice that the golden girdles here, in keeping with the general meaning throughout the Bible, indicate that these seven vial-bearers had divine power or were in some way associated with the Divinity which is always the case where gold is placed symbolically on a person.

Before we leave this fifteenth chapter, let us notice that this mysterious temple of Testimony was filled with the Glory of God, but was closed during the period of time set apart for the pouring out of the contents of these vials! In other words, Holiness and Righteousness stood still and were breathless while God balanced accounts with a Godless world.

We now come into the sixteenth chapter of Revelation. We are going to study a chapter that begins the portrayal of the climax of earthly splendor, for in it we see the nations joined in the Battle of Armageddon. This will be the ash-can of civilization! It is horrible to realize that all the ambition, both personal and national, all the scheming and plundering by Godless monarchs, all the grandeur and glory of human pride will come to an end on the plain of

Megiddo, the valley of Jehosaphat, or, as we knew it, Armageddon.

One vial is emptied upon the earth causing a "noisome and grievous sore upon the men which have the mark of the beast". That word, "noisome", is most peculiar. It suggests that nauseating idea that these sores are abscesses audibly bubbling with inflammation and pus.

The second vial caused a horrible decomposition within the sea, so that "it became as the blood of a dead man". What a horrible thought, a sea of decomposing blood! The scientific aspect of this horrible sentence is that the atoms that composed the sea were untied, and decomposition set in. Every bit of living tissue within the bosom of the deep began to decompose, and not one living organism was left in the waters of the sea!

The third plague fell upon the rivers and fountains of water, and they literally became blood. Notice the difference between the third plague and the second. The second plague caused the waters of the sea to become as the blood of a dead man while that of the third plague turned fresh water into blood. Notice that the fifth verse records the cry of the avenging angel of the third plague as he praises God for the just judgment upon the waters, saying that this is the recompense to this earth which has slain the spiritual leaders of all time, and now the reprobate residue left on the earth is literally made to drink blood. Note that the echo that came from the altar in heaven was in keeping with the cry of the avenging angel:

"Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."

Notice that one by one the common-place blessings of the earth and the heavenly bodies that surrounded it are being erased as the plagues are poured out.

Now, the fourth angel poured his vial upon the sun, and it burst into unprecedented heat, and the horrified inhabitants were left on this earth sizzling in this temperature and blaspheming the name of God.

The fifth angel poured his vial upon the capital city of the beast or Anti-Christ, and, as the world was filled with darkness, terrified human beings gnawed their tongues for pain. Again, fiendish folly of blasphemy was hurled from the God-hating people that had been left on the earth, hurled into the face of God!

Here is a significant incident in these closing scenes. The river Euphrates is singled out, and the sixth plague is made to dry it up "that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared". Just what this means nobody knows exactly, but certain Scriptural prophecies indicate that just before the end of the dispensation in which we are living ends, there will be a great rebuilding of Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates, and the valley will be restored to its ancient fertility and dense population. It may also mean that across this desolate valley will come the federated kings from the East to join in the world-wide efforts that will end at the Battle of Armageddon. Notice that the thirteenth verse describes the war-like propaganda that will go out from the dragon which is Satan, and the beast which is the Anti-Christ, and the false prophet who will be the head of the false religions. This will be the real cause of the Battle of Armageddon. We see here the spirit of war propaganda portrayed under the symbol of frogs which the thirteenth chapter calls "unclean", and which the fourteenth chapter says are the "spirits of devils" to stir the kings of the earth and the whole world together to the colossal and disastrous battle which will end the present civilization. Notice that between the sixth and the seventh plagues in the fifteenth verse is uttered a last minute warning that the second coming of Christ will come as a thief and pronounce a benediction on every one who is watching and keeping his garments of righteousness. This passage indicates that between the sixth and seventh pourings of the vials there is still hope for persons to participate in the blessedness that will attend the second coming of Christ.

We may be sure that the Battle of Armageddon will be between two forces: one which is terribly out-numbered and hopelessly pressed back on the Temple of God in Jerusalem; and another force of innumerable soldiery and unlimited war equipment. The latter will be the forces of the Anti-Christ which are to be defeated; the other, the thin blood-line who has been left as the last vestige of God's followers on a renegade world.

When the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, there was an announcement made from heaven, brief and terrific, "It is done". Then follows the description of voices, thunders, lightnings, and an earthquake, "such as was not since men were upon the earth".

The results of this earthquake upon the city, which is evidently Jerusalem, is that it will be divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations will fall. Babylon, which evidently will be rebuilt, received at this time "the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath". Notice, also, that the surface of the earth was changed by this earthquake, so that every island vanished, and the mountains went back to the level which many Bible students believe they had been at some former time in this earth's history. Psalm 90 tells us that there was a time before the mountains were brought forth upon the earth.

The last account in this chapter was the falling of hail out of heaven with every stone weighing a talent, which is about two-hundred pounds. The last sound that we hear in this sixteenth chapter of Revelation is the pandemonium over the earth filled with blasphemy against God.

The Eighteenth Talk

THE FALL OF BABYLON

REVELATION 17 and 18

THE seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelation present the judgment of Babylon. To truly understand these two chapters, one will, of necessity, have to know the Biblical meaning of Babylon. Do not take the Babylon here to mean simply the old city on the bank of the Euphrates River in this connection, for it means vastly more. To me, the term Babylon here includes the origin of the city, the iniquitous stream of idolatry which poured forth from it, its religious and political authority, not only of ancient Babylon, but its stream of influence down the centuries.

Babylon was the first city founded on earth. In it was practiced the first idolatry, the first war for conquest, and it soon came to be known in antiquity as the crown of political power and religious authority. Its ships soon were sailing all waters carrying its unspeakable religious practices and anti-God system of paganism. In early Babylon we find that a certain queen, to hide her shame, claimed divine parentry for her child and had her son made a god, and this worship of such a god was the heart of Babylonian religion which was scattered by her wide-sailing vessels across the earth. No wonder she is called the "mother of harlots"!

We have only to recall Daniel's prophecy about the metal image in the Book of Daniel to understand that Babylon and its king, Nebuchadnezzar, constituted the fountain head of the empire which devastated the earth in the order given to Nebuchadnezzar and revealed by Daniel, Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. God expressly had Daniel to say to this great Babylonian king, "Thou art this head of gold". Do you wonder that these chapters in Revelation called Babylon "the mother of harlots" and outline vividly her description?

Some of the early history of Babylon will be of interest to every Bible student. It was in the sixth generation from Noah, about three hundred years after the flood, that the great dispersion, or scattering of people, occurred. The Bible tells us this was in the days of the

patriarch, Peleg. However, in two generations earlier than Peleg, we already read of the city and kingdom with which the history of Daniel connects, and the culmination of which was represented by Nebuchadnezzar. This is Babylon. There is no older known city, no older known kingdom than Babylon. In the tenth chapter of Genesis we learn that Cush, the son of Ham, begat Nimrod, and that Nimrod "began to be a mighty one in the earth", and that Nimrod "was a mighty hunter before the Lord", whose prowess became proverbial in all aftertime, and that "the beginning of his kingdom was Babel (Babylon), and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar". Many of the prehistoric mounds and ruins of ancient Babylon were named after this mighty hunter, Nimrod, founder of Babylon, and, later, Babylonians made of him a god. The ancient Chaldeans placed him in the heavens as the constellation of Orion. His name has been, through all the centuries from the time of his life until today in the same region, the symbol for the highest expression of human greatness, "Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord".

From Nimrod as a type of human greatness in Babylon, let us pass to Nebuchadnezzar, whom Daniel said was the golden head of the metal image. He adorned and exalted Babylon with magnificence befitting the metropolis of the world's greatest empire. The walls which he built around Babylon contained more solid masonry than the entire Chinese wall and inclosed one hundred and thirty square miles. Through this wall were one hundred passageways with gates of solid brass. Nebuchadnezzar built two palaces which were veritable wildernesses of architectural magnificence and artistic adornment. He erected the famous hanging gardens of Babylon to please a wife whom he had brought from the wooded hills. The remains of these hanging gardens exist today but as mere piles of rubbish, some one hundred and forty feet high. He built a great reservoir that was one hundred and thirty-eight miles in circumference and one hundred and twenty feet deep into which he drained the Euphrates River to retain its waters. Nebuchadnezzar lined the Persian Gulf with great break-waters. He built a net work of navigable canals, one of which remains today and is known as the "King's River". He walled up the sides of the Euphrates all the way to the sea, and some of these retaining walls are visible today. The city was laid out in blocks

that were about three-fifths of a mile on each side, and all the streets were broad and crossed at right angles. A sub-way was built under the Euphrates River, rivaling that which now connects Brooklyn and New York under the Hudson. Such is the history of some of the magnificence and marvelous works of Nebuchadnezzar.

The seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelation write "Finis" to the age-long conquest and triumph of Babylon. The city itself was destroyed. God wrote the epitaph of ancient Babylon on the walls of Belshazzar's Palace in the cryptic sentence, "Mene, mene, tekel, Upharsin". The sacred record tells us in Daniel 5:30 that that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain.

"The shroud, his robe of state;
His canopy, the stone;
The Mede was at his gate!
The Persian on his throne."

Chapters seventeen and eighteen mark the close of the iniquity of Babylon which continued from the fall of the ancient city across every century to our own day and will go on to the end of the present dispensation. Truly, the second verse of Revelation seventeen delivers a fearful indictment against the influence of Babylon on human history, "with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication". "Fornication" here is deeper than the usual meaning. In this connection the word means the mixing of lust for power and unspeakable idolatry with the so-called worship of God. Notice that the seventeenth chapter discloses to us a scarlet woman decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls, and having in her hand a gold cup. However, the contents of that cup was the abomination and filthiness of her fornication. This fourth verse of the seventeenth chapter describes the double damnation of Babylon, the political power provided in the first beast in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, and the woman who represents the godless religion of all time.

The eighth verse of the seventeenth chapter fixes the origin of the beast in the bottomless pit and his ultimate departure into perdition.

Some Bible students claim that the ninth verse, where seven mountains are mentioned, refers to the Roman Catholic Church which was founded in and propagated from Rome, the city which is built upon seven hills. However, I have never been able to narrow the interpretation to any single church, but I prefer to believe that religious Babylon will include all false religions of all time.

We are told in the twelfth verse that ten kings and ten kingdoms will suffer in this persecution of the judgment upon Babylon. This leads us to conclude that the last empire will be made up of ten federated kingdoms, but notice that their power is short-lived, one little hour of prophetic time.

Verse thirteen describes the closing order of the organization of these ten kingdoms, for it says that "they have one mind and give their power and strength unto the beast". They had one hatred, and that was war against Jesus Christ, who is called in the fourteenth verse, the "Lamb". Thank God, we are told, also, in this verse that the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful!

The Nineteenth Talk

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

REVELATION 19

ONE wonders upon reading the Book of Daniel why the vision which came to Nebuchadnezzar in the night watches was repeated in a succeeding chapter to Daniel alone. Upon reflection, one quickly discerns the reason for the repetition of the vision. Nebuchadnezzar's dream was of a metal image with a golden head, silver shoulders and breast, brass abdomen, iron legs, and clay and iron feet. This was a vision of the great Gentile empires that have filled the pages of history since the date of Nebuchadnezzar's vision, six hundred and six years before Christ. Daniel had a vision of four beasts: the first, a lion; the second, a bear; the third, a leopard; and the fourth, an indescribable beast with iron teeth and brass claws. Even a superficial comparison reveals that they are the same world empires. In the first vision, gold, the most precious metal, is symbolical of the Babylonian empire; in the second vision, a lion, the king of beasts, for the same monarchy. The second empire in the first vision, that of the Medes and Persians, was described by silver, the next most precious metal; in Daniel's personal vision, this same empire is symbolized by a bear, the second beast of the jungle. The third, which was Greece, in Nebuchadnezzar's vision was described with brass; in Daniel's vision, by the third beast in ferocity, a leopard. The fourth empire pictured in the metal image was one with a characteristic of iron, tapering down to where it mixed with weakness under figure of clay. Now, we can see the reason for the giving of the second vision. That which Nebuchadnezzar dreamed was the world's estimate of imperial power, being symbolized by precious metals; in Daniel's dream we see what heaven thinks of world-wide monarchy, describing them as ferocious beast.

In the eighteenth chapter of Revelation, we see the world view of the destruction of Babylon, politically and religiously. In the nineteenth chapter, we get heaven's view of the same catastrophe. In the first verse of the nineteenth chapter there is a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, "Alleluia", and rejoicing over the judgment of the wickedness of this earth under the symbol of the

first city, the home of paganism and the spring from which all physical conquest flowed.

At the sound of the second "Alleluia", the four and twenty elders and the four and twenty creatures fell down and worshiped God, saying, "Amen, Alleluia", that is, affirming as righteous and just God's terrific judgment on a world that had worshiped the purple and the big stick. A third voice is heard coming out of the throne, saying, "Praise our God". The fourth group of voices was of a great multitude and sounded like unto the voice of many waters and of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth".

After this four-fold cry of praise and exaltation for the destruction of organized wickedness on this earth, the announcement is made that the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His bride has made herself ready. This is a description of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the world, and the church, made up of born again believers who had been made ready by the Holy Spirit for the entrance into the immediate presence and glory of God.

Verse eight tells us that the bridal party, the born-again believers, is to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, and explains that the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.

In the tenth verse John tells us of a peculiar experience he had at this point. He says that when he heard these "Alleluias" and glimpsed the church in white linen, he fell at the feet of this unknown announcer and proceeded to worship him. The heavenly herald said,

"See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

What happened here is simply this: some person who had been on this earth, for he calls himself a fellow servant, was so transformed by either the resurrection or the change that took place when he was taken up to meet the Lord, that John mistook him for God. It is easy for me to imagine that if one of us met Mary Magdalene on the streets of gold, she would be so beautiful, so divine-appearing that we would fall to worship her as one of the Triune Godhead. So indescribable will be the transformation for any person on

this earth who is prepared by the Holy Spirit for entrance into the Glory World.

Now, we come to what I think is the description of the Second Coming of Christ. That is verses eleven through twenty-one of this nineteenth chapter of Revelation. Notice that He comes here upon a white horse, symbolical of peace and purity and bears the name of "Faithful and True", and the announcement is made that He will judge and make war in righteousness.

We see Him, first, as a flame of fire, and on His Head many crowns, but, notice that the thirteenth verse tells us that His clothing looked as if it had been dipped in blood, and another name is heard, "The word of God". Here, we see Him in His suffering on Calvary. What a picture, flaming eyes, many crowns, and yet covered with blood! This is a balanced picture of Christ as Priest and King.

Verse fourteen tells us that for a body-guard all the armies of heaven attended Him, and they, too, were upon white horses and clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Verse fifteen describes Him as a judge from whose mouth there flashed a sharp sword with which He smote the nations and will rule them with a rod of iron. This, evidently, is descriptive of His judgment of the Anti-Christ and His dealing with the nations engaged in the last battle, that of Armageddon. Notice that "He treadeth the winepress of fierceness and wrath of Almighty God". Flashing from His vesture and on His thigh are the words, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords".

Verses seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen describe His judgment of the consequences at the Battle of Armageddon. Verse nineteen described the coalition against God which will really launch the Battle of Armageddon.

Verse twenty announces the capture of the beast who is the head of political Babylon, of the last great dictator, and with him the false prophet who, in my judgment, will be the head of the religious Babylon, and certainly one of these is the Anti-Christ. Their doom is announced in the words, "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone". It is well to note here that Satan is not dealt with in the same way, but we find that at the end of the Millennium, which will be a thousand years after this sentence of the beast and the false prophet, Satan is cast into a lake of fire and

brimstone in the next chapter, the twentieth of Revelation. Here, the startling statement is made that through the millennium, which will last for a thousand years, the beast and the false prophet will remain in the lake of fire and brimstone but not be consumed.

The Twentieth Talk

SOME CLOSING EVENTS OF THIS AGE

REVELATION 20

THE twentieth chapter of Revelation is interesting for several reasons. It tells us of the binding of Satan; the first resurrection; the subsequent release of Satan; the battle that will follow the Millennium; the casting of Satan into the lake of fire and brimstone; the White Throne judgment. This chapter is interesting in that it marks the close of the present world program, for the next chapter describes a new heaven and a new earth.

Let us take up some of these great events in detail. The first event is the binding of Satan. Notice that an angel came down from heaven, "having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand". Just what that chain means one could hardly say with certainty, but it evidently means that just as a great chain would bind human beings secure, so will some binding force be used to make Satan powerless. This key to the bottomless pit reveals to us that this angelic officer has the power to open some abysmal depth, doubtless, in outer space and confine Satan there for a thousand years.

The term, "one thousand years", is used five times in this chapter, and from it we get the word, "millennium", which is from the Greek word, "mille", meaning one thousand. So, the term, "millennium", is used here a number of times: once to describe in the second verse the duration of the first imprisonment of the Devil; next, in the fourth verse to describe the time the saints live and reign with Christ; also, in the fifth verse it is used to describe the length of the time between the two resurrections; in the sixth verse, to describe the duration of the reign of Christ; and the last, in the seventh verse the term fixes the time of the imprisonment of Satan in the bottomless pit. It is the same thousand years in every time it is used, but the different usages are merely to show what is going on in different places, and what numerous personages are suffering during the time.

One would not be far wrong to call the twentieth chapter the "thousand year chapter."

It is natural to expect Satan to be bound and, therefore, powerless before a millennium of world wide peace and righteousness can ever be enjoyed on this earth. How could this world have rest as long as the enemy of peace is loose? This is the fallacy in the belief that the world will become better and better and that Satan will be conquered more and more until, finally, he will quit his post, and this world will enjoy a thousand years of the reign of the Prince of Peace. In other words this is the belief that humanity can make ready the world for the reign of God without divine help other than that which we have on earth today. The tragedy about this position is that civilization, as we know it, has failed, and this planet seems to be madly plunging into the midst of a world war in spite of peace conferences and all that the churches can do. The truth of the business is that the world has backed the church into a corner and is saying to it, "Do it or die!" My opinion is that the church will do its best against great odds until the Lord, personally, takes charge on this earth after the binding of Satan by divine power, such as is described in the opening verses of this twentieth chapter of Revelation.

Notice in verse three that Satan is not only cast into the bottomless pit but is shut up and sealed. This is to emphasize the fact that there will be no thought of his release, and the unbroken seal will bare witness of God's purpose to restrain Satan for this millennial period.

We are shocked upon first noticing that after Satan is shut up and sealed in the bottomless pit, verse three reminds us, "that he must be released a little season". The reason for this is manifest. Just as a magnet attracts a piece of steel, so will Satan attract his own. When he is released, at the end of the millennium, he will begin his old tactics of raising an army to combat the forces of righteousness. Keep in mind that this is after the millennium. Some Bible students go so far as to say that even the millennium will not be a complete success, because Satan will be loosed and will lead his forces of evil to another battle after this world has enjoyed the millennial reign under Jesus Christ! How can anyone dare to hope that any man with his puny implements of war and his smoking torch of

civilization can bring in the millennium when even the Son of God, reigning in millennial glory will have to do some "mopping up" after the thousand years of peace.

Verse four describes the reign of Christ and the saints during the millennium. This verse is a shining star of hope to everyone who has suffered martyrdom or persecutions for the blessed name of Jesus. There are two conclusions which one may draw from the fourth and fifth verses of the twentieth chapter of Revelation, and you may choose which one is tenable: first, some Bible students think that the fourth verse of this chapter in describing the first resurrection leads us to believe that only the martyred saints will leave the graves at the first blast of the resurrection trumpet, and that the rest of the dead, both saved and unsaved, but who were not classed as martyrs, will be left in the dust of the earth.

The second theory is, and it is the one that I hold, that verse four here describes the resurrection of all the saved, regardless of whether they suffered martyrdom or not, and I draw that conclusion from the sixth verse of this twentieth chapter of Revelation which says:

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

This leads me to believe that all the persons who will not be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is referred as the second death, will be taken out of the dust of the earth at the first resurrection. This is dealing with bodies, because the souls of the saints have been with the Lord since their death. Verses seven, eight, and nine describe the rebellion of Satan immediately upon his release from the bottomless pit. We are told that he will deceive the nations in the four quarters of the earth, and the names, "Gog" and "Magog", are used in this connection as Satan gathers him own to battle. The number of this satanic force is compared to the sands of the sea. Bible students declare that Gog is the princes of Russia who will be ruling at that time, and Magog is his land. Notice, their plan of battle will be to surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city, which is evidently Jerusalem. This will, evidently, be the last struggle this world will ever see, but, remember, it is not the battle of Armageddon, for that will have occurred one thousand

years before this. This is the titanic struggle of Satan and his followers among the sons of men in a last effort to make a stand upon this earth. The tenth verse describes the culmination of this combat in these words, "And fire came down from God out of heaven". The verse describes the ultimate end of Satan as he is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. A remarkable fact is disclosed in this verse, at the opening of the lake of fire the beast and the false prophet are still there. Yet, they were placed there before the millennium, Rev. 19:20. One cannot take the position that the lake of fire and brimstone is for the destruction or extinction of the souls and bodies of men or devils, for if the beast and the false prophet can last through the thousand years of it, they could last through many such millenniums of torment. But, the Scripture here is plain as it places this sentence of doom above the beast and false prophet as well as Satan when it announces that they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The eleventh verse allows us to see the satanic host recede to make room for the great White Throne Judgment. John, then, tells us that, "He saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened". There were two kinds of books opened, one containing the things written therein, evidently, a record of the lives of those to be judged, but another book, "The Book of Life", contained only a list of names. We are told that "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works". Whoever had his name written in the Book of Life seemed to escape this judgment, but whoever did not have this security was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

It looks to me as if this is the supreme court of the universe. Here the Justice of God is vindicated as He gives every lost soul, and perhaps devils, a chance once and forever to state his case again. Then, the Book of Life is searched to see if such a name was written therein; where it was not found, regardless of the deeds that may have been recorded during the life of such a person, they were cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death. This is in keeping with the words of Jesus when He described the time when many would come and offer their claim for salvation on the basis of having done many wonderful works in His name, but He says He will reply, "I never knew thee". This chapter certainly

teaches that, "By grace are ye saved through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God".

Another interesting disclosure here is that death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them. The term, "hell", is one of the most misunderstood words in the Bible. There are three words which are translated "hell" in the Holy Book; one word in the Old Testament and two in the New Testament. The old Hebrew word for hell which we find only in the Old Testament is "sheol". This means the entire region on the other side of the grave. It may refer simply to the realm of the dead without any reference to whether they are happy or miserable, or it may refer to a place of punishment. Then, again, it may be used to describe the condition of one who was once saved but has passed into this unknown place. In one case it manifestly refers to Jesus in the Psalm when He says to the Heavenly Father, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (Sheol). We are sure that even if David meant this to refer to himself, and certainly if it referred to the Lord, it cannot refer to a place only for the wicked.

When we come to the New Testament, we find the word most frequently used is "hades". Another word used by the Lord to describe what we call "hell" is "Gehena". Let us take the word, "Hades", first. In Luke sixteen, we find the picture of Dives and Lazarus. In the twenty-third verse it says in speaking of Dives, "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom". Here, the word translated, "hell", is "hades", but Abraham, Lazarus, and Dives are all in the same picture. However, the first two are in the upper part, separated from the place where Dives was in torment by a great gulf. Therefore, we are lead to conclude that hades means something like the old word, "Sheol", in the Old Testament, viz: the abode of both the saved and the unsaved. But, something has happened since Jesus ascended from Olivet, and it is the confident opinion of many Bible students that the upper part of hades was emptied, and that Abraham, Lazarus, and all the saints of the Old Testament have been taken into immediate presence of God, but that Dives, and all who were lost before Calvary and those who have died without Christ since are in the same condition awaiting this great White Throne Judgment. Now, we are prepared to understand what Revelation twenty, verse

thirteen means when it says, "hell delivered up the dead which were in it". We are lead to believe that this refers to the emptying of the last bodies who had been claimed by death and hell in its icy realm until this great day, for the next verse adds that "death and hell were cast into the lake of fire and brimstone". This means that an end was made of death, and hades was emptied.

The Twenty-first Talk

**A NEW HEAVEN AND
A NEW EARTH**

REVELATION 21 and 22

IT is significant that the new heaven and the new earth are not mentioned until after Satan has not only been chained or restrained in the bottomless pit but has also been placed with the false prophet and the Anti-Christ in what this book calls a "lake of fire and brimstone". Heaven will not be possessed in its fullness, neither will the new earth be freed from heart-break and sin until Satan has been eliminated from the problem of existence. The record here is careful to keep us from thinking that these evil personalities were destroyed and will, therefore, be conscious in this lake of fire and brimstone. Of this we may be certain, they will be so restrained and restricted that they cannot even influence redeemed humanity again.

John begins the twenty-first chapter by telling us that he saw a "new heaven and a new earth". We can visualize in our imagination a new earth where sin no longer exists, where there are no wrecked homes or broken hearts, but it is difficult for the human mind to think of a new heaven. Just what that means, we shall never know in this world. It may be that there will be changes in the celestial realm after Satan, whom the Bible tells us was once an archangel, has been forever taken out of the cosmic program. The next makes us certain of this: that man dwells with God, and that the redeemed are His people, and that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and that there will be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

Verse five makes the beautiful announcement that all things are made new. Time will cease to write its record on the bodies of those whom we love. Eternal youth will start its reign and will never grow old.

Verse six announces that one of the blessed benefactions of God will be to slack the thirst for deathless life in the soul of each

redeemed person by allowing them to drink freely of the water of life.

Verse seven takes us nearer to the heart of God in the announcement from the lips of Jehovah that we will be the children of God.

Verse eight announces the doom of those who are not saved. Words break down under this description, and the human mind is left bereft at the horrible description of the second death.

We are then given a view of the Bridal party which is composed of the redeemed of all ages who are called the Lamb's wife.

The heavenly city is then described, and we are given the most minute descriptions. One is struck with the incomprehensible mass of precious stones that compose the wall of the heavenly Jerusalem. Bible students have computed these dimensions to mean that this city will be twelve hundred miles wide, twelve hundred miles long, and twelve hundred miles high. The human mind fails to grasp such tremendous dimensions, but the suggestion of the whole picture is the room for God's people in the heavenly city.

Verse twenty-two tells us that there was no temple in this particular part of heaven, and, yet, in another place in Revelation, the temple of God in heaven is described. The impression that one gets from this is the vastness of the new heaven which must contain an unmeasurable field of glory, far beyond the sight of John at one time and in the field of his vision at another.

Perhaps, the most beautiful suggestion in this twenty-first chapter is the street of gold. Notice that it is singular, only one street so that there will be no partiality; all the saints of God will have front footage on the heavenly boulevard!

Then, we are told that the saved of the earth shall walk in the light of God on the golden street. What a privilege! Doubtless, here is where we shall have the sweetest fellowship as we promenade in the city surrounded by jewelled walls, walking in the light of God's immediate presence.

The twenty-seventh verse startles us with the statement that "there shall in no wise enter into it", that is, into the city, "anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life".

"Lord, I care not for riches
Neither silver or gold;
I would make sure of heaven,
I would enter the fold.
In the Book of Thy Kingdom
With its pages so fair,
Tell me, Jesus my Saviour,
Is my name written there?"

Now, we come to the marvelous twenty-second chapter which closes the book of Revelation. Remember that in the last chapter we were privileged to view a new earth and a new heaven and, also, a new relation of God with His people. Then, we are told of a new Jerusalem. Now, we come to view a new paradise. God tried to give paradise to this planet back in Eden, but sin wrecked the first one. Now, God has placed all the privileges and blessings of the Edenic home in heaven and bids us come and enjoy it.

The tree of life vanished when angels with flashing swords expelled our first parents from the garden of bliss. Here the tree of life is found again blooming on each side of the river that proceeds out of the throne of God. It is significant that the tree of life vanishes in the third chapter of Genesis and does not reappear until the last chapter in the Bible, the twenty-second chapter of Revelation. In all the books between, we see humanity searching for life and thirsting for God, only to see them disappointed in the hope that they had through the sacrificial blood of a paschal lamb.

Notice in the twenty-second chapter that every curse is banished from the universe. Christ has won at last! One day, it seemed that the Roman Empire and the hard-hearted Sanhedrin were victorious, and the Christ on the cross was the victim. Once, it seemed that the Cross of Jesus Christ was the stupendous failure of all, but in the twenty-second chapter of Revelation we find that Christ is victorious throughout the universe, and the last enemy has been destroyed. The Christian hope has been realized; the Blood of Christ has finished its redemptive work; the Bridal party of the Lamb has been completed, and eternal bliss sets in. Satan is sealed in the lake of fire and brimstone together with the devastating, world-

wrecking Anti-Christ and his tool, the false prophet, who headed and symbolized the false religions of the ages.

Notice in the third verse of this closing chapter that it tells us "His servants shall serve Him". Thank God for this glorious statement from the throne of God! Here, our service is so imperfect and so feeble, but, then, we can serve so that the smile of God will guarantee us perfection and give us heaven's richest reward. Then, we shall sing the song that has been in our heart always, but which the world has never heard. Then, the minister can tell the story of redemption as his stammering tongue has always wanted to declare it. Humanity can praise God even as the seraphim and the white robed elders have praised him since morning stars have sung together and the sons of God shouted for joy.

We are startled by an incident reported by John. He says he fell down before one whom he thought was divine, only to discover that it was a fellow-servant, some sinner saved by Grace and redeemed by the Blood, grown beautiful in the environment of the heavenly home. What a compliment on the efficacy of God's redemptive plan! This leads us to believe that the vilest sinner that ever crawled upon the surface of this earth, washed in the Blood of Jesus Christ and made new by the Holy Spirit will be so filled with the glory of God and changed by the heavenly environment that a visitor could not tell him from one of the divine persons of the Godhead. What a change the Blood of Christ can make in a human heart!

Verse ten reminds us that the contents of this book have been dealing with that which is yet to come, for the announcement is made that this book must not be sealed "for the time is at hand". Then, this sentence is left ringing over all the intelligence of the universe, that there will come a time when the Bridal party of the Lamb of God has been finished, and then he who is unjust or unsaved will be forever unsaved while the years of eternity roll. But, thank God, he that is righteous will be righteous while the great pendulum of eternity beats out the centuries. With Satan safe in the lake of fire and brimstone there will be no more physical powers to be exercised by any political leaders and no more false religions by any false prophets. The redeemed are redeemed until the ghost of eternity announces that God has ceased to be. Such a

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thought is so preposterous that it guarantees the eternal bliss of the redeemed when the Blood has manifested its justification power, and the new heaven and the new earth begin their reign of the endless bliss.

Verse twelve reminds us that Jesus is coming again, that He is coming quickly, and He will bring His reward with Him when He comes. Then, there is recorded a warning, lest anyone tamper with the contents of this sacred volume; a penalty is pronounced upon all who dare to do so.

In verse seventeen, so near to the close of this wonderful book, we hear the golden notes of wedding bells as God sounds His last call. Nothing is more beautiful in all Scripture than the Divine invitation here expressed in these words:

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come, and he that heareth, let him say, Come, and he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely."

How sweet and tender is the trembling prayer of the Apostle John as he closes the book and the volume that we call the Bible, with these appealing, heart-searching, soul-stirring words, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus".

God seems to lay His great tender hands upon the heart of humanity in the last heart-throb of this marvelous book, the Bible, "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all, Amen."

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