Revelation - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Daily Sacrifice, December 1

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“When the seven thunders had 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”— Revelation 10:4.

FIGURATIVELY, the noise of the thunder is used in many places in Scripture as the voice of God. Elihu so speaks of it; David also, and several of the prophets. In this vision as John beheld the angels of the covenant descending from heaven, to take possession of this lower universe, with the opened book in his hand, the seven thunders of judgment roared through the skies. But their reverberations were silenced by divine authority, and John was commanded not to write what they uttered. Grace has turned aside the judgment of God for all who believe the record He has given concerning His blessed Son.

The storm of judgment broke over His sacred head on Calvary that we might never be exposed to it.

—John Newton.

Daily Sacrifice, December 2

“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” — Revelation 10:7.

WHY did God ever allow sin to lift its hideous form in heaven, first when Lucifer fell and then on earth in Eden’s Paradise? Why did He not destroy Satan and save the human race from his temptations to evil? Why has He permitted all the terrible consequences of sin to go on throughout the millennia that man has been on earth? Why do even the most godly suffer with the worst and vilest? Why? why? why?

All these questions will be answered when the secret of God’s age-long toleration of evil will be revealed at the sounding of the trumpet which shall announce the closing-up of the present dispensation and the ushering in of Immanuel’s righteous reign. Then all mystery will be done away and we shall understand, as we cannot now, just why conditions were allowed to run their course which we may think might better have been prevented. In that day God will be justified in all His ways with men, and we shall realize that He has wrought all in accordance with His infinite love and wisdom.

—C. A. Tindley.

Mysteries of God, Chapter 9.

The Mystery of God Finished

THE final book of the Bible is an apocalypse. It is not apocrypha—that is, something concealed, or hidden—but, indeed, a revelation. It gives the close of all God’s ways with man upon the earth, and vindicates His righteousness both in grace and judgment; but it is primarily a book of judgment, and that threefold. It details the judgments that must fan on apostate Christendom, on disobedient Israel, and on the gainsaying nations.

The heart of the book is the tenth chapter, and the pith of that portion is the angel’s declaration, of verse 7, that “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.” This is the theme of the seven-sealed roll; the vindication of God’s holiness in having so long tolerated evil in His universe. What greater mystery confronts and confuses the human mind than the question, Why does God allow unrighteousness so often to triumph? It is what men call the mystery of Providence; but Providence is only another name for God. This is His secret. He will disclose it in due time, and all shall be clear as the day. Till then, faith rests upon His Word, and trusts His love, however true it may seem to be that goodness and righteousness are at a discount in the present age, and have been so since Cain rose up against his brother and slew him.

His final triumph over all evil is what is so vividly presented in the rapidly-shifting tableau of “the Revelation (not of ‘St. John the Divine,’ but) of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.”

The book is by no means so difficult of spiritual comprehension as some have imagined. It divides naturally into three parts, as intimated in verse 19 of the first chapter. “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things shall be after these things” (literal rendering). The first division is, of course, the opening chapter, with its account of what John had seen—the Lord judging in the midst of the assemblies of His people. “The things which are,” that is, which are now present, or now going on, are the letters to the seven assemblies in chapters two and three.1 The balance of the book is devoted to the third division; — the things which shall follow after the Church’s history on earth is closed. It is the time of the end, the short period of judgment, when all who have refused the grace of God will have to know His vengeance. This is in full accord with what is elsewhere taught most clearly in Scripture.

At the end of the age the tares are gathered in bundles and burned (Matt. 13:30, 40-42); the man without the wedding garment on is cast into outer darkness (Matt. 22:13); the unfaithful servant is appointed his portion with the hypocrites (Matt. 24:48-51); the foolish virgins, though they go for oil, are shut outside (Matt. 25:11); the unprofitable servant has even his profession taken away (vers. 28-30); those who neglected to enter in at the strait gate seek in vain to enter then (Luke 13:24); even as those who refused to be warned by Enoch and Noah perished in the flood, and those who listened not to Lot were destroyed in Sodom (Luke 17:26-30).

These, then, are the ones who become followers of Antichrist, and are crushed by the wrath of the Lamb!

But it is equally plain that the period of Revelation 4 to 19 will not be one of unmixed judgment. Some there are who will become the objects of sovereign grace, and who, though they pass through the terrible tribulation of that time, will be saved out of it. But these are not Christ-rejecters of the present day, whose hearts then become soft, and who own the Saviour they now refuse.

In short, we search Scripture in vain for one hint that any gospel-rejecter will be saved in that day. Nor does the expression in Revelation 7:9 militate against this: “Of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” for manifestly none of Israel will be among them, as we see the 144,000 of the twelve tribes quite distinct from the great multitude. The expression really declares the universality of the response to the everlasting gospel among the heathen nations, but Christendom, as Israel, is not counted, unless, indeed, there be found even there some who never heard the gospel before. This everlasting gospel is not the gospel of the grace of God as now proclaimed, but the good news that the long reign of iniquity is almost over, and the Lord God Omnipotent is about to assert His power, and thus the mystery of His toleration of evil shall be solved at last. There will be found in that day a people who will receive this message with contrition of heart, and turn to Him in repentance, confessing their sins.

And, first of all, we are reminded that this will be the period of Israel’s awakening, as we have already seen in several passages. In Daniel 12:3 we read, “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever”; and this, as the first verse assures us, during the time of trouble; but “at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

The hour of their darkest trouble and deepest sorrow will result in the elect among them returning to the Lord. The 144,000 of Revelation 7 picture to us those who will say, “Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up” (Hos. 6:1). Zion’s sore travail shall result in a great bringing forth of children, as predicted in Micah 5:3 and Isaiah 66:8. We quote the latter passage, “Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” The verses following are deserving also of special notice in this connection. See also Zechariah 12 and 13.

And so the “blindness in part” is to be done away; the “fullness of the Gentiles” having come in, as shown also in Hosea 3:4, 5. “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.” This is true, not of the nation as a whole (see Zechariah 13:8, 9; Isaiah 24:13; also Ezekiel 20:31-44), but of the remnant. The mass will be destroyed for their apostasy. The remnant will be acknowledged as the nation, “and so all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:26). To be of the sons of Jacob even, does not insure an opportunity of grace. None who refuse the truth now, whether Jew or Gentile, can be saved then.

Through the Jew, the gospel of the Kingdom will during this time be preached in all the earth for a witness, ere the end shall come. Sent forth by the Spirit from on high, they will proclaim far and wide the approach of the Kingdom, and call upon men to repent as John the Baptist did of old. See Matthew 24:14. Thus we see grace going out to the Gentiles who have not heard the truth previously. The great result of this is seen also in Zechariah 8:20, 23.

With this agrees our Lord’s teaching as to the judgment of Matthew 25. This takes place at His coming to the earth. The living nations are gathered before Him. The separation is made according to the treatment accorded the Jewish missionaries mentioned above, whom He owns as “My brethren.” Intelligence in divine things is not marked in any, but at least they did not reject or neglect the messengers. They are saved, and enter into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. They are the “blessed of My Father.”

And so, even though the sword of judgment is unsheathed, grace is still exercised according to the word, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy” (Rom. 9:15). From Israel and the Gentiles a countless number will go into the millennial kingdom, and acknowledge the sway of the blessed One, once made a curse for them, as for us. But not one who has spurned the Lamb of God in the present period will be among them.

There will be some who will be numbered with the heavenly saints after the Church is gone. They will be exclusively Jewish, as evidenced by the fact that they sing “the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb” (Rev. 15:3). By martyrdom under the Beast and Antichrist they lose an earthly inheritance and obtain a heavenly one. Their part will be, not with the Church, the Body of Christ and Eve of the last Adam, but doubtless with those of old who “desired a better country, that is, a heavenly” (Heb. 11:16). In Revelation 20 we see them enthroned with the rest who live and reign a thousand years. With the Lamb they will be forever, but not theirs will be the special place enjoyed by those who now believe in Him and who are identified with Him in the present hour of His rejection.

Having thus rapidly sketched the acting’s of God in judgment and in grace, as set forth in the third great division of the Revelation, I turn to notice its order more particularly. It seems to divide into two almost equal parts, each of which covers the same season, or time, only that the latter has Israel more particularly in view, and the former the Gentiles. An appendix is added, having to do with the Church in the glory of God.

The first of these two sections begins with the door opened in heaven, in chapter 4, and goes on to the judgment of the wicked dead, ending at verse 18 of chapter 11. The second portion, or the recapitulation, giving details omitted in the former part, begins with the temple of God opened in heaven (and the ark of His covenant, speaking of His relation to Israel, seen), in verse 19, and goes on to the final judgment of chapter 20. The balance of the book is a kind of appendix, setting forth the glories of the Bride the Lamb’s wife, the heavenly Jerusalem.

It will be noticed that in the beginning of the first section, four and twenty crowned priests are seen in heaven, robed in white and sitting upon thrones, surrounding the throne of God and the Lamb. Unquestionably these are the heavenly saints who have been translated to glory at the

coming of the Lord for His own, according to 1 Thessalonians 4, as seen in the chapter on the Mystery of the Rapture. God is now about to draw His sword for the final conflict, but He takes care to gather His own to Himself ere the judgments fall.

In chapter 5 the Lamb alone is found worthy to take the seven-sealed book—the title-deeds to the earth that once cast Him out. As fast as He breaks the seals, judgments against which men harden themselves fall upon the earth that refused Him, as set forth in chapter 6:8, and 9.

Chapter 7 is a parenthesis, letting us know that, even in that dreadful hour of His wrath, a remnant of Israel, and a great multitude of the heathen nations, shall (as we have already, I trust, seen clearly), be saved for the earth, and the earthly aspect of the millennial kingdom.

The opening of the seventh seal releases the entire scroll, and seven angels who stand before God are given seven trumpets. As Israel of old sounded the trumpets of Jehovah's judgment about Jericho prior to its terrible fall, so these shall sound the downfall of all that man and Satan have built up throughout the ages.

Six of these trumpets sound in chapter 8 and 9. And, as a parenthesis occurred between the sixth and the seventh seal, so here we have another one between the last two trumpets.

The mighty angel of chapter 10, who comes down from heaven, can be none other than the blessed Lord Himself. What created being could be so described? He is "clothed with a cloud (the cloud of the divine glory): and a rainbow was upon His head, and His face was as it were the sun (supreme majesty), and His feet as pillars of fire." Moreover He has the now-opened scroll in His hand, and, as Possessor of all created things, He puts His right foot upon the sea, and His left foot upon the earth. Lifting up His hand to heaven, He "sware by Him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be no longer delay: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, THE MYSTERY OF GOD SHOULD BR FINISHED, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (vers. 6:7).

John is then commanded to eat the book; for prophecy consists not of idle words, or mere intellectual instruction, but is to be received into the heart, that it may enable the man of God to live now in the light of then.

The first fourteen verses of chapter 11 Continue the parenthesis, setting forth the Lord's care for Jerusalem and His judgment on the apostate portion of the nation. The climax is reached in verse 15, when the seventh angel sounds, "and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The world-kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, has come; and He shall reign forever and ever." This involves the complete overthrow of San's power, hence of all evil, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness. Thus the Millennium and the day of judgment at its close are all anticipated. Therefore "the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come: because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged,2 and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest dtroy them which destroy the earth" (vers. 16-18).

Thus the secret of God will be finished, and evil will be seen to be but the dark background against which His grace and His holiness will stand out in bolder relief than if sin had never been permitted to lift up its head in the universe.

As stated above, the second part of the prophecy travels over the same ground, reaching its climax in the judgment of the great white throne. The millennial reign of Christ will be a time of rewards for His saints, and will close with judgment on His adversaries.

This world, yea, the entire universe, may be likened to a business which has become demoralized through wicked devices, and is therefore put into the hands of a receiver, that its affairs may be straightened out. When all is established in order, the receivership comes to an end.

Such a Receiver is our Lord Jesus Christ. Man, ruled by Satan, has hopelessly ruined himself and all over which he was set by God. Jesus is given the receivership. He will bring order out of the existing chaos, and put everything right. "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.... And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15.)

Thus will the receivership be accomplished—evil banished, righteousness triumphant, the mystery finished, and God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—be all in all throughout an eternity of bliss, in which iniquity shall never again rear its head! But none in that unending day of God will sing so sweet a song as those who once were sinners lost and guilty, yea, vile and loathsome too, but who have been saved by grace divine, and shall forever praise the Lamb who died, and extol the precious blood that cleansed from sin's pollution. Had there been no sin, there could have been no Saviour; and oh, how great the loss, to have known our Lord as Sovereign and Creator, but not as the One who died to redeem us to God with His own blood, thus to bind our hearts to Himself for all the ages to come.

—Taos. Kelly.

Daily Sacrifice, December 3

"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" — Revelation 11:1.

WE measure that which we desire to possess for ourselves. When one selects a plot of ground he is concerned as to its length and breadth and its exact limits. The temple of God and those who dwell therein represent Jehovah's peculiar treasure, Israel the rod of His inheritance. This He marks off for Himself at a time when the world outside is still in rebellion against Him. Even so is it now when His little flock constitute the temple in which He dwells by His Spirit in the midst of a hostile scene. Godless men may rage and ridicule those whom the Lord has set apart to Himself, but they are precious in His eyes and under His particular care. He has marked them off from all the rest of mankind as His own sanctuary, a spiritual house in which His grace and power are seen.

The outer court of the temple where the Gentiles were permitted to gather was not measured in John’s vision, for the nations as such are not yet in spiritual relationship with God.

—J. G. Deck.

Daily Sacrifice, December 4

“I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth” — Revelation 11:3.

IN every age God has had His chosen representatives. He has never left Himself without witness. He speaks to men through men to whom He has revealed His will and committed His testimony, whether this be a message of grace, as in the present time, or of judgment as in darker days which lie just beyond this present age. The two witnesses will combine the ministries of Moses the law-giver and Elijah the restorer, as they seek to recall men to a realization of their responsibility to God and to convict them of their folly in rejecting His authority. As they thus testify for Him no power, earthly or infernal, can hinder or thwart them till all is complete. So it is with God’s witnesses now. They are “immortal till their work is done.” If persecuted even unto death it only means to triumph by faith.

All the power of the enemy cannot thwart God’s purpose. That which He has planned in eternity shall be carried out in due time.

Daily Sacrifice, December 5

“They that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth” — Revelation 11:10.

IT is a solemn fact that “unreasonable and wicked men,” as Paul calls them, can make light of the most serious things and even scoff and blaspheme when God’s judgments are being meted out.

The voice of His witnesses disturbs men. They are happy when their testimony is silenced. In this vision we see the Christ-rejecting mass celebrating with carnal joy and fleshly merriment, the fact that God’s messengers are dead and, as they fondly hope, no one again will prod their guilty consciences.

Even as men who have no heart for Christ at the present time celebrate the memorial of His birth by sending gifts one to another, so when His witnesses have ended their testimony, they will rejoice and send presents to their equally guilty friends because the tormenting voices of the witnesses are heard no longer. How loudly this proclaims the incorrigible evil of the human heart when unsubdued by divine grace.

Daily Sacrifice, December 6

“She brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne” — Revelation 12:5.

WE know from Psalms 2 That it is God’s own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is destined to rule the nations with the inflexible rod of righteousness. But when He is manifested as King of kings and Lord of lords His Church will be associated with Him in the government of this world, as we see in Revelation 2:26, 27. The Man Child then speaks of Christ and His Church: He the Head, the Church the Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. As we are to reign with Him in the coming day, we are the objects, as Israel was in the past, of Satanic malice and hatred, but all his efforts to destroy the Seed of the woman, and those who receive life from Him, will prove vain.

Just as our Lord Jesus, the Head, has been caught up to God and His throne, so in due time all His own will be gloried in the same way. Till then it is our privilege to suffer for and with Him, who, in grace, underwent such bitter agony that we might be redeemed to God. Already we are seated in Him in the heavenly places. Soon we shall be with Him there.

—J. G. Deck.

Daily Sacrifice, December 7

“I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” —Revelation 12:10, 11.

THE devil is the prince of the power of the air, the vile leader of a host of wicked spirits in the heavenlies who are engaged constantly in making war on the saints of God. But the time draws near when he and his evil emissaries will be cast down from heaven into this world of which he has been, through long ages, the prince and god. Michael the archangel is the guardian of Israel, and to him is to be given the honor of expelling Satan and his apostate angels from the heavens. The devil has been the accuser of the brethren from the time sin first came into the world, but the advocacy of Christ is the answer to all Satan’s efforts to condemn.

It is the part of wisdom never to underrate the strength of an enemy. Ours is a great and mighty foe, but his power will soon be broken, and he himself cast into the abyss. Meantime, we wrestle, not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in heavenly places, the world-rulers of this darkness.

—Horatius Bonar.

Daily Sacrifice, December 8

“It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” — Revelation 13:7.

IT was God who instituted human government in the beginning. So long as magistrates and rulers recognize that they are His servants and endeavor to rule in His fear and according to His Word, governments are a great blessing to the world. But when those in authority cast off all restraint and refuse allegiance to God, impiously denying His very existence and using their power to deceive and enslave the nations, government becomes a menace to the peace of the world. The beast of John’s vision represents this very thing: power in the hands of man, used in defiance of God. Under such conditions the lot of His children becomes hard indeed, but by grace they will be enabled to overcome, and to live for His glory, no matter how bitter the persecution they may have to endure. This was so under the beast of pagan Rome of old. It will be so under the beast of the atheistic dominion of the last days.

When the demands of government come into conflict with the claims of Christ, then like those of old we must obey God rather than man.

—H. Bonar.

Daily Sacrifice, December 9

“I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads”— Revelation 14:1.

MOUNT Sion is the memorial of grace. It was grace that chose David and enthroned him on Mt. Sion.

When Christ our Lord returns in glory He will appear on this mountain welcomed by a host of His faithful followers who in times of great stress refused to be turned aside either by the persecutions or the allurements of the world. These we are told are the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb, the nucleus of His coming glorious kingdom.

How blessed to contemplate Him as the Lamb on Mt. Sion! It was as the Lamb of God He died to take away the sin of the world. As the Lamb He is now enthroned in heaven, and as the Lamb He will return in triumph. Those who love Him follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

As a lamb He was led to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before its shearers He bore all uncomplainingly. How gladly we should worship Him as the Lamb in the glory of God!

—J. G. Deck.

Daily Sacrifice, December 10

“I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them” —Revelation 14:13.

IT is of course of the dead in Christ that the Holy Spirit so speaks. They are blessed because they are with Him who has redeemed them to Himself. They are absent from the body and present with the Lord. Having departed this life they are now with Christ which is far better than any possible earthly experience. Once they toiled and suffered here below. Now they rest from their labors, as they await the day when all believers shall be manifested at the judgment-seat of Christ and they shall be rewarded for everything they have done for Christ “Their works do follow them.”

To die in the Lord is to enter into eternal blessedness. On the contrary to die out of Christ means endless judgment. Jesus said, “Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins”; and of such He added, “Whither I go, ye cannot come.” Note the vivid contrast: die in the Lord; die in your sins! It is not true as some fondly hope that there is something so purifying about death that all who pass through it will be fitted for heaven. Only those who die in Christ have this blessedness.

—Barbauld.

Daily Sacrifice, December 11

“I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth” — Revelation 16:1.

IT is in response to the anguished cries of suffering saints on earth whose prayers ascend to God continually that the seven angels empty their vials (or, more literally, bowls) of the wrath of God upon the earth. Now God may seem to be indifferent to what godless men inflict upon His people. He says, in Psalms 50:21, “These things hast thou done, and I kept silence.” As a result evil-disposed men take it for granted He is powerless to interfere. But the hour is drawing near when the long silence of God will be broken, and He will pour out His wrath upon that world which has refused to bow in repentance before Him and has manifested its hatred of His laws by oppressing and persecuting His saints. Judgment is according to righteousness, and although long delayed, will fall at last upon those who have dared to defy the living God. While the day of grace lasts, we who know Christ are responsible to seek the salvation of those for whom Christ died, that they may be delivered from the wrath to come. If men refuse to hear and heed the message they are responsible for their own ruin.

—S. Davis.

Daily Sacrifice, December 12

“I saw three unclean spirits like frogs ... which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” — Revelation 16:13-16.

THE name “Armageddon” has caught the imagination of many as signifying a crisis in the great age-long conflict between good and evil. The word means “the mountain of Megiddo.” In the valley below several great battles have been fought which had a decisive effect upon the destiny of the nation of Israel. The last effort of Satan through his unclean minions is to be staged in the same place. There will rage the battle of the great day of God Almighty. And there can be but one possible result. The hosts of hell will be vanquished by the armies of heaven. It is in view of this that the Word goes forth: “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

The nearer we draw to the end of the age, the more we should be concerned about our personal testimony for Christ and about individual holiness of life. It is too late to be careless or indifferent. The times demand godliness of life and faithfulness in witnessing for Christ.

—H. Bonar.

Daily Sacrifice, December 13

“The seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done” — Revelation 16:17.

WHEN Jesus was about to dismiss His spirit to the Father He cried, “It is finished!” thus indicating the consummation of the work of redemption. When the course of this present evil age shall have come to its conclusion a voice will be heard crying, “It is done”; thus declaring that at long last God’s tolerance of iniquity shall have reached its end, and He will purge the world by judgment.

How restful it is to know that nothing takes God by surprise, but that He works all things according to a prearranged plan. “Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.” He has never abdicated His throne as the moral Governor of the universe however much men may ignore Him, and even though Satan is acknowledged by them as the god and prince of this world. Amid all the changing scenes of earth we who trust in the living God may be at peace, for we know He has set a limit beyond which iniquity cannot go, even as lie says to the waves of the sea, “Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.”

—Isaac Watts.

Daily Sacrifice, December 14

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful” — Revelation 17:14.

HUMAN government has been ordained of God in order to restrain the lawless passions of men and to enable the nations to live in peace and quietness. So long as the powers that be recognize their dependence upon Him and seek to rule in His fear, they prove a blessing to mankind. But when government arrays itself against God and His Christ it becomes a curse, and must be destroyed eventually because of its corruption.

The beast is human government at its worst. “Man being in honor abideth not, but is as the beasts that perish.” Of old, pagan Rome made war with the Lamb and endeavored to destroy all who confessed His name. Throughout the centuries many other governments, notably Papal Rome, have followed suit. In our days Bolshevik Russia determined to stamp out all religion of every kind, and even today is but tolerant of Christianity because of political expediency. But no matter how great the power of those nations that make war on the Lamb, the Lamb shall overcome them. He is the earth’s destined King, and His faithful followers shall triumph with Him,

—D. M. M.

Daily Sacrifice, December 15

“I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” —Revelation 18:4.

THE great world-religious system may seem very lofty and imposing for a time, and may appear to be impregnable and beyond all possibility of destruction, But its end is sure, for God has predicted its utter ruin, and “He will not call back His words.” Meantime He would have His own blood-redeemed people separated from everything unholy and walking apart from that which is soon to be devoted to judgment. Hence, the call, “Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues,” We are called upon to walk in separation from evil, refusing all fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Unspiritual people may judge as narrow and bigoted one who seeks to be obedient to God in this matter, but when the hour of retribution strikes, who will not be thankful that he has obeyed the call to separate from every unholy alliance. Separation is not, however, to be merely negative Jest it become Phariseeism. We are to be separate from iniquity, but set apart to Christ. So we shall be preserved from all defilement, and kept for His glory.

— Charlotte Elliott.

Daily Sacrifice, December 16

“The fruits that thy soul lusteth after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all”— Rev. 18:14.

A very literal translation of the first part of this verse reads as follows: “And the fruit-season of thy soul’s desire is gone from thee.” This is both solemn and suggestive, as it tells of the condition of soul into which one falls who trifles with eternal things until they no longer leave any serious impression upon the mind and heart. “The fruit-season of thy soul’s desire,” speaks of those early days when conscience was tender and impressions were made which, if acted upon, would have resulted in salvation and everlasting felicity. But every day of procrastination tends to make the conscience less sensitive and the possibility of eventual salvation more remote, until at last the fruit-season of the soul’s desire is gone, and there is no longer any concern about the things of eternity. It is a very dangerous thing to refuse to heed when God speaks. Many there are who, because of continued rejection of the Word of the Lord, have gone beyond redemption-point in the river of life, and now have lost all concern about their guilt and their danger. It is of God’s great mercy if this is not so with you who are unsaved.

—Violet Ursula Fraser.

Daily Sacrifice, December 17

“After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God” —Revelation 19:1.

ALL the hosts of heaven join in a paean of joy as they celebrate the righteous judgments of the Lord, ending with the glorious doxology, “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!” What a scene of rejoicing that will be when all evil shall be put down and righteousness shall be triumphant at last! No more will the faithful of Christ’s flock be called upon to suffer from the grievous wolves who have sought their destruction through long centuries of conflict and testimony. As they look back they will see how wonderfully the Lord had undertaken for them, and they will realize then, as they cannot now, that for every trial they were called upon to endure there was a “need’s be,” in order that their tested faith might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. No one will then regret any suffering endured for His name’s sake. All will be recognized and rewarded at the day of manifestation.

—Noel’s Col.

Daily Sacrifice, December 18

“I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war” —Revelation 19:11

WHAT a marvelous scene is here depicted, as John with the pen of inspiration presents our blessed Lord as a mighty Conqueror, descending from heaven on a noble white charger with all the armies of heaven—the saints of all ages—in His train. He comes forth heralded as the Faithful and the True, the King of kings and Lord of lords. While identical with the once-lowly Jesus who died for our sins on the cross, the mystery of His nature is known only to the Father and to Himself. He has a name which no man knew, for no man knoweth the Son but the Father. That vesture dipped in blood with which He will be clothed carries our minds back to the cross where the cruel Roman spear pierced His side only to draw forth the blood that saves.

With the sharp sword of His Word He will smite the nations who have persisted in rebellion against His authority, and He will take over the government of earth, ruling with the rod of iron, inflexible righteousness. What a day it will be when all is fulfilled!

—Bakewell.

Daily Sacrifice, December 19

“I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God” —Revelation 19:17.

THERE are two suppers in this stirring chapter. In the earlier part we have the marriage of the Lamb—the supper of grace. Now we are called to consider the great supper of God—the supper of judgment. When the Lord descends to the earth at His second advent He will destroy with the brightness of His coming the armies of evil arrayed against Him and His followers. The carcasses of these men and their beasts are to provide a carrion feast for the birds of prey who shall be summoned to consume them. Thus will the last foes of God and of His Church be destroyed, and so the way prepared for the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth.

Millions of saints have prayed, and millions still pray, “Thy kingdom come”; and we look forward with great longing for the day when God’s will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. When the Son of Man returns, our prayers will all be answered.

—Mrs. Donald A. Dey.

Daily Sacrifice, November 13

“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle” — Revelation 1:13.

IF, like John, we are in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day we too shall be able to see the Son of Man as He walks in the midst of the churches. For it is of these the candlesticks, or lampstands, speak. It is both precious and solemnizing to know that He, the risen, glorified Lord, is moving about among His churches and taking note of all that goes on; commending for everything that is according to His Word, and condemning all that is merely of the flesh and not of the Spirit. Magnificent in His robes of glory, the sword, which is the Word of God, proceeds from His mouth, and His feet like as fine brass, glowing with furnace heat, are quick to stamp out all that dishonors His name.

As we gaze upon His countenance, which is as the sun shineth in his strength, we remember that it is written, “Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.” He is not in the midst to condemn, though He is too faithful to allow evil to remain unrebuked, but He is among us to revive and restore, that we may glorify Him the more.

—Cowper.

Daily Sacrifice, November 14

“And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last” — Revelation 1:17.

A VISION of the glory of the Lord always results in a sense of our own littleness and sinfulness. We may well fall down before Him in humiliation and self-abasement, but even as we do so we will hear His sweet and reassuring voice bidding us fear not, because we are precious in His sight, and have to do with Him who is the Eternal One, the First and the Last, who in grace became the Son of Man that He might redeem us to God.

We need not fear death for He has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He went down into the dark domain of the underworld and came forth in triumph. Now as the Risen One He wears at His girdle the keys of death and of the world unseen. Death for us is therefore a vanquished foe. As the all-conquering One He now sends forth His messenger to His churches that all may know what is in accordance with His will in order to do it, and what things are contrary to His desires in order that we may avoid them. Nothing ever takes Him by surprise. He knows the things which have been, those that are, and all that yet shall be.

—John Newton.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, December 26

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” — Revelation 1:5, 6.

IT is really the present tense in the first clause— “Him that loveth us.” His love is unchanging and eternal. Saints in glory will take up this pan of praise which will sound through endless ages through the courts of heaven. But they who sing up there must learn to use the words down here. For God has willed that those who believe on His Son should know that their sins have been washed away by the precious blood of Christ and they are even now constituted a Kingdom of priests unto God, His Father, and ours, to be adoring worshippers for all eternity.

—Annie J. Flint.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, December 27

“I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” — Revelation 1:18.

THE gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16) is the glad tidings of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 15:1-4). To believe and proclaim the death of the Son of God is not enough. It is the resurrection that tells us that His propitiation has been accepted, and God can now justify all who put their trust in Him (Rom. 4:25). Everywhere that the apostles of the new dispensation went, they preached Jesus and the resurrection (Acts 2:24, 32; 17:18, 31). This implies nothing short of the actual resurrection of the physical body of our Saviour. And so-called spiritual resurrection is a denial of the truth revealed in Scripture. If Christ be not risen, our hope is vain, we are yet in our sins (1 Cor. 15:17). But thanks be unto God, He has indeed been raised from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

The witnesses to the resurrection, as given in the Gospels and in 1 Corinthians 15, were many and varied. There was no possibility that so many people were deceived or suffered from hallucinations. Moreover, the change that came over the apostles and the new spirit of boldness infused into the members of the early Church all bore witness to the certainty of the disciples that their Lord had overcome the power of death.

Daily Sacrifice, December 20

“The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever” — Revelation 20:10.

MAN has been tested under various dispensations or economies, only to manifest his untrustworthiness except as upheld by divine grace. Tested in innocence, in Eden’s garden, he sinned by disobedience to the one command laid upon him. Tested under conscience from the fall to the deluge, he so behaved himself that corruption and violence filled the earth. Tested under the restraints of government and promise, he went into almost universal idolatry, from which God called Abram to whom He revealed Himself anew. Tested under law, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the evil behavior of those who had received that revelation at Sinai. Tested under the personal presence of the Son of God, they crucified the Lord of Glory. Tested under grace, many spurn the gospel message. Tested under Christ’s righteous reign, many will join in Satan’s revolt at the end. But God’s plan will not miscarry. The devil will be banished to the lake of fire and his power forever ended, and those who have suffered because of faithfulness to Christ will receive a full reward.

Daily Sacrifice, December 21

“I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them”— Revelation 20:11.

IT was Thomas Carlyle who wrote: “What a sublime thought is that of a last judgment; a righting of all the wrongs of the ages.” And Solomon declared that God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ need have no fear of that judgment day, for “There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” To these the Lord has promised they “shall not come into condemnation [or judgment],” for they have passed already out of death into life.

But the Christless may well dread that awful hour when all the wicked dead will stand before the Great White Throne to be judged according to their works. That judgment will be unbiased. It will be according to truth, Each case will be dealt with individually, and every one rewarded according to his deeds. Each will be dealt with in absolute righteousness. “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

—Walter Scott.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, December 30

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” — Revelation 20:6.

SCRIPTURE distinguishes between the resurrection of life, which will take place at our Saviour’s pre-millennial advent (1 Thess. 4:13-17), and the resurrection of judgment, which takes place at the end of time, just prior to the setting up of the Great White Throne where all the wicked must give account before God. They who participate in the resurrection of the just have been saved by grace. Theirs will be a blessed part indeed. They are holy, set apart to God in Christ. The second death, which is final separation from God, they shall never know, for they are possessors of eternal life received by faith in Christ. For eternity they will have access as priests into the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, and when the Kingdom is set up over this earth they will reign with Him for whom once they suffered in the time of His rejection, Best of all, they shall see and be with Him forever.

— J. G. Deck.

Daily Sacrifice, December 22

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” —Revelation 21:1, 2.

IN reading the description of the new Jerusalem, the eternal Home of the heavenly saints, it is important to remember that God is speaking in symbols, as indicated in Revelation 1:1, where the word translated “signified” really means, “made it known by symbols.” But it is easy to read these in the light of what is elsewhere revealed in the Word of God.

We have here that city which hath foundations, for which Abraham looked in faith (Heb. 11:10). It is set forth in verse 1 to 7 as it will be for all eternity, when the new heavens and the new earth shall succeed the present temporal conditions. But from verse 9 of chapter 21 Through verse 5 of chapter 22, we see the heavenly city in connection with the millennial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then the nations will learn war no more. Those will be the days of heaven upon earth, when the holy city, the center of light and blessing, will be the capital of the glorious kingdom over which Christ and His Bride, the Church, will reign in righteousness.

—Lucy A. Bennett.

Daily Sacrifice, December 23

“I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” — Revelation 21:3,4.

GOD delights to dwell with men. From the time when He walked and talked with our first parents in Paradise, He has always expressed His pleasure in communion with His people. When, at last, time has run its course and all His children are gathered home in the new Jerusalem, He will rejoice in the fact that He has the unnumbered hosts of the redeemed gathered about Himself in a scene never to be marred by evil of any kind. It is this to which saints of all ages have looked forward, and this hallowed fellowship will be their supreme joy in the ages to come, when Christ Himself, the Lamb once slain, will be the lamp through whom the divine glory will be displayed in all its fullness.

Daily Sacrifice, December 24

“He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” — Revelation 21:6.

WHEN all in heaven and in earth will be reconciled to God, even those who have persisted in rebellion against Him and in the refusal of His clemency, will be subjugated to His authority. Through enduring the horrors of the second death, eternal separation from God, they will realize that they have been dealt with in righteousness and are but receiving “the due reward of their deeds.”

For the redeemed there will be unbroken fellowship with God, who shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and free them forever from all that was mutable or that could cause pain or grief. Theirs will be unbroken communion with Him who says, “I make all things new.”

It is not God’s will that any should fail of this blessedness. Therefore He offers to every thirsty soul to give freely of the fountain of the water of life. If any refuse to drink and live, they have but themselves to blame for their eternal loss.

—Frances Bevan.

Daily Sacrifice, December 26

“There came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife” — Revelation 21:9.

THE eternal home of the saints was to John as a beautiful city “coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” We often picture a city as a woman. We speak of London under the figure of the queen-city on the Thames. Rome comes before us both as the city that in John’s day had dominion over all the earth, and as the scarlet woman, Babylon the Great. So the New Jerusalem appears as the capital city of the glorious kingdom of God and as the Bride of the Lamb.

All the redeemed are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, Jerusalem, which is above, is our mother. Our citizenship is in heaven, We are but strangers here passing on to that eternal rest which remains for the people of God.

—Bernard.

Daily Sacrifice, December 27

“The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb”—Revelation 21:14.

IT was after the false harlot, the apostate church, had met her richly-deserved doom that John was given a vision of the true Church, as a great city built upon the foundation of the apostles of the Lamb, and surrounded by a wall great and high. The wall speaks of security and of separation. The inhabitants of that city will be protected from all evil and forever separate from all that is unholy. Yet its gates of pearl will be open to all who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

It may not be possible to explain satisfactorily all the wondrous symbolism of this description of our heavenly home, but what Christian heart does not beat a little faster as we read of its glory and its magnificence! What a glad consummation to our years of pilgrimage and testing when we all gather home together to go no more out for eternity! There we shall behold the King in His beauty and shall dwell in the light of His countenance throughout eternity.

—H. Boner.

Daily Sacrifice, December 28

“There shall be no night there” — Revelation 21:25.

IT has often been remarked that it is astonishing how little the Bible tells us about what we shall find in heaven. It shows us how to get there and emphasizes the importance of being sure we are in the way to the city of bliss; but it does not say a great deal about the place itself. Someone has described it as “the land of no more,” for we are told that there will be no more tears, no more pain, no more sorrow, no more sin, and no more night.

This means a great deal to those who have known tears and sorrow, heartbreak, and bitter anguish. To such the night is a time to be dreaded. The long weary hours seem endless as one waits for the dawning of the morning. But over yonder night will be forever gone, and we shall bask eternally in the sunshine of the Father’s smile and the Saviour’s presence. As we look back over the path that led to the city, we shall praise our God for all His dealings with us.

—Anon.

Daily Sacrifice, December 29

“He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” — Revelation 22:1.

THE pure river of the water of life that proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb is the Holy Spirit’s testimony to the perfection of Christ and His finished work. In this our souls shall rejoice for all eternity. As we drink of that limpid stream we shall never thirst for the vain, empty, unsatisfying things of earth.

The more we know and enjoy of the preciousness of Christ the more we shall desire, and so we shall drink forever of that stream of blessing, that fountain of everlasting life.

Here on earth we know what it means to be led beside still waters and to have our spirits refreshed as the truth of Christ is revealed to us. Over there we shall know in all its fullness what here we know only in part. Christ will be our portion forever. We shall never tire of beholding Him or of the consideration of His love and grace.

—T. P.

Daily Sacrifice, December 30

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still” — Revelation 22:11

SOLEMN indeed is the lesson that these verses bring before us. Character tends to permanence. He who revels in filth and follows the ways of unrighteousness throughout his life here on earth, will go out into eternity only to be confirmed in his wickedness and never separated from it forever. On the other hand, he who turns to God in repentance and obtains new life in Christ through believing the gospel, will be characterized in his pilgrimage here by a love for purity and holiness, and will find his joy in seeking to walk before God in paths of righteousness. This delight in the things that please God will become more and more intense until called from this scene, when he will be fully conformed to the image of God’s Son and confirmed in holiness and goodness.

Death does not make bad people good, and, thank God, it can never make good people bad! It confirms people for eternity in the ways in which they have chosen to walk. “As the tree falls, so is shall lie.” Our state in eternity is unchanging.

—Wm. Blane.

Daily Sacrifice, December 31

“Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be”—Revelation 22:12.

WE may think His coming has been long delayed, but He “is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish.” Every day He delays gives additional opportunity for men to come to Him and become members of the Church which is His body. When that Church is complete He will descend from heaven with a shout to call all His own to Himself. Then each shall be rewarded according to the measure of our individual faithfulness.

—T. E. P. Woods.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, December 31

“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” —Revelation 22:20, 21.

THE last word ever heard from heaven, the last that shall be heard until the Lord’s return, was the promise of His coming again, and that quickly. God does not count time as we do. Not two days (2 Peter 3:8), according to His reckoning, have elapsed since Jesus went away. Soon He will fulfill His promise. The heart that loves Him looks for Him, and responds, “Even so. Come!” Till then there is grace for every moment of the way. The Old Testament closed with “a curse” because of man’s failure to keep God’s holy law. The New Testament closes with “grace,” because of Calvary. On the basis of the work there accomplished grace flows out in abundant fullness.

Daily Sacrifice, November 15

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou halt left thy first love” — Revelation 2:4.

THE church in Ephesus was thoroughly orthodox, even ready to fight to the limit for foundation truth, and refusing to listen to those who would pervert it. But they had left their first love. That is in heart they had turned away from occupation with the Lord Himself. They were far more ready to contend for doctrine than to be taken up with Christ. This is a snare to which we are all exposed. It is of great importance that we be sound in the faith. It is even more important that our hearts are filled with fervent love for Him who has so loved us as to give Himself for us. This church, too, had labored much. Its members could not be accused of slothfulness. But work without love is of little value in the eyes of Him who, moved by His love to the Father and His love for us, was to go to the cross that He might purchase our redemption.

Shall we not examine our own hearts, and if we find that love is lacking, confess our coldness and indifference, and seek to repent and do the first works—those which are the result of faith that worketh by love?

—T. Kelly.

Daily Sacrifice, November 16

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” — Revelation 2:10.

THIS Smyrna church was made up largely of the poor of this world rich in faith. What its members lacked in this world’s goads they made up in devotion to Christ and confidence in God. Although having to endure the blasphemous attacks of certain enemies of the cross of Christ, they were exposed to severe persecution, even to imprisonment and death for His name’s sake; yet they remained steadfast, and so had the assurance that whatever they might have to suffer here, they would not be hurt of the second death. These words are written for our encouragement. It means much to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart despite the opposition of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Every seeming defeat is turned into glorious victory, when we are conscious of the Lord’s presence with us and realize we are sustained by His mighty power. There is a wealth of encouragement in the Saviour’s words, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Every believer has eternal life. But the crown of life is a special reward to be given for faithfully enduring trial, even unto death itself.

—Anon.

Daily Sacrifice, November 17

“To him that overcometh wilt I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white atone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” — Revelation 2:17.

WHEN Israel was in the wilderness, sustained by bread from heaven, God commanded Moses to fill a golden pot with manna and lay it up before the Lord within the ark, in the holiest of all. This was the hidden manna. Jesus shows us in John 6 that the food by which God sustained the host in the wilderness typified Himself. He came down from heaven as the Bread of God to give life unto the world. The manna spoke of Him in His humiliation. Now that He has gone back to heaven He is the hidden Manna on which the souls of His people feed by faith. The members of the church in Pergamos were exposed to severe temptations. Pergamos was the center of serpent-worship with all its debasing practices. There Antipas was slain, and there the devil made strenuous efforts to seduce God’s children and break down the wall of separation between the Church and the world. But God’s grace was all-sufficient to enable them to triumph, even as it is sufficient to make us today more than conquerors through Him who has loved and redeemed us. All who overcome by faith will enjoy the fellowship of the Lord in a very blessed and intimate way.

—J. N. Darby

Daily Sacrifice, November 18

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the morning star” — Revelation 2:26-28.

ONE can scarcely imagine a church in a worse condition than that of Thyatira. Superstition had taken the place of faith for the great majority. Immoral conditions prevailed and were condoned by the leaders. An unclean woman had obtained and maintained a strange influence over many who professed the Christian name while denying it in practice. But there was a remnant, a few to whom Christ was precious, and who were grieved to the heart over the state of the assembly. To these the Lord gave comforting words and a precious promise. He bade them hold fast until He returned, and assured them that even though they suffered now they should reign with Him in the day of His manifestation. Then He added, “I will give him the Morning Star.” This is the blessed Hope of His coming for His own before the last storm of judgment breaks over the world. He Himself is the Bright and Morning Star. He is the One for whom His people wait. To behold Him as He is and to be caught up to be with and like Him forever—this will repay abundantly for all His afflicted ones have had to endure from the prince of this world and his emissaries.

—G. W. F.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, December 28

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” — Revelation 2:7.

WE need to distinguish between the Church, the Body of Christ, which includes all God’s children in this dispensation of grace, and local churches of God, which are responsible groups of believers meeting together for Christian fellowship and testimony. Christ Himself builds what He calls “My Church” (Matt. 16:18). The building of local churches is committed in large measure to His servants (1 Cor. 3:10). As Paul went from place to place, when people were saved he was used of God to gather them out from the world and into the fellowship of the churches, or assemblies of God, where they would be nurtured and edified and could maintain a testimony in their respective communities to His saving grace. These churches were directly responsible to Christ Himself, while they maintained communion with each other as representatives of the one gloried Head. (See 1 Thess. 2:14). in the beginning there was but the one great circle of Christian fellowship. Unhappily, divisions almost innumerable have come in, through human infirmity, throughout the Christian centuries, but the closer the churches keep to the divine pattern laid down in the Book of Acts and in the apostolic letters to the churches, the more we shall have the Lord’s approval and blessing. We cannot undo the mistakes of the past, but we can cleave to the Lord and the Word of His grace, and so be kept from much that is unscriptural and divisive,

—C. Wesley.

Daily Sacrifice, November 19

“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy” — Revelation 3:4.

THE church in Sardis was a spiritual graveyard. Very few in it were really born again. Most had a name that they lived, but were dead toward God. Yet in the midst of these disheartening conditions a few were found who had not defiled their garments, and to whom the promise was that they should be counted worthy to walk with Christ in white. What encouragement this should give to Christians who find themselves in a community where there is very little of a spiritual character. Christ abides! Circumstances, no matter how depressing, need not hinder growth in grace. Such may be scorned as old-fashioned and bigoted by those who know nothing of the realities of true spiritual life, but they will find their craving for understanding and fellowship met as they continue in prayer and in the study of the Holy Scriptures. The Lord will never leave nor forsake any who endeavor to keep themselves unspotted from the world and from formal religiousness which hinders rather than helps in one’s walk with God. There is no occasion to despair or become discouraged when one is assured of His approval.

—W. M. Czarnnske.

Daily Sacrifice, November 20

“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name” — Revelation 3:8.

THE church in Philadelphia had the Lord’s approval throughout. Yet it was not a great or strong company. It consisted of a few to whom Christ was precious and which had little strength. That strength was derived from feeding upon and obedience to the Word of the Lord. To those who kept His Word and did not deny His name He promised an open door of opportunity for service. We may be sure of the same today. No matter how perplexing the times in which our lot is cast, He who opens and no man shuts, and who shuts and no man opens, will open for us a door of service that we may maintain a constant witness to His saving grace. We do not have to be great and mighty in order to be useful Christians. Where there is a little strength and a heart of devotion He can use us and make us a means of blessing to others. And when our testimony here is ended we shall be given a place of recognition in the Holy City which descends from God out of heaven where we shall enjoy fellowship with Christ and all the redeemed throughout the ages to come.

—E. W. C.

Daily Sacrifice, November 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” — Revelation 3:21.

THE overcomer is the one who has been born of God. He obtains the victory over the world by faith, a faith that is so set on things above that it enables him to put earthly things beneath his feet. In the coming day of manifestation all such will share the glory of our blessed Lord when He returns to reign in power and righteousness over all the world.

—Dorothy Langford.

Daily Sacrifice, November 22

“Behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine atone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald” — Revelation 4:2, 3.

HOW blessed to look away from and above all the confusing scenes of earth and see, with the eye of faith, the throne set in heaven. There upon that seat of imperial authority is One like a jasper and a sardine (sardius) stone. In the breastplate of the high-priest in Israel the jasper stone bore the name Reuben, which means, “Behold a Son!” and the sardius was engraved with the name Benjamin— “Son of the Right Hand.” It is easy to see who is meant then in this wonderful passage. He who is the Eternal Son, the Man Christ Jesus now seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, comes thus before us, and knowing Him we are assured that all is well, for to Him all power has been committed. Happy the privilege of those who like the four and twenty presbyters, the heads of the priestly company, gather round the throne to worship and extol the One who is Creator of all things, and who has claimed us for His own in infinite grace. It is as our hearts are occupied with Him that we become like Him even as we walk down here on earth.

—Anon.

Daily Sacrifice, November 23

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” —Rev. 4:11.

HE who sits in the midst of the throne is worshiped as the Creator of all things, by all heavenly intelligences, whether angels or men. He is worthy to receive glory and honor and power. Every loving heart delights thus to ascribe all worth to Him. Glory is excellence displayed; honor is the recognition of superiority; power here is might, not merely authority. That it is the Eternal Son who is worshiped in this way is evident, for He is adored as the Creator of all things. And we know from other scriptures that it is our blessed Lord Jesus by whom “were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist [or, hold together]” (Col. 1:16,17). All creation is the witness of His power and wisdom, and all things were brought into existence for His pleasure. We, who through grace have been led to trust in Him as Saviour, are also destined to be for His joy and pleasure eternally.

—Miss Wigram.

Daily Sacrifice, November 24

“I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” — Revelation 5:6.

WHEN the announcement was made in heaven that the Lion of the tribe of Judah had prevailed and was worthy to take the title-deeds to the universe and loose the seals thereof, John looked for a Lion, but beheld a Lamb. The two are identical, and speak of our Lord as the conquering King and the Sacrificial Victim. He died upon the cross for our sins and now He is seen in the midst of the throne as a Lamb who had once been offered in sacrifice. He bears upon His glorified body the marks of His passion, and to all eternity these will be the mute witnesses of a love that was stronger than death.

As we gaze by faith upon His once-marred face how our hearts should go out to Him in worship and thanksgiving as we remember that it was love for us that brought Him from the throne of glory to the cross of shame. Some day He will take His great power and reign. Then all redeemed creation will be subject to the Lamb who once was slain, but lives eternally to bless all who trust in Him.

—Watts.

Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations, December 29

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and halt made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” — Revelation 5:9, 10.

THE new song is the song of redemption. When God created the universe it was so beautiful that the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. But that old song was soon hushed when sin came in to mar God’s wondrous handiwork. Now that His own Son has wrought our redemption, we who once were lost ruined sinners take up the new song and praise the Lamb once slain, who has washed us from our sins and made us to be a royal priesthood. Angels cannot sing this song. They have never known what it is to be thus redeemed. It is for the sons of God by faith to lift their voices in this glorious anthem which will fill the courts of heaven with melody. But only those who learn it here can sing it there.

—Thos. Kelly.

Daily Sacrifice, November 25

They cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?... For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? — Revelation 6:10, 17.

WE do not, ordinarily, couple the thought of wrath with a lamb. We might rather have expected to read of the wrath of the Lion. But, as we have seen, these are but two different characters in which our Lord is presented. The Lion of the tribe of Judah who shall destroy His enemies and reign victoriously at last is the Lamb of God who died to take away the sin of the world. He now sits upon a throne of grace, and offers pardon and salvation to all who come to God in His name. But if His grace is despised, judgment must have its way and in due time the wrath of the Lamb must take its course.

What a prayer-meeting these verses depict! But in that day of divine indignation it will be too late to pray and too late to find a hiding-place. God is now showing mercy to every repentant soul. In the day of His wrath His judgment will fall on those who spurned His grace, for, it is written: “The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous” (Psa. 1:5).

Daily Sacrifice, November 26

“Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads” — Revelation 7:3.

IN every age God has had His elect who have not bowed the knee to Baal nor been carried away with the errors of their times.

Those who shall bear the seal of God in their foreheads as His judgments are being poured upon the earth will be delivered from the power of the enemy, even as His faithful witnesses have been sustained by His might and enabled to triumph by faith in all past ages.

God never permits any hour of trial to come to pass without arranging beforehand for the security of His own sealed ones. Nothing can touch them but what His love allows, and everything that He permits will work out for their good either in time or eternity.

His angels ever restrain the winds of adversity until He has sealed those who are to be His witnesses in the time of distress and tribulation. He works everything according to the counsel of His own will.

—Charles Wesley.

Daily Sacrifice, November 27

“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” — Revelation 7:14.

ALL who ever have been or ever will be saved, in any age or under any dispensation, will owe all their blessing to the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. His precious blood alone can cleanse from sin. This white-robed multitude who will come up triumphantly out of the sufferings and sorrows of the great tribulation will stand before the throne of God because they shall have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Who but God can estimate the value of the propitiatory work of His beloved Son? Untold millions will worship and laud Him for all the ages to come because of what His grace has wrought.

We are all debtors to that grace. We owe all our blessing to the blood shed when the Lord Jesus became the great Sin Offering and gave Himself a ransom for all on Calvary. What praise should fill our hearts as we contemplate the work of the cross!

—Henry Ostrom.

Daily Sacrifice, November 28

“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” — Revelation 8:3.

THE brazen altar in the outer court spoke, of old, of the cross-work of our Lord Jesus Christ. The golden altar in the holy place, immediately before the veil, typified His intercessory work on the throne in heaven. There He ever lived to present our cause before the Father; He is our Advocate, our Great High Priest, and our Mediator.

We are oppressed at times with the sense of the feebleness and inadequacy of our prayers, but nothing that is imperfect goes up to God. Our Lord, officiating at the golden altar, removes from our petitions everything that is unworthy and presents our prayers in all the value of His own perfections.

The very judgments that are destined to fall upon a Christ-rejecting world will come in answer to the cries of God’s hidden ones.

Daily Sacrifice, November 29

“The seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound” — Revelation 8:6.

AT present the gospel trumpet is resounding through the world, calling all men to repent and to turn to Christ who died for our sins and lives to save all who confide in Him.

But the day is coming when, as in the case of Jericho of old, the trumpets of judgment will sound, proclaiming the end and doom of this present evil world, which has been arrayed for so long in fierce conflict against God and His saints.

When those trumpets sound the world will crumble, and will soon be superseded by an entirely new order when righteousness will cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep.

As we see these things beginning to come to pass, our hearts will be kept in peace if we walk with God and remember that all has been foretold and that He is working in all things according to His foreknown plan!

Medley.

Daily Sacrifice, November 30

“He opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit” —Revelation 9:2.

THE smoke out of the bottomless pit, darkening the sun and thus hiding the light of day, seems to be a picture of the strong delusion, which in the righteous government of God is visited upon men who, after having every opportunity to know the truth, have turned away from it. Men love darkness more than light when their deeds are evil. If people will not receive the message of the gospel, which sets forth Christ as the Light and Redeemer of the world, they are in grave danger of being given up to judicial darkness, and so left to perish in their sins.

When this state is reached the pestilential locust-errors from the abyss are let loose upon men, and their minds are tormented by the awful sense of being shut away from the light of life. As God gives light we are responsible to walk in it lest we be given over to the blackness of darkness forever. It is His will that all should receive the light of His truth. Condemnation follows its rejection.

—Elsie K. Wens.

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