

PROPHECY CLASSICS

THE BOOK OF REVELATION



PART ONE

A. J. FERRIS



Seal not the sayings of the
prophecy of this book: for
the time is at hand." Rev. xxii: 10.

PART I.

A simple explanation of Chapters I. to XI.
which foretell the History of the Christian
Church from 96 A.D. to the Second Advent.

—BY—

A. J. FERRIS, B.A., Diploma of Education
(University of New Zealand)

88 Pages, 20 Illustrations.

1/6

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

The evangelical churches hold either of two views of Revelation:—(1) That its prophecies from **Rev. 4** onwards still await fulfilment—and so this is called the “*futurist*” interpretation. Or, (2) that Revelation has been progressively fulfilled in the history of Europe, Pagan and Papal, whence it is known as the “*historical*” interpretation. The “*futurist*” view was put forward by the Jesuit Ribera in 1585 in an endeavour to draw attention away from the “*historical*” interpretation which caused the Reformation by identifying the Papacy as the anti-christ and the Church of Rome as the “*Babylon*” of Revelation. The “*futurist*” suggestion was not accepted by the Protestant churches until it was seized by the Plymouth Brethren from 1830 onwards and propagated widely throughout the evangelical churches. The “*historical*” view has on the other hand always been held by the martyr church, and the following list of names of some of the eminent servants of God who held this view surely indicates which is correct, the Roman-Jesuit view or the Protestant historical view:—

<i>Wycliffe,</i>	<i>Bishop J. C. Ryle,</i>
<i>Luther,</i>	<i>Principal R. S. Candlish,</i>
<i>Calvin,</i>	<i>Bishop Barnes, U.S.A.,</i>
<i>Latimer,</i>	<i>Bishop Wordsworth,</i>
<i>Knox,</i>	<i>Prof. Birks (Cambridge),</i>
<i>Sir Isaac Newton,</i>	<i>Finney,</i>
<i>John Foxe,</i>	<i>Moody,</i>
<i>Bishop Newton,</i>	<i>Dr. H. G. Guinness,</i>
<i>Bunyan,</i>	<i>Spurgeon,</i>
<i>John Wesley,</i>	<i>Dr. F. B. Meyer,</i>
<i>Dr. Hudson Taylor,</i>	<i>Dinsdale Young.</i>

It is the “*historical*” view which is given in the following pages.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART I.

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REVELATION 1.

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.

2. Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

With the above words, John commenced to describe how he received the collection of prophecies which we know as the Book of Revelation. God gave to His Son foreknowledge of certain future events which were in turn told to John. As we study the introduction as above, two questions naturally come into our minds:—

(1.) As the word Revelation means an “unveiling” or “making known,” why is the Apocalypse unanimously looked upon as the most difficult part of the Bible to understand?

(2.) If the prophecies given to John were to have been fulfilled “*shortly*,” that is soon after 96 A.D. when John received them, why is it that most people think that they are still awaiting fulfilment, even though almost 1900 years have elapsed since John’s day?

The answer to both problems is given in verses 1 and 2 where John wrote—“*And He (Christ) SIGNIFIED it (i.e., the prophecy) unto His servant John who bare record . . . of all things that he saw.*” That is, Christ gave the prophecies to John in **signs** and **symbols**. For example in verses 12 and 13, we read that in his first vision John “*saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst . . . one like unto the Son of man . . . and in his right hand seven stars.*” Now this was an Old Testament scene

of the High Priest tending the candlesticks and supplying them with oil, etc., in the Holy place of the temple. Yet in 70 A.D. the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, and the actual candlesticks were carried to Rome by Titus as part of the victors' spoil. Hence in 96 A.D. when John saw the candlesticks in his vision, they were symbolical. We read in verse 20 that Christ Himself told John what they represented— "*The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*"

Therefore John's first vision represented Christ as Israel's High Priest of the New Covenant, looking after His church and supplying her with the oil of the Holy Spirit. Likewise throughout Revelation wherever John records what appear to be Old Covenant temple services, they symbolise the Christian church of the New Covenant in her worship of God.

As another example of such symbolism, in **Rev. 1-20** John was told that the "*seven stars*" he saw in his first vision were seven "*angels*" or "*rulers*" **not** stars literally. Therefore likewise the "*sun, moon and stars,*" and often the "*heaven*" described in the visions of Revelation are symbolical of similar ruling powers over the "*earth.*" When John saw these heavenly bodies darkened or fall, it symbolised the fall of certain rulers from their government over the lands of Bible prophecies. If we were to interpret those constellations John saw in his visions as meaning the literal sun and moon, etc., this would necessitate that the solar system be destroyed numerous times to fulfil John's visions, which of course would be a physical impossibility.

Also to interpret the "*earth*" as meaning the whole earth from pole to pole would in many cases make the prophecies of Revelation fantastic and utterly beyond reason. The "*earth*" of these prophecies is interpreted for us in **Luke 2-1**:—" *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that ALL THE WORLD should be taxed.*" Now obviously in this case "*all the world*" did not include say the millions of India and China, but only the lands ruled by the



A reproduction of the sculpture on the Triumphal Arch of Titus still standing in Rome. It shows the victory procession carrying the spoils from the Temple—the Candlestick, Trumpets, and Shewbread.



Medals were struck by the Emperor Vespasian in honour of his son Titus the prince. The captive House of Judah ("Judea Capta") is represented by a weeping woman.



Cæsars, i.e., the Imperial Roman Empire. Similarly, the "earth" in the prophecies of Revelation which was written during the days of the very same Roman Empire is that territory ruled by Rome.

With the above observations in mind, perhaps the reader can now realise why Revelation is so little understood. The symbols used **must first** be interpreted before the prophecies make intelligent reading. It is like anyone picking up a foreign newspaper which is absolutely unintelligible until the individual learns the vocabulary of the particular foreign language. Likewise the symbols in Revelation must be first understood. A literal interpretation makes its prophecies contradict one another; makes them grotesque and utterly impossible of fulfilment, and hence of no inspiration or help to the Christian church.

Here also is the answer to our second question, why nine out of every ten people will tell you that the fulfilment of Revelation is almost all future. As they have read nothing in the history of the last 1900 years **literally** fulfilling the strange visions recorded by John, they conclude that the latter must still be future and have to do with awful judgments at the end of the world. Yet such futurist views directly contradict the very purpose for which the Apocalypse was written, to "*reveal and SHOW to Christ's servants*" things to take place "*shortly*" or from 96 A.D. onwards. Once however the strange symbols are interpreted (and what a nightmare the Book of Revelation was to us in our childhood days!) all becomes clear, the nightmare goes, and Revelation is seen to be what it claims to be, a foreview of Christendom from John's day to the second advent, and even beyond.

* * * * *

We naturally ask the question why did Christ use such signs and symbols to represent the Christian church, nations and rulers, etc., when He gave John those visions concerning the future? The purpose of Revelation was (1) to provide a guide re the career of the church in the world so that suffering saints would be comforted by the realisation that God had foreseen their tribulations; (2) to inspire them by giving them visions of their final resurrection glory when their persecutors would be judged and destroyed; (3) at the same time to veil the actual time and season of the second advent so that Christians would always have the ever-present hope of the near return of Christ. All those aims were achieved in the wisdom of God, by the use of symbols which could only be understood as the fulfilment of the prophecies in history gradually interpreted the symbols.

This plan is referred to in **Dan. 12-9**, where Daniel complained that he could not understand the weird symbols he had seen in his visions; the answer came back to him "*the words are closed up and SEALED till the time of the end.*" Although Daniel's prophecies would be read, their symbolic language would seal their

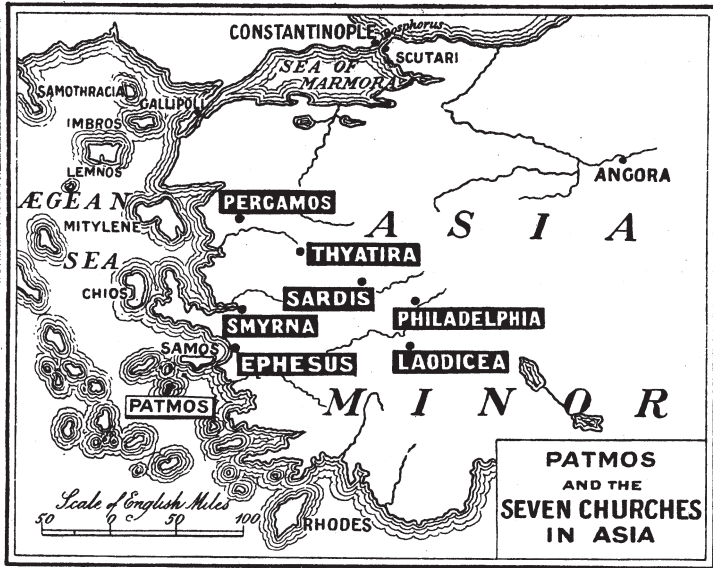
message until that time in God's purpose. John however in **Rev. 22-10** was told, "*SEAL NOT the sayings of the prophecies of this book for the TIME is at hand.*" Therefore in John's day, 96 A.D., the "*time of the end*" or the "*last days*" had arrived in which the events of the Christian dispensation would gradually unveil and unseal the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

Then again such symbolic language could only be understood by Christians who searched the scriptures for certain keys which also helped to decipher the symbols. Unbelievers would not obtain those keys so that such symbolic language protected the saints from unnecessary persecution which they would have experienced if the Bible had openly condemned such political powers as say the Roman Empire.

* * * * *

Chapters 1 to 5 of Revelation contain John's description of how it came about that he received the prophecies recorded by him in the succeeding chapters 6 to 21.

Chapter 1 is purely introductory and describes John's first vision how that (in 96 A.D.) he was an exile "*in the isle that is called Patmos for the . . . testimony of Jesus.*" (Verse 9.) While at prayer on a certain Lord's Day, suddenly John heard a voice commanding him "*What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus . . . Smyrna . . . Pergamos . . . Thyatira . . . Sardis . . . Philadelphia and Laodicea.*" (Verse 11.) John turned in the direction of the voice and saw (in his vision) "*seven candlesticks, and in the midst . . . one like unto the Son of man.*" Christ then spoke to John and revealed His identity as the resurrected Son of God triumphant over death:—"*I am he that liveth, and was dead . . .*" In verse 19 we read that Christ then instructed John to write down "*the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.*" However before John saw any further visions, Christ gave him seven special messages, one for each church. Presumably the prophet was to add a copy of these special messages to the book of visions he was about to



receive, record, and send to the various churches. These seven messages are recorded in **Rev. 2** and **3**.

Chapters 4 and 5 are John's record of his second vision in which he saw a scene in heaven with God giving to His Son a "book" or scroll actually, containing the special series of prophecies Christ was in turn about to pass on to him.

Chapter 6 and onwards is John's record of the visions he saw as Christ broke seven seals by which He was able to unroll the "book" in seven stages; as each seal was in turn broken, more of the scroll was unrolled revealing to Christ further knowledge of the future which he then translated into action before John's vision. The latter wrote down exactly what he saw.

However, before going on to study those detailed prophecies which are recorded in **Rev. 6** to **22**, let us examine Christ's seven special messages to the churches as in **Rev. 2** and **3**.

REVELATION 2 and 3.

As we study these seven messages, we cannot help but realise that there is something far more significant in them than that they merely concerned local churches in Asia. Why should so much attention have been given to seven Asiatic churches in John's day, and no mention be made of the great churches at Jerusalem, Rome and other centres? Those Asiatic churches also passed away and even the cities from which they took their names ceased to exist. The reader will soon see that the seven churches were also typical of seven successive stages in church history from John's day to the second advent.

(In order that the prophetic character of Christ's seven messages may be more easily grasped, a chart is reproduced on page 17 showing—(1) the names of the local churches; (2) what the names mean by which the spiritual character of each church is revealed,—quoted from "*The Return of the Jews, and the End of the World*" by Nathan Cohen Beskin, a converted Jew; (3) the periods in church history corresponding to the descriptions which Christ gave of the local churches; (4) Christ's peculiar titles qualifying Him to judge the churches—by which in five cases a silent rebuke was offered to five of the churches; (5) His eulogies; (6) His admonition; and (7) His rewards to faithful overcomers out of each church.)

UNTO THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS. REV. 2-1 to 7.

"These things saith he that ... walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2. I know thy ... labour and patience ... and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not ...
4. Nevertheless ... thou hast left thy first love ... and I will remove thy candlestick ... except thou repent.
7. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Christ commended their labour and patience, and refusal to accept false apostles, but warned them that they had "*left their first love.*" The name "*Ephesus*" means a letting go or relaxation of effort.

We see here a picture of the church of John's day with its faith being tested by anti-christian doctrines, and persecution at the hands of Imperial Rome as well as by the Jews. Moreover, Christ did not return at the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A.D., as many erroneously expected. Such a combina-

tion of circumstances tempted the early church to lose the first enthusiasm of Pentecost.

Individual overcomers would some day have the reward of everlasting life living in paradise completely restored after the millennium, as described in **Rev. 21** and **22**.

UNTO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA. REV. 2-8 to 11.

"These things saith (He) . . . which was dead, and is alive.

9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) . . .

10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison . . . and ye shall have TRIBULATION TEN DAYS: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

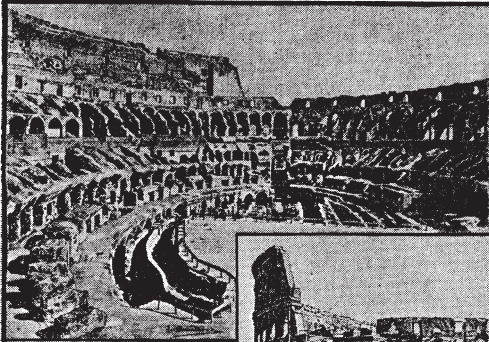
11. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

Christ here described a martyr church of poor people who would suffer terrible persecution, imprisonment and death for Christ. "Smyrna" means "anointing oil," so that God would strengthen His martyr saints by His Spirit upon them.

The identity of the "Smyrna" period of church history is unmistakable as the martyr church under

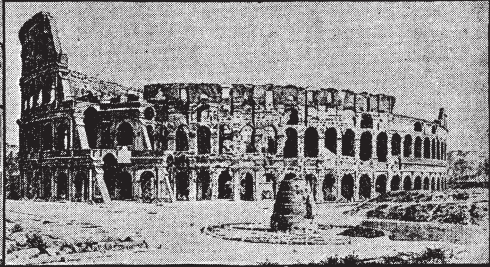
Pagan Rome which carried out ten distinct persecutions all told. As an example, Foxe in his "Book of Martyrs" describes the seventh persecution (236 A.D.) as follows . . . *"the Christians were in all parts of the Empire driven from their habitations, and tormented in their bodies; racks and prisons, axes and halters, fire and wild beasts, scalding pitch and melting wax, sharp stakes and burning pincers, were but some of the methods of their treatment."*

The special "tribulation" lasting "ten (prophetical days" (i.e., ten years) was accurately fulfilled during the years 303 to 313 A.D. when the church experienced the fiercest persecution it had ever had to endure. In 303, the Emperor Diocletian issued an edict decreeing the destruction of Christian churches, burning of the scriptures, and death to Christians by means of all kinds of devilish tortures. In 313 A.D., Constantine, who had been converted the year before, became Emperor of Western Rome so that the last great Pagan persecution came to its end. At the same time Licinius, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire also issued a decree of toleration to the Christians.



The Colosseum
at Rome,
where fifty thousand
people could sit and
watch the persecuted
Christians

Christians were sewed
up in the skins of wild
beasts, and then worried
by dogs till they expired
Foxe's Book of Martyrs.



The quotation, and lower illustration of the persecution of the church under Pagan Rome, are reproduced from Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

Christ comforted this martyr church by reminding them that He too was put to death by the soldiers of Rome, but that He rose again in triumph over death. Likewise those in the "Smyrna" Church who died as martyrs will some day be given a "crown of life," that is be resurrected, and will also "not be hurt of the second death." The latter is described in **Rev. 20-14** as the destiny of the wicked at the final judgment at the end of the millennium. In **Rev. 20-6** it is shown how the overcomers out of the "Smyrna" period will not experience the second death, for they will have been resurrected at the commencement of the millennium—"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power."

TO THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS. **REV. 2-12 to 17.**

"These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges:

13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and . . . faith, even . . . where Satan dwelleth.
14. But . . . thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.
17. . . . To him that overcometh will I give . . . a white stone . . ."

day. Therefore "Satan's seat" was the city of Rome, the capital of that Empire. Now Christ commended the "Pergamos" church in that she was maintaining the Christian faith right in the very centre where Satan was worshipped. Therefore the "Pergamos" stage in church history was clearly the years following the decrees of toleration in 313 A.D. which naturally made the capital city of Rome the centre of Christendom. Yet at the same time it was the very place "where Satan dwelleth," and hence fraught with danger for the church.

The Bible clearly demonstrates that the Gentile kingdoms of this world belong to Satan in that he is worshipped by them in one way or another. Daniel the prophet was shown by God that during Israel's 2520 years' dispersion for breaking the Mosaic laws, there would succeed four great Gentile Empires one after another, (likened to "four beasts" in **Dan. 7**). The fourth Empire since Daniel's day was Rome which was approaching the height of its power in John's

A liberal translation of the name "*Pergamos*" is "*married to power*." By 337 A.D. half the inhabitants of the Roman Empire professed Christianity which became the **STATE RELIGION**. Worldliness and loss of spirituality automatically resulted when Christians were thus honoured, and such a union of church and state clearly fulfilled the title "*married to power*."

Christ accused this church of imitating "*Balaam*." Let us go back to the original incident in **Num. 22 to 25**. When Israel were about to enter into the promised land (about 1446 B.C.), Balac the king of the Moabites whose land adjoined Canaan, became fearful of Israel's power, and requested Balaam to curse the Lord's people. (Balaam apparently had a supernatural gift of effectively cursing anyone!) However when he opened his mouth to curse, there came forth instead prophetic blessings for Israel. When Balac thus failed to obstruct Israel (but rather brought blessings,) **Num. 25-1, 2**, records how the Moabites "*called the people (Israel) unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods . . . and began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.*" Thus Israel fell into sin, and God was forced to punish them.

Christ condemned the "*Pergamos*" church in that she was likewise leading Christians or spiritual Israel to worship idols and thus commit spiritual fornication. The analogy perfectly fits the church period from 313 to the rise of the Papacy in 606 A.D. When Satan, using as his instrument Imperial Pagan Rome, failed to weaken the church by cursing (i.e., by persecution) but rather brought blessing, it seems Satan changed his tactics, and compromised with the church after the conversion of Constantine. When the Empire then embraced Christianity thus providing a feast as it were for Christians, the latter lost their strict adherence to the scriptures, and acknowledged the idols of Pagan Rome by worshipping them with the extra ornamentation of Christian names. Thus Satan's second plan of compromise, like Balaam's second plan, succeeded in enticing spiritual Israel into idolatry. The nominal conversion of the Roman Empire produced, in the succeeding centuries, a religion which

was a combination of Pagan idolatry and Christian ceremonies and names. Thus Christ accurately foretold this in His description of the "*Pergamos*" church period. (This was also the "*falling away*" which prepared the way for the coming of the Papal "*man of sin*" prophesied by Paul in **2 Thess. 2**).

To individual overcomers Christ promised to give a "*white stone*" which probably signifies membership in that spiritual temple through which God will some day reflect His glory to all nations.

TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA. REV. 2-18 to 29.

"These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire . . .

19. I know thy works . . . faith and patience.
20. Notwithstanding . . . thou sufferest that woman Jezebel . . . to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.
21. I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.
22. Behold I will cast her . . . into great tribulation . . .
23. And I will kill her children with death . . .
24. But unto you . . . as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan . . .
25. . . . that which ye have hold fast till I come.
26. And he that overcometh . . . to him will I give power over the nations.
27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron."

doubt the church under

In **I. Kings 16-31**, we read that Jezebel, a Phoenician princess, wedded Ahab, the king of rebellious ten-tribed Israel. **I. Kings 18-13 to 19**, describes how the new queen "*Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord*" while the "*prophets of Baal ate at Jezebel's table.*" The latter false prophets taught Israel to worship idols and to burn incense to images of the Gentile goddess Astaroth whom they called the "*Queen of Heaven*" as in **Jer. 44**, etc.

We ask at what period in church history did the so called Christian church persecute and kill the true prophets of the Lord while elevating false prophets who taught the people idolatry and thus spiritual fornication? Answer:—without a

the Papacy especially from 606 A.D., to the Reformation in 1517.

This prophecy was also equally applicable to the Greek church in the Eastern half of the Roman Empire. The "*Thyatira*" church is the middle church of the seven, and it was the church of the **middle ages** which killed millions of true saints who refused to worship idols and images as mediators to God. Also the false priesthood of the dark ages taught the people to worship Mary, the mother of Jesus, as if Divine and to call her the "*Queen of Heaven*," the very same sin which Jezebel led Israel of old to commit. There are numerous Catholic paintings of Mary in the Art Galleries of the world (such as the Tate Gallery) with the Gentile heathen title below— "*The Queen of Heaven*," Yet Mary died nearly 1900 years ago, nor is there any historical or Biblical record that she was at any time resurrected or taken up into heaven. Therefore Roman and Greek Catholics who worship Mary, burn incense to her, and call her the "*Queen of Heaven*," are really worshipping under an assumed name the goddess Astaroth whom the children of Israel were taught to worship by Jezebel's false priests. "*Thyatira*" means "*ruled by a woman*," and surely Jezebel metaphorically ruled the whole church of the middle ages.

Christ said that this church would have plenty of time to repent. In the East, the Greek church never repented of its superstitions and images in spite of the scourge of the Mohammedan Arabs in the seventh and eighth centuries. In the West, it is now 400 years since the light of the Reformation burst through the darkness, yet the church of Rome has never repented, but instead has fought the light. Christ's prophecy that **therefore** the Thyatira church would suffer "*great tribulation*" has been fulfilled (1) in the East, by the almost total destruction of the Greek church at the hands of the Turks and Russians; and (2), in the West, by the mutilation of the Roman Catholic church through the French Revolution and to-day the Communists and Nazis in Spain, Germany and Poland, etc. Finally Christ warns the remainder of the "*Thyatira*" church that her children will be killed with death; (i.e., at His second advent, when He comes to judge all anti-christian systems in

“*flaming fire*” according to **2 Thess. 1-8.**) Hence His title, “*with eyes like unto a flame of fire,*” is a warning to this church of her final judgment.

However there were to be some Christians in the Thyatira period who would not “*have known the depths of Satan.*” This latter description indicates that Christ must have regarded this church as the very masterpiece of Satanic delusion. All who have read anything of the history of the Roman and Greek churches, with their wicked deceptions, will readily admit the accuracy of Christ’s prophetic description of that period in church history. To the “*overcomers*” He will give the privilege of ruling the nations in the millennium, which will be a contrast to their humiliating persecution at the hands of that counterfeit Christianity.

Christ’s title to sit in judgment—“*The Son of God,*”—is surely a rebuke to the church of the Middle Ages which reduced Christ to the subordinate position of a babe, the “*Son of Mary,*” instead of the triumphant resurrected Son of God, the one and only mediator between God and sinful humanity.

(Notice in the messages to the last four churches, that Christ points forward to His second advent; this simply means that from “*Thyatira*” onwards each church would continue functioning right up to the second advent, although, of course, each would pass its zenith as a succeeding phase began to predominate.)

TO THE CHURCH IN SARDIS. REV. 3-1 to 5.

“These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God . . . I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead.

3. Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.
5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment . . .”

“*Sardis*” means a “*precious stone*” or “*shining light,*” so that here we recognise the Reformation church which was certainly a precious jewel and a shining light at the end of the dark ages. The translations of the Bible from Hebrew, Greek and Latin into the languages of the nations, 1517 onwards, brought a revolt against the corruptions of the church. The Reformers thus had a “*name that they lived*” because

THE 7 CHURCHES	1 Ephesus	2 Smyrna	3 Pergamos	4 Thyatira	5 Sardis	6 Philadelphia	7 Laodicea
SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:-	REV. 2; 1 to 7	REV. 2; 8 to 11	REV. 2; 12 to 17	REV. 2; 18 to 29	REV. 3; 1 to 6	REV. 3; 7 to 13	REV. 3; 14 to 22
MEANING OF NAME:-	"TO LET GO"	"ANOINTING OIL"	"TO BE MARRIED TO POWER"	"TO BE RULED BY A WOMAN"	"A PRECIOUS STONE"	"BROTHERLY LOVE"	"POWER OF THE LAITY"
PERIOD IN CHURCH HISTORY:-	A. D. 96	A. D. 100 - 313	A. D. 313 - 606	A. D. 606 - 1517	A. D. 1517 - 1739	A. D. 1739 - 1850	A. D. 1850 - 1917+ END OF AGE
CHARACTER OF EACH CHURCH:-	EFFORT RELAXED	MARTYRDOM & TRIBULATION	UNION OF CHURCH AND STATE	COUNTERFEIT; ANTI-CHRISTIAN	REFORMATION	EVANGELICAL; MISSIONARY.	MODERNISM; SPIRITUAL POVERTY
CHRIST'S TITLE AS JUDGE:-	"WALKS IN MIST OF CANDLESICKS"	"WHICH WAS DEAD AND IS ALIVE"	"HE WHICH HATH THE SHARPSWORD"	"THE SON OF GOD"	"HE THAT HATH THE SEVEN SPIRITS"	"HE THAT IS HOLY AND TRUE"	"THE FAITHFUL WITNESS"
GOOD POINTS:-	LABOUR & PATIENCE	ENDURED TRIBULATION	THE FAITH NOT DENIED	FAITH & PATIENCE	A NAME THAT IT LIVED	KEPT THE WORD	NONE
FAULTS:-	LEFT FIRST LOVE	NONE	BALAAM'S DOCTRINE. IDOLATRY	RULED BY "JEZEBEL"	BUT DEAD SPIRITUALLY	NONE	LUKEWARM
REWARD TO OVERCOMERS	"PARADISE"	THE FIRST RESURRECTION	"A WHITE STONE"	REIGN WITH CHRIST	"NAME CONFESSED"	"THE NEW JERUSALEM"	WITH CHRIST ON DAVID'S THRONE

they unearthed and proclaimed far and wide the simple gospel of Christ—one mediator between God and man—after a thousand years of darkness seeking God through countless false mediators. However the change in doctrines was so revolutionary that the Reformers were content to keep the ‘letter’ of the newly discovered Bible without pressing on into the out-pouring of the Spirit promised to Israel in the last days. From Christ’s point of view the Reformed churches (true to history) were as a whole “*dead*,” for there were far greater depths of spirituality which “*He that hath the seven Spirits*” desired His church to have.

The reward to individual overcomers will be that they will be robed in the garments of righteousness which simply means worthiness before God of resurrection and everlasting life.

(Note:—From the above warning to the “*Sardis*” church, it is plain that the coming of Christ “*as a thief*” to some, will be only because they have not been watching the signs of the times. To the watching and waiting Christians however, “*that day will NOT overtake them as a thief in the night*” according to **1 Thess. 5-4**. Some Bible students have produced a “secret-silent rapture” theory from this analogy “*as a thief*,” failing to see that Christ’s return “*as a thief*” is only in the sudden unexpectedness of such an event to the ignorant world. There will be nothing secret and silent about Christ’s advent, but rather a rude awakening and a fiery judgment, as all the scriptures testify.)

TO THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA.

REV. 3-7 to 13.

“These things saith he that is holy, he that is true . . .

8. I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door . . . for thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.
10. . . . I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation (or trial) which shall come upon all the world, to try them . . .
11. Behold, I come quickly:
12. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the tem-

Christ found no fault with this church, so that her members have an open door into everlasting life. We recognise the “*Philadelphia*” stage in church history as the period 1739-1850 A.D. commencing with the Wesleys. That century saw the formation and phenomenal growth of British and American Bible and Missionary societies. The

ple of my God . . . and I will write upon him the name of . . . New Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from my God..” consequent printing of millions of Bibles, and missionary activity among all nations, has revealed the identity of Britain and the U.S.A. as latter-day Israel, the “*servant*” nation of God. At the same time great revivals swept Britain, the U.S.A., and Scandinavia under the cardinal doctrines of salvation and holiness. It was thus that Christ’s title as he commenced this letter—“*He that is holy and true*”—revealed the corresponding character of this church. Multitudes of Anglo-Saxons came into the forgiveness of sins promised in Israel’s New Covenant, with the result that the Anglo-Saxon race is unquestionably proved to be the once lost house of Israel. When so many of Israel thus came back into covenant relationship with God, He fulfilled His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their seed would be in the last days “*a company of nations*,” (i.e., the British Empire) and “*a great people*” (i.e., the U.S.A.) (It is interesting to note that the great city of Philadelphia, U.S.A., was founded and named by Christians who knew they were the pioneers of the “*Philadelphia*” stage in church history!)

After passing its zenith, the “*Philadelphia*” church would continue to exist until the second advent because Christ promises to keep the remnant of this Church from the judgment or “*trial*” of the nations at His second advent. **Matt. 24-30, 31**, shows the return of Christ, and how He will send His angels to gather His elect from all over the earth. Next in time-order, **Matt. 25-31** to 46 then describes the judgment or “*trial*” of the nations. Thus the faithful remnant will be saved from that trial of all the nations, by being gathered into the presence of Christ.

The “*overcomers*” will be made pillars in the “*temple of my God*.” In the Old Covenant the temple with its priesthood was the centre of Israel’s government and worship. Hence to be part of the temple of God in the New Covenant will be to form part of Christ’s millennial government over Israel and the world. The

promise of citizenship in the "*New Jerusalem*" means the same blessing—to form part of the "*body*" or "*bride*" of Christ.

TO THE CHURCH OF THE LAODICEANS.

REV. 3-14 to 21.

"These things saith . . . the faithful and true witness . . .

16. Because thou art LUKE-WARM, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

17. Because thou sayest, 'I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,' and knowest not that thou art miserable and poor, and blind, and naked:

18. I counsel thee to buy of me . . . white raiment that thou mayest be clothed . . . and anoint thine eyes . . . that thou mayest see.

19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent.

20. 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 sup with him.

21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

This church is the last of the seven, and hence represents Christendom at the end of the church age. It is condemned because of one prominent characteristic, "*L U K E W A R M N E S S*, *neither cold nor hot*," which feature undoubtedly points to the Christian church in general since about 1850 to the present. The church of to-day as a whole rests on its oars content with the benefits of the Reformation and the Evangelism of the two previous church periods, and is thus truly "*lukewarm*."

The name "*Laodicea*" means "*power of the laity*," the symbolism of which can be interpreted in two ways. (1) It indicates a church whose ministering clergy so lack spiritual reality that they are as it were only like "*laymen*," instead of being

priests unto God. (2) Conversely it represents a church in which the true priests are often laymen with no professional clerical training. Both these features are clearly seen in present day religious work.

Christ foretold that this church would consider itself "*rich and increased with goods*." Certainly the church of to-day has a rich heritage of spiritual know-

ledge and experience, so that there is no excuse for any not making their election and calling sure, yet how few press into the Kingdom of God! The majority are missing that high calling through sheer apathy. Then again as Christ foretold, the church has a false standard of wealth, relying upon her Doctors of Divinity and clergy trained in philosophy and modernism as the evidence of wealth; whereas actually the great necessity is often missing—real Christian experience—real salvation, so that the church is terribly poor in the sight of God. In verse 20, Christ paints a sad picture of Himself shut out of His own church and knocking for admittance!

The advice to the Laodiceans is to “*anoint thine eyes that thou mayest see,*” which injunction indicates a state of blindness. In our own day, God has provided a key which unlocks and clarifies the whole Bible, the key that lost Israel is found in the Anglo-Saxon race. Yet many of the leaders of the churches are not the slightest bit interested in fulfilled prophecy, nor in the mighty theme of the second advent, and often deny the truth of such. The result is that the church and nation have been both ignorant of their inheritance; as **Isaiah 42-19** foretold, “*Who is blind as the Lord’s servant?*” The time has now come however, when God is causing both His church and kingdom peoples to awaken and appropriate their blessings.

However there would be certain individuals whom Christ would love, (no doubt because of their zealotness) and in order to bring them to Himself in reality, He foretold that He would “*rebuke and chasten them.*” How exactly this has been fulfilled, is verified to-day by thousands of Christians out of all denominations who, only when overtaken by sorrow and hardship, have found Christ and that anointing of the Spirit which unlocks the treasures of the Bible.

In His last words to the church, (“*to him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame . . .*”) Christ named the reward to faithful overcomers of reigning with Him on David’s throne in

the millennium. Christ "*overcame*" by doing the perfect will of God as revealed to Him in the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Himself. Likewise, Christ says, individuals who read the Bible and obey what is revealed to them, will reign with Him. As the "*Laodicean*" period will witness the second advent, Christ naturally pointed to the throne of David upon which He will reign as King in the millennium. During the last 1900 years, Christ has been at the right hand of God on the eternal throne in heaven, but at His return He will ascend the throne which He calls "*My throne*" because God has promised it to Him in **Luke 1-32, 33**:— "*The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever.*" The overcomers out of the church of Laodicea along with the overcomers of the other six church periods will reign with Him as His executive body and hence will, as it were, sit with Him on David's throne.

As to what will happen at that time to the rest of Laodicean Christendom, so nauseating is lukewarmness to Christ, that He says, "*I will spue thee out of my mouth.*" We see a similar scene in the parable of the ten virgins recorded in **Matt. 25-1 to 13**, where the "*foolish virgins*" were shut out of the high calling of being in Christ's executive body because they lacked the necessary "*oil*" of the Spirit.

In conclusion, it will be readily admitted that we can to-day look back over the pages of some 1900 years of church history and see seven distinct stages in which the peculiar features of the seven Asiatic churches are reproduced, and in the exact order named by Christ. As the visions recorded by John in **Rev. 6 to 19** were detailed prophecies concerning the Christian church in its spiritual and political relations with the nations during the church age, it thus seems as if Christ first of all gave a summary or synopsis of that same history in His messages to the seven local churches.

REVELATION 4 and 5.

In the next two chapters, **Rev. 4 and 5**, John records his second vision in which he saw a scene in heaven with God giving to His Son the very prophecies which would soon in turn be passed on to the prophet.

REV. 4-1 to 5.

1. "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard . . . said, 'Come up hither and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.'
2. And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven..
3. And he that sat (on the throne) 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.
4. And round about the throne . . . I saw four and twenty elders sitting . . . and on their heads crowns of gold.
5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God."

These verses describe John's experience how that the Spirit of God came upon him bringing a vision in which he seemed to be transported right into heaven itself. From his new viewpoint, John's gaze was directed first of all to the throne of God. The prophet likened the glory of God emanating from the throne to the brilliance of highly polished precious stones. Through the mercy of God in Christ, he was able to see "*the light that no man can approach unto.*" (**1 Tim. 6-16**).

Such reapproachment of man to God was symbolised to John when he saw the glory of God not as a light from which he had to flee, but as a "*rainbow . . . in sight like unto an emerald.*" Just as the rainbow was the appointed sign to Noah and his posterity of the promised mercy of God not to flood the earth again, likewise John as a son of God saw the Creator's glory not as a "*consuming fire,*" but broken up into the soft colours of the rainbow. Moreover the whole scene was veiled by that colour which is most restful to the eyes and abounds in God's earth—emerald green. How beautifully does such

a vision symbolise the mercy of God now extended to all like John who accept the mediatorial work of Christ on their behalf.

Surrounding the throne, there were seen twenty-four kings constituting the government of the Kingdom of heaven. It seems that the millennial kingdom of Israel will be similarly organised since Christ told His disciples that "*in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" (**Matt, 19-28.**) In **Rev. 22**, Christ's government is likened to a city with twelve foundations named after the apostles, and with twelve gates named after the twelve tribes of Israel. Hence it has been suggested that in Christ's government over Israel and the world there will be twelve more thrones to be occupied by twelve saints out of Old Testament Israel, (thus making twenty-four all told).

We read in verse 5 that then John heard and saw "*out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices,*" which symbolised the power of God issuing forth to govern and direct His creation. There were also seen "*seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven Spirits of God*" which represent that Divine life, energy and power which radiates from God and whose manifestation is known in the scriptures as the "*Holy Spirit.*" That mighty power, though unseen like electricity, upholds the Universe, and such tremendous energy was fitly symbolised as "*lamps of fire burning.*" The **sevenfold** aspect may denote the Divine perfection of the Holy Spirit, and perhaps represents the seven attributes of the Spirit as described on page 27.

REV. 4-6 to 11.

6. "... and round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes.
7. ... the first was like a lion, and the second ... like a calf, (bullock) and the third had a face as a man, and the fourth ... was like a flying eagle."

These verses describe how that John then saw "*four beasts*" one at each corner supporting the throne of God. The word "*beast*" is an incorrect translation and should be, as in the original

9. "And when those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne . . .
10. The four and twenty elders fall down . . . and worship him that liveth forever . . . and cast their crowns before the throne saying,
11. 'Thou art worthy, O Lord to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created'."

11 then describe how that worship given to God by these the highest and most intimate of His created beings. However although they hold such powerful positions in the government of the Universe under the direct supervision of the Creator, they continually acknowledge that to God is due all the praise and honour.

Greek, "*living creatures.*" **Ezek. 10** describes the same living creatures or cherubims most intimately associated with God in His government of the Universe. Their mighty power is portrayed to us when the prophets liken them to the strongest creatures in God's earth. Their many eyes symbolise their great wisdom and understanding. Verses 9 to

John saw the adoration and

REV. 5-1 to 8.

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book, written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming . . . 'who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?'
3. And no man in heaven, nor in earth was able to open the book.
4. And I wept much . . .
5. And one of the elders saith unto me, 'weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.'
6. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne stood a Lamb, as it had

It is very evident that the "*book*" John saw was in the form of a scroll or roll, for it was "*written within and without.*" Moreover it was sealed with seven seals which kept it from being unrolled.

This scroll contained the prophecies eventually to be dramatized before John in his visions. At first, the latter imagined that there was no one worthy to break the seals, and he wept much. Could not one of the mighty cherubims or one of the twenty-four kings break the seals? Apparently none were qualified. Then we read

- been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God . . .
7. And he (the Lamb) came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.”
- that one of the elders told John to cease his weepings for “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals.*”

John looked up through his tears expecting to see the King of the forest—a great lion, but instead saw an innocent “*Lamb*” which had at one time been slain. We ask who was this “*Lamb*,” the only one worthy out of all God’s creation to open the scroll? **John 1-29** identifies Him for us as Christ the “*LAMB OF GOD which taketh away the sin of the world.*” Also the fact that the “*Lamb*” was seen at the right hand of God (since we read that He took the book out of the right hand) identifies Him as the Lord Jesus Christ “*who endured the cross . . . and is set down at the RIGHT hand of the throne of God.*” (**Heb. 12-2.**)

This scene brings out very beautifully the fact that Christ’s worthiness not only to open the book of prophecy but also to be the “*Lion of Judah*” eventually to reign on David’s throne, is because He died as the Lamb of sacrifice to pay the price of Israel’s transgressions and the sin of the world. No doubt John expected to see a lion, under the impression that it would require tremendous strength to break the seals, but instead saw a lamb! John’s attitude here was typical of the Jewish expectation of what the Messiah would be like and what He would do. The Jews wanted all the glory of the Messianic reign on David’s throne, and a Messiah who would come as the “*Lion*” king to fulfil the numerous prophecies concerning Israel’s supreme greatness among the nations. They failed to see or if they saw it would not admit it, that the prophets also foretold that the Messiah must suffer for the sins of His people, and for that very reason because He was willing to suffer, God would count Him worthy of some day being Israel’s King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The strange position in the twentieth century is that the Christian church admits that Christ came as the

suffering “*Lamb*” 1900 years ago, but is not now willing to acknowledge His coming as the “*Lion of Judah*” which is just as surely prophesied and certain as was His first advent. The above scene in **Rev. 5** clearly shows that the same Messiah is both Israel’s Lamb and King, but of course His public manifestation as King of Israel is yet future though nevertheless sure. Whether Christendom believes it or not, multitudes of fulfilled prophecies in this 1917 generation indicate that very soon God will fulfil His promises to His Son of the latter’s glorious reign on David’s throne. Christ poured out His life-blood to do the will of the Father, so that God is bound to keep His promises.

We ask what was symbolised by the “*seven horns*” and the “*seven eyes*” which John saw on the Lamb? In **Dan.** and **Rev.**, we are told that “*horns*” symbolise kings or dynasties of kings. “*Seven*” is the number of perfection or completion; hence the seven horns symbolise that the Lamb is the One whose title we read in **Rev. 19-16** is “*KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*” Christ will be the perfect King in comparison with all the Kings in David’s long line. Likewise the “*seven eyes*” or “*Spirits of God*” identify the Lamb as Christ to whom God has given His spirit “*without measure.*” **Isaiah 11-2** describes Christ’s millennial reign, and names the “*seven Spirits*” or attributes of the Holy Spirit which will rest upon the King as He governs Israel and the whole earth—“*and the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom . . . understanding . . . counsel . . . might . . . knowledge . . . fear of the LORD.*”

As John saw the Lamb take the book out of the right hand of God, how the prophet must have realised that it was by His obedient sacrifice that Christ became the only one worthy to take the book of prophetic knowledge from God and unseal it and reveal it to the Christian church. This scene is also a lesson to us that God measures greatness by perfect obedience to His will.

REV. 5-8 to 14.

8. “And when He had taken the book, the four living The prophet then described how that all the angelic

creatures and... elders fell down before the lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.

9. And they sung a new song, saying, '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;
10. And hast made us (?) unto our God Kings and Priests: and we (?) shall reign on the earth."

rulers surrounding the throne of God bowed to the Lamb acknowledging His worthiness to be God's chosen vessel of honour. John then heard a new song being sung such as was never heard in the Old Testament days. Verses 9 and 10 record for us the words of the song which **a c k n o w l e d g e s** Christ's worthiness to open the book in that He had paid the price of death to redeem Israel and save all humanity.

Those who read these verses in the Authorised Version, as above, must carefully ask themselves the question, what people actually sang this song? The A.V. is rather ambiguous as it is not clear whether it was the Christians who sang it in their prayers, or whether it was the cherubims and elders who sang.

At first sight one would be inclined to say that the song was sung by Christians since the cherubims and the elders did not need redemption being perfect creatures of God's heavenly creation. On the other hand these angelic rulers all took harps, after which John heard the song, so that we would expect that those who had the harps also sang the song. However we need be in no doubt if we refer to the original Greek or consult other versions. The Greek word-for-word translation for these verses has no ambiguity about the matter.

9. "And they sang a new song, saying 'Thou art worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals, because thou wast killed, and didst redeem to God, with thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.
10. And thou didst make THEM to our God, a Royalty and a Priesthood, and THEY shall reign on the earth'"

Ferrar Fenton's translation is almost the same as the above:—"... *and have made THEM into ... priests for our God. And THEY shall reign over the earth.*"

Both these translations thus clearly demonstrate that it was the cherubims and the elders who sang the song, and **NOT** about themselves, but about the Christian saints whose prayers they saw ascending into their midst in 96 A.D.

These angelic creatures were able to sing the song of Israel's redemption, not merely because they saw the nail-prints in Christ's hands, but because they saw the prayers of Christian saints accepted by God as sweet odours. That was the very proof of the effectiveness of Christ's mediatorial death on behalf of sinful humanity, and sufficient evidence to the angelic rulers to fall down before the Lamb and acknowledge His worthiness. The prayers represented the first fruits of Christ's death, and ascended to heaven from those in the church of John's day who will reign with Him as kings and priests during the millennium.

The elders' song which John heard in 96 A.D., of course looked forward to the millennium—"and they *SHALL reign on the earth.*" In **Rev. 19**, John records the second advent of Christ, and in **Rev. 20-4** he describes the fulfilment of the elders' song—"and they lived (i.e., were resurrected) and *REIGNED with Christ a thousand years.*"

REV. 5-11 to 13.

11. And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne . . . ten thousand times ten thousand . . .
12. Saying . . . 'Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, . . .
13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, . . . heard I saying, 'Blessing and honour . . . be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever'."

These closing verses record how John heard the countless hosts of angels also acknowledging the worthiness of Christ to receive such wisdom and power. Finally, in verse 13 we read how that the prophet heard all creation glorifying both the Father and Son, especially for giving to humanity the prophecies of "Revelation."

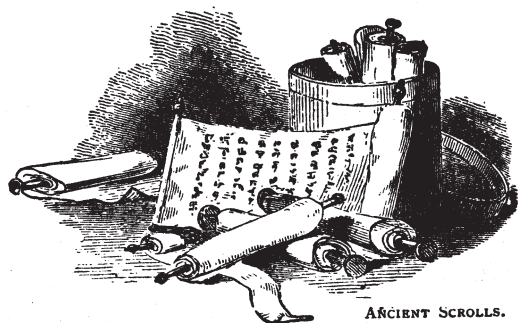
REVELATION 6.

THE BREAKING OF THE FIRST SIX SEALS.

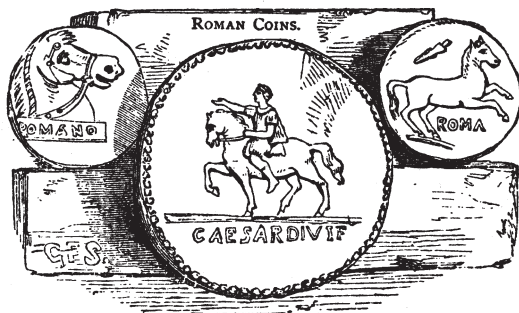
The sixth chapter of Revelation is John's record of the visions he saw as Christ broke, one after the other, six of the seals binding the roll of prophecies God had just given to Him. As each seal was broken, more of the book was unrolled, and Christ translated its prophecies written therein into dramatic action before John's vision. We naturally ask how much of the Christian dispensation was prefigured in those six seals? In answering that question, let us note that the prophecies released by the six seals are all described in **ONE** small chapter of Revelation, whereas there are twenty-two chapters all told. Therefore, logically, the six seals must only cover proportionately a small section of history from John's day and onwards.

Let us first visualise the stage and its scenery upon which the prophet witnessed the dramatization of the future. John saw (probably before him) a landscape which he called the "*earth*." The latter, without a doubt consisted of the lands of the Roman Empire which have been the sphere for the fulfilment of all prophecies concerning the "*times of the Gentiles*." This is the area known by Bible students as the prophetic "*earth*," as illustrated in the diagram on page 51. John also saw above this "*earth*" a sky with its sun, moon and stars.

We notice at the breaking of each of the first four seals, a horse and its rider crossed the landscape which was affected in such a way as to portray the history of the peoples in that "*earth*." Also the colour of the horse in each case apparently symbolised a particular condition of the Roman Empire, while the rider dramatized the cause of that condition. That a horse should have been chosen to represent each stage in the growth and decay of the Roman Empire, can be understood when we realise the place occupied by the horse in Roman history.



ANCIENT SCROLLS.



SEAL 1. REV. 6-1, 2.

1. "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals... a **WHITE HORSE**: and he that sat upon him had a bow; and a **CROWN** was given unto him; and he went forth **CONQUERING**, and to conquer."

The first seal released on to the stage before John's gaze a **WHITE horse** symbolical of Roman Imperialism at its height, since her emperors invariably rode white horses as well as her generals in their victory processions. The "**bow**" represents her military character. The "**crown**" given to the rider is "*stephanos*" in the Greek which is a coronet like a circle of laurel leaves, **NOT** a jewelled diadem. This characteristic shows that the rider and horse symbolised Imperial Rome of John's day and the succeeding two centuries since in that period her emperors wore such coronets in contrast with the

diadems worn by barbarian kings. Many Roman coins illustrate the encircled head on one side, and on the other the emperor going forth to war riding a white horse. The fact that the rider and his horse went forth "*conquering and to conquer*" perfectly describes the growth of the Roman Empire from 96 to 180 A.D., when it spread its mailed fist in military conquest over all the lands occupied by the three previous Gentile empires of prophecy. This period witnessed an empire united in peace under famous emperors, and is fitly described by historians as the "*Golden Age*" of Rome.

SEAL 2. REV. 6-3, 4.

"And when he had opened the second seal . . . there went out another HORSE that was RED; and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great SWORD."

was shown to John when he saw the inhabitants of the Roman earth "*kill one another*"—**CIVIL WAR**. The "*sword*" symbolised that the law and order of the emperors was displaced by the rule of the sword.

The change in the colour of the horse from white to **RED** symbolised the corresponding change within the Empire from peace to bloodshed in the next stage in Roman history. The cause of the banishment of peace

It must be admitted that this vision was an exact picture of the Empire in the first century of its decline and fall. From 185 to 284 A.D., the many armies throughout the Empire revolted from allegiance to one emperor, and created numerous rival emperors who were in turn often assassinated. The rival armies under their respective generals in the provinces brought wide-spread civil war and revolution; whole armies massacred one another and red blood deluged the Empire.

SEAL 3. REV. 6-5, 6.

"And when he had opened the third seal . . . I beheld and lo a BLACK HORSE; and he that sat upon him had a pair of BALANCES in his hand.

The **BLACK horse** symbolises depression and gloom. The cause of that depression is again represented in the

And I heard a voice . . . say, rider, this time by his
 'A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of balances. The balance was a
 barley for a penny; and see common symbol in Roman
 thou HURT not the oil and history for justice and
 the wine'." commerce, and hence was
 often a badge of the emperor or provincial governors,
 as seen on Roman coins.

We ask in what way did the administrators of the Empire bring about a condition of depression. The voice John heard answers that question. Taxes to support the armies, etc., of Rome could be paid either in money or the equivalent value of produce such as wheat, wine and oil. In order to stop unscrupulous tax-gatherers from collecting an unfair equivalent in produce, it was necessary to value the produce in terms of money; hence the voice—one measure of wheat to a penny, and so on. The Greek verb "*adikeo*" translated "*hurt*" in verse 6 means (as in Young's Conc.) "*to be unjust.*" Thus the command could have been better translated "*and see thou BE NOT UNJUST with regard to the oil and the wine,*"—that is, in collecting taxes, exact only the fair equivalent in produce.

Thus this vision is a dramatic picture of **TAXATION**, especially in view of the balances in the hands of the rider denoting the official tax-gatherer.

Therefore we conclude that the cause of the changing colour of the horse to black depression was taxation. As we turn to the history of the Roman Empire during the first half of the third century A.D., we find that true to this prophecy one of the chief causes of decay was excessive taxation. In 212 A.D. the Emperor Caracalla issued his famous decree extending the privilege of Roman citizenship to all free men within the Empire. Such a "favour" was actually a curse since it carried with it more taxes. This taxation to maintain the armies and the extravagant administration of the Empire proved to be so burdensome that agriculture was ruined, and fertile provinces were left uncultivated in desolation, depression and gloom.

SEAL 4. REV. 6-7, 8.

“And when he had opened the fourth seal . . . behold a PALE HORSE: and his name that sat on him was DEATH, and HELL followed . . . and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth; to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”

The **PALE horse** shows the colour of mortification and decay, and symbolised the approaching collapse and disintegration of the Roman Empire. The rider whose name was “*Death*” accompanied by “*Hell*” or the grave, represented Death stalking through the Empire claiming as its victims a quarter of the inhabitants by means of wars, famines, pestilences and wild beasts.

We see here an accurate picture of the Roman Empire in the latter half of the third century A.D. The years 250 to 300 A.D. saw disastrous wars both within the Empire and against the invading Goths. Awful pestilences followed the bloodshed. Gibbon the historian wrote of this period that “*plague raged without interruption in every province, every city and almost every family in the Roman Empire. During some times, five thousand persons died daily in Rome.*” Also the ruination of agriculture through the excessive taxation brought inevitable famines, and as civilization wained, wild beasts multiplied and ravaged the inhabitants.

SEAL 5. REV. 6-9 to 11.

9. “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the ALTAR the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:
10. And they cried . . . ‘How long O Lord . . . dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?’
11. And white robes were given unto them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until . . . their brethren . . . should be killed as they were . . .”

At the breaking of the fifth seal, John’s attention was directed to a totally different scene, for he saw an “*altar*” like the altar of sacrifice in Israel’s Old Covenant worship. Beneath it appeared martyrs slain for their faith.

First we ask what did the “*altar*” signify? In the Book of **Exodus**, we have the account of how Moses was instructed to build the tabernacle for Israel’s wor-

The Seven Seals of Rev. VI-VIII

REV. VI: 1-2



SEAL 1




ROME VICTORIOUS

96 A.D. - 180

REV. VI: 3-4



SEAL 2




CIVIL WAR

A.D. 185 - 284

REV. VI: 5-6



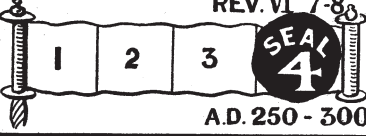
SEAL 3






TAXATION DEPRESSION

A.D. 200 - 250

REV. VI: 7-8



SEAL 4

DECAY & DEATH

A.D. 250 - 300

REV. VI: 9-11

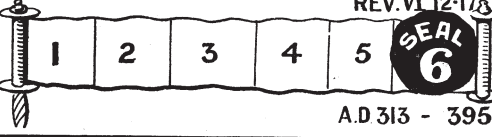


SEAL 5

CHRISTIAN MARTYRS

A.D. 303 - 313 (UNDER EMP^r DIOCLETIAN)

REV. VI: 12-17

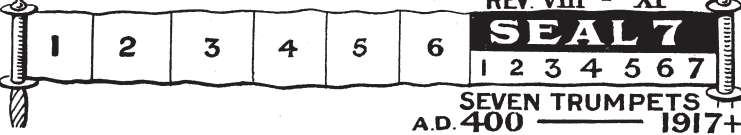


SEAL 6

FALL OF PAGANISM

A.D. 313 - 395 (CONSTANTINE)

REV. VIII - XI



SEAL 7

SEVEN TRUMPETS

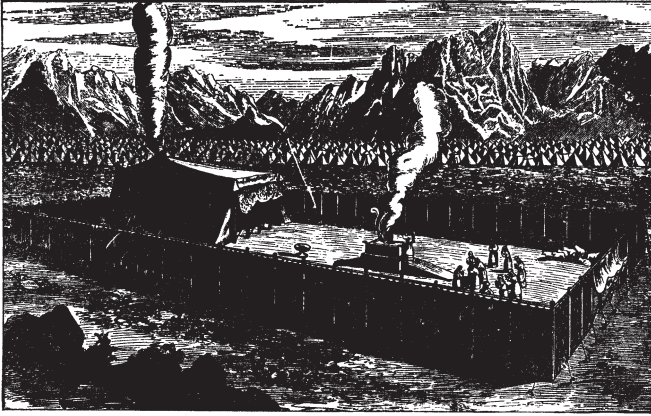
A.D. 400 - 1917+

ship. In the court outside the tabernacle, stood the brazen altar where certain animals were sacrificed to make atonement for Israel's sins. However the Old Covenant temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., so that the "altar" of John's vision must symbolise the "altar" of the **New Covenant** which was the cross of Calvary upon which Christ died as the one great sacrifice for sins. Then the souls "*under the altar*" in John's vision had accepted the forgiveness of their sins made possible through Christ, that is, they were Christians.

Also, the first three chapters of **Leviticus** describe how that in the Old Covenant the Israelites could worship God by bringing voluntary offerings of a bullock or ram, or pigeon, etc. We read that when the animal was slain, the blood sprinkled on the altar and the carcass burnt to ashes also on the altar, such a sacrifice was "*as a sweet savour unto the Lord.*" Hence when John saw the Christians "*under the altar slain for the word of God,*" it symbolised that they were **MARTYRS** who had presented their bodies as a living sacrifice to God (**Rom. 12-1**) and whose death God regarded "*as a sweet savour unto Himself.*"

Let us now examine how this vision was fulfilled in the history of the church. It is common knowledge that Pagan Rome fiercely persecuted the Christians unto death. The Romans looked upon Christians as enemies of their gods, since the scriptures condemned their heathen sacrifices, and they saw that the Christians obtained their inspiration from those scriptures. Hence when the Romans offered the Christians the alternative of engaging in such heathen ceremonies or of being tortured to death, multitudes chose martyrdom, and so died literally "*for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.*"

This same tribulation for the church was also prophesied in Christ's description of the "*Smyrna*" church period, which was discussed on page 10. Note also that John saw the above vision released by the **fifth** seal, which historically would be the commencement of the fourth century A.D. True to this prophecy, the most intense persecution of the church was that under the Emperor Diocletian 303 to 313 A.D.



The tabernacle with its court containing the brazen altar of sacrifice.

In verse 10 we read that John heard the martyrs cry to God “*how long*” would it be before their persecutors would be judged. Just as in **Gen. 4-10** when Cain slew Abel, the latter’s blood metaphorically cried out to God for judgment, likewise John saw and heard the cry of the martyrs and their dear ones—how long was such cruelty and sin to continue without judgment? In answer “*white robes were given*” to the martyrs which signified that they were counted righteous before God. They were then told to “*rest yet for a little season*” (i.e., sleep in death) “*until their brethren were killed as they were.*” Here is a definite reference to a second group of martyrs which history has recorded for us in the Papal persecutions when millions were murdered because they believed and obeyed the same “*word of God.*”

SEAL 6. REV. 6-12 to 17.

“And when he had opened the sixth seal . . . lo, there was a great EARTHQUAKE; and the sun became black as sackcloth . . .

13. And the stars of heaven fell upon the earth . . .

Those who fail to realise that symbolic language is used here, visualise in these verses the end of the world, and it certainly would be the end of the solar system if

15. And the kings of the earth and . . . every bondman, and . . . free man, . . . said to the mountains, 'Fall on us, and hide us . . . for the great day of his wrath is come.'" fulfilled literally. Others think that these verses refer to the second advent of Christ because the latter event is so often described as taking place at a time

when "*the sun shall be darkened and the powers of the heavens shaken,*" (as in **Matt. 24-29**). However, the second advent is not seen by John until Rev. 11, and only at the end of a long series of events released by the **seventh** seal which comes **AFTER** the sixth seal.

In many scriptures an "*earthquake*" represents a political upheaval. In the above vision John also saw the sky over the Roman "*earth*" affected by the earthquake in that the sun and moon were darkened and the stars fell. In **Gen. 37** there is recorded a dream in which Joseph saw "*the sun and moon and eleven stars made obeisance*" to him. When Jacob his father heard of the dream, he gave out the interpretation—"shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren come to bow down to thee?" Thus Jacob and his wife and their eleven sons, the progenitors of the Israel nations, were symbolised in that dream by the sun, moon and the stars. Likewise in John's vision the heavenly luminaries represented the authorities over the Roman earth from the emperor downwards.

We do not have to look far into Roman history to locate a great political earthquake in which the ruling authorities of the day were displaced. One of the mightiest revolutionary movements which history discloses was the defeat and fall of heathen Paganism in the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity during the fourth century A.D. For three centuries the Roman emperor was the **Pontifex Maximus**, that is the head priest of heathen paganism. In 312 A.D., Constantine was converted to Christianity and in 313 defeated the pagan emperors, himself becoming emperor. Such a unique event was well portrayed to John as he saw the darkening of the Imperial pagan "*sun.*"

Constantine abandoned the heathen "*standards*" of the Roman armies and instead adopted the sign of the cross which seemed to guarantee him victory after

victory over fear-stricken armies. Constantine issued an edict giving complete toleration to Christians, and in the succeeding years of his rule, issued edicts suppressing heathen sacrifices, destroying pagan temples, and tolerating no other form of worship than Christianity. He also elevated Christians into high offices in the state, and displaced pagans, while heathen priests lost their great power over the people. Such a displacement of authorities fulfilled the symbolic falling of the stars in John's vision.

In verses 15 to 17, John described how that there would be utter panic and consternation in the Roman world as a result of the "earthquake," so that the populace would think that the end of the world had come. As the Romans saw the Christians' God honoured, and Christians elevated into positions of power, no doubt their guilty consciences convicted them of possible judgment for their sins. John describes how that he saw the Roman populace trying to hide themselves and their heathenism, in the belief that the day of judgment was at hand. When Christ foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, He described how that there would be a similar scene to the above, i.e., **Luke 23-27** to 30, "*Jesus said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me but for yourselves . . . then shall they say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.'*" In the frightful destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. many thought that the end of the world had come. Likewise as Constantine and his army defeated the pagan armies, the latter fled panic-stricken in fear of approaching judgment. Note that it was **ONLY** the Roman populace who cried out that the day of wrath had come. It was **NOT** a Divine authoritative statement but merely the opinion of the Roman inhabitants when they saw and experienced such an amazing upheaval.

The fall of paganism symbolised in the above vision released by the **sixth** seal took place in the years 313 to 395 A.D. Let us note that this great revolutionary change was shown to John immediately following his vision of the martyr church released by the **fifth** seal. Hence once again we see that the prophecies released by the breaking of the seals were all in correct time order as revealed by their fulfilment in Roman history.

REVELATION 7.

We do not read of the breaking of the seventh seal until **Rev. 8**. Therefore the contents of **Rev. 7** must have been written at the end of that portion of the scroll released by the breaking of the sixth seal. Yet as we examine these two visions recorded by John in **Rev. 7**, we see that their fulfilment has no connection with the prophecies first released by the sixth seal. **Rev. 7-1** to **8** describes a process which goes on throughout the whole of the Christian dispensation—the “*sealing*” or marking out of those qualified to be in Christ’s millennial government. The second vision, in verses 9 to 17, shows all those “*overcomers*” resurrected and living in the “*many mansions*” of the “*Father’s house*” during the millennium. Let us now examine the details.

THE FIRST VISION IN REV. 7: Verses 1 to 8.

1. “And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. As the angels hold back the **four** winds of judgment at the **four** corners of the earth, it seems that the whole inhabited earth is meant, and that some world-wide judgment is in the power of these angels who await the command to release it. John then saw “*another angel*” who authoritatively commanded the four angels to withhold the judgment until certain servants of God are “*sealed*.” We wonder who is symbolised by this angel, but let us first find out what the sealing process is, the understanding of which interprets the whole vision.
A “*seal*” is a characteristic mark of identity such as the
2. And I saw another angel ascending from the EAST, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels
3. Saying, ‘Hurt not the earth . . . till WE have SEALED the servants of our God in their foreheads.
4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed . . . an hundred and forty and four thousand (144,000) of all the tribes of Israel.
- 5-8. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand . . . Reuben . . . Gad . . . Aser . . . Nephthalim . . . Manasses . . . Simeon . . . Levi . . . Issachar . . . Zabulon . . . Joseph . . . Benjamin.”

Royal Arms with its heraldic lion and unicorn, etc., which everywhere identifies the nations of the British Empire. Now John heard that 12,000 from each of the tribes received the angel's seal by which they became marked out from the rest of Israel. Paul tells us what this "seal" is in his letter to the Ephesians as in **Eph. 1-13** to 15:—

"In whom (Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth . . . in whom also AFTER that ye believed, ye were SEALED with that Holy Spirit of promise . . ."

It is very plain that the people referred to here as sealed were first of all believers in Christ. As we turn to the story of these Ephesian Christians in **Acts 19-1** to 7, we find when and how they were "sealed."

1. ". . . Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples (i.e., believers in Christ).
2. He said unto them, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' and they said unto him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.'
6. And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

Although these Ephesians were believing Christians they had not even heard of the gift of the Holy Spirit, let alone receive it, until Paul arrived and taught them. Later on, the apostle wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians and reminding them of his visit told them that when they thus received the Holy Spirit they were then "*SEALED*." Therefore the 144,000 represent a body of Christians who have in like manner received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We can now see that the sealing angel symbolises **CHRIST** through whom Christians received that gift. Also the fact that John saw the angel ascending from the **East** shows that he represents Christ, for at the latter's birth the wise men said they had seen "*HIS STAR IN THE EAST*," and Christ told John as in **Rev. 22-16**, "*I am the bright and morning star*," (which rises in the East).

We can now understand why the sealing angel in John's vision authoritatively forbade the angels to

release the winds of judgment upon the earth. In the days of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, Moses repeatedly had to plead with God not to destroy Israel in spite of their repeated sins. In like manner Christ, the captain of Israel's New Testament salvation, pleads with God throughout the Christian dispensation that universal judgment be withheld from Christendom and the world until the "*holy nation*" is completely formed. We note that John heard the angel saying "*Hurt not the earth . . . till WE have sealed the servants of our God.*" This shows that there must have been at least one other being co-operating with the angel in the work of sealing. And so here we see symbolised the joint work of Christ and His Father in sending the gift of the Holy Spirit to the "*overcomers*" out of organised Christendom.

It is also evident that the "*twelve tribes of Israel*" from among whom the 144,000 are sealed are **not** the literal national tribes of Israel but symbolise the visible Christian church of all denominations. Since the true church is being taken out largely from the Anglo-Saxon-Israel race, there is a temptation here to British-Israelites to interpret the "*twelve tribes*" as literally national Israel but we must be consistent in our interpretation of Revelation in which Israel and O.T. institutions **always** symbolise the N.T. Christian church. By 96 A.D. the ten lost tribes had become "*lo-ammi*" or Gentilised, while the Jews of Judah were disinherited and scattered. Yet in John's list the tribe of Judah is mentioned, (and first!) Hence "*Judah*" in **Rev. 7** must only be symbolical along with the rest of the tribes there named. Also we find that John's list omits the tribe of Dan which it would certainly not have done if the list represented literal Israel. The purpose of Dan's omission was to keep the number of the tribes to the symbolic **TWELVE** since with Manasseh there would be thirteen.

Now we notice that the number sealed is 144,000 which is a very small number if interpreted literally. There must be hundreds of thousands to-day, let alone throughout the last 1900 years, who have received the gift of the Spirit; hence the number 144,000 must also be symbolical as we would expect. Twelve is the number

of perfect organisation and government, and the fact that it is made up of **twelve** lots of **twelve** thousand signifies that it represents the completed "*church*," the perfect "*body of Christ*," ready to govern the world. Similarly **Rev. 22-16** likens Christ's millennial government to a city which is 12,000 furlongs long, and 12,000 furlongs broad, which figures again symbolise perfection of government.

John's vision of only a remnant out of professing Christendom being truly born again of the Spirit is in agreement with the actual facts concerning the visible Christian church. Also Christ's message to the seven typical churches showed that only individual overcomers would be found worthy of membership in the millennial government of Christ. Thus John saw concentrated into one act as it were the selection of the "*church*" or "*ecclesia*" which means "*that which is called out*"—a process which we know occupies the whole of the church age. However when the required number to form the millennial government is completed (which completeness is symbolised in the number 144,000) many scriptures foretell that the present dispensation will close with a time of judgment aptly symbolised by the four winds held back by the angels as in the first verse of this vision.

THE SECOND VISION IN REV 7, Verses 9 to 17.

9. "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations . . . stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands;
 13. And one of the elders said unto me, 'What are these . . . ?'
 14. And I said unto him, 'Sir, thou knowest.' And he said to me, 'These are they which came out of THE GREAT TRIBULATION, and have washed their robes, and made them
- In these verses John describes a similar vision to that which he recorded in **Rev. 4** where he saw the throne of God surrounded by the angelic hosts and their rulers. This time however there appeared an additional multitude composed of all nationalities. One of the elders told John that they had made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb, and hence this multitude are **Christians** who in their

- white in the blood of the Lamb.
15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him . . .
 16. They shall hunger no more . . . neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.
 17. For the Lamb . . . shall feed them . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."
- earthly life experienced the forgiveness of their sins through Christ. On the eve of His betrayal and death, Christ comforted His sorrowing disciples with the promise that some day He would return for them that He might lead them to the heavenly home He would prepare for them, i.e., **John 14-1 to 3.**

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you . . . And if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, ye may be also."

As Christ has not yet returned, nor the first resurrection taken place, it is obvious that John's vision of the glorified church is still awaiting fulfilment. Also he noticed that the multitudes had **palms** in their hands which betokened victory. Therefore the multitude of Christians were represented as conquerors over death, so that again we see that this is a vision of the "*church*" of Christ resurrected as a result of His second advent and reigning with Him in glory. Of course the elder spoke to John as if the millennium had come (which time the vision represented) and so looking back at the earthly trials of the faithful, he says of the great multitude "*these are they which came out of (THE) GREAT TRIBULATION.*" (The definite article "*THE*" is in the original Greek.)

Such a description of the dispensation between the first and second advents—"the great tribulation"—was a most appropriate title as far as the true church was concerned. During 1700 years out of the last 1900, faithful Christians have suffered awful persecution from Pagan and then Papal Rome. Christ Himself had forewarned His disciples in **John 16-33**, "*In the world ye shall have TRIBULATION.*" Thus the Elder, looking back over the whole church age, confirmed the accuracy of Christ's prophecy. Even to-day it is only in Anglo-Saxon and

related countries that Christians are free from political persecution, and even there every true Christian more or less suffers because of his testimony.

However in this vision John saw that all trial and suffering was over, and the great multitude of the redeemed "*shall hunger no more . . . neither shall the sun light on them . . . (16) for the Lamb . . . shall feed them . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*" In contrast with her terrible suffering and persecution during her earthly preparation, the true church will enter into joy and bliss and glory dwelling in the presence of God and of Christ forever.

We now begin to see the connection between these two special visions recorded in **Rev. 7**. The first shows the "*overcomers*" qualifying for their millennial calling, and represents them as just a small remnant compared with the masses of professing Christendom. The second shows the **same** sealed Christians having entered into their inheritance of resurrection, no more a persecuted remnant but united together to form a countless multitude. In one vision the overcomers are described as the elect out of "*Israel*" symbolising the professing church. In the other, they are shown as the "*body*" of Christ will be, representative of all nationalities.

* * * * *

In conclusion let us analyse the reasons for the apparent intrusion of these two special visions into the historical sequence of the prophecies released by the broken seals.

Firstly :—Until the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity, the church was so persecuted that it contained only genuine Christians, and was for the most part apostolic in its teaching and experience. At the nominal conversion of the Empire, however, multitudes went through a formal confession of Christianity by obeying the ordinance of baptism, etc., and produced a church which was only Christian in form and ceremony. The majority of its members lacked the real sealing of the Spirit of God. How appropriate then that the vision

in **Rev. 7** should follow immediately after the sixth seal which symbolised that conversion of the Roman Empire ; surely the vision of the remnant of 144,000 must have acted as a warning to Christian Rome that there was something more necessary than mere outward profession to qualify for resurrection life.

Secondly :— At the conversion of Pagan Rome to Christianity, the church began to spiritualise the promises made to Israel in the O.T. and to claim titles solely belonging to national Israel. Hence it was appropriate that John's vision, which symbolised the organised church as "*the twelve tribes of Israel*" should be recorded in Revelation at the very stage of history when the church began to call herself "*Israel*."

Thirdly :—The martyrs-to-be of Pagan Rome must have seen themselves fulfilling the vision of the martyrs released by the fifth seal as in **Rev. 6-9** to 11. There they saw that the martyrs were given "*white robes*" and hence were counted worthy of eternal life ; then as they looked across the page to **Rev. 7**, they would see the same white-robed martyrs reigning with Christ in resurrection glory during the millennium and for ever. When the martyrs read of this their future glory, how they must have been inspired to refuse to deviate from their faith at any cost. How appropriate then that the vision of the glorified church in **Rev. 7** should follow as quickly as possible after the vision of the martyrs presenting their bodies to God as living sacrifices because of their Christian testimony.

Fourthly :—The prophecy released by the sixth seal in **Rev. 6** symbolised the revolutionary change from Pagan Rome to Christian Rome. The seventh seal in **Rev. 8** released seven trumpets whose successive soundings released seven judgments against apostate Christendom. Hence **Rev. 7** comes at the natural dividing point in the Christian dispensation—midway between Pagan and Papal Rome. Therefore the two visions described in **Rev. 7** could not have been placed in a better position in Revelation from the point of view of interfering as little as possible with the general historical sequence of events symbolised under the seals and trumpets.

REVELATION 8.

REV. 8-1 to 6.

1. "And when he had opened the seventh seal . . . I saw . . . seven angels . . . and to them were given SEVEN TRUMPETS. Verse 1 describes the breaking of the seventh seal which released the remaining portion of the scroll whose contents were then translated into action before John in seven acts at the blowing of seven trumpets. In the Old Testament, trumpets were blown to announce that the Lord was about to judge the enemies of His people. Likewise as each of the above trumpets sounded, John saw that the Roman "earth" and its peoples were invaded and thus judged.
3. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.
4. And the smoke of the incense . . . with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God.
5. And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it unto the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

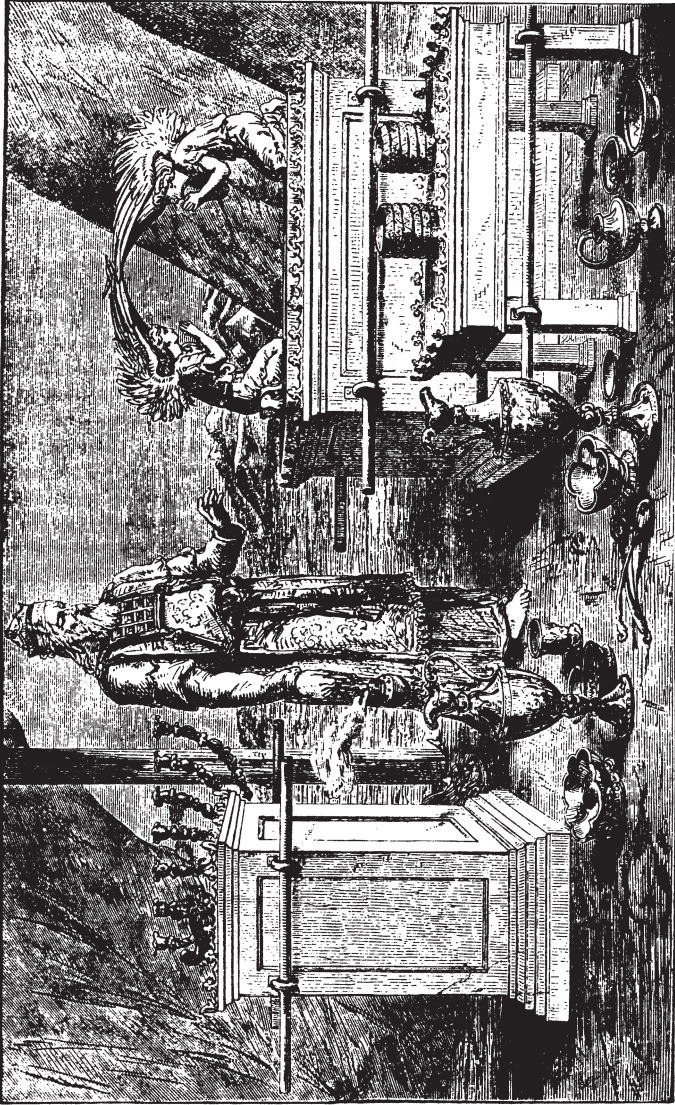
In verses 3 to 5, we read of a preliminary vision in which John was shown the cause of the seven judgments about to be released. We saw how the events of the sixth seal represented the fall of Paganism. Yet by the end of the fourth century, Christianity had become apostate in that the martyrs came to be worshipped as mediators to God instead of Christ the only High Priest. There was however a faithful remnant of true Christians whose worship John saw in O.T. symbols ascending to God as in verses 3 to 5. In the Old Covenant the High Priest used to stand at the altar of sacrifice and there receive gifts of incense from the Israelites as part of their worship of God. However the incense was not received by God unless burnt upon fire off the altar, and unless carried into the Holy place by the High Priest who offered the incense on the golden altar before the Holy of Holies. Thus in John's vision, the "*angel*" represents Christ, the High Priest of the New Covenant receiving the gifts of spiritual incense—the praise and worship of true

Christians, and through His intercession carrying their worship into the presence of God.

Such a vision was a rebuke to Roman Christianity which at the time of the fulfilment of **Rev. 8** had forsaken Christ as the one and only mediator to God and hence deserved judgment. John thus saw that the "*angel*" took "*fire of the altar and cast it into the earth,*" causing "*thunderings, and lightnings and an earthquake.*" The latter symbolised the approaching storms of judgment about to be released upon the Roman Empire because of her previous persecutions of the Christians, and then her paganising of Christianity by which Christ was forsaken as the only High Priest and in His place idols of saints worshipped, etc.

On the death of the Emperor Theodosius in 395 A.D., the **Goths** who had already moved into lands of the Empire during the fourth century, revolted from their allegiance to Rome, and the call to arms sounded throughout the Empire. Such a revolution was not only like an "*earthquake*" but also like "*thunderings and lightnings*" in that it gave warning of the approaching storms of judgment about to break on the Empire in the Gothic invasions.

In the judgments released by the seven trumpets, we notice that a phrase—"the *THIRD PART*"—is repeatedly used, and we see that certain judgments were to fall on particular "*third parts*" of the Empire. It is very remarkable that during the fourth century which saw the fulfilment of the sixth seal in the fall of Roman heathenism, the Empire was on three occasions divided into three parts under the rule of three Emperors—at Constantine's conversion 312 A.D.; at his death in 337 A.D., and from 383 to 387 A.D. At other times it was ruled by one or two Emperors. Such trisections seemed to be forewarnings of the coming judgments prophesied in **Rev. 8**. It is of course impossible to obtain any idea as to the actual boundaries of the "*third parts*" mentioned in **Rev. 8** and **9** until we see the fulfilment of their prophecies in history. We then have a wonderful confirmation of the accuracy of these prophecies in that three different races, the **Goths**, the **Arabs**, and the **Turks** each



A representation of the furniture of the Old Testament tabernacle:—
the golden altar of incense; the candlestick; the High Priest carrying the censer; the ark of the covenant.

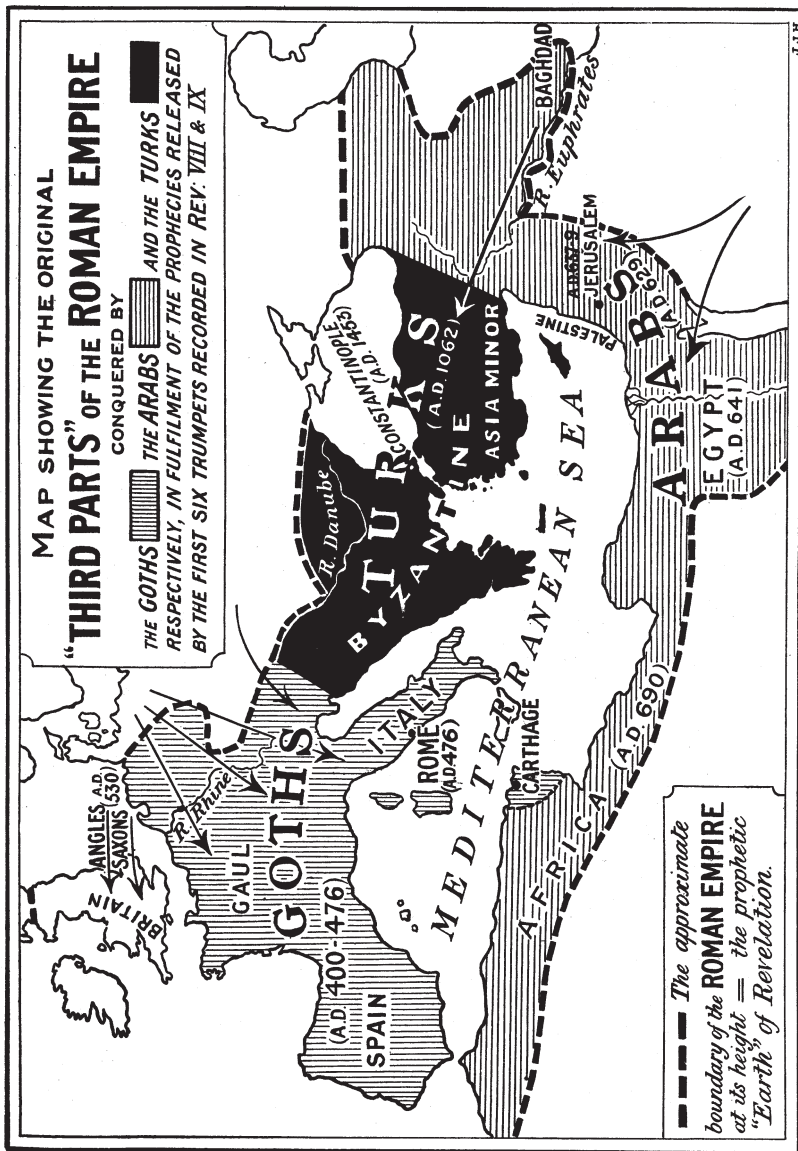
invaded and scourged a "*third part*," thus covering between them the whole of the former Roman Empire.

Now we notice that the first four trumpets occupy only the last seven verses of **Rev. 8**, and hence we should expect their prophecies to have been fulfilled quickly in proportion to the small space allotted to them. We also see that the first four trumpets all release judgments on a certain "*third part*" of the Empire, apparently the same "*third*"—in one case its lands, in another its sea, and then its rulers, and finally its rulers. This conclusion is supported by the fact that there could not be four different "*thirds*"; also the **first four seals** all released prophecies concerning the same "*earth*" which was in each case symbolised by a horse, which linked the four seals together. If we reason by analogy, then the **first four trumpets** have to do with the same "*third part*" which phrase likewise links them together. We ask which portion of the Roman Empire first permanently fell to foreign invasion? History answers that from 400 to 476 A.D. the **Goths** overran Gaul, Spain, Italy and Carthage including the Western Mediterranean, while in 476 A.D. the Imperial rule ceased in that Western "*third*" of the Empire.

Now the judgment released by the fifth trumpet, as in **Rev. 9**, is totally different, and we see that it was to be in the form of a religious war since the invaders would especially attack idolatrous Christians. We recognise this judgment as fulfilled in the **Arab** invasion of Palestine and the African Provinces in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. History shows how those Mohammedans conquered another "*third part*" of the Empire.

The judgment released by the sixth trumpet definitely tells us that it would result in the fall of another third of the Empire, and true to this prophecy the **Turks** conquered the remaining section of the old Roman Empire, namely, Asia Minor, the Balkans, and as far north as Austria.

The seventh trumpet whose sounding is recorded in **Rev. 11-15** contains the final judgments on the Roman earth, the expansion of the Commonwealth of Israel and the return of Christ as King; therefore the



prophecies released by the seven trumpets and recorded in **Rev. 8 to 11** must cover the period from the fifth century A.D. right up to and including the second advent.

Let us now examine in detail the prophecies released by each trumpet.

THE FIRST TRUMPET: REV. 8-7.

“The first angel sounded, and there followed HAIL, and fire mingled with blood . . . cast upon the earth: and the third part of TREES was burnt up.”

The origin of this desolation was from the north as signified by the “*hail*” which could only come from the cold north. Every history

book on the Roman Empire records that in the years 400-410 A.D. the **GOTHS** led by **Alaric** came from the north and laid waste Italy destroying the vegetation as they went. We remember being taught at school how the Romans had to leave Britain in 410 A.D. to defend Rome against those Goths.

THE SECOND TRUMPET: REV. 8-8, 9.

“And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the SEA . . . and the third part of the ships were destroyed.”

History also shows the fulfilment of this prophecy. In 425 A.D. another branch of the Goths known as the **VANDALS**, ravaged Gaul

and Spain and then crossed to Africa. Under their leader **Genseric** in 439 A.D., they captured Carthage where they built their fleets which (for 30 years) pirated the isles and sea coasts of the Western third of the Mediterranean, and destroyed the navies of Rome.

THE THIRD TRUMPET: REV. 8-10, 11.

“And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great STAR from heaven . . . upon the third part of the RIVERS and fountains of waters.”

Again history books give us the fulfilment. In 450 A.D., the **HUNS** led by **Attila** their great leader (called in history the “*scourge of*


God!”) made desolate the valleys of the upper Danube and the river Rhine. From thence in 451 A.D. the Huns moved in their path of destruction and bloodshed to the Alps of northern Italy thus falling on the “*fountains*” or sources of the rivers in this Western third of the Empire.

The Seven Trumpets of Rev. VIII - XI


1ST  A third part of the trees was burnt.
 Rev. VIII: 7

GOTHS
 [ALARIC]
 A.D. 400
 410



2ND  A third part of the ships destroyed.
 Rev. VIII: 8-9


VANDALS
 [GENSERIC]
 A.D. 425
 470




3RD  A third part of the rivers and fountains.
 Rev. VIII: 10-11

HUNS
 [ATTILA]
 A.D. 451



4TH  A third part of the sun darkened.
 Rev. VIII: 12


HERULI
 [ODOACER]
 A.D. 476




5TH  Locusts war against idolatry.
1ST WOE
 Rev. IX: 1-11

ARABS
 A.D. 612
 150 YRS
 762



6TH  Horsemen to slay the third part.
2ND WOE
 Rev. IX: 13-21.

TURKS
 A.D. 1062 ← 391 YEARS → A.D. 1455 1690 A.D.



7TH  "Thy wrath is come."
3RD WOE
 Rev. XI: 15-19

7 VIALS

COMMUNISM
 FRENCH REVOLUTION A.D. 1789
 SOVIET RUSSIA
 A.D. 1917 +



THE FOURTH TRUMPET: REV. 8-12.

“And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun . . . the moon . . . and the stars . . . was smitten . . .”

These lights in the miniature sky of John’s visions symbolised the ruling powers in the political heavens of the Roman Empire. In 476 A.D. the **HERULI**, another branch of the Goths, led by **Odoacer** entered Rome and caused the banishment of the Emperor, Romulus Augustulus, and the cessation of the Imperial rule. Emperors continued to rule over the rest of the Empire in the East, but from 476 A.D. onwards a **third** of the former Empire passed under the rule of the victorious “barbarian” invaders. This was symbolised to John by the complete darkening of a **third** of the heavenly lights in his vision.

We can now see why the prophecies released by the first four trumpets concerning the Gothic invasions occupy so few verses in Revelation—because they were fulfilled in such a short space of time, 400-476 A.D. On the other hand, the last verse of **Rev. 8** gave warning that the three remaining trumpets would be far more serious and enduring in their desolations.

REV. 8-13.

“And I heard an angel . . . saying ‘WOE, WOE, WOE to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices which are yet to sound!’”

To express the terrible nature of the judgments foretold under the last three trumpets, they are called **“WOES.”** Thus the fifth trumpet is referred to as the first woe; the sixth trumpet is the second woe, and the seventh trumpet is the third woe.

The Eastern section of the Roman Empire, along with the African provinces, survived the Gothic invasions and Constantinople flourished under the title of the “new Rome.” At the same time there developed in the East a superstitious relic-worshipping apostate Christianity (the Greek church) which was to bring upon itself the judgments of God. **Rev. 9** is John’s record of his visions of those judgments which he saw released at the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets.

REVELATION 9.

We are not told the countries from whence the attacking "*locusts*" of the fifth trumpet came, but all the symbols used are distinctly **Arabic** in character. The sixth trumpet, on the other hand, clearly gives the origin of the avenging hordes it released as the "*river Euphrates*." Therefore we look into the history of the Near East for the rise of two mighty desolating forces which would, as a scourge against corrupt Christianity, make war against the remaining "*third parts*" of the Roman Empire. Let us first examine the prophecy John saw released by the fifth trumpet.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET: REV. 9-1 to 11.

"And the fifth angel sounded . . . and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth . . .

4. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass . . . neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God.

5. . . . that they should be tormented FIVE MONTHS . . . as the torment of a scorpion.

7. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto HORSES prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns of gold and their faces were as the faces of men.

8. And they had hair as the hair of women . . .

9. And they had breastplates as it were . . . of iron . . .

(10) And their power was to hurt men five months."

mass of Roman and Greek

The "*sun*" here again symbolises the highest political rule in the Roman "*earth*." As Western Rome had fallen beneath the Gothic invasions symbolised in the first four trumpets, the "*sun*" would be the Imperial power now centred at Constantinople. The darkening of the sun and the air by smoke out of the pit would symbolise the weakening of the remaining Imperial rule, and the obscuring of Eastern Christianity by some evil Satanic influence. We read that **out** of the smoke came forth hosts of attackers like "*locusts*," but whose object was not to destroy the green countryside as in the case of the Goths, but to attack those people who had not the "*seal of God*," that is, the Christians who were Christian

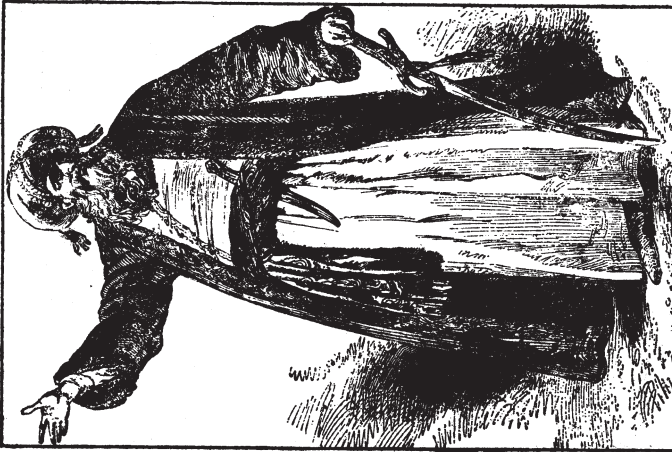
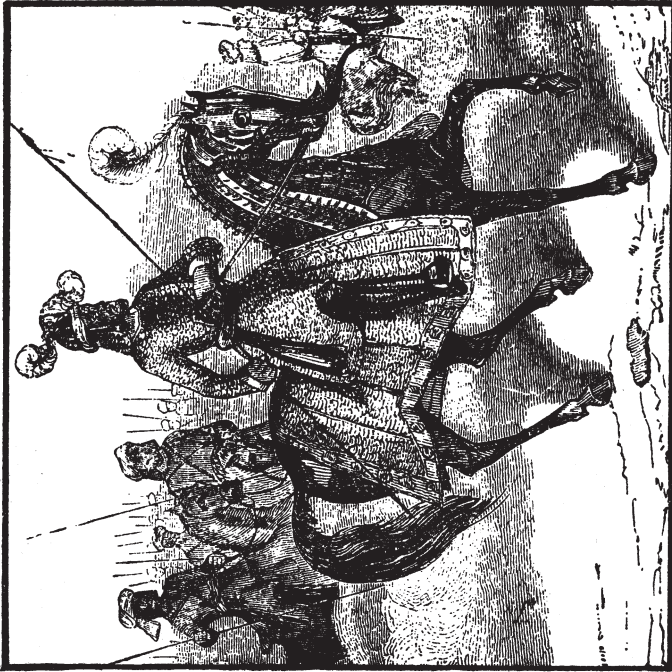
in name but idolatrous and heathen in practice. Therefore this fifth trumpet would release a **religious war**.

About 610 A.D., at Mecca in Arabia, **MOHAMMED** privately proclaimed a new religion which he professed to have received by Divine revelation, but which actually was Satan-inspired and from the "*pit*" as **Rev. 9** had foretold. In 612 A.D. he proclaimed his mission to convert all infidels and so-called Christians to the Koran with his cry that "*there was one God, and Allah was his name, and Mohammed was His prophet.*" The religion which henceforth spread under the leadership of Mohammed and his successors was the "*smoke*" which overshadowed the "*sun*" of Imperial rule in the East, and almost obliterated Christianity in many of those lands.

John saw that "*out of the smoke,*" that is a result of the Mohammedan faith, there came forth attackers like "*locusts*" in number and origin, and like "*scorpions*" as to their sting when they "*tormented Christians.*" Now the literal scorpions and locusts come from Arabia, and so in John's visions they represented the **Arabs** who as a result of accepting Mohammedanism went forth with the avowed aim of destroying idolatrous Christianity.

We know that the Arabs made it a principle not to lay waste the countryside, (according to the law in their Koran,) a unique characteristic clearly foretold to John. Their one object as stated in Revelation was to destroy an obviously corrupted Christianity, and historians record how the Arabs offered their enemies the choice of accepting the Koran, or of paying tribute money, or of death by the sword. Such action was symbolised to John when he saw that the locusts would "*torment*" the apostate Christians.

Verses 7 to 9 describe other characteristics of the locusts which clearly identify them as the Mohammedan Arabs. The latter were skilled "*horsemen*" who wore turbans ("*crowns of gold*"); also they were bearded ("*faces . . . as men*") and had long hair ("*as women*"); they also introduced the use of chain armour, ("*breast-plates as it were of . . . iron*"). The enclosed illustration of an Arab horseman confirms these details.



Left:—A typical picture of Mohammed seen in books on Arabian history.
Right:—The picture of an Arabian horseman used in the Pictorial Bible to illustrate the locust woe.

The period of time during which this Arabian scourge would successfully war against Christendom is twice named in **Rev. 9** as "*five months*" which would be $5 \times 30 = 150$ prophetic days, or **150 years** in fulfilled prophecy. The question arises when to date the commencement of this period of aggressive torment of Christendom by the Mohammedans?

In 612 A.D. Mohammed proclaimed his mission. In 622, the year 1 of the Mohammedan calendar, he fled from enemies to Medina where he organised his religiously fanatic converts into an army. In 629 A.D. the war against Christendom commenced with the conquest of Arabia. Under succeeding Caliphs, the Arabs conquered Palestine and Syria in 637-9 A.D.; Egypt by 641 A.D.; all northern Africa by 707 A.D., and Spain by 713 A.D. Thus history gives us the dates 612 to 629 A.D. as the commencement of the "*locust woe.*" Then 150 years later is the period 762 to 779 A.D., when we should expect the "*woe*" to cease its victorious aggression.

As we turn to the pages of history we find that in 755 A.D. a rival Caliph arose in the west causing a division in the Mohammedan power. In 761 A.D. the Arabs began to be driven out of Spain, while in 762 A.D. exactly 150 years from the year Mohammed proclaimed his mission, the Eastern Caliph or head of Mohammedanism shifted the centre of the Arab Empire from Syria to the far away east, and founded Baghdad. Thence from 762 A.D. onwards the "*locusts*" retraced their flight, as it were, and retired from aggressive torment. In conclusion, let it be noted that the Arabs conquered another "*third part*" of the former Roman Empire.

At the end of this vision John records the comment in verse 12 that "*one woe is past; there come two woes more hereafter,*" which shows that there would be an interval of time before the rise of the second woe released by the sixth trumpet. Such a prophesied interval is true to the facts of history since two centuries passed before the next scourge of Christianity known as the Turks arose in the East. Let us now examine the details of the prophecies released by the sixth trumpet and recorded in verses 13 to 21.



The so-called "Mosque of Omar" on the temple site, (above the Jews' Wailing Wall) standing as the evidence of the conquests of the Mohammedan Arabs in the seventh century A.D.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET: REV. 9-13 to 21.

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice . . . saying to the sixth angel . . . Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15. . . which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the THIRD PART of men.
16. And the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred myriads.
18. By these three was the third part of men killed—by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.
19. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails . . ."

John saw the sixth trumpet release multitudes of military horsemen from the valley of the Euphrates whose object was to subjugate the "*third part of men*"—the remaining Eastern third of the former Roman Empire untouched by the Goths or the Arabs.

History describes for us the rise of a great military nation of unique horsemen from the valley of the Euphrates in the eleventh century A.D.—namely, the **TURKS.**

The latter adopted Mohammedanism as their faith and incentive, so that what was left of Eastern Christianity became the object of their destruction. Historians unanimously record that the determined objective of the Turks was to conquer the remaining section of the Roman Empire (called in history the Byzantine Empire) whose capital was Constantinople. After four centuries of aggression the Turks achieved their aim, made Constantinople their own capital, and thus "*slew the third part of men.*"

John saw that there would be a period of "*one hour, one day, one month, (or 30 prophetic days) and one year (or 360 prophetic days)*" which total 391 prophetic days, that is 391 **years** in fulfilled prophecy, before the horsemen of the second woe would conquer the remaining "*third part*" of the old Roman Empire. If we date the rise of the Turks from the year 1062 A.D., (when the Turks crossed the Euphrates at the commencement of their conquest of Eastern Christendom), then 391 years later is the year 1453 A.D. when **CONSTANTINOPLE** fell. It is remarkable how the Crusaders held up the advance of the Turks into Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when hundreds of thousands of "Christians" from Europe lost their lives endeavouring to withstand the woe of the sixth trumpet. However when the prophesied period of 391 years began to draw to its close, the Turks crossed into Europe and conquered more and more of the remaining "*third;*" i.e., Bulgaria (1389), Salonica (1430), Serbia (1438), and Greece (1446). By 1453 practically the whole of the Eastern Roman Empire had fallen to the Turks, except its capital which fell in May of that very year which was the 391st year of the Turkish woe against Christendom.

In verse 18 we read that it would be by the use of fire, smoke, and brimstone or sulphur that the horsemen of the sixth trumpet would gain their victory. We see hear a direct reference to the unique use the Turks made of **gunpowder**. We notice in verse 19 that John saw the fire and smoke belching forth from the mouths and tails of the horses, which seems strange until we realise the reference to **artillery**. John saw in his vision the cannon being dragged into action at the tails of the horses and



The Church of St. Sophia, the former centre of Eastern Christendom
 . . . converted into a Mosque by the Turks in 1453 A.D.

then swung round so that out of their "*mouths*" went forth fire, etc. Constantinople was almost an impregnable fortress and had repeatedly held out against the Arabs, but the remarkable use which the Turks made of cannon battered breaches into the walls. How accurate then was the prophecy that it would be by these means that Constantinople would fall. The city of Constantine with its famous Church of St. Sophia had been the centre of Eastern Christianity as well as the Imperial seat, but in 1453 all that came to an end, and instead there arose the mosques of Mohammedanism.

However it must be pointed out that the "*woe*" of the Turks against Christendom did not cease in 1453 A.D. They had accomplished their purpose and mission in conquering the remaining "*third part*" of the old Roman Empire, but for another two centuries they attacked Western Christendom. Thus John does not record the passing of the second woe until verse 13 of the next chapter, **Rev. 10**. Yet the Turks never advanced any further into Europe than the northern boundary of their allotted "*third part*" which fact remarkably confirmed the accuracy of the scriptures.

REVELATION 10.

20. "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should worship IDOLS . . . which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.
21. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries . . . nor of their thefts."

Chapter 9 closes with the comment that the rest of men, not conquered by the Arabs or Turks, that is Western Europe, would take no profit or warning from the experience of the Eastern church, and continue the manufacture and worship of lifeless idols. There is no doubt that these verses refer to the idolatrous Church of Rome which still persisted in martyring true Christians and deceiving the nations by her fables and superstitions, as well as robbing the people of their money by "indulgences," etc. That Church failed to see the judgments of God in the Mohammedan invasions, and actually sent the Crusades to fight the Turks instead of repenting of its own sins! Thus we are not surprised to find that the seventh trumpet or "*third woe*" (**Rev. 11**) would release the judgment of wars and revolutions on the Roman Catholic nations. First, however, John describes in **Rev. 10** a dramatisation in five acts of the glorious **PROTESTANT REFORMATION** which marked out the Israel nations from the rest of Europe. It will be seen how that John himself took part in the dramatisation, by acting the experiences of the Reformers.

ACT 1. REV. 10-1, 2,

1. "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven . . . and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun . . .
2. And he had in his hand a little book open; and he set his right foot upon the sea and his left foot upon the earth."

John's vision of the mighty angel, his sudden descent, appearance and claims, unquestionably symbolises the sudden discovery made by the Reformers led by Luther in 1517 A.D., of CHRIST and His claims.

Just as John saw the rainbow of Divine mercy, so the Reformers awakened to

the mighty truth of the **mercy** of God as expressed in Christ. The face of the angel "*as the sun*" symbolises how they recognised Christ as the "*Sun of righteousness*" not the Pope or any other false mediator. For a thousand years Christendom had been in almost total darkness, since Christ was displaced from the church by numerous counterfeit mediators and false doctrines. Then suddenly and miraculously, from 1517 onwards, an increasing multitude throughout Europe saw the spiritual "*Light of the world*," and realised that Christ alone was their Saviour, their only hope for mercy, their only righteousness, thus fulfilling John's symbolic experience.

The apostle also noticed that the angel held a "*little book open*," as if justifying His claims by the book. We see here symbolised the second great discovery made in the sixteenth century, that of the BIBLE, and that the latter entirely supported the claims of Christ in opposition to the false claims of the Roman church. Except to a persecuted remnant of faithful witnesses, the Bible had been shut away in libraries and monasteries, and closed to the masses because of its Latin language and a spiritually ignorant priesthood. However, from 1517 onwards the Bible was re-discovered, its message again understood, and its contents translated into the languages of all nations so that it became an "open" book for all to read.

Thus the first episode of **Rev. 10** portrayed the commencement of the Reformation through the dual discovery of Christ as the Saviour, and of the Bible which vindicated His claims. True to this prophecy, God first offered a way of escape to Roman Christendom, not a scourge of war such as Eastern Christendom experienced at the hands of the Turks, but a positive awakening of truth concerning the Bible which uncovered the errors of the church. It is also interesting and inspiring to notice the omnipotent guidance of God in the intimate connection between the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, and the Reformation which followed in the next century. Constantinople had been the centre of Greek Christianity, but with the advent of the Turks, scholars fled to the Universities of Western Europe, taking with

them their knowledge of Greek and precious Greek manuscripts of the Bible. The result was a revival in the study of the classical languages, Greek being taught in Europe for the first time in 1458 A.D. Such a "Renaissance" or "New Learning" meant that the Bible which was written in Greek and Latin was studied afresh. In 1516, Erasmus published his famous Greek N.T. thousands of copies of which were eagerly read by the numerous scholars who had already learnt Greek. Translations of the Bible into the languages of the nations automatically followed so that instead of being closed to the masses, it became an open book for all to read.

Then also the invention of printing was made at the same time in the marvellous providence of God. The invention of type, a movable press, how to make paper from rags and pulp, all came when the Bible was rediscovered and about to be translated into the common tongues. Hence the Bible was one of the first books to be printed and instead of being hand-copied on vellum, a tedious and expensive process, the sixteenth century and onwards witnessed the printing of millions of Bibles. This is probably the significance of the fact that John saw a "*LITTLE book open*," that it would be the smaller PRINTED Bible which would cause the Reformation. The following list of dates shows the years in which some of the important printed editions appeared, and the connection with the fall of Constantinople in point of time and cause is evident.

- 1453 A.D.—Flight of Greek scholars to Western Europe.
- 1454 „ —Invention of printing in Germany.
- 1458 „ —Greek first taught in European Universities.
- 1476 „ —Caxton introduced printing into England.
- 1516 „ —Erasmus printed his Greek New Testament.
- 1518 „ —Zwingli printed the first Swiss N.T.
- 1522 „ —Luther's N.T. in German which went into 57 editions in the next ten years.
- 1526 „ —Tyndale's English N.T. A Swedish Bible.
- 1535 „ —Coverdale's complete English Bible.
- 1537 „ —A Danish Bible. Matthew's English Bible.

The Byble in
 Englyshe, that is to saye the con-
 tent of all the holy scrippure, bothe
 of y olde and newe testament truly
 translated after the veryte of the
 hebrue and Greke textes, by y dy-
 ggent studie of dyuerse excellent
 learned men expert in the sayde
 tonges.

Printed by Richard Grafton &
 Edward Whitchurch.

Cum privilegio ad imprimen-
 dum solum.
 1539.



A PRINTING PRESS OF 1498.

(From the Frontispiece to a Book printed in that Year)

The writing on the
 title-page of the
 "Great Bible" which
 was printed in 1539,
 and placed in every
 English church by
 Royal command.



TINDALE and COVERDALE

Left:—Tyndale who first translated the Bible into English from the original Hebrew and Greek.
 Right:—Coverdale who supervised as editor the publication of the "Great Bible."

1539 A.D.—The “Great Bible” printed under Coverdale’s supervision and placed by Royal command in every church for the use of parishioners.
 1611 „ —The King James Authorised Version.

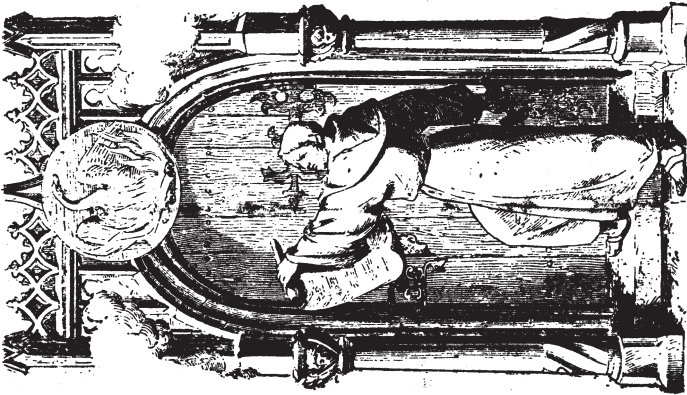
When the masses were then able to purchase Bibles and read them in their own languages, the revolutionary discovery was made that it was Christ and His claims that were all important, not the Pope, or Mary, or any dead saints. The result can easily be visualised. Christendom was stirred through and through, and the scriptural claims of Christ through the instrumentality of the Reformers challenged the whole Papal system. Such a result was exactly foretold in the next dramatic episode of **Rev. 10**, as in verses 3 and 4.

ACT 2. REV. 10-3, 4.

“And (the angel) cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, SEVEN THUNDERS uttered their voices . . . I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, “Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.”

John records how the angel cried with a loud voice like a lion roaring, symbolising the tremendous challenge of Christ the “*Lion of the tribe of Judah*,” to the Church of Rome through the writing and preaching of Reformation leaders, such as Luther, Erasmus, Melanchthon, Zwingli, etc., On October 31st, 1517, Luther challenged the Papal system of “indulgences”—the supposed forgiveness of sins in exchange for payments of money to the church—by nailing his ninety-five theses of his beliefs on the church door at Wittenberg. Within fourteen days the whole of Germany was aroused, and in a month all Christendom agog, so that the church was forced to reply.

It is thus not difficult to interpret the symbolism of “*the seven thunders*” which John heard answering the lion’s roar. Historians often refer to the Papal edicts and Bulls as the “*thunders*” of the Vatican. Also their seven-fold character in verse 3 identified them as the voice of the Papal church whom **Rev. 17-9** foretold would be as a woman sitting upon “*seven hills*,” i.e., centred in seven-hilled Rome. We read that John was about to



Left:—Luther nailing his 95 theses on the church door at Wittenberg, (from "The Story of Luther's Life," by T. S. Rivington)
 Right:—Luther burning the Papal Bull and edicts, December 10th, 1520.

write down the voices of the seven thunders when a Divine voice from heaven restrained him telling him to write them not, (obviously because they were not true; in **Rev. 21-5** we read just the opposite, how John was told to "*write for these words are true and faithful*"). When we remember that in **Rev. 10** John dramatises the experiences of the Reformers, we can see the fulfilment of this episode.

Luther and his followers at first had no idea of separation from Rome, but merely of reformation within the church whose authority they were still prepared to acknowledge. Hence when the leaders of the church replied to Luther in 1518 and 1519, and put forward the awe-inspiring claims as to the infallibility of the church, Luther and his followers were almost overwhelmed. However, in replying to the arrogant claims of the Papacy, Luther found that a "*voice from heaven,*" i.e., the Holy Spirit, intervened and led him to see from the scriptures that the Pope was none other than the expected "Anti-Christ." Hence when the Pope's final Bull excommunicating Luther thundered forth in June, 1520, the Reformer replied by gathering a great audience outside the walls of Wittenberg where he deliberately burnt the Papal Bull and edicts. In this manner the "*seven thunders*" were "*sealed up.*" Luther's experience and example was repeated a millionfold during the Reformation as the Holy Spirit, unveiling the scriptures led multitudes to refuse to accept the false claims of the church.

ACT 3. REV. 10-5 to 7.

"And the angel . . . sware by him that liveth for ever and ever . . . who created heaven and the earth . . . THAT THERE SHOULD BE TIME NO LONGER.

7. But in the days of the voice of the SEVENTH angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

In this episode John records how he heard the angel proclaim with the Divine authority of the Creator Himself that at this point in history "*there should be time no longer,*" for when the seventh angel should sound, the end of the age would come.

We ask how was this incident fulfilled in the days of the Reformation.

When the newly-opened Bible was read by the Reformers, they made the astounding discovery that they themselves were actually fulfilling the prophecies of **Rev. 10**. This meant that they were able to locate their position on the road map of church history which Christ had given to John. What is more they could see that they were not far from the end of that journey. Also they saw that the Turks who had taken Constantinople in 1453 A.D., and were knocking on the gates of Vienna in the very midst of the Reformation, were fulfilling the "*woe*" of the sixth trumpet which commenced in **Rev. 9**. Then as they looked across the page of the Bible to **Rev. 11**, they saw that there was only one more trumpet to sound, and that at that seventh trumpet Christ was to return. Thus in the days of the Reformation there came the mighty awakening that now the second coming of Christ was not something away in the dim future of endless time, but a most practical certainty bound to take place at a definite chronological epoch according to the prophetic word of the Creator. Such a realisation sent a thrill of encouragement through the Reformers who all preached the certain and comparatively near return of Christ. The evangelical section of the church has ever since maintained the same testimony, and with ever increasing certainty as the day draws nearer.

ACT 4. REV. 10-8 to 11.

"And the voice which I heard from heaven (forbidding to write the seven thunders) . . . said, 'Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel.'

9. And I (John) . . . said unto him, 'Give me the little book.' And he said unto me, 'Take it and eat it up.'
10. And it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

In the last verses of **Rev. 10**, we read how John dramatised the experience of the Reformers in their study of the Bible. There is no question that the Holy Spirit, or the "*voice from heaven*," led the Reformers to study or "*eat*" the scriptures. Historians record how that in the Reformation the Bible

11. And he said unto me
 "Thou must prophesy
 again before many peoples,
 and nations . . . and kings."
 became the most treasured
 thing in all the world,
 diligently read by millions.
 carried about in the bosom
 and committed to memory—so sweet was its heavenly
 manna to men and women hungry for God. However . . .
 such spiritual knowledge brought responsibility! The
 unscriptural doctrines of the Church of Rome were
 shown up, and had to be abandoned and reproved by
 those whom God had so awakened. The result was
 suffering and bitter persecution at the hands of the
 church which dominated Europe.

During the thirty years succeeding Luther's protest, all countries experienced the shameful Inquisition which condemned multitudes of true Christians to torture and death because they studied the scriptures. In England, Henry VIII. and Edward VI. had both placed Bibles in all churches with the injunction that it be read and taught. Then came Catholic Mary's reign with the awful persecutions at her instigation when nearly 300 Protestants were inhumanly burnt alive, including Latimer and Ridley. During those same years 1553—58, multitudes were imprisoned and maltreated in shocking circumstances merely because they possessed Bibles and had tasted the sweetness of the gospel of Christ.

The Reformers could not help but share their joy and pass on the good news by every means available. Thus we read in the last verse how John was commissioned to "AGAIN *prophesy* (or teach) *before many peoples, etc.,*" not John personally of course, since he died, but the Reformers whom he dramatized. True to this prophecy, the Reformers, realising that their commission came direct from Christ, restored the preaching of the Bible which characterised the early apostolic church. Pulpits were built for the purpose in the Reformed churches, and evangelism began to be restored after an absence of a thousand years. All nations of Christendom experienced this phase of the Reformation, and numerous kings and princes specially requested the Reformers to preach before them in literal fulfilment of John's commission.

REVELATION 11.

ACT 5. REV. 11-1, 2.

"And there was given me a REED like unto a ROD: and the angel stood saying, 'Rise, and MEASURE the temple of God, and the altar and them that worship therein.

2. But the court which is without the temple LEAVE OUT and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months'."

"*measure*" the temple with its true worshippers, but to "*leave out*" or literally "*CAST OUT*" the outer court of the Gentiles, and not "*measure*" it. (When Solomon built the temple, he added an outer court to accommodate Gentiles who desired to worship God.)

And so the Reformers found that the Bible became in their hands a Divinely authoritative measuring-rule by which they were able to "*measure*" or plan out the dimensions of what the true church ought to be like. The first Christian church founded by Christ and His apostles was of course in Divine order. Then came the "*falling away*" into idolatry and unscriptural practices throughout the Middle Ages. With the re-discovery of Christ and the Bible, the Reformers realised the need of a RE-FORMATION of the true church. Hence when the rulers in Germany, Switzerland, England, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, etc., placed Royal authority in the hands of the Reformers, the latter drew up the constitution of the true church using the Bible as their guide or measuring rule. Thus there came into being the Protestant Re-formed churches, in literal fulfilment of John's commission to "*measure*" the temple or true church.

At the same time we notice that John was specially instructed NOT to "*measure*" the court of the Gentiles, but to reject it. In fulfilment of this episode, the

The first two verses of **Rev. 11** dramatise the final and crowning act of the Reformation—the division of Christendom into two churches Protestant and Roman Catholic. John was given a "*reed*" or measuring-rule which he describes as being like a "*rod*" or Royal Sceptre, and he was told to

Reformers made no endeavour to reconstitute or re-form the Church of Rome but entirely rejected all Romish doctrines, practices, and worshippers.

THE REFORMERS' DISCOVERY OF GOD'S TRUE WITNESSES.

3. "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth.
 4. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."
- From verse 2 to verse 12, we read of another series of prophecies this time concerning a faithful remnant of Christians who would witness to the truth throughout the Middle Ages. In the second half of verse 2, John had been told that the Gentiles in the outer court, that is the Latin Roman nations, would "*tread under foot the holy city, forty and two months.*" (1260 "days.") The "*holy city*" or "*New Jerusalem*" always symbolises in the N.T. the true church of Christ, and so we see there a prophecy that the Papal church would oppress all true Christians for 1260 years. Verse 3 then foretells how that during that time Christ would specially empower "*two witnesses*" to maintain the truth of the gospel even though "*clothed in sackcloth,*" that is, under conditions of persecution. True to these prophecies the pages of church history clearly reveal such a line of persecuted witnesses.

We notice that John was told that the truth of Christ would be maintained by "*TWO witnesses*" which number suggests another witness besides that of the faithful Christians. In the Mosaic law two witnesses were always required to establish a conclusive testimony. Verses 4 to 6 enumerate various characteristics of the two witnesses by which we can not only identify them but also distinguish one from the other. In verse 4, one witness is likened to "*two candlesticks,*" and the other to "*two olive trees.*" This metaphor is repeated from **Zech. 4-11** to 14 where the prophet visualised two olive trees one on each side of a candlestick into which they fed the oil for burning. Now Christ told John in **Rev. 1-20** that a candlestick symbolised a church. Therefore Zechariah



Illustrating the persecution by Rome of Christ's "two witnesses."
 Left:—Bishops Latimer and Ridley burnt alive at Oxford, 16th October, 1555, during Catholic Mary's reign.
 Right:—Bishop Tunstall burning the first edition of Tindale's N.T. in English, at Paul's Cross, May, 1530.

saw symbolised in his vision the O.T. Israel church, while John saw “*TWO candlesticks*” representing the N.T. church as well. Hence we conclude that one of the witnesses is the true church. This identity is further confirmed in **Acts 1-8** where Christ told his disciples who formed the early N.T. church, “*Ye shall be WITNESSES UNTO ME . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth.*”

We now ask who is the second witness symbolised by the “*two olive trees*” which supplied the candlesticks with oil for their light? **Zech. 4-14** tells us they are “*the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord,*” i.e. the prophets and apostles of the Old and New Testaments, whose writings we now call the Bible. It has always been the scriptures from Moses to John which have supplied the “*oil*” by which the church has been a light in the world’s spiritual darkness. Thus the second witness of Christ is the Bible, and this is amply borne out by its own admission. In **John 5-39**, Christ said “*Search the SCRIPTURES for they are they which TESTIFY (or witness) OF ME.*” Hence the two witnesses are without doubt (1) the faithful church both B.C. and A.D. symbolised by the two candlesticks, and (2) the Bible consisting of the Old and the New Testaments symbolised by the two olive trees.

Thus verses 3 and 4 represent the Divine revelation which came to the Reformers showing them that Christ’s true church were the martyrs who had witnessed to the truth of the scriptures, and NOT the Roman persecuting church with her unscriptural man-made tradition. In 1563, John Foxe published his famous and unsurpassed “*Book of Martyrs*” which historically reviewed the countless multitudes who had suffered at the hands of the Papal church because of their true testimony. Modern editions of Foxe’s history show that even in 1866, the 1260th year of the existence of the Papacy, Protestants were burnt alive at Barletta in Italy. Verses 5 to 12 give further characteristics of Christ’s “*two witnesses*” and particularly their experiences during the Reformation era.

5. “And if any man will hurt History contains many
them, fire proceedeth out illustrations of the fulfilment



Three leaders of Christ's witnessing church.

of their mouth and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed (by fire).

6. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood."

persecuted the witnesses and so least of all suffered from the bloodshed which continually drenched the Continent during the time of the witnesses' special testimony. In regard to verse 6, we know that when Elijah and Moses wielded the Word of God, judgment was poured upon apostate Israel, and the enemies of Israel. Likewise in the days of the N.T., so long as the witnesses were persecuted, God withheld spiritual rain from Europe resulting in the Dark Ages; also the history of Europe in the Middle Ages is one long account of the shedding of blood in war around the water-ways of the Continent.

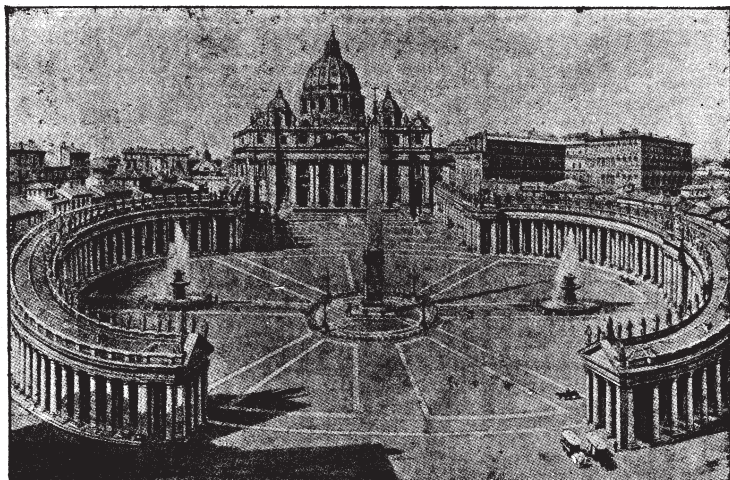
7. "And when they shall have finished (or rather completed) their testimony, the beast . . . shall make war against them, and shall

of these prophecies, for the nations of Europe, such as France and Spain, who persecuted the Christians and their scriptures experienced the awful judgment of wars and revolutions. England on the other hand least of all

It is agreed that the "beast" of verse 7 is the "fourth beast" of prophecy,

overcome them, and kill them." that is the fourth great empire during the times of the Gentiles, namely, the Roman Empire, Pagan and Papal. According to verse 7, there would come a time when the witnesses would finish or complete their testimony, with the result that the beast would make war with them, overcome them, and kill them. The identity of the Papacy as the "man of sin," the "anti-christ," and the final head of the "fourth beast," was not preached by the remnant of witnessing Christians until the twelfth century A.D. Thus it was not until then that their special witnessing for Christ was completed. However, from the twelfth century onwards the Waldenses and the Albigenses (in France), the Wickliffites (in England, 1350 onwards), the Hussites (followers of Huss and Jerome in Bohemia, 1480 onwards,) all preached from the scriptures that the Papacy was the prophesied Anti-christ, that the doctrines of transubstantiation, purgatory, prayers to the saints, infallibility of the Papacy, etc., were false and anti-christian. The result was that the Papacy declared open war against the "heretics," and from the twelfth century onwards the frightful Inquisition was used to exterminate the true church and prevent the scriptures being read in the common tongues. Statistics from history prove that the Papacy was instrumental in killing millions of Christians when it commanded the armies of Europe to butcher whole towns and villages of Waldenses, etc., by fire and sword.

In 1499, the Bohemian Brethren sent representatives through Europe to find if there were any other witnesses with a similar testimony to their own, and found none, so successful had been the Papal war of extermination. On December 16th, 1513, a Papal Bull was issued calling the remaining Bohemian dissentients to present their case before the ninth session of the Fifth Lateran Council convened for May 5th, 1514, with the object of completing the extermination of all "heresies." That day came and the representatives of the church of Western Europe gathered in the Lateran church at Rome to hear the famous proclamation of triumph, "*Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit.*" No witness appeared to



The city of Rome (St. Peter's) the symbolic "street" or meeting-place of the councils of the Church of Rome.

testify to the truth, their voices were silent as if they were all "*killed.*" Evidence of this silence is given in the following extract from an address delivered by A. Pucci before the Lateran Council in Rome in 1516 A.D. "*There is an end of resistance to Papal rule and religion; nobody opposed any more.*" The non-appearance of the witnesses to defend their testimony in the city of Rome, and the consequent jubilation forms the subject of the prophecies in the next verses, 8 to 10:—

8. "And their dead body shall lie in the STREET (literally the meeting place) of the great city, which spiritually is called (by the witnesses) Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.
9. And they (the representatives) of the people and . . . nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, (i.e., for 3½ years there would be no life from the

The "*great city*" which the martyrs and the Reformers referred to as spiritual Sodom and Egypt was the Roman Catholic church which completely dominated all Western Europe. Many references from the writings of the witnesses such as the Waldenses, the Wickliffites and the Reformers could be

- witnesses,) and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.”
10. And they that dwell on the earth shall rejoice over them and make merry, and shall send gifts one to the other, because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.”

quoted to show how they called the Church of Rome “Sodom” because of her impurity, and “Egypt” because of her idolatry. Many times did the martyrs condemn the church for re-crucifying Christ in her persecution of His faithful followers. The “*street*” or meeting-place of the symbolic great city was Rome, the residence of the Papal head, and the meeting-place of the councils of the church. Verse 9 describes how there would come a time when the representatives (“*they of the people, etc.*”), of the nations of Western Christendom would gather in Rome unmolested by the witnesses whom for 3½ prophetic “*days*,” they would regard as merely “*dead bodies*.” True to this prophecy, for 3½ years from 1514 to 1517, the church found the voices of the witnesses silenced and her position unchallenged. The prophecy that the council of the church would not allow the bodies of the witnesses to be put in graves was fulfilled in that during those years of unchallenged supremacy, 1514-17, the council did not allow the witnesses to be forgotten or “*buried*” even though “*dead*” or silenced, but repeatedly issued edicts excommunicating their souls, (if possible,) ordering the scriptures in the common tongues to be burnt, the bones of martyrs to be dug up and burnt, and Christian burial to be refused to all “*heretics*.”

Verse 10 describes the making merry, banqueting and exchange of gifts among the leaders of the church in 1517 when the General Council was dissolved, its purpose of exterminating all “*heretics*” having been apparently accomplished. Historians of the Papacy such as Roscoe in his “*Life of Pope Leo X.*,” (Pope at the Reformation,) confirm the remarkable accuracy of this particular prophecy. There was cause for much rejoicing because the “*two prophets*” now apparently “*dead*” had been a torment. Throughout her history, the Church of Rome fought to prevent the circulation of the scriptures among the nations in their own languages. The reason was obvious since the scriptures disclosed her corruptions



LUTHER AND ERASMUS

of the faith. Hence the repeated burning of Bibles by Rome, because that witness "*tormented*" her. Then when the other witness, the line of faithful Christians, preached the simple gospel of Christ in place of the spurious doctrines of the church, and then identified the Papacy as the prophesied "*man of sin*," they too became a torment to Roman Christendom.

11. "And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, (the two witnesses,) and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.
12. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, 'Come up hither.' And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them."

Verse 11 then made the prophecy that "*after three days and a half*," i.e., $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of silence, the two witnesses would be, as it were, resurrected by the Spirit of God moving through them with resulting fear to their enemies who saw them. On October 31st, 1517, exactly $3\frac{1}{2}$ years from May 5th, 1514,

when the Council of the church announced its absolute suppression of the "heretics," Martin Luther placed his 95 theses on the door of the church of Wittenberg protesting against the unscriptural practices of the church. Within a month, Luther's protest which he supported by the scriptures aroused all Europe. Thus the witnesses as it were "*stood on their feet*" after being as "*dead bodies*" for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. In 1516, Erasmus published his New Testament

in Greek which made possible the translation of the Bible into the common tongues from 1517 onwards. In describing the Reformation, historians often quote the familiar expression, "*Erasmus laid the egg, and Luther hatched it.*" This shows us how inter-dependent the two witnesses were, one upon the other, as they arose again into activity 1517 onwards. Erasmus the scholar of the Bible resurrected the scriptures and opened the way for the printing of millions of Bibles, while Luther the preacher was the forerunner of the multitudes of teacher-witnesses raised up in the Reformation.

Verse 12 makes the comment that the two witnesses would ascend up to "*heaven.*" The latter could not mean the dwelling-place of God since the witnesses did not go out of sight of their enemies but only into an elevated position where "*their enemies beheld them.*" Therefore the heaven of this verse is the political heaven of the European nations, and true to this prophecy the Reformers and their Bibles began to be honoured by kings and princes after a thousand years of being trodden under foot. Instead of the faithful Christians having to worship in caves and woods, nation after nation passed laws granting them tolerance of worship, while high political offices were opened to the Reformers (particularly in Germany, Scandinavia, England and Holland) to the dismay of the Church of Rome. Also the Bible which had been suppressed and burnt by Rome began to be honoured as the very Word of God, and to be regarded as "*the most valuable thing that this world affords*" in the words of the British coronation service.

In 1528, Luther wrote the following remarkable comment which plainly shows the fulfilment of these particular prophecies concerning Christ's witnesses:— "*We are not the first ones who applied the anti-christian kingdom to the Papacy: this many great men have dared to do many years before us and that frankly and openly under the greatest persecution. The old divinely-ordained WITNESSES confirm our doctrine, AND THE BODIES OF THESE SAINTS ARISE as it were among us with the NEWLY-VIVIFIED GOSPEL, and awaken much confidence.*" In these words Luther linked together



A part of the title-page of the "Great Bible." The highest figure in the picture is Christ beneath Whom is Henry 8 handing out the Word of God (Verbum Dei) to the clergy on his right hand, and to the laity on his left. Below, there is depicted the universal joy among the people, and their approval, as they voice the national shout of Israel "God Save the King."

the martyr-witnesses of the Middle Ages with the Reformers as a continuous stream of witnesses for Christ, only broke in their testimony by the 3½ years' silence during the Papal supremacy 1514-17. In 1530 the Reformers began to be known as "Protestants" which comes from a Latin word meaning "Witnesses" again showing how the Reformers were the continuation of the line of Christ's witnesses.

REV. 11-13. THE RETURN OF ISRAEL TO GOD.

"And the same hour there was a great EARTHQUAKE, and the TENTH part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men SEVEN thousands."

This verse describes the effect of the resurrection and elevation of the two witnesses as a great earthquake. The latter in Revelation always symbolises an overturning of established customs and authorities, and such exactly was the Reformation which historians refer to as the greatest revolutionary change since the first advent of Christ. As a result of the earthquake we read that "*a TENTH part of the (great) city fell.*" As we noted before, the "great city" symbolised the Church of Rome which ruled all Western Europe. The tenth part of the city which fell surely symbolised the complete breaking away of England from allegiance to the Papal Church in the days of the Tudors to form a great Protestant witnessing nation. Through the leadership of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Queen Elizabeth, and then James I., the king or queen of England became head of the English church instead of the Papacy. (By the Act of Supremacy, 1536.) Then the adoption of the Book of Common Prayer and the ratification of its "thirty-nine articles" by Act of Parliament and Queen Elizabeth, in 1571, completely severed the English church from Rome.

The rise of Protestant Britain was a strong proof of her Israel identity. In 969 B.C., the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh went into idolatry bringing upon themselves the curse of the "*seven times*" or 2520 years' punishment and dispersion. Exactly 2520 years later was the year 1552 A.D. which saw England in the midst of her renunciation of Roman idolatry. This was the

thousands." A Messianic prophecy in **Micah 5-2** reads "*Thou Bethlehem . . . though thou be little among the THOUSANDS of Judah, etc.*" However when Matthew points out how that prophecy was fulfilled in Christ's birth he quotes the verse, (as in **Matt. 2-6**), as follows, "*Thou Bethlehem art not the least among the PRINCES of Judah, etc.*" Therefore if we likewise translate John's "*seven thousands*" as "*seven princes*" or principedoms, or provinces, we can see that he was referring directly to the breaking away from the Papacy of the provinces which ultimately formed Protestant Holland. The cruel Inquisition in the Netherlands (which were provinces of Catholic Spain) caused such a revolt that in 1579 **seven** of the provinces linked together as the Protestant United Provinces and revolted from Spain and the Papacy. After many years of bloodshed and martyrdom, their independence was recognised in 1629 and modern Holland emerged. Thus the "*seven provinces*" were "*slain*," that is, lost as far as the Papacy was concerned.

In this manner the Book of Revelation recorded the repentance and restoration of the idolatrous House of Israel, exactly as all the prophets had foretold. In contrast, the Latin Roman Catholic nations failed to profit by the lesson of the Turkish desolation of Eastern Christendom, and rejected the great Reformation awakening. Let us then go on to see how John foretold the final judgment of God on unrepentant idolatrous Europe.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET or THIRD WOE.

REV. 11-14 to 19.

14. "The second woe is passed; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. In verse 14, John records that, some time after the Reformation, the "*second woe*" or Turkish war against Christendom would cease; then after a short interval there would come the "*third woe*" released by the seventh trumpet. Verses 15 to 18 foretell that at this time the
15. And the seventh angel sounded (his trumpet) and there were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.'

18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints . . . and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”
19. “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings . . . and great hail.”

Kingdom of Israel would expand and fill the earth, and that Christ will reign as King; the Gentile nations would receive the wrath of God, the dead would be judged, God’s servants rewarded, and the wicked nations destroyed.

The “*lightnings, thunders and hail*,” of verse 19 show that the “*third woe*” would express itself in the form of wars and revolutions.

Now we find that this scene in verse 19 is repeated by John in **Rev. 15-5** during the outpouring of the “seven last plagues of God’s wrath on idolatrous Europe. This proves to us that those seven successive vials of judgment (as described in **Rev. 16**) are the **details** of the “*third woe*” released during the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

We first of all want to know at what point in history did the “*second woe*” or Turkish onslaught of Europe cease? Throughout the 17th century the Turks attacked the Holy Roman Empire and hammered on the gates of Vienna, but at the close of the century they began to experience defeat. As a result of the Treaty of Carlowitz between the Emperor and the Turks in 1699 A.D., the latter lost huge territories, and from that time onwards fear of further invasion of Europe ceased. In the diagram on page 53 there is given a suggested date—1690 A.D.—for the ending of the “*second woe*.” At any rate it could be said that the woe had passed by the year 1700 A.D. Verse 14 foretold that the “*third woe*” would follow “*quickly*.” This shows that there would be a short interval of time between say 1700 A.D., and the sounding of the seventh trumpet with its final judgments on idolatrous Europe. History reveals to us that those desolating judgments began with the French Revolution of 1789 which arose from the atheistic Communism of the 18th century; and ever since wars,

revolutions and **Communism** have and are still destroying Roman Catholic civilisation.

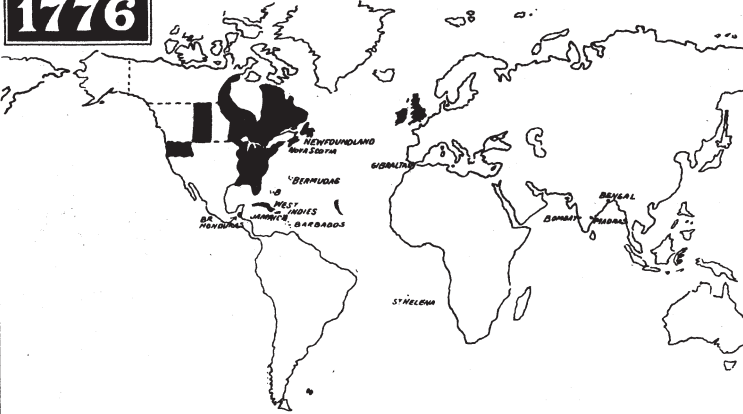
Let us further examine the prophecies in **Rev. 11-15** to 19 as to what would happen during this period of the ending of the "*times of the Gentiles.*" Verse 15 records that during the sounding of the seventh trumpet John heard voices acknowledging that "*the kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdom of our LORD and of His Christ.*" The Kingdom which Christ will be given at His second advent is the "*Kingdom of Jacob*" which should, during this time of wrath on Continental Europe, be expanding into the "*company of nations*" promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Truly history shows the rise of the British Commonwealth of Nations and the United States of America from 1776-1801 A.D. onwards, thus revealing the lost people of Joseph-Israel. The Anglo-Saxon race to-day governs **one-third** of the earth! Here then is the "*House of Jacob*" and the "*throne of David*" which will be Christ's Kingdom at His advent at the close of the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Thus verses 15 to 18 portray a visible intervention of God into the affairs of the nations, the cleansing of the earth of its wickedness, the rewarding of the faithful saints of all ages, and the ushering in of the kingdom of God upon the earth under Christ the King of Kings.

THE REVELATION OF THE TRUE CHURCH IN ISRAEL.

19. "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings . . . and great hail." Verse 19 closes with the comment that during the wars and revolutions of the seventh trumpet, the temple of God was seen opened in heaven, and the ark of the covenant in its midst. The "*temple of God*" during the Christian dispensation is the true church of Christ situated in the midst of national Israel, and the "*ark*" of the new covenant is Christ upon the fleshy tables of whose heart the laws of God were written and perfectly kept. Thus this verse signifies that, during the sound-

Revelation, ch. 11: v. 15.
And the seventh angel sounded;....

1776



1940+



The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ;....

ing of the seventh trumpet, the true church in which Christ dwells by the Holy Spirit would emerge from the obscurity of the Middle Ages and be SEEN ELEVATED into a position of honour and power in the midst of national Israel. True to this prophecy, parallel with the rise of atheism and Communism in Continental Europe, God has poured out His Spirit in Britain and America, particularly from John Wesley onwards. The resulting rise and growth of Anglo-Saxon Missionary and Bible Societies further revealed the true witnessing church of Christ. We note that John records this vision of the exalted church at the end of the sounding of the last trumpet. This would signify that, at the close of the age, the true apostolic Israel church would emerge more distinct than ever from the mass of organised churchianity and will finally be revealed to all the world by her exaltation with Christ at His advent.

In conclusion, the question will be asked how is it that **Rev. 11** leads right up to the end of the Church age, and yet there are eleven more chapters in Revelation? The answer is given in **Rev. 5-1** where we read that the scroll containing the prophecies was "*written within and without.*" When Christ had broken the seventh seal, and translated to John all the prophecies on the inside of the scroll, John's record reached **Rev. 11**. There is no doubt that then Christ turned the scroll over and translated the prophecies written on the outside which John records in the other eleven chapters of Revelation. As we examine the latter we find that they refer to the same Christian dispensation, but rather from the point of view of the political powers of the Roman Empire, Pagan and Papal. Evidently the wisdom of God thought it better to foretell the history of the Christian church, and then the political history of Europe, in two separate series of prophecies. The author has accordingly written his interpretation of the two parts of Revelation in two booklets, and trusts that they will prove a source of help in the understanding of the most difficult part of the Bible, the Book of Revelation.

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