

“KEEPING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN” IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION In Two Parts—PART ONE

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Of all the books on prophecy, intended for the blessing of the Lord’s people, the one that appeals to me most is the book of Revelation. There are several reasons for its fascination. In the first place it is a revelation from God, given to Jesus Christ, which was for the special blessing of the Lord’s people, and for no others. It was sent by a special angel and was given to the beloved John in the form of symbols—prophecy in the form of symbols—this to keep it hidden from all but the Lord’s faithful people. To outsiders it would appear as incomprehensible foolishness.

Its fascination is further enhanced by the fact that John the Apostle was banished to the penal island of Patmos because of his faithfulness to the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus, and that it was when he was on this island that this revelation was given to him for the Lord’s people. John himself, showed by the language he used that he was deeply moved by the fact that he was given this symbolic prophecy, and that he regarded the giving of the prophecy to the seven churches in Asia as a special honor and responsibility.

We note the language now of the first three verses of the book—“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John. 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.” So there is a blessing to those who read the prophecy and to those who hear the prophecy, and who “KEEP THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN THEREIN.” There is something important in the prophetic book that the Lord’s people should “KEEP,” or as Weymouth renders it—“lay to heart.” Doubtless the things that should be KEPT or “laid to heart,” are lessons, exhortations and promises.

John has the message—he had been in the spirit and had doubtless been occupied for many hours in seeing and hearing things from the revealing angel, and he wrote the things down that he saw and heard. And so he begins by saying—“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne.”

John mentions a “throne” and this is a reference to the vision which we find recorded in the fourth chapter of Revelation—a throne scene. John beheld a door opened in heaven, and the first voice he heard was like a trumpet, and the voice said to him, “Come up hither and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.” And John said that immediately he was in the spirit, and in that state of mind he saw a throne set in heaven,

and one seated upon the throne, glorious in appearance. The appearance was as a brilliant diamond and red in color as a sardine stone, and there was a rainbow round about the throne, emerald in appearance. The one seated upon the throne was a representation of the Emperor of the universe; and as John said, it was from this brilliant one in appearance that there was grace and peace to those for whom the message was intended. But grace and peace were also from the seven spirits which were before the throne of God, and also from Jesus Christ, who, as John says “is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.” (We shall allude to these seven spirits later on.)

Then John adds, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (think of that for a moment!—from him who washed us from our sins in his OWN BLOOD), “and who hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to HIM be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” “Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen.” Then John adds our Lord’s own words about himself—“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

John is very humble about his position and we can glean an important lesson from his words—“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” John didn’t boast of his special faithfulness, nor of the honor conferred upon him in receiving the last inspired testimony from God for the Lord’s people down through the Gospel Age. No, he merely said, “I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation.”

John said he was in the spirit on the Lord’s day and he heard behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet, and he was commissioned of our Lord to write what he was about to see, to record it in a book and send it to the seven churches which were in Asia. And the particular seven churches are mentioned and we can find these names if we look at the map of the territory in John’s day.

And as John turned to see the voice that spoke with him, he saw a very striking vision: there were seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man. The appearance of this one like the Son of man was very peculiar and was a representation of the qualities and authority of the Son of Man as he supervised the candlesticks. The one like unto the Son of man was clothed with a garment down to the foot and was girded about the paps with a golden girdle, and his head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet as if burned in a furnace, and the voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his

countenance was as the sun which shineth in his strength. The majesty of the sight was more than John could stand, and as he said, “when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.” But the one having the appearance as the Son of man, laid his right hand upon John and said, “I am the first and the last: 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. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

One of the lessons we can take from this vision is that our Lord Jesus who is the first and the last, who was alive and had been dead, and is alive for evermore, and who has by right of his faithfulness, the possession of the keys of hell and of death, this one is supervising and guarding and directing the affairs of the seven stages of the churches down through the Gospel Age. NOTHING escapes his watchful eye, NOTHING transpires without his permission, NO ONE INTERFERES with the welfare of the Christian church.

His voice is as many waters—it can be stern and it can be exceeding loving and kind; and it can use all means for the promulgation of the necessary messages down through the Gospel age. And he has absolute control and direction of the seven messengers of the seven stages of the church. Those who are faithful are used of our Lord; and those who are unfaithful are sifted out of divine service. Our Lord Jesus is in absolute control at all times, and we must “lay to heart” the message—to look to our Head for direction at all times and in all things. We must lay to heart the meaning of the messages to the churches—they are seven, and we do well to ponder them carefully for the lessons and exhortations and precious promises.

The promises are to provide us with inspiration and incentives to faithfulness. And as we note the experiences of the Lord’s people, as suggested by the symbols used to portray the conditions of the church of Christ at various periods of the Gospel Age, we should take particular note of them, and avoid those things which received rebuke and do those things that win our Lord’s word of approval.

The first church named is Ephesus, and it seems it is possible to have works and to labor and have patience, and even to be unable to bear those who are evil, and even to ferret out those who are false apostles, and yet be lacking in something important in the Lord’s estimation—“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” There is a powerful lesson here—apparently it is possible to keep going as Christians, yet we can lose hold on that all-important thing called “first love.”

What is meant by “first love?” May it not be that deep sense of reverence we feel toward God and Christ when we realize how grandly supreme they are in every way—grandly supreme in those qualities of character as shown in the outworking of the Divine Plan toward the human family? It is not merely gratitude for redemption, although that is, and should be a strong sentiment in our hearts toward God and Christ; but in addition it is that deep sense of appreciation of God and of Christ for what they are—as the very personification of Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power—combined in perfect balance. To illustrate: if we should say to a person who had benefited us greatly in various ways, and who had a grand character—if we should say, “I am deeply grateful to you for the grand way you have treated me, and I would just love to associate with you the rest of my life, and become just like you in character”—wouldn’t that be the grandest thing we could say to a person? Would not such a person feel that he had received the highest compliment possible; and would not that be “first love” toward that person? I THINK SO!

And so with “first love” in the spiritual realm—we feel not only deeply grateful to God and to Christ for their lovingkindness to us in redemption and in the high calling extended to us, but we feel that we are the most honored and happiest when we have the privilege of being the special friends of God and of Christ, and try to become like them in character. This reminds us of the words of Jesus found in John 15:8, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Another lesson we learn is found in the words of commendation addressed to this church at Ephesus—“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.” Nicolaitanism is the theory or doctrine of human headship or lordship in the Christian church. This we must hate as the Lord also hates it—we must never submit to any headship that takes the place of the headship of our Lord. We must never allow ourselves to look to any human leader as taking the place of Christ—giving directions in the place of Christ. We are to appreciate faithful teachers, and pastors and elders, but we are to be like the noble Bereans, by making sure that such teachers and pastors and elders are speaking in harmony with the directions of our TRUE Head, the Lord Jesus Himself.

And now to receive inspiration from the promise to the church at Ephesus—“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” This particular tree which was in the MIDST of the paradise of God, was, in the first Paradise, a forbidden tree—the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” The promise to the overcomer is that he will have the privilege and joy of partaking of the tree of all knowledge under conditions that will have God’s sanction and not bring a curse. What a delight it is to look forward to the time when we can have access to all knowledge, and that there will be no curse to result from such eating. This is an incentive worth remembering.

The second church addressed is Smyrna, and the message to this church is not very long. From a prophetic standpoint, this message applies to the church in the time when there was a severe persecution of the church by the Pagans. This is particularly referred to in the words “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.” The ten days refer to the ten years of persecution from the decree of Diocletian in A.D. 303 to the Edict of Milan by Constantine, in A.D. 313. The Lord’s people at that time had a rough time of it; but our Lord was with them as he is the one in the midst of the seven candlesticks—“Lo I am WITH you, even unto the end of the age.” Our Lord knew what it was like to go through persecution, for he was wounded unto death, even unto the death of the cruel Roman cross.

To this church our Lord said, “These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.” Yes, he was dead, but “is alive.” And what a comfort are such words to the Lord’s suffering people when they know that their Lord had experienced opposition unto death! He would be in a position to know how to comfort his suffering followers—and his followers would KNOW that he KNEW! There would be this “fellowship feeling” toward one another—both knowing that they were experiencing the same things in the same cause. Here is something we can “LAY TO HEART.”

How cheering are his words to this church—“I KNOW thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (BUT THOU ART RICH) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer... be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Ah yes, if we are faithful unto death we will receive a crown, a reward of life—the HIGHEST FORM OF LIFE—the CROWNING feature of life—immortality, life within ourselves. How inspiring is the promise to us that if we are faithful unto death “we shall not be hurt of the second death.” The second death is for willful wrongdoers, and if faithful unto the end, we are the Lord’s own, and free from all possibility of being destroyed in the second death. Here is something else we can “LAY TO HEART.”

During the time of the severe Smyrna persecution, the Lord was aware of everything that was going on—he saw their works and their tribulation and also their poverty. BUT he saw something else too—“BUT THOU ART RICH.” Yes, they were rich in character qualities, and they were also rich in having the Lord’s favor. The persecutors of the Lord’s people may feel that they are in power and can carry on with impunity, but the Lord is the judge and he knows how rich are his people in having the Lord’s favor and how, in time, the persecutors will suffer just retribution for having persecuted the Lord’s people, sometimes unto death. This reminds us of the vision which John saw when the fifth seal was opened (chapter 7, Vs. 9 to 11), “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: and 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? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” There is a mingling of sentiment here on the part of the Lord’s people—an absolute trust in God that he is “holy and true”; but the time is long and the persecution dreadful, and so they ask, “How long O Lord before thou wilt avenge our blood?”—How long will it be before all persecution will be brought to an end and evil doers restrained and punished? The Lord assures His suffering people that it takes time to work out all his purposes, and that all of his people must pass through difficult experiences, and it takes many centuries for all these things to be accomplished. What a comfort it is to know that the One who is in the midst of the candlesticks is supervising the experiences of the Lord’s people and that evil will be permitted to hold sway only for a good purpose and for the right period of time.

Now let us see what we can “TAKE TO HEART” from the message to the church at Pergamos. This was the time when God’s true people had to be “Antipas”—they had to resist popery. The seat of Satan was being established at this time. This was the time when false teachers were acting like Balaam—teaching error for profit. This was the time when human headship was becoming firmly established in the church—Nicolaitanism. It was a dreadful time indeed and dangerous for the Lord’s true people. But the Lord’s true people held fast to the name of Christ and did not deny the faith, but were martyrs in their opposition to selfish ambition in the professed church of Christ. We can benefit from their examples of courage and faith, and remain true to what we have and not allow ourselves to be influenced by false teachers. Our Lord said to this falling church—“Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.” This sword of the mouth is the Truth, and that is the weapon we are exhorted to use in resisting false teachers and teachings.

How inspiring to the Lord’s true people is the promise to the church at Pergamos—“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” The end of the unfaithful is to be shame and defeat, while the reward for faithfulness is to eat of the hidden manna—even immortality. Then too, the faithful have the promise of a white stone—a stone is divided in half, and the name of our Lord is on one-half and our name is on the other half and there is an exchange of half stones. This symbolically indicates a precious token of the love between the Lord and ourselves. This is the reward to the overcomers, but even in this life we have a personal acquaintance with our blessed Lord. We have the seal of the Holy Spirit, and the natural man knows nothing of this precious, individual, secret relationship between the Lord and ourselves. How inspiring to love and faithfulness is this promise that we shall fully experience in the first resurrection. We are blessed indeed as we read these things and “LAY THEM TO HEART.”

If we are faithful overcomers we will meet our Pergamos brethren beyond the veil in the first resurrection. No doubt there will be reminiscing of the Lord's people as they relate to one another their experiences in the different periods of the Christian church during the Gospel Age. They will reread the previews of prophecy contained in the book of Revelation, and they will point out to one another their own experiences, and they will say to one another—See the Lord knew all about it beforehand and he was standing in our midst the whole time, supervising our experiences and giving us strength from his own example and from the promises to the churches contained in these very messages to the seven churches in Asia.

Now let us see what we can learn and "LAY TO HEART" from the message to the church in Thyatira. The Lord severely condemns those false Christians who brought about a fornication—a union of the Christian church with the civil power. This is expressed in the 2nd chapter, Vs. 20-23. "I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." This was a time of extreme stress upon the Lord's true people—to resist all this spiritual fornication. The Lord said to his faithful people at that time—"But unto you I say and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden—but that which ye have already, hold fast till I come."

And then the sustaining promise—and how much this promise means to the Lord's people—NOW we are subject to the powers that be and we are subject to all forms of tyranny. But in the next age, it is going to be different—listen to the promise—"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." Yes, it will be altogether different then—now we must endure the rule of imperfect and selfish men; but in the next age, we will be given absolute power to rule the nations with a "rod of iron,"—there will be no resistance possible to the new rule—but the power will be exercised in a righteous manner, to establish righteousness in the earth. How inspiring is this promise to us who are witnessing the great power struggles of the various governments of the earth, even in the United Nations which is supposed to be founded upon the highest of ideals. We know that man cannot bring order out of this horrible chaos which is in the earth; and we know too that no human power can bring back the dead to life.

Sardis is the next church addressed and we find the message in the first Vs. of chapter 3. This is the darkest period of the Christian church—the time when the false church had almost obliterated all the faithful from the face of the earth. But the one standing

amongst the candlesticks with the eyes as a flame of fire was able to see that there were a few left—“Thou hast a few names EVEN IN SARDIS which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white.” What a dreadful time this was for the Lord’s true people! It was at this time that the false church triumphantly proclaimed, “There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule, and religious opposers resist no more.” This was just before the Reformation burst forth. This was the time when the false church made the public declaration—“The whole body of Christendom is now seen to be subjected to its head, i.e., to thee” O Leo the 10th.

This was the time when the spiritual vitality of the true church was at its lowest ebb—“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.” The false church felt confident and triumphant, but little did it know of the commotion that would arise to plague it in the next period of the church, when the Reformation got started in full force.

The promise to the faithful overcomers is a delight to read—“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” Yes, those who were hounded to death in the Sardis period will have their names secure in the book of life. Their names were cast out as vile while they lived on earth, but Jesus promised that he would confess their names before his Father and before his angels. So it is heartening indeed, as we take this promise to heart—if our names are cast out as vile and despicable in this life, because we follow the Master and his precious truth, it will be different in the First Resurrection—our Lord will gladly and enthusiastically confess our names before the Father and before all the angels. So what matters it now, if we are rejected and despised (just as our Lord was), if, in the next life we are confessed before the Father and his angels?

Philadelphia is the next church addressed. We gain much from the message addressed to this church—it is called the church of brotherly love. This was the Reformation period—when the Reformation burst forth in the midst of the false church. We take particular note of the words that are used in the message to this church—“These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.” The false church was claiming to be the holy and the true and to have the key of David; but our Lord would now use some of his faithful witnesses to dispute the claims of the false church; and it would be proclaimed by the Reformers that Christ was the one who was holy and true and who had the key of David.

Then the message continues—“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.” Our Lord saw that there was some strength left after the terrible times of the Sardis church, and through his providences he set before his faithful ones an open door and the faithful reformers went through that open door, and because it was the right time for the truth to be triumphant against the false church, our Lord said of this open door, that no one would be able to shut it. And so it was—“behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews [which say they are the true people of God], and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.” This applies no doubt to the time when the true church will be in power and will subdue all the enemies of the Lord, and all opponents of the truth will have to come and worship the true church in glory.

We can gain courage from the example of the Reformers—even though they had only a LITTLE strength, yet they were not remiss in using what strength they had in the face of terrible odds. So with us, if we see opportunities to serve the interests of the Truth or the interests of the Lord’s people, we should use our energies and not think that because there is so much opposition that we should back down and do nothing. The Lord’s people were faithful in the Reformation time and the Lord promised them that because they “had kept the word of his patience,” he would keep them from the hour of temptation, which would come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. And now we are the Lord’s people in that time—the Laodicean period and we are in the very midst of the hour of temptation which has come upon the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. The Lord expects us to be faithful under the circumstances of our day, and he provides special assistance adapted to the condition of our particular time.

The promise to the overcomers of the Philadelphia brethren is very inspiring—“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” How full of precious meaning is contained in this promise! What an inspiring hope this is to think of being a pillar in the glorified temple beyond the veil, and to have the name New Jerusalem written upon us, and that we shall never have to look forward to anything that would make us unhappy or lonely. We shall have the name of the Bridegroom written upon us and we shall be the temple of the Lord, and come down to bless the inhabitants of the earth!

From this New Jerusalem will issue forth a river of water of life for the refreshment of the whole human creation; and the leaves of the trees beside this river will be for the healing of the nations. How delightful it is to think of this pure, sparkling, fresh water of truth which is to refresh the nations who have had nothing but stale brackish water to drink for so many centuries!

The last message is to the Laodicean church, or the church of the Laodiceans. The nominal church is luke-warm, and this is very displeasing to the one who is in the midst of the candlesticks—this nominal church is spewed out of the Lord’s mouth. The professed church says it is “rich and increased with goods, and has need of nothing;” but in the Lord’s estimation it is “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

This church is counseled of the Lord to buy of him “gold tried in the fire, that it may become rich; and white raiment, that it may be clothed and to have its eyes anointed with eye salve that it may see.” This is the period when the Lord “stands at the door and knocks: and if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Yes, he is our present Lord and we have heard his knock and have responded to his voice and opened the door, and he has come in to us and he has supped with us, and we have supped with him. And what a feast has been spread before our wondering eyes—things new and old. Our table is spread with the most wonderful delicacies—refreshing to our souls and nourishing the fruits of the spirit. No table spread for the Lord’s people has ever equaled the table spread here in the end of the age. Both our minds and hearts are satisfied and our lives are marked with continual rejoicing and thankfulness. This feast is a foretaste of the feast that will be spread before us when we will be with the Lord in glory—when he will confess our names before the Father and before his holy angels.

The promise to the Laodicean church is a constant inspiration to us, especially as we know that there is going to be a literal kingdom set up for the blessing of the nations —“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 promise is in our minds constantly because it figures so prominently in the Harvest Message we have.

After the messages to the seven churches, we find the throne scene—this is recorded in the 4th and 5th chapters of Revelation. Upon the throne is seated God himself, or we should say this is a vision that is intended to convey the thought that God is meant, although actually it was not God, but only a vision representing various qualities which we know are identified with God. The throne scene is a striking vision, but it is not our purpose at this time to dwell upon all the details of each vision, but only those details which will teach us some lesson that we should “TAKE TO HEART.”

The outstanding feature of the vision that teaches a salutary lesson is the answer to the question—“Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?” John saw in the right hand of the one seated upon the throne “a book written within and on the backside sealed with seven seals.” And the question was asked, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” No one responded, and John wept much because no one was found worthy. Then one of the 24 elders speaks to John—“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.” And John “Beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living ones, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having 7 horns and 7 eyes, which are the 7 spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”—This is the one that is worthy to open the book and loose the 7 seals. The slain Lamb—the one who had been so faithful as to give his life to redeem Adam and his race, is the one who deserves the honor of opening the book and loosing the 7 seals.

There is a double lesson here that we can “TAKE TO HEART.” First, that we are to honor the slain Lamb and look to him as the one worthy to receive our homage and to direct our lives. The second lesson is that special faithfulness to God brings special honors from God—honors of dignity and usefulness—in other words no one should expect rewards of any kind unless he first prove himself as fully devoted to the purposes of God and the ideals of God’s character as the Master himself.

In the beginning of our talk, we noted that grace and peace were to be to us from the one seated upon the throne—meaning our Heavenly Father, and also from Jesus Christ. In addition, it was said that grace and peace would be from the “seven spirits” which were before the throne of God. In the throne vision it was said that the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, and the slain Lamb had 7 horns and 7 eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” All this together would seem to suggest that as “eyes” would represent deep wisdom and spirits would represent powers, and that there were 7 in each case—that God’s wisdom and power in their completeness would be exercised in behalf of the Lord’s people, and give them favor and peace. And we believe this has been the case, that the Lord’s people have been cared for in every possible way, and there has been no lack of any kind. We know from experience that we have been abundantly provided for in our day, and we feel confident that all grace and peace will be ours in the remainder of our pilgrim journey. Let us “TAKE THIS TO HEART.”

We specially note the 12th verse of chapter 5—“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive” (now note 7 things which the Lamb was worthy to receive)—“power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing.”

After the Lamb takes the book he proceeds to open the seals, one by one, and John sees a new vision in each case, and he records what he saw and what he heard. Incidentally, the throne scene remains in view all the time—John is before the throne and he watches as the Lamb opens the seals; and off to one side, so to speak, he beholds new visions and he records all he sees and hears. The opening of the seven seals reveals the visions of the entire book of Revelation, and we have them in book form—the last book of the Bible—the book of Revelation, or the Apokalupsis, or revelation. We are in awe (and we “TAKE THIS TO HEART”) as we contemplate God’s foreknowledge of all that was to transpire down through the Gospel Age, and on down to the end of the Millennial Age. This is a blessing to us to realize that all that has happened and what will happen was

completely known to our Heavenly Father, from the foundation of the world—this gives us confidence and peace in our Christian life.

We pass over the opening of the first five seals without comment. The opening of the sixth seal reveals a vision of a great earthquake and this is interpreted to mean the French Revolution. Other symbols have to do with conditions that we see around us—there is great fear on the part of the mighty, and efforts are made to shore up their positions, and they say to the mountains and rocks (kingdoms and strong organizations in society), “hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?” This has been going on for a long time now (in our day), and possibly the great cry for protection is directed to the United Nations—COVER US, PROTECT US—“For the great day of the Lord’s wrath has come.” How strengthening it is to our faith to understand the significance of these world conditions. We can see that men are in desperation and are spending millions of dollars all over the world, and are doing everything they can think of to preserve the status quo—but it is too late!

END OF PART ONE