

# THE KINGS FROM THE SUNRISING

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## FOREWORD

All last-day prophecies graphically portray the final conflict and the necessity for the church to be fully prepared for the most terrible struggle of all history. The Spirit of Prophecy declares: "There is before us a terrible crisis. The lives of many will go out in darkness" (Watchman, April 2, 1906). "The great controversy between good and evil will increase in intensity to the very close of time . . . And all the depths of Satanic skill and subtlety acquired, all the cruelty developed, during these struggles of the ages, will be brought to bear against God's people in the final conflict" (GC. 9, 10). "The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God" (GC. 622). "As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's Message . . . abandon their position, and join the ranks of the opposition" (GC. 608). "Soon God's people will be tested by fiery trials, and the *great* proportion of those who now *appear to be genuine* and true will prove to be base metal. Instead of being strengthened and confirmed by opposition, threats, and abuse, they will cowardly take the side of the opposers . . . To stand in defence of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few - this will be our test" (5T.136).

Only one class of Adventists will stand steadfastly through the coming fearful storm -those who have learned how to be "clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness". The Lord's servant has written: "Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict" (PK. 725). Therefore, it is imperative that all of God's people learn personally how to obtain and to put on this "armor of Christ's righteousness". All last-day prophecies emphasize this feature, but the most arresting of them all, and one that presents the secret of knowing how to obtain the "armor of Christ's righteousness", is the Lord's own personal Message to His church in His Armageddon prophecy (Rev. 16: 12-16, etc.). It is because this, the Lord's special Message to His remnant people, forewarns God's people concerning their imminent peril and

how they may be prepared to meet it, that Satan has brought in so much confusion and misunderstanding concerning the prophecy depicting the gathering of the forces of evil "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty", the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates by the 6th plague, and the coming of "the Kings from the Sunrising".

The main feature of the Lord's personal Message to His remnant people (for He is the Revelator, see Rev. 22: 16; GC. 342) concerning the coming Armageddon, is an appeal to His people to be "clad in the armor of His righteousness" before probation's hour closes. Study Rev. 16: 15, which is quoted by the Spirit of Prophecy, with reference to the close of probation, and the necessity of being "clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness" (Col. 3:19; D.A. 635, 636).

Therefore, as the Lord Himself has emphasized the theme of righteousness by faith in *His Armageddon Message*, any consideration of any aspect of that Message apart from the theme of righteousness by faith is but a pathetic perversion of the prophecy. When studied in the light of the vital theme of righteousness by faith, the prophetic outline concerning the coming of the Kings from the Sunrising becomes one of the most encouraging and most stimulating of all eschatological subjects.

The interpretation which applies the Kings from the Sunrising to the nations of the Orient has no bearing upon the subject of righteousness by faith and because of this fact alone is thus revealed as a counterfeit teaching to the truth our Lord Jesus has conveyed in His book of Revelation. A large number of leading Bible teachers and students among Seventh-day Adventists do not believe the interpretation that applies (Rev. 16: 12) to the so-called "heathen" nations of the "East".

In July, 1950, a Questionnaire was placed before a gathering at the Pacific Union College, Angwin, California, U.S.A., of representatives of the theological departments of all our colleges in North America, in order to question the Bible teachers present concerning such subjects as the Kings from the Sunrising, Armageddon, etc. Information obtained by that Questionnaire was most gratifying, for it revealed a remarkable unanimity among our leading Bible teachers. For our present purpose it will suffice to give the response to two of the questions appearing on the Questionnaire. When asked how many believed that "Armageddon is a battle between the nations of East and West", not one replied in the affirmative. The same unanimous negative reply was obtained to the question: "Are the kings of the east earthly powers?" The majority said that they believed that "The kings of the east are Christ as , King of kings and Lord of lords, and those that 'are with Him' (Rev. 17: 14)."

These facts should be known among God's people, particularly in Australia where there has been a considerable overemphasis upon the erroneous interpretation that "the Kings from the Sunrising" refer to the "heathen" nations of the "East". Unfortunately, in some of our evangelical meetings and through the radio the erroneous interpretation is still presented as if it were the altogether accepted "orthodox" teaching of Seventh-day Adventists. However, it will be clearly seen from the response to the Questionnaire taken at the College Bible Teachers' Council in 1950 that the teaching which declares the Kings from the Sunrising to be the so-called "heathen" nations of the Orient, and Armageddon to be a battle between the nations of East and West was unanimously *rejected* by the College Bible Teachers who were gathered in council at that time.

In order to ventilate some of the reasons why so many Seventh-day Adventist Bible teachers and students of Holy Writ do not and could not believe that the Kings from the Sunrising who are brought into great prominence in the prophetic delineation of earth's mighty climactic hour, refer to the eastern nations of earth, but rather refer to the coming of the Heavenly armies to deliver the people of God and to destroy their Babylonian oppressors, this book is written.

LOUIS F. WERE.

#### KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

of E.G.White books published by

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The writings by Mrs. E.G.White (182?-1916) are- generally by Seventh day Adventists believed to be illumined by the Spirit of prophecy.

IT.1 Testimonies, Vol.1, P-1  
 GC.9,10 The Great Controversy, p.9110  
 EW-34 Early Writings, P-34  
 TM Testimonies to Ministers.  
 DA The Desire of Ages.  
 pp Patriarch and Prophets.  
 PK Prophets and Kings.  
 SC Steps to Christ.  
 EW Early Writings.  
 RH Review and Herald.  
 MB Mount of Blessing

Emphasis has been added to extracts employed to draw attention to certain salient features.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE EASTERN QUESTION - FERTILE FIELD FOR FALSE PROPHECIES

Many false forecasts have been occasioned by the Eastern Question - yes, and many loyal Seventh-day Adventists have made these false forecasts - due to their belief in the Eastern Question. Our only purpose in referring to this fact is to point out the cause, in order that we may profit today by the mistakes of yesterday. It would be difficult to learn of a prophetic interpretation more discredited by the unfolding of events than the Eastern Question. For three-quarters of a century, since it was introduced into the Advent Movement, it has been prolific as a producer of false prophecies.

At first, and for sometime after its introduction to the Advent Movement by Uriah Smith, the Eastern Question was understood to refer to matters pertaining to Turkey and to the Near East its present greater emphasis among us to the Far East is of more recent origin.

The Eastern Question is not a part of the original belief held by our Pioneers - to the contrary, it is a counterfeit of their teaching. The early denominational view of Armageddon was expressed by James White in an editorial of the Review and Herald, January 21, 1862: "The great battle is not between nation and nation; but between earth and heaven". This was the teaching of this Advent people when the angel of God commissioned the Lord's servant to write: "Said my accompanying angel, 'Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages' " (EW.258). This teaching was also included in the inspired message of the Spirit of Prophecy which states: "It is as certain that we have the truth as that God lives" (4T.595).

In the Australasian Division it has been declared that "the Kings of the East" refer to the nations of the Orient. This was definitely not "a block" or "a pin" of the message mentioned in the above extracts from Mrs. E. G. White for this erroneous interpretation came in among us many years after those statements were made. The statement in Early Writings, p. 258, was indeed one made early in the Advent Movement; that found in Volume Four (4T.595) was first published in 1881.

The guided pen wrote in November 27, 1883: "The great waymarks *we have passed* are immovable . . . These pillars of truth stand firm as the eternal hills, unmoved by all the efforts of men combined with those of Satan and his host" (Rev. & Her., Nov. 2 . 7, 1883). "The truths given us *after the passing of the time in 1844* are just as certain and unchangeable as when the Lord gave them to us in answer to our earnest prayers . . . We know what we have accepted is the truth" (Ms. 32, 1896). "Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established ... Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has given for *the last fifty years*" (E. G. White, Rev. & Her., May 25, 1905).

These statements of confidence and certainty given by the Lord's servant refer to those truths given to this people in the "early" days of the Advent Movement, and to use them (as has been done) to support the teaching which declares that a military conflict between East and West is portrayed in Rev. 16: 12-16, is a

blatant misuse of inspired words, for this teaching arose in our midst within very recent years - long after those inspired words were penned. "We are to be established in the faith, in the light of truth given us in our early experience" (G.W.302). Those among us whose minds have been conditioned by biased propaganda (which has presented only one viewpoint - the wrong one) and continual repetition (which to some seems to make a presentation correct), may be surprised to learn that "prior to the death of Uriah Smith in 1903 the idea of a conflict between Orient and Occident being in any way related to Armageddon had *never appeared in the literature of the church*". In presenting a scholarly survey of "*The Origin of the Politico-Military Armageddon*", Pastor Raymond F. Cottrell also says: "Two new concepts in regard to Armageddon were introduced subsequent to his [Uriah Smith's] death, namely, the idea of Armageddon being essentially a politico-military conflict, and that by which the nations of the Far East became the 'kings of the east' of prophecy. Neither of these views seems even so much as to have occurred to Uriah Smith".

As these ideas "never appeared in the literature of the church" prior to 1903, they cannot possibly be included in the statements made by God's servant declaring: "Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages" (EW.258); "It is as certain that we have the truth as that God lives" (4T.595); "The truths given us *after the passing of the time* in 1844"

(Ms.32, 1896); "Truths that the Lord has given for *the last fifty years*" (R.&H. 25/5/1905).

The Pioneers discovered the truth of God's last-day Message by intensive Bible study and earnest prayers. As stated by the servant of the Lord: "Many of our people do not realize how firmly the foundation of our faith has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce, Elder Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly, often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, 'We can do nothing more', the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labour and teach effectively. . . . A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me" (Special Testimonies, series B, No. 2, pp. 56, 57).

A similar statement is given in Gospel Workers, p. 302: "Sometimes whole nights would be devoted to searching the Scriptures and earnestly asking God for guidance. Companies of devoted men and women assembled for this purpose. The power of God would come upon me, and I was enabled clearly to define what is truth and what is error. As the points of our faith were thus established, our feet were placed upon a solid foundation. We accepted the truth point by point, under the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. I would be taken off in vision, and explanations would be given me".

No Eastern Question, no military Armageddon emerged from these earnest and long seasons of Bible study and of pleading for the light of Heaven. To the contrary, Armageddon was seen to be not between nation and nation; but between earth and heaven' Thus the light of truth came as the Lord led the Pioneers to compare Scripture with Scripture, making the Bible its own expositor.

However, this Divinely-reliable principle of ascertaining the interpretation of the prophetic Word laid down by the pioneers Of the message was not to be the unerring method permanently employed among us, for Uriah Smith, who accepted the message as a young man of twenty years of age in the year 1852, was to set a pattern for permitting current events to influence the interpretation of prophecy. This young man did not share the rugged Christian experience and deep Bible study of the earliest pioneers. While wielding a learned pen, he "relied heavily on an intensive study of earlier Protestant exegesis, as is evident throughout his book". In his outline, "*Pioneer Views on Daniel Eleven and Armageddon*", p. 11, Raymond F. Cottrell says of Uriah Smith: "Near the close of his life he expressed to a close friend regret that he had not found time for continued deep study of prophecy because of his duties as editor of the *Review*, and added that others after him would have the happy privilege of discovering fresh rays of light which had eluded his own search".

Because certain political matters concerning Turkey, Russia, etc., were live topics of the day, he was led to find in these national events signs of the second advent, which, he thought, *seemed to fulfil* certain last-day prophecies. Not by a process of comparing Scripture with Scripture did he decide that Turkey was

the king of the north, for by that procedure no one could possibly come to his conclusion. But because Turkey's downfall seemed imminent, this appeared to him to be the fulfilment of Dan. II: 45. This system of permitting newspaper reports or current events to determine the interpretation of prophecy was a strange departure from the method employed by the pioneers and the Spirit of Prophecy, for they relied exclusively on the Bible for its own expositions. James White and other pioneers, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, did not merely *guess* that the power referred to in Daniel II was the papacy, for that is the only conclusion one can obtain *when permitting the Scriptures to explain themselves*. But at that time the papacy was thought to be dead - hence Uriah Smith wrote: "The attempt which some make to bring in the papacy here is so evidently wide of the mark that its consideration need not detain us" (Daniel and the Revelation, 1881 edition, p. 283). The passing years have vindicated the position held by the pioneers, including James White, for the papacy today has risen to great heights of influence among the nations. It is a cause of great rejoicing that many of our leading thinkers and keen Bible students today are comparing Scripture with Scripture as did our pioneers and so now believe that the papacy and not Turkey is the power referred to in the closing verses of Daniel 11.

Permitting current events to explain the Bible, Uriah Smith wrote concerning tottering Turkey: "All eyes are now turned with interest toward Turkey; and the unanimous opinion of statesmen is, that the Turk is destined soon to be driven from Europe.... The occupation of Egypt by the English the present year (1883), is another step toward the inevitable result, and furnishes a movement which the Independent, of New York, ventures to call 'the beginning of the end' . . . - Thus all evidence goes to show that the Turk must soon leave Europe ... it may be but a few months" (1881 edition, pp. 289, 298). All of this is now seen to be so many wasted words; in fact, many pages in the old editions are so many pages filled with misapplication of current events that did not happen according to the expectation of our learned brother. Those pages are mute witnesses of the unreliability of interpreting prophecies according to present, passing political phases, a lesson which some of our present-day expositors still need to remember.

James White was distressed when he observed the trend of permitting passing current events to influence one's interpretation of prophecies away from the positions which had been established by patient, prayerful Bible study. He wrote an editorial in the Review of November 29, 1877, some years after Uriah Smith had shifted from his own original position, substituting Turkey for Rome. Raymond F. Cottrell states:

James White wrote advising caution in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy and found Uriah Smith 'removing the landmarks fully established in the Advent Movement'. This article leaves no doubt that the position making Rome the power of Daniel 11: 45 and Revelation 16: 12 had been 'fully established' as a 'landmark' in the Advent Movement prior to that time, and that it was held by the pioneers of this Message, without exception, from the days of William Miller down to at least 1863".

Further reference was made to James White's editorial in the Review and Herald, November 29, 1877, at the Bible Conference of 1952 - see "Our Firm Foundation", vol. 2, p. 696. James White intimates that if we study the Bible correctly and "live as near God as we should" we would be able to "understand what the Lord has revealed". Continuing, he declared: "But in exposition of unfulfilled prophecy, where the history is not written, the student should put forth his propositions with not too much positiveness, lest he find himself straying in the field of fancy . . . Positions taken upon the Eastern Question are based upon prophecies which have not yet their fulfilment. Here we should tread lightly, and take positions carefully, lest we be found removing the landmarks fully established in the advent movement. It may be said that there is general agreement upon this subject, and that all eyes are turned toward the war now in progress between Turkey and Russia as the fulfilment of that portion of prophecy which will give great confirmation of faith in this soon loud cry and close of our message. But what will be the result of this positiveness in unfulfilled prophecies should things not come out as very confidently expected, is an anxious question.... Those looking at the Eastern Question will probably be disappointed".

Pastor James White knew that Uriah Smith was following wrong principles by permitting current happenings in the political world to influence his interpretation of last-day prophecies, and he knew that events would not occur as Uriah Smith so confidently thought they would. Subsequent events proved the wisdom of the words of Brother White and revealed that it was a wrong principle to permit newspaper reports and current events to influence one's interpretation of prophecy, as in the case of Uriah Smith at that time.

We quote again from Raymond F. Cottrell's informative paper, "*Pioneer Views on Daniel Eleven and Armageddon*", p. 6: "Several facts stated in this article are vital to an understanding of the issue then at

stake. James White firmly believed Rome to be the power of Daniel 11: 45 and set this forth as one of 'the landmarks fully established in the Advent movement'. Uriah Smith and a majority of the leaders, who were in 'general agreement' with him, were 'found removing the landmarks.' 'Positive and confident' in their belief that the 'war now in progress between Turkey and Russia' was 'the fulfilment of that portion of the prophecy' they offered this conflict as primary evidence in support of the new view, in expectation that within a very short time it would 'give great confirmation of faith in the soon loud cry and close of our message'. The immediacy with which that event was expected to occur is expressed by Uriah Smith as follows: 'All eyes are now turned with interest toward Turkey; and the unanimous opinion of statesmen is, that the Turk is destined soon to be driven from Europe ... it may be but a few months'.

"In the mind of James White the vital question was the validity of the new method by which current history was used to interpret prophecy rather than to substantiate positions already determined on the basis of Scriptural evidence. He championed the Bible as its own expositor, urging the use of passages of Scriptures clearly understood to explain parallel portions which were not so clear.... Not believing the war in progress to be the fulfilment of Daniel 11: 45-'he shall come to his end'-it was therefore to him 'an anxious question' what would be the effect of 'this positiveness in unfulfilled prophecies *should things not come out as very confidently expected.*' He feared that instead of a great confirmation' of the message the result would be nothing but another disappointment. Having once passed through such an experience he did not anticipate another with pleasure. As history records, it was James White and not Uriah Smith who turned out to be right; Turkey did not come to her end, nor has she even yet been driven from Europe".

The amazing phenomenon is that since Uriah Smith's unfulfilled anticipations the same kind of failure to predict the outcome of future national events has been experienced by those of our expositors who have based their prognostications similarly on the belief that Dan. 11: 45; Rev. 16: 12-16, depict a military war among nations. Each recurring international crisis was declared to be a positive harbinger of the soon-coming Armageddon cataclysm.

That anyone should to this day still have confidence in this interpretation after the painful and replete record of the false prophecies strewn along the pathway of our Adventist history for over three-quarters of a century indicates how tenaciously the human mind clings to a belief that is based partly upon a text of the Bible plus human attachment of it to present-day political events. While the text is in the Bible and the event is Occurring in the world, only the imagination of man connects them together. The unaided mind of man is deceived into thinking that it is dealing in facts, but the fact that has to be established is whether a number of passages in the Bible corroborate the interpretation placed on the one passage that is supposed to be fulfilling in the world.

## ORIGIN OF THE POLITICO-MILITARY ARMAGEDDON

In his scholarly presentation of the origin and development among us of "*The Politico-Military Armageddon Idea*", Pastor Raymond F. Cottrell says: "Although Uriah Smith's concept of the role of Turkey has remained substantially unchanged through the years, two new concepts in regard to Armageddon were introduced subsequent to his death, namely, the idea of Armageddon being essentially a politico-military conflict, and that by which the nations of the Far East became the 'kings of the east' of prophecy. Neither of these views seems even so much as to have Occurred to Uriah Smith, for reasons which will become obvious.

"Increasing world tension and the armament race preceding World War I prepared many Adventists to think of it as the Biblical Armageddon. As early as 1903 one writer spoke in the *Review* of the 'evil spirits that are stirring up the nations for war, and gathering all the world to Armageddon.' It is now evident, of course, that members of the three-fold religious union had nothing whatever to do with leading the nations into the first World War, and that that conflict was in no sense the Armageddon of prophecy; but a little later the same writer commented that 'Many who know the pulse of international affairs see just before us a world conflict, which they describe as the Armageddon of the nations. . . . Men of affairs see the gathering of the nations to mighty conflict. The sure word of prophecy says that it is the gathering to the battle of the last great day. That which the prophets of God long centuries ago describe, the modern journalist and statesman bear witness to. With express speed the world is rushing on to the great Armageddon'."

After quoting statements which appeared in the *Review* declaring that the approaching hostilities of World War I would be the fulfilment of the prophecy regarding Armageddon, Brother Cottrell makes the following wise observation:

"Note well that the armament race preceding World War I was considered by popular journalism to be preparation for 'Armageddon' - World War I. Without offering Scriptural evidence that these preparations were in any way directly related to the Biblical Armageddon, this line of reasoning on the part of secular writers was adopted and applied by our writers and people to the Armageddon of prophecy. . . . Thus, prior to its outbreak, World War I was defined as, and unequivocally identified with, the Armageddon of prophecy. A careful study of all articles on this subject during the decade preceding World War I reveals the fact that no attempt was made to prove this supposed relationship from the Bible itself. The idea that the impending conflict might be in any way related to the Armageddon of the Bible was either assumed or borrowed exclusively from secular sources.... This procedure on the part of unquestionably well intentioned writers constitutes a distinct departure from the established principle that the Bible must be its own interpreter. Current events do not and cannot of themselves interpret prophecy; they may be used legitimately only to confirm an interpretation already conclusively established on the authority of Inspiration itself.

## "ARMAGEDDON IN RELATION TO TURKEY"

"In the literature of the church, as in other journals, Armageddon was understood to follow immediately upon the expected removal of the capital of Turkey from Constantinople to Jerusalem: 'The Scriptures indicate that eventually the site of government will be removed to the glorious holy mountain between the seas, referring evidently to Jerusalem' . . . It was suggested that if Turkey should enter World War I, 'then this (World War I) is the first stage of the Armageddon battle'. Upon the entry of Turkey into the conflict, England of course withdrew her century-long opposition to a Russian invasion of Turkey and the taking of Constantinople; and this loss of support was taken to be Turkey coming to her end, with none to help: 'The Ottoman Empire in Europe will soon be merely a memory ... For nearly forty years the writer has watched with deep interest the movements in the Near East with reference to the fulfilment of the predictions relating to the Eastern Question, and rejoices in the clear evidences that the last step, the last act of the drama, is at hand'. But, as with Uriah Smith a half century earlier, this idea was a reflection of secular thought. An article the *Review* quoted in its entirety from the *New York Times* entitled, 'The Sick Man of the East is Dying at Last', affirmed with respect to World War I that 'apparently the end of the Turkish Empire is at hand' . . .

"Interest in Turkey, revived with World War I, again led influential evangelists to give 'positive' and 'confident' expression to the opinion that the sick man of the East was about to be driven from Europe.... Events, of course, vindicated the wisdom of the counsel given by the leaders in Washington, for Turkey was not driven out of Europe, its capital was not moved to Jerusalem . (and it would now seem that it cannot be), and World War I did not turn out to be Armageddon—as so many had fondly hoped."

Through adopting the wrong principle of permitting popular opinions and current events to *seem* to interpret the Scriptures, rather than to adhere to the pioneers' practice of comparing Scripture with Scripture and thus accepting truth even though contrary to popular opinion, Uriah Smith had led many of his successors to follow him, and, with him, to father many false forecasts which were supposed to be the declarations of the prophecies. Since his day the Advent pathway has literally been littered with discarded disproved false predictions. It would weary the reader were we to continue at great length to present anything like an adequate idea of the various false prophecies which have sprung from the political and military interpretation of such prophecies as Dan. 11: 45; Rev. 16: 12-16. However, we quote further from Pastor R. F. Cottrell's resumé of the origin and development of the military Armageddon among us. On page 18 he says:

## "ARMAGEDDON BECOMES AN EAST-WEST CONFLICT"

"Prior to the death of Uriah Smith in 1903 the idea of a conflict between Orient and Occident being in any way related to Armageddon had never appeared in the literature of the church; but in the *Review* for October 22 of that year an article on 'The Gathering for Armageddon' spoke of a 'collision between Russia and England for the mastery of Asia' . . . It was not until 1913, however, that the concept of Armageddon being a conflict between East and West is found clearly and emphatically stated in the *Review* :

"During and soon after World War I a series of books by Lothrop Stoddard dealing with the 'yellow peril' and 'the rising tide of colour' became popular reading, apparently substantiated by the rapidly growing power of Japan and the awakening of other Oriental peoples. Denominational emphasis on an East West Armageddon between the two World Wars was decisively influenced by these and similar books, to the extent that the title of them was used by at least one writer in discussing the topic (C.B. Haynes, *On the Eve of Armageddon*, 1946 edition, p. 55 uses the expressions 'yellow peril' and 'the rising tide of color', clearly indicating the influence of these books). Assumed to be the fulfilment of Revelation 16: 12-14, developments in the Far East were accorded wide publicity in the literature of the church and also from the pulpit - some even claiming that Japan is mentioned by name in the Bible. With World War II this line of interpretation went into eclipse, of course, and an article in *The Ministry* emphatically denied that Japan had anything to do with the 'kings of the east' (see Andrew N. Nelson, 'Japan and the Kings of the East', *The Ministry*, Vol. 19, No. 7, June, 1946, p. 10). During the war assertions were made publicly by some individuals to the effect that it would not close ere the holocaust of Armageddon itself should burst upon the world. It is worth remembering that similar statements had been made about the wars of Napoleon, about the Balkan conflicts of the 1820's, about the Civil War, about the Spanish-American War, about World War I, about World War II, and are now being repeated in anticipation of World War III. Perhaps caution would again be in order.

"No one would deny the reality of serious trouble in the Far East, and possibly even total war between the East and the West; the question is, on what Scriptural authority and by what valid principles of interpretation can this trend of contemporary history be linked to the Armageddon of the Bible? This concept, borrowed exclusively from secular sources, reached its climax in church publications between 1931 and 1937, highlighted by Japan's invasion of Manchuria in the former year and the commencement of the Sino-Japanese War in the latter. This view is now seldom found in print, to be sure, and for obvious reasons; but it still continues to play an important role in the thinking and speaking of many individuals who erroneously consider it to be the position of Uriah Smith and the early pioneers."

The present writer feels sure that the reader will agree with him that the truth of the situation should be stated in order to clarify misunderstandings among God's people, for some have thought that loyalty to the Advent Message and to the faith of the pioneers requires them to believe that the Armageddon prophecies depict a war between East and West. As stated in the above quotations, Uriah Smith did not teach this belief; such conceptions are of comparatively recent date among us being twentieth century additions. And such conceptions are strange perversions of the belief of the pioneers that Armageddon is to be a war "between earth and heaven".

Is it not time that the position was made clear as to who have been loyal and who have been disloyal to the teachings of the pioneers and of the Spirit of Prophecy? Those who have stood loyal to the time-tested, time-honoured teachings of the Advent Movement have been classified as heretics, as those who teach errors, departing from the "old landmarks" etc., while some teaching the twentieth century additions which are perversions of the original teaching of the denomination boast of their orthodoxy! What a strange spectacle, indeed!

After World War II broke out, our brethren in Australia in the annual campaign for the circulation of four missionary papers had two of the four papers prepared to show that the Japanese were the kings of the east. One declared: "Japan is unmistakably identified with the prophecy of Revelation 16, led by the spirits of the devil, and working miracles". The other confidently declared that Japan was the kings of the east and the power that would certainly march to the river Euphrates. He wrote: "Only Japan in the near future would be in a position to be a serious contender for any prize to be wrested from a Western power. And strangely enough, the language of God's prophet seems to indicate that it is to her that He refers ... In recent months events in the Far East have moved rapidly in a direction which would indicate that at last the kings of the East are moving in the direction of the rendezvous of prophecy - the river Euphrates. ... Reader, our review of current international affairs reveals that the stage is rapidly being arranged for the last prophecies of God's Word to be fulfilled. . . . The whole East is aflame. The kings from the sunrising (Japan), with unbounded confidence in their divine destiny, are challenging all Western interference in Asiatic affairs . . . before our gaze the last act of the drama is rapidly unfolding".

Guided only by human impulse and whatever national event happened to be occurring at the time, this writer referred to "this fulfilling prophecy", "*rapidly unfolding*", which statement illustrates how much imagination enters into the military interpretation of Rev. 16: 12-16, for the Kings of the East are not scheduled in the prophecy to do their appointed work until after the 6th plague has been poured out

That the teachings outlined in the papers just referred to are not in harmony with the Bible, that they are the result of following wrong principles of interpretation, merely superficial guesses at the portent of the prophetic Word, is demonstrated by the fact that when Japan was defeated by the Western powers, some of the same expositors who were so confident during the period of Japan's military might that Japan (in the church missionary paper quoted above, which was scattered by thousands around Australia, the words used were, "only Japan") was the kings of the east dropped such declarations when Japan was defeated and, without admitting their previous error, proceed with equal equanimity and certainty to declare that Russia or China or both are the kings of the east referred to in the prophecy. This shows that they have not studied the Bible to ascertain what it says concerning the kings of the east, but they merely fasten on to any power in the East that is militarily strong and aggressive, and from current history only they think they have discovered who are the kings of the east. Bad as that kind of assumptive teaching is - pure guesswork - the saddest feature is that such superficial expositors should become hostile toward those who search the Bible to find therein the Lord's teaching on the kings of the east - labeling them heretics or apostates from the teachings of the Advent Movement; which, of course, is just the reverse.

A few years ago, to cite another illustration of how false prophecies arise from erroneous interpretation of the Armageddon prophecies, trouble developed between Persia and Britain over the oil wells. Then, it did look as if there might be trouble. In a special article in "The Signs of the Times", July 9, 1951, the Editor declared that "Daniel the prophet . . . particularized the outstanding political developments pertaining to the Middle East." He also asserted that Russia was fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel 11: 44 by stirring up her agents in Persia. He wrote: "This is just what Russia is doing. It is just what the prophecy says she would be doing. 'Now is your last chance to oust the British from Persia,' shouts a radio voice from the Soviet border. . . . Every dispatch from the Australian Associated Press in Teheran should shout aloud the fact that there is not much more time. The astonishing indifference of professing Christians and worldly folk alike, can only be accounted for by either a disregard for, or downright ignorance of, the prophecies relevant to present world affairs". The sequel to this episode is that Persia and Britain solved their differences over the oil wells, and current cables declare that Persian reds have been smashed. Had the editor held to the original teachings of the pioneers of the Advent movement he would not have been led into the mistake of jumping to a wrong conclusion.

The problem of preachers propounding their own private interpretations was mentioned at the Bible Conference (1952) by Pastor A. V. Olson. He said: "It may not be out of place to sound a note of warning against the danger of yielding to the temptation of indulging in fanciful, private interpretations or personal predictions. Consciously or unconsciously, many of us may have erred on this point. Years ago I overheard one of our ministers, who had frequently written articles on the Turkish question, say to a group of workers, 'I will never write another article on this subject for the public press, because every time I tell what the Turk is going to do he makes a fool of me by doing something entirely different.' By his erroneous interpretations and unwarranted predictions, this good brother had created embarrassment both for himself and for the church.

"This man has not been the only one to make such mistakes. Well do I recall how during the first world war we were assured, on the basis of a fanciful interpretation of an obscure text, that at the end of the war, when the peace conference would assemble, the pope of Rome would be found sitting at the head of the council table as chairman. But, lo, and behold, when the peace conference met there was no pope in the chair. He was not even present. Since the outbreak of the last world war I have heard a number of sermons on 'Russia in Prophecy'. All of them have been disappointing. They have savored too much of fanciful speculations and interpretations of obscure texts" (Our Firm Foundation, vol. 2, p. 547).

In condemning the teaching that Armageddon refers to a military war in Palestine, Pastor Paul K. Freiwirth, in his "Valleys of the Bible", pp. 86, 87, and published by "The Voice of Prophecy" (U.S.A.), says: "In the Biblical sense, however, this word [Armageddon] does not refer to any such event [i.e. 'to the universally expected conflict among men']. Instead it has to do with puny man's attempt to declare war against his Maker. . . . The fact that the term 'Armageddon' is symbolical of the final clash between mankind and God was believed by God's people anciently.... It is all the more regrettable, therefore, that hasty and careless thinking should have given such a distorted picture of Armageddon's meaning."

And so we could proceed to show how by forsaking the system of interpretation of comparing Scripture with Scripture to find the meaning of the prophetic designations, we are led by popular current events into making false prophecies and making human speculations, and deceiving ourselves and others that these misconceptions are indeed the actual teachings of the Bible.

The Word of the living God says: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deut. 18: 22).

In concluding this chapter, we quote once more from the informative outline written by Raymond F. Cottrell. On page 20 he says:

"THE TREND BACK TO THE VIEW OF THE PIONEERS" "The ascendancy of the military party in Japan during the 1930's, particularly the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the commencement of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, and the pan-Asiatic policy these military moves represented, was reflected in the literature of the church, particularly in the *Signs*, in which Armageddon was commonly linked with current events in the Orient. For a time this aspect of interpretation practically eclipsed all others, both in church literature and from the pulpit. Some ministers of reputation and experience unequivocally asserted that World War II was Armageddon because of the fact that Japan stood committed against the West, or that it would blend into Armageddon without a cessation of hostilities.

"This over-emphasis on an Oriental Armageddon puzzled many ministers, particularly college Bible teachers, with the result that commencing about twenty years ago they began searching the Scriptures to discover whether or not the things they read and heard were so. Following sound principles of prophetic interpretation, particularly making the Bible its own expositor and with reference to no other sources than the Spirit of Prophecy, they were unable to find evidence for the positions popularly taken. Those who engaged in this study were at first unaware of the view of the pioneers or of the fact that numerous others were simultaneously studying the same problem. Eventually the entire problem cleared up for them, both historically and exegetically, until at the Bible Teachers' Council following the General Conference session in 1950 a questionnaire covering various topics on which differences of opinion had existed revealed the fact that Bible teachers in all the colleges of North America are now in complete agreement with one another on the king of the north and Armageddon, and with the pioneers of the Advent Message as well (L. H. Hartin, editor, Report of the College Bible Teachers' Council, 1950, p. 53).

"It should be pointed out that those who now hold to the Pioneer View were at one time firm proponents of the Traditional View of Uriah Smith (plus twentieth century additions), but that direct, personal study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy alone convinced them of the need of making a change in their thinking. With an earnest desire to arrive at truth rather than to maintain any preconceived opinions they rediscovered the view of the pioneers, tested it on the authority of Inspiration, and found it fully vindicated. It is worthy of note that while on the one hand all who now hold to the Pioneer View were once 'traditionalists', no living individual has, after understanding and espousing the Pioneer View, reverted to the Traditional View. This is significant. It would seem that those who still hold to the Traditional View do so, largely, in the belief that loyalty to the Advent Message and to the faith of the pioneers requires this of them, and in the absence of personal study on the basis of sound principles of exegesis."

## CHAPTER TWO: WILL THERE BE WAR BETWEEN EAST AND WEST?

We can be sure that wars will recur among men until Jesus the Prince of Peace holds universal sway. When our Lord was asked for signs of His coming and of the end of the world, He answered, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matt. 24: 6, 7). Wars would exist down through the years. Before the end came, wars would grow into gigantic struggles involving not only nations, but whole kingdoms. "All these are the *beginning* of sorrows", said the Saviour (v. 8). In the margin of the A.V. of Mark 13: 7, 8, we read: "The word in the original importeth the pangs of a woman in travail." "The beginning of sorrows, or birth pangs" will grow in intensity until the kingdom of the Messiah is born. In harmony with the prediction, wars have affected an ever-widening circle, and the future may hold a more terrible conflict than has yet been waged. The servant of the Lord has written:

"The world is stirred with the spirit of war. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place" (9T.14).

"The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other" (9T.17).

"It suits his Satanic majesty well to see slaughter and carnage upon the earth. He loves to see the poor soldiers mowed down like grass" (IT.366).

"Satan delights in war ... It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another; for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God" (GC.589).

These statements indicate that wars will recur until the end, and they will be incited by Satan until he is destroyed. If the disciples could quarrel by the side of the Prince and Author of Peace concerning who would be the greatest in the church kingdom, there is no prospect that the world would be at peace for long in the presence of the author of war and bloodshed.

There is no Bible prophecy that declares that there will be war between East and West, neither is there any recognition in Scripture of such designations as East and West in the political world; such terms are purely of a worldly character.

Expositors of prophecy are not prophets, though, as we have shown, for many decades there have been expositors of last-day prophecies who have assumed the prophetic role through their misinterpretation of those prophecies. On a number of occasions our preachers and expositors of last-day prophecies have made predictions which subsequent events have proven to be false, thus showing that they were guided by erroneous principles of interpretation.

What has made these predictions so worthless? - the false belief that such passages as Rev. 16: 12-16; Dan. 11: 45; Joel 3, etc., depict a gathering of nations to Palestine for a political war. Such is not intended by those prophecies. It is this false, military conception of these prophecies that has been responsible for much political speculation as to the supposed alignment of the nations for the coming battle of Armageddon. There is a certain fascination, which is pleasing to the "natural" senses, in moving nations about on the chessboard of human deductions, in trying to work out the details of the final battle of the nations at "Armageddon". This unscriptural teaching has caused men to prophesy how things would come about in order to fulfil their misinterpretation of those prophecies. As the years roll by these predictions, one by one, have been, and will be proven untrue. Undoubtedly, most of the readers of these lines will remember more than one of these unfortunate attempts at reading into the prophecies what God did not place there.

An unbiased examination of the cause of these false predictions, which bring in political speculations, will reveal that they are the fruitage of the theories concerning the supposed alignment of the nations for the mistaken battle of "Armageddon". God's Word, rightly understood, does not outline a gathering of nations to Megiddo, to Jerusalem, or to any other specific literal place for war, or for any other purpose in connection with "Armageddon"-until the end of the millennium, when the unsaved literally gather around the literal New Jerusalem as depicted in Rev. 20.

As in the past, Palestine may again be part of the battlefield for contending nations. However, whatever wars may yet be fought in Palestine they will not be the "Armageddon" of Rev.16:12-16. All theories which are based upon a literal gathering of nations to Palestine for conflict in supposed fulfilment of Rev. 16: 12-16 will be proved false by the march of events, for such beliefs are based upon a total misunderstanding of God's Word and are misconceptions of the prophecies involved.

The prophecies depict the struggles of the church, and those prophecies which are misinterpreted in relation to a supposed gathering of nations to Palestine are graphic portrayals of the conflict between the forces of good and evil. In the Scriptures, the church of Jesus Christ is always depicted as dwelling in Palestine, on "the mountains of Israel", and all those prophecies which depict a gathering of the nations to that land are to be understood only as a depiction of the Satanic forces led on by evil spirits against the people of God. When these prophecies are thus understood there comes flooding into the soul a wave of understanding, of joy, of satisfaction, in knowing that God's love for His church looms so large in His Holy Word. The church is the object of His supreme regard. Those who love and serve Him are the central objects of all those prophecies which have been misinterpreted militarily. The Spirit of Prophecy declared that the prophecies would be "better understood" and that one thing would stand out conspicuously from that "better" understanding - "that the connection between God and His people is close and decided" (TM. 1 14). This is the grand truth that is immediately recognized once one sheds the false interpretation that the last-day prophecies of a mighty conflict pertain to military matters. When those prophecies are seen in the light of the great controversy between the forces of good and evil in which the church is the central figure, there is seen the great importance of those prophecies for the people of God, and in this way is revealed the love of God for His people. In His love for His church the Lord Jesus has clearly outlined its struggles

with the powers of earth, and in those prophecies He shows how the nations will all gather to attack His church and how, through His intervention, their enemies will be destroyed and His people be victorious.

This is the glorious teaching of those prophecies which have been misinterpreted in relation to military matters, and to hide from the church the wonderful messages given by our Lord for the comfort and guidance of His church Satan caused to be spread abroad the military interpretation of these prophecies depicting the struggles and the victory of the church of Jesus.

No one knows what the nations, militarily, will do in the 25 future. Political conditions have changed, and what appeared certain to end in the battle of "Armageddon", did not happen as wrongly prophesied. Present political conditions can also change, and especially in the light of so many past failures of expositors predicting falsely, one would be foolish today to hazard a guess as to what exactly may or may not occur among the nations of the world. That wars in general will rage until the end of time we can be confident, but of any thing specific concerning the various nations only the infinite God really knows. What the nations will do in connection with the conflict between truth and error we are plainly and fully informed by Divine revelation.

### **CHAPTER THREE: SATAN WILL STIR UP WARS AND STRIFE IN ORDER TO EVENTUALLY UNITE THE WORLD AGAINST THE CHURCH**

Concerning Satan's subjects the servant of the Lord has written: "The willing subjects of Satan are faithful, active, and united in one object. And although they hate and war with one another, yet they improve every opportunity to advance their common interest. But the great Commander in Heaven and earth has limited Satan's power" (IT-346).

"The world is filled with storm and war and variance. Yet under one head - the papal power - the people will unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses" (7T.182).

From these and other extracts we learn that it is Satan's purpose to unite his forces against the church - see also 5T.449; 451; 6T.18, etc. He will stir up wars among his own subjects and then have the church blamed for the troubles that afflict the nations of the world. As stated in the Spirit of Prophecy: "And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils. The class that have provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God's Commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday-Sabbath, that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced, and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, preventing their restoration to divine favour and temporal prosperity. . . . Those who honour the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth" (GC.590-592).

Describing the scenes to be enacted after probation closes the Lord's servant says: "Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old.... Those who honour the law of God have been accused of bringing judgments upon the world, and they will be regarded as the cause of the fearful convulsions of nature and the strife and bloodshed among men that are filling the earth with woe" (GC.614).

"I saw the sword, famine, pestilence, and great confusion in the land. The wicked thought that we had brought the judgments upon them, and they rose up and *took counsel to rid the earth of us, thinking that then the evil would be stayed*" (EW.34).

"When God shall bid the angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture" (6T.408).

"Strife, war, bloodshed, with famine and pestilence, raged everywhere" (IT.268, 355, 356).

"Soon grievous troubles will arise among the nations-trouble that will not cease till Jesus comes.... The judgments of God are in the land. The wars and rumours of wars, the destruction by fire and flood, say clearly that the time of trouble, *which is to increase until the end*, is very near at hand" (R. & H. Nov. 24, 1904).

Satan incites nations to war as an instrument of policy: it is part of his schemes for diverting people's attention, to occupy their time so they will not prepare for the close of probation. "Satan delights in war. . . . It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another; for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God" (GC.589). Satan also employs wars as a means of arousing the world to hate the remnant church. The Lord's servant says: "The whole world is to be stirred with enmity against Seventh-day Adventists. . . . It is the purpose of Satan to cause them to be blotted from the earth, in order that his supremacy of the world may not be disputed" (TM.37). God's restraining hand prevents the great adversary from precipitating far greater troubles and wars until God's people are ready for what will eventuate. But as fast as God's providence permits Satan to bring greater trouble upon the world, the evil one stirs up friction and difficulties among the nations. We are instructed to "understand the progress of events in the marshalling of the nations for the final conflict of the great controversy" (8T.307).

The enemy does not merely stir up wars to occur just anywhere haphazardly, but he plans to stir them up in places best calculated to bring greater misery to the world in order that the world, being brought into unprecedented difficulties and dangers can the more readily be led to hate God's people and to plan their destruction. That eventually the Lord's restraining hand will be lifted in order to permit Satan to bring about the final scenes is clearly stated: "And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils.... While Satan seeks to destroy those who honour God's law, he will cause them to be accused as law-breakers, as men who are dishonouring God, and bringing judgments upon the world . . . [They] will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth . . . they will be regarded as the cause of the strife and bloodshed among men that are filling the earth with woe" (GC.590, 591, 592, 614). In this way Satan unites the powers of earth to take the drastic action of deciding to destroy God's people. Eventually Satan will have so led the world that "at last a universal decree will denounce these as deserving of death" (PK.512). "There will be, in different lands, a simultaneous movement for their destruction" (GC.635). Thus we can be sure that nations of both East and West will someday and for a little time at least, join hands in persecuting God's people by enforcing Sunday laws and by agreeing to the "universal decree" of death passed upon them.

While we have information respecting the coming of general wars and strife among men we have no prophecy that tells us whether or not there will be war between the Orient and the Occident. We are informed, however, that the brief period of unanimity among the nations of the world, at which time they all agree to destroy God's people, will end abruptly, for God intervenes to save His remnant people. Then, there will be world-wide confusion and slaughter among all the nations and peoples of the world. Of that time, the end of Satan's earthly kingdom, God says: "I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdom of the heathen (nations) ... and the horses and riders shall come down, *every one by the sword of his brother*" (Haggai 2: 21, 22). In a number of places in the Scriptures the same picture is presented - see Zech. 14: 13; judges 7: 22; 1. Sam. 14: 20; 2 Chron. 20: 23; Ezek. 38: 21. "The swords which were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Every- where there is strife and bloodshed.... The work of destruction *begins* among those who have professed to be the spiritual guardians of the people. The false watchmen are the *first* to fall. There are none to pity or to spare" (GC.656). This terrible universal work of slaughter is in progress when Jesus returns to bring everlasting deliverance and joy to His people; then He destroys "the remnant" of the unsaved with the power of His Word, see Rev. 19: 2 1.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: "THE KINGS THAT COME FROM THE SUNRISING"**

### **A GLORIOUS MESSAGE FOR THE CHURCH**

One of the most glorious messages contained in the Holy Scriptures is to be found in Rev. 16: 12. This prophecy concerning the coming of "the Kings from the Sunrising" (R.V. and other translations) is of the utmost importance: it is one that was sent to cheer the heart of all Christians, and particularly the remnant

people, to scatter all darkness and to bring in the light of Heaven, and to give strength, courage, and enlightenment to the people of God.

While briefly touching on this subject we will also issue a challenging analysis of the interpretation that has been fostered by some of our evangelists and writers. And we say in a kindly and forthright way that this prophecy has nothing, absolutely nothing directly to do with the so-called "heathen" nations of the Orient -such a conception is utterly out of harmony with the true exegesis of Rev. 16: 12. To interpret "the Kings from the Sunrising" as referring to nations existing to the east of the Euphrates or of Jerusalem is to misinterpret completely one of the most inspiring prophecies in all the Bible, reducing the sublime to the ridiculous, explaining the things of Heaven by worldly wisdom.

First, where is one verse to substantiate the teaching that "the Kings from the Sunrising" are the "heathen"? The expression "from the sunrising" has already been mentioned in Rev. 7: 2 with reference to the rise of God's last-day Message of Sabbath reform. Must we conclude therefore that this Message came from the "heathen"-from China, Japan, etc.? The following extract, which is really an explanation of Rev. 7: 2, gives the words spoken by Sister White in a vision at the home of Brother Otis Nichols, near Dorchester, Mass., November 18, 1848. She said: "He [God] was well pleased when His law began to come up in strength. That truth [the Sabbath truth] arises, and is on the increase, stronger and stronger. It's the seal! It's coming up! It arises, *coming from the rising of the sun*, like the sun, first cold, grows warmer, and sends its rays. When that truth arose, there was but little light in it; but it has been increasing. Oh, the power of these rays" -"Questions on the Sealing Message," by J. N. Loughborough, P. 15.

In the Book of Revelation, of which our infinitely-wise Lord Jesus is the Author (Rev. 22: 16; G.C.342), every word is placed in the structure of that Book with exquisite wisdom and care-this fact has impressed those who have given it most thorough study. How, then, could we be so careless or blind in our understanding of it to *assume* that while in Rev. 7: 2 "from the sunrising" means from Heaven exactly the same designation in Rev. 16: 12 means nations whose lands are east of the Euphrates or Jerusalem? This is worse than blind guessing for it is presumptuously thrusting aside what the Lord has already made clear in Rev. 7: 2 in order to fit in a speculative assumption of a purely worldly character in our understanding of Rev. 16: 12. There is not one particle of Biblical evidence to support the teaching that "the Kings from the sunrising" refer to the "heathen" nations to the east of Jerusalem. I challenge anyone among us to produce definite Bible evidence for such teaching. To declare that the "heathen" of Joel 3 mean the same as "the Kings from the sunrising" is not only gratuitous assumption, but is plainly contradictory to the express teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy that these "heathen" ("gentiles", "nations") are the people who persecute the remnant church "in the final conflict" over the Sabbath-EW.283, 284; IT.183, 184, etc.

Christ said that anyone who is not a member of His church is a "heathen" (Matt. 18: 17). Paul's preaching "among the heathen", mentioned in Gal. 1: 16, is set forth in Gal. 2: 9 in contrast to the other disciples preaching among the professing people of God. The word "heathen" is found 143 times in the Old Testament, and never *once* does it refer to the Chinese, Japanese, Russians, etc. Seven times the word "heathen" is used in the New Testament (A.V.), but none of these Scriptures apply directly to the Chinese, Japanese, etc.

The word "gentiles" in Joel 3: 9 is from the same original word as "nations" and "heathen", and the very context reveals that this proclamation: "Sanctify war" (margin) refers to the united efforts of all nations of the world to destroy the "remnant" mentioned in Joel 2: 32 under the guise of a holy war. Our Lord refers to Joel's prophecy concerning the "nations", the "heathen", when He describes how, at His second coming, "all nations shall be gathered before Him: and He shall separate them one from another the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matt. 25: 31-34, compare Joel 3: 12). He applied Joel's prophecy concerning the "heathen" to the people of the whole world. Do we know better than our Lord? Let us abide by His teaching. In Ephes. 2: 11, 12, we have the inspired definition of the word "gentiles" or "heathen"-those who are "aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel". In Rev. 11: 2 the word "gentiles" or "heathen" refers to the Papal church in its persecution of the "Israel of God" during the Dark Ages. With these God-given and precisely-stated definitions we see readily that the "gentiles", or the "heathen", in the Old Testament were the *enemies of God and of His people*; in the New Testament they are the spiritual *enemies of spiritual Israel*. The terms "heathen" and "gentiles" are *never once* in Scripture applied to Japan, China, Russia, or to any nations specifically east of Palestine. Surely no God-fearing expositor will dare to expound the Sacred Word in defiance of light so fully and so clearly given. That interpretation which declares that "the Kings from the Sunrising" are the nations of the Orient is *without one Scripture to*

*support it*, and is condemned by the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy-and by commonsense. That erroneous teaching comes under the category of "private interpretations" (2 Pet. 1: 20) against which we are specifically warned. We must compare Scripture with Scripture, and not accommodate a text to the terminology of modern usage.

Those who endeavour to make the "heathen" of Joel 3 refer to "the Kings from the sunrising," (Rev. 16: 12) are confusing *two entirely different designations*. The "heathen" or "gentiles" of Joel 3 are applied by the Spirit of Prophecy to the enemies of spiritual Israel and do not have any direct reference to the nations east of Jerusalem. The "heathen" or "gentiles" of Joel 3 are the *enemies* of God's people; "the Kings from the Sunrising" of Rev. 16: 12 are the *deliverers* of God's people, and the *enemies of Babylon*, of this fact there can be no doubt, and commentators without any preconceived ideas freely declare such to be the case.

Notice the following comment on Rev. 16: 12 from the "New Larger Type Edition, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible", by Robert Jamieson, D.D., A. R. Faussett, A.M., David Brown, D.D.: "*The Kings of the Earth who are earthly* (v. 14) *stand in contrast to the Kings from the East, who are heavenly*, Observe the comment upon Rev. 16: 12 by Christopher Wordsworth, D.D., a devout and spiritual scholar: "And, as the great river, the river Euphrates, the glory and bulwark of Babylon, became a road for Cyrus and his victorious army when he besieged the city... And so the drying up of that spiritual Euphrates will prepare the way for *the Kings of the East* (Rev. 16: 12, compare Isa. 44: 27, 28; 45: 1; Jer. 50: 38; 51: 36), *that is, for Jesus Christ*, and for *His children of Light*, who are faithful soldiers, and who will be permitted to share in the royal splendour of the Mighty Conqueror, the King of Glory, Who is the Dayspring from on high-the Light of the world-the Sun of righteousness, with healing in His wings (Luke 1: 78; John 8: 12; Mal. 4: 2). May all who read these lines be of that blessed company through Jesus Christ our Lord! Amen..... Miscellanies Literary and Religious", Vol. 1, pp. 437, 438.

"The Pulpit Commentary" remarks concerning Rev. 16:12:-

"*The 'Kings of the East' are certainly ranged on the side of God*. Many writers see an allusion to Christ and His saints. The Sun is a frequent figure of Christ in the Scriptures (cf. Mal. 4: 2, Zech. 3: 8; 6: 12, LXX., Luke 1: 78, also Rev. 7: 2; 12: 1; 22: 16). *The Kings of the East may thus be identified with the armies of Rev. 19: 11-16.*"

T.W. Christie, B.A., in his "The Book of Revelation" (p. 273), says: "*East is ever connected with Christ and His children*. 2 Pet. 1: 19; Rev. 22: 16; Mal. 4: 2; Isa. 60: 20."

In his "The Book of Revelation", P. 269, W. Milligan, D.D., comments on Rev. 16: 12-16: "We have also met at Rev. 7: 2 with the expression 'from the sunrising', and it is there applied to the quarter from which the angel comes by whom the people of God are sealed. In a book so carefully written as the Apocalypse, it is not easy to think of anti-Christian foes coming from a quarter described in the same terms. *These Kings from the sun-rising are not said to be part of 'the kings of the whole inhabited earth' immediately afterwards referred to. They are rather distinguished from them.* The 'preparing of the way' connects itself with the thought of Him Whose way was prepared by the coming of the Baptist. The type of drying up of the waters of a river takes us back, alike in the historical and prophetic writings of the Old Testament, to the means by which the Almighty secures *the deliverance of His people*".

One of the foremost scholars and writers of the Advent Movement, designated the "dean of Seventh-day Adventist writers", George McCready Price, M.A., says: "It does seem reasonable that *the 'kings of the east' must be the antagonists of the kings of the whole world*"; for the latter are under the control of evil spirits, and hence the former must be *the ones on the Lord's side*, and must be the ones employed for the destruction of the spirit-led enemies."

Another prominent scholar and writer in the Advent Movement, S. H. Lindt, in his brochure, "The Kings of the East", states: "*The kings of the east are set forth in contradistinction to the kings of the earth* in Rev. 16, indicating that they are a separate and a distinct group and *cannot be considered a part of this world* because the kings of the earth and the whole world are included in the words of verse 14.." In this same outline, Brother Lindt also says:

"The Hebrew of the Old Testament has a word for sun-rising which is a close synonym of the Greek word referred to above. This Hebrew word occurs in the Old Testament a total of seventy-three times, and, like its Greek synonym, it is used in literal narrative frequently where its natural meaning is the east, or the sunrising. The Hebrew word is pronounced mitzrach. It is also used a few times in symbolic prophecy,

and in such instances it is applied to Christ just like the Greek word in the New Testament. Two sample verses illustrating this fact can be found in Isaiah 41, verses 2 and 25, where 'the righteous man from the east', or 'from the rising of the sun', can *be no other than Christ Himself.*"

So that God's people in Australasia may understand how widespread among our Bible teachers and scholars is the belief that the Kings of the East refer to armies of Heaven led by our Lord Jesus, I will quote from another paper, entitled: "Comments on the Sixth and Seventh Plagues", by G. F. Wolfkill, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at the Pacific Union College in 1950. In his paper, Brother Wolfkill says: "In my paper on Armageddon, it was suggested that Christ and the commanders of His armies in heaven are the 'kings of the east' referred to in Rev. 16: 12. Since that paper was written, several other papers dealing with last-day events have given a similar interpretation of the 'kings of the east'. It is the purpose of this paper to present briefly further evidence in support of the view that Christ and His followers are the 'kings of the east'. Any who wish to make a more extended study of this subject are urged to read *The Kings of the East: An Historical Study*, by Raymond F. Cottrell."

After quoting from Early Writings, pp. 281, 286, 53, 54, showing that the Lord Jesus, the angels, and the saints, wear crowns as kings, Brother Wolfkill says: "The armies of heaven under the command of the King of kings will come to the earth to fight 'the battle of the great day of God Almighty'. This is the battle of Armageddon. 'The battle of Armageddon is soon to be fought. He on whose vesture is written the name, King of kings, and Lord of lords, is soon to lead forth the armies of heaven' (6T.406)... The first visible appearance of the King of kings with the armies of heaven will be seen in the *east* as a small black cloud. 'Soon there appeared in the *east* a small black cloud ... Jesus rides forth a mighty conqueror . . . the armies which are in heaven follow him' (GC.640, 641). 'And I saw a flaming cloud come where Jesus stood. Then Jesus laid off His priestly garments and put on His kingly robes, and took His place on the cloud which carried Him to *the East*, where it first appeared to the saints on earth - a small black cloud which was the sign of the Son of Man. While the cloud was passing from the Holiest to *the East*, which took a number of days, the synagogue of Satan worshipped at the Saints' feet' (Ellen G. White. To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad, April 6, 1846. Also in Day-Star, March 24, 1846). In this sublime presentation is described the coming of the 'kings of the east' of Rev. 16: 12."

After presenting Scriptural and Spirit of Prophecy evidence, Brother Wolfkill concludes his paper, saying: "Surely then, the kings of the east of Rev. 16: 12 can be none other than Christ with the commanders of the armies of heaven".

## **CHAPTER FIVE: BENDING THE FACTS TO FIT THE INTERPRETATION**

Not one text can be advanced to support the declaration that "the kings of the east" "are Asiatic nations lying east of Palestine, the heathen nations, the coloured races." There is not one Scripture that says that in last-day prophecy "east" is to be understood as being "east" of the literal land of Palestine; not one text to support the assumption that these "Kings of the East" are "coloured" or are "heathen"; not one text to support the thought that "the Kings of the East" were ever asleep and would "at last awake". What a betrayal of this most cheering message for the remnant people of God.

In order to impress people with the accuracy of their prophetic interpretation that the Oriental people are the kings of the east some of our evangelists make an inexcusable use of the word "heathen" in the prophecy of Joel 3. They say, though *without one text to support their assertion*, that these "heathen" of Joel's prophecy are the same as the kings of the east, and, to add weight to their words, stress the "heathen"-like behavior of these Orientals. One synopsis of an evangelist's address reads: "The Oriental has a different vision - ambition and belief almost wholly destitute of the great Christian principles. Their concept of human life is inferior to ours [the West]. Human rights are few and invariably ignored. Morality is a strange word to them".

Yet many of these Orientals were deeply shocked when seeing for the first time the low standard of human behavior shown by films from the "West". It might help us to be less superior in our "Western" egotism, which has entered into the interpretation of the impartial Word of the living God, to read the following extract taken from the Melbourne Herald 25/10/1955):-

"The Indian Government today published a plan to prohibit alcohol - except for foreigners drinking in private - within 21 years. A report by a prohibition inquiry committee blamed the British for spreading the drinking habit. The report said: 'It would be wrong to say that alcoholic drinks were introduced to this country by the British, but their consumption was extended by the habit of the average Englishman'. The plan proposed that as a first step all 'visible drinking' should be stopped immediately by banning liquor in hotels, bars, restaurants, messes, clubs and at social gatherings. Tourists and foreign residents would get liquor in separate rooms in hotels. Embassies would be expected to co-operate by not serving alcohol at public receptions attended by Indians. By April, 1958, all drinking of liquor, except by foreigners in private, would be banned completely. The Government has not decided whether to accept the plan. The Indian Constitution already stipulates that prohibition shall be introduced. The committee had to decide how and when. Four of the 29 States - Andhra, Bombay, Madras and Saurashtra - have prohibition. Nine others have 'dry' areas or 'dry' days. About 3G per cent. of the population is affected by prohibition."

It is not only in regard to liquor that the "West" has set a bad example for the "East", for one has but to read history to earn how the poor Orientals have suffered at the hands of representatives of so-called "Christian civilization".

In order to obtain a balanced judgment respecting non European countries it would be wise to observe actual conditions to be found in some of these so-called "heathen" lands. We quote again, from the Herald (Nov. 3, 1955): "Bagdad. - Films which encourage any kind of criminal act, vice, drug trafficking or any other unlawful activities will be banned by Iraqi authorities. The Film Censorship Board has asked foreign film agencies and cinema owners here to co-operate by not importing or showing such films. Such films, the board explains, are creating irresponsibility among the youth and encouraging them to follow the example of the gangster film heroes. 'Juvenile courts,' a board circular states, 'since their establishment in 1952, have found that in almost 85 per cent. of their cases youthful offenders have committed their crimes in exactly the way shown in the American gangster films'."

Surely the vast army of criminals that carry on their nefarious activities in the United States, to cite an example from the "Western" world, are just as much deserving the appellation "heathen" as are sinners in "Eastern" lands.

Is it not as true today with many in Christendom as in the days of the Jewish nation concerning which we read: "Among those whom the Jews styled heathen, were men who had a better understanding of the Scripture prophecies concerning the Messiah than had the teachers in Israel" (DA.33).

The "West" with its terrific welter of bloodshed in two great wars, causing such tremendous destruction of life and property with the manifestation of diabolical cruelty and suffering, has nothing wherewith to boast of superiority over the multiplied millions of Orientals who have not exhibited such wholesale unchristlikeness. The "East", at first shocked by the warlike propensities of the "West", is now following the example of the "West" in learning the art of modem warfare. The "East" will also follow the "West" in bringing persecution to bear upon God's people for their loyalty to the Commandments of God. As stated in the Spirit of Prophecy: "Foreign nations will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in all parts of the world" (6T.395). "The people of every country on the globe will be led to *follow her example*" 6T.18).

When interpreting such prophecies as Joel 3 we should not be influenced by western egotism but abide by what is clearly revealed in the Word of God. As we have shown, the "heathen" of Joel refer to those who are "enemies" of God's people in all countries of the world, a vast army led by the apostate leaders of Christendom. The prophecy of Joel describes how the people of the world - "West" and "East" - will be led to make war upon the people of God. The Spirit of Prophecy, pointing us down to the close of the conflict over the keeping of the Law of Jehovah, says: "Through the day and night their cry ceased not (Luke 18:7, 8; Rev. 14: 14, 15). I heard these words: ... Deliver us from *the heathen round about us*" (IT.183). Then describing the deliverance of God's people from the "heathen", the Lord's servant says: "Their captivity [see Joel 3: 1] was turned . . . *Their enemies, the heathen* around them, fell like dead men. They could not endure the light that shone upon the delivered, holy ones" (IT.184). See also EW.283, 284. Thus God's servant not only quotes Joel 3: 11, 12 concerning the "heathen round about" the remnant church, but she declares that she heard the people of God quoting this passage from Joel in their prayers to God for their deliverance from these "heathen round about". Thus showing that God's people must learn the true interpretation of this prophecy of Joel and no longer be deceived by a false interpretation of the prophecies that portray, not military conflicts, but the great struggle between the forces of good and evil.

It is a highly dangerous thing to wrongly interpret the Scriptures - we are dealing with matters of eternal life or eternal death. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for *instruction in righteousness*: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17). God does not create worlds in vain, neither does He give such a wonderful prophecy as that of Joel's book in vain -He gave it that His people might know of His foreknowledge in depicting the final struggle of the Satanic forces against His loyal people, that they might learn therein of His love for them and of His blessed assurance that He will cause them to triumph over their enemies. How it must grieve the heart of God to see His professing servants presenting to a needy world a counterfeit interpretation that can only feed the vanity of those of the Occident, a counterfeit interpretation that hides the glorious teaching of righteousness by faith which is the very essence of all last-day prophecies.

It should give grave cause for reflection to remember that the Lord's servant has stated: "As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's Message..... abandon their position, and join *the ranks of the opposition*... and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become *the most bitter enemies* of their former brethren" GC.608).

As the Lord's servant has definitely declared that "*the heathen*" are the "*enemies*" of the remnant church and in the extract just given also states that "a large class ... join the ranks of *the opposition*"; that "men of talent and pleasing address ... become the most bitter *enemies* of their former brethren", we thus learn that apostate members of the remnant church will then be numbered among "the heathen". As the Lord has given these prophecies in order to strengthen His people for the final conflict, and, as we have seen, those who endure the coming test of strength with the powers of darkness employ the prophecy of Joel 3 when praying for deliverance from "their enemies, the heathen round about" them, we may conclude that those who wilfully or through worldly-mindedness continue to interpret this prophecy to the end in relation to the Orient will actually be among "the heathen" of that prophecy. It was in a similar way that the Jewish priests, through their nationalistic interpretation of the prophecies, actually fulfilled the very prophecies which they thus erroneously interpreted. As stated by the apostle Paul: "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, *they have fulfilled them* in condemning Him" (Acts 13: 27).

In a spirit of kindly Christian charity, the writer of this outline desires to review a few things pertaining to the inaccuracies employed when seeking to bolster up the erroneous conception of the prophetic Word of God. The handbill of one of our sincere evangelists reads: "1,400,000,000 Asians Awake and Ready to March". This number must include all the babies, the boys and girls, the old men and women, the sick, afflicted and the infirm, as well as millions of war-sickened Asiatics, whose chief object in life is to obtain enough food to keep them alive. They have no thought of marching anywhere - certainly not of marching over thousands of miles across great mountain ranges and rivers till they reach Palestine where this advertisement infers they will fight the West! There is *not one* Scripture to support this teaching. The effect of such garish advertising, making untrue statements, is prejudicial in the minds of thinking men and women who immediately ponder on how long it would take to organize this prodigious number for such a march, why they would march, etc.? How sad when such advertisements claim that these wild assertions are based upon Bible prophecy! How much better it would be were the people invited to come along to hear about the glorious Redeemer Who is "the way, the truth, and the life", and Who throughout Scripture is declared to be "The Sunrising from on high" (Luke 1: 78, margin); "The Sun of Righteousness" Who arises "with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4: 2); the King, the Son of David, Who declares that He is "the bright and morning [sun-rise - Dr. Strong] Star" (Rev. 22: 16).

Another of the handbills (paid for by our tithes-hence our responsibility) circulated by our workers reads in bold type: "ALL EYES EAST", which is not true, for half the world's population is in the Orient and cannot be said to be looking East. And how incongruous for preachers and writers living in Australia, New Zealand, etc., to use such words when they desire their audiences or readers to look directly north or to the northwest to the countries which they classify as being "east" I It is not Scriptural to say that "east" means east of Jerusalem for "east" is mentioned in Rev. 7: 2 when describing the Message that *comes from Heaven*. Since the rejection of the Jewish nation no prophet has ever made a prophecy based geographically upon the literal city of Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER SIX--WHEN ALL EYES WILL TURN TO THE EAST

There will come a time when "all eyes" will be turned "to the east" and that will be at the second coming of Christ. The Lord's servant has written concerning this important features saying: "Soon our eyes were drawn *to the east*, for a small black cloud had appeared ... which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer, and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud". The Lord's servant has again drawn our attention to this fact in GC.640. We are positively informed that "the written testimonies are not to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart the *truths of inspiration already given* . . . Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the Testimonies simplified the *great truths already given*" (5T.665). Therefore the Bible definitely teaches that Christ's coming will be seen in the eastern skies, which, of course, is plainly taught in many Scriptures, such as Ezek. 43: 1-4; Matt. 24: 27; Rev. 16: 12; 22: 16, 20, etc.

That Jesus will come down the eastern skies looms large in many places throughout the Bible. Those who have not studied the Bible with this thought in mind would be surprised to learn the great amount of light that is available on this subject.

What we have given in this brief outline is sufficient for our purpose; for further confirmation of this important teaching the reader is urged to see my other publications where I have gone more fully into the subject. All the verses that teach the second coming of Christ-every twenty-fifth verse on an average in the New Testament-are to be understood in the light of Christ being seen coming in the east. For instance, in Rev. 1: 7, we are informed: "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". This cloud, the servant of the Lord declares, will be seen in "the east". Jesus, when declaring that His coming would be "as the lightning cometh out of the east", also said: "And then *shall appear the sign* of the Son of man in heaven: and all tribes of the earth mourn, and they *shall see the Son of man* coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24: 27, 30). Here we are definitely told by our Lord

He will appear in the eastern skies. At first there will appear a small cloud in the east; this cloud becomes larger and more glorious as He draws nearer to the earth. It is then that "All Eyes" will be turned to the "east", whether saints or sinners. This is the glorious truth that Satan seeks to hide by the teaching that all eyes are now turned to the heathen countries in supposed fulfilment of Rev. 16: 12. But Rev. 16: 12 does not point us to heathen lands but points us to the coming of our Lord Jesus, "the Light of the World", "the Sun of Righteousness", "the Sunrising from on high", Who will lead "the armies of Heaven" against "the armies" of earth. This is what is portrayed in Rev.16:12 as may be seen by comparing with Rev. 19: 11-21.

"The Kings from the Sunrising" are set forth in contrast to the kings of the earth and of the whole world" (Rev. 16: 14). Commentators, including Seventh-day Adventist scholars, have pointed out this fact. In the Revelator's portrayal of the final conflict He, Jesus is the Revelator) describes two armies, and only two: "the kings of the earth and of the whole world" (Rev., 16:14) and "the Kings from the sunrising" (v. 12). "The Kings from the Sunrising" are pictured as coming to "make war" (Rev. 19: I 1) upon "the kings of the earth and of the whole world". In Rev. 19: 11-21 where the coming of Christ is so graphically depicted, He is pictured as leading "the armies which were in heaven", coming to "make war" upon "the nations", "the armies" of "the beast and the kings of the earth". As His coming is plainly declared to be "from the sunrising", "the east", then Rev. 19: 11-21 repeats what is pictured in Rev. 16: 12-16: "The armies of heaven" come from the eastern heavens-"from the sunrising"-to "make war" upon "the kings of the earth and of the whole world". This fact is also commonly accepted among unbiased commentators, including numbers of our own scholars and Bible teachers.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: THE KINGS OF THE EAST ESPECIALLY MENTIONED

In his broadcast address July, 1955)-"Asia's Multitudes Awake!"-The Voice of Prophecy speaker declared: "In his vivid description of the closing scenes of earth the New Testament prophet, John the revelator, especially mentioned the kings of the east". It is true that "the Kings from the sunrising" are "especially mentioned". But this fact is against the idea that the designation "the King, of the East" refers to the "heathen" of Asia. Through-out the Revelator's graphic portrayal of the actors in the great drama in

the final conflict, commencing with Rev. 12 and continuing on to Rev. 20, the only powers described are the beast and the false prophet and "the kings of the earth" who enforce "the mark of the beast" (Rev. 19: 19, 20). The "kings of the earth" are the same as the "dragon" mentioned in Rev. 16: 12 as will be readily seen when comparison is made with Rev. 12: 17; 16: 13, 14; 17: 12-14; 19: 19, 20. The Spirit of Prophecy plainly declares that "the kings" who enforce the mark of the beast are the "dragon"-see TM.39, 62.

The Lord, in His Revelation portrayal, is most careful to stress the sad, but important, fact that the final conflict involving the remnant church in such deadly peril and threatened extinction will be precipitated by professing Christian nations-Christendom -leading the world to enforce Sunday laws under pain of death to dissenters. These are the earthly powers that are "especially mentioned" in the prophecy, and it is utterly incorrect to say that the "heathen", "the peoples of the East", are "the kings of the East" who are "especially mentioned".

In Rev. 19: 11-21, which is the parallel passage to that of Rev. 16: 12-16, nothing is said about the "heathen" (as understood by those who misapply that term to mean the people of Asia), for in that graphic portrayal the powers which are specifically mentioned are "the beast, and the false prophet" and their "armies" who have enforced "the mark of the beast". That is, the wrath of God is to fall most heavily upon those who have professed to be His people but who have given their strength to Satan by going contrary to God's law, by persecuting His loyal people, and threatening to slay them for their obedience to His Commandments. Were the "heathen" to be "especially mentioned" it would make them of greater importance, that upon them especially must the wrath of God fall; but such is not in harmony with the principle so clearly declared in the Bible that the Lord judges according to the amount of light one receives. The "West" will lead the "East" to rebel against God's Sabbath Message.

Then, again, it is obvious that "the Kings from the sunrising" could not refer to the Asiatics, for they are *already included* in the designation "the kings of the earth and of the whole world". Having declared that "the kings of the earth and of the *whole* world" are involved in this final conflict it would be redundant to mention the so-called "heathen" half of the world already included. But there presents no problem whatsoever when "the Kings from the sunrising" are "especially mentioned" as "the armies of Heaven" coming to "make war" upon "the kings of the earth and of the *whole* world".

This harmonizes with the teachings of our Pioneers, which may be expressed in the words of James White in an editorial in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 21, 1862, entitled: "Thoughts on the Great Battle". He wrote: "The great battle is not between nation and nation, but between earth and heaven".

It is certainly true that "the Kings from the Sunrising"- "the armies of Heaven" coming from the land of light-are "especially mentioned", which indicates their importance to the people of God, for it is a fundamental principle of Scriptural exegesis that nations and powers are brought into Biblical prophecy only as they relate to God's people. Therefore, "the Kings from the sunrising" are "especially mentioned" because of their importance to the people of God, which is one reason out of many why they could not refer to the "heathen".

## **CHAPTER EIGHT--CONCLUSIONS BASED ON FAULTY FOUNDATIONS**

It is not true, as stated by one outline based upon the belief that "the Kings from the sunrising" refer to the "heathen" or "coloured races", that "the climax of the prophecy is reached" in the description given in Rev. 16: 13, 14, for the Revelator employs the words "I saw" (v. 13) *after having presented his climax* (v. 12) and then proceeds to deal with the events leading up to that climax. Therefore, the climax of the prophecy is Rev. 16: 12, the coming of our Lord with His heavenly armies to destroy the world's forces in the destruction of Armageddon, the word which, in the Hebrew, means, "the mountain of destruction".

To enforce attention and to add weight to the contention that "the kings of the east" refer to the "heathen" nations who are destined to march across to Palestine, according to the misinterpretation of Rev. 16: 12-16, some of our evangelists lay claim to speak on this subject "with certainty and authority" because of their "many years' residence in Eastern countries", a line of reasoning employed by those believing in the return of the Jews to Palestine, and who return from that land declaring that the prophecies are fulfilling

there in relation to literal Israel and literal Palestine and that their word should be heeded because they have been to Palestine and have seen the fulfilment. Those who are guided by definite Bible principles of interpretation have no need to go to any country to know what the Lord has revealed in His Word. Scientists who look for missing links and evidences supporting the evolutionary hypothesis often interpret what they see in the light of certain preconceived ideas before they discover their "finds". Similarly, those who entertain ideas whether political, scientific, or religious, read into what they see evidence of the idea they held *before* they saw their findings-they misinterpret the facts. Similarly, those who reside for a time in Eastern lands or pay a visit there and witness a state of unrest in certain sections of those countries seize on such unrest as proof positive that those peoples are getting ready to march to Palestine -"indicative of a western drive", "east is to move west"-statements that have no basis in solid fact. It is purely a figment of human imagination based upon an erroneous interpretation of Rev. 16: 12-16.

It so happened recently that the very week that one of our evangelists was considering the subject of "All Eyes East", he made statements as one who had resided a number of years in Eastern countries, and those statements were not in harmony with two world authorities on the Eastern countries who also made statements that same week. Our evangelist, of course, was anxious to persuade his audience to see his interpretation of Rev. 16: 12, while the two eminent political commentators were just giving their unbiased opinion of actual existing conditions and the political ambitions of Eastern countries.

Handbills and synopses before me as I write suggest that the whole of the East is against the West, something that is not true, for there are numbers of peoples living in the Eastern countries who seek to find common agreement with the West and to live in peace together. Many of the people living in the East are grateful for the help given them by the West, and some are striving to bring about a peaceful state between the Orient and the Occident. Many millions throughout the East long only for a peaceful existence, to grow food and find shelter for their families. Even of recent date Eastern nations have striven for peace, at times in contrast to the more belligerent West. In other ways, certain nations of Asia have helped the West. When the question of the proposed change in the calendar came up before the United Nations committee some of the Eastern nations took action to kill the reform proposal. In the Afro-Asian Peace talks there was evidence of a division in Eastern nations in their attitude toward the West. One journalist has stated: "India, second most populous State in Asia, has a six-year plan to attract white travellers to see for themselves what is happening there. . . . Similar ideas are stirring in other Asian countries. States which were finding the heady wine of nationalism liable to cloud their sense of what was best for themselves are beginning to realise that they do not live for themselves alone" (Advertiser).

Some of the Asiatic countries recognize that the much maligned colonialism has brought them benefits which they will carry, ready-made, into self-government. Tengku Abdul Rahman, Chief Minister of Malaya's new elected Government, has declared that Malaya, when, in four years, it achieves its aim of self-government, intends to remain within the British Commonwealth. Whether this eventually occurs will not decide the interpretation of Rev. 16: 12, for the interpretation of that and every other verse in the Bible is given in the Scriptures themselves. These present political happenings are presented to illustrate the inaccuracies often employed to support the interpretation that "the Kings from the sunrising" are the "coloured races" who are supposed to be united against the West.

Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, until recently British Commissioner General in South-East Asia, and now U.K. High Commissioner in India, has recently stated: "One of the most remarkable proofs of the friendship engendered between different peoples is that when they broke their old associations with Britain, they eagerly entered into a new association in a different form. What happened in India is a classical example of that".

At the time of writing results have come to hand concerning elections held for Cambodia's new National Assembly, in accordance with last year's Geneva agreement ending the eight-year Indo-China war. A spokesman of the Cambodian Interior Ministry states: "A veritable anti-communist tidal wave has swept Cambodia". This follows hard on the heels of a startling advertisement widely circulated by one of our evangelists concerning 'the Red-inspired march of hungry men' in the East: the East united against the West!

The following extract from an article in a recent Melbourne paper will serve to illustrate the necessity for our evangelists to keep abreast of current happenings in the East and not to declare blindly, in devotion to a false theory, that the East is united against the West in supposed fulfilment of Rev. 16: 12, for, apart from the erroneous interpretation involved, there is also the question of appearing inaccurate in the field of contemporaneous history. The article referred to says:

"It would be a grave mistake to view all recent events in South-East Asian countries as inimical to Australian interests and a threat to our way of life. There is a tendency to look upon the rising tide of nationalism as evidence of inexorable progress towards the Communization of Asia. There are straws in the wind to-day which suggest that such is far from being the case and that a sturdy independence of spirit is arising as a new feature of the Asian scene. Such a straw is the election victory in Cambodia of the Popular Socialist Community Party, led by the young ex-King Norodom, which is dedicated to the ending of corruption and political intrigue and reform of the constitution. The election was a shattering defeat for all other parties including Communists, who did not win a seat.... But if a small Asian community can in these days show a courageous front to the Chinese Communist colossus just across its border; and if countries such as Siam, Burma and Indonesia-'untainted by colonialism'-are able to display a zeal for democratic reform as a front against an internal Communist threat, hope still remains that a large part of S.E. Asia will remain free and independent. The signs are there; the flame of hope is growing" (Advertiser, 22/9/1955).

Another of our evangelists, speaking on the subject of "East and West", and endeavouring to impress upon people that East was already practically united against the West in supposed fulfilment of Rev. 16: 12, said: "The Mediterranean tonight is the boundary of East and West. The roadway for the East is ready for the march of the Kings from the Sunrising". But this is chiefly imaginary; poetical phraseology that does not harmonize with the facts, for the Eastern nations have no plan or purpose in marching West to Palestine. We should not manipulate facts to fit in with some fanciful interpretation of the Scriptures. This evangelist declared: "East is to move West. This breath-taking event is future". This evangelist's breath is taken away by his misinterpretation of Rev. 16: 12. He sees this prodigious event of the East moving West in his imagination, for there is nothing occurring at the present to indicate that East is going to move West, and he also admits that it is a future event! It is a very deceiving procedure to point to the future for the fulfilment of some prophecy and let imagination apply that future fulfilment as if it were fulfilling today—create a picture of the future and allow a misinterpretation to apply to today's happenings.

During World War II, at the height of Japan's military successes, a writer in one of our papers referred to "this fulfilling prophecy". He thought Japan's martial activities and the trend of the war indicated already that the Japanese, as the kings of the east, were en route to the river Euphrates, that Japan was even then fulfilling the prophecy. Yet Rev. 16: 12 clearly states that the Kings of the east do not enter the prophetic scene until after the outpouring of the 6th plague! Therefore, it was idle speculation, pure assumption, to connect up by way of anticipation the doings of the Japanese war machine with what the prophecy says will occur after the 6th plague is poured out. It was purely a trick of imagination that transferred what was conjured up as the picture presented by the prophecy of Rev. 16: 12 and made it appear to be fulfilling during World War II. But that illustrates how impossible it is for any expositor to apply Rev. 16: 12 (and parallel passages) in connection with some nation or nations today or at any time before the outpouring of the 6th plague, for this prophecy does not say one word regarding what the kings of the east will do before that time.

Those who apply Rev. 16: 12 to present-day happenings read into that prophecy something that is not there. In that prophecy there is not the slightest suggestion of anything done by the Kings of the East *before* the outpouring of the 6th plague, so that it is futile to quote that verse with reference to what is transpiring today. The writer whose wartime article is referred to above has stated in his article "The East Aflame", appearing in "The Signs of the Times" (October 31, 1955): "The following prophecies from the Word of God seem to be meeting their fulfilment at the present time: Dan. 11: 44; Rev. 16: 12" (verses quoted). Surely it is very confusing and misleading to declare that the prophecy, which the Lord says will be fulfilled after the outpouring of the 6th plague, is now meeting its "fulfilment *at the present time*".

That writer's application of Daniel 11: 44 to present-day political happenings in the East widely differs from that given by George McCready Price in his book "The Greatest of the Prophets. A New Commentary on the Book of Daniel", pp. 316, 317, which reads: "Many are inclined to interpret the first part of this text literally and to apply it to contemporary events. The misapplication of prophecy to contemporary events has always been a more common blunder than that which has resulted from trying to interpret prophecy in advance. Why, may perhaps be hard to explain; but the history of the centuries shows that so it has ever been. Not only does personal bias work to vitiate the result, but the chromatic aberration of mass prejudice tends to throw both the prophecy and the contemporary events out of focus, so that people do not see either in their true perspective ...

"I think all are agreed that the many whom this evil power goes forth *to destroy* and utterly *to sweep away* must be the true people of God, not some opposing military force. Also it is extremely interesting to note that, according to some Hebrew scholars, the expression here implies something like *a universal boycott or outlawry*, an idea which will be readily understood by most of my readers, in the light of Revelation 13: 17 and the many related statements in *The Great Controversy*, and elsewhere".

When interpreted militarily, no one can possibly know what the Kings of the East of Rev. 16: 12 will do *before* the time of the 6th plague for the prophecy does not give the slightest hint at anything they will be doing before then. However, when we permit the Bible to interpret itself, we may know what "the armies of Heaven" are doing now and what they will do also after the 6th plague - they are ever fighting against the forces of evil and ever engaged in protecting the blood-bought church of Jesus Christ.

The Lord's servant says:-

"John writes: 'I beheld and heard the voice of the angels round about the throne.' Angels were united in the work of Him who had broken the seals and taken the book. *Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.* The nations of the world are eager for conflict: but they are held in check by the angels. *When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish.* Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels, with their living cargo, will be entombed in the great deep. *All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of Satanic agencies.* But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon.

*"Angels are belting the world, refusing Satan his claim to supremacy, made because of the vast multitude of his adherents. We hear not the voices, we see not with the natural sight the work of these angels, but their hands are linked about the world, and with sleepless vigilance they are keeping the armies of Satan at bay till the sealing of God's people shall be accomplished.*

"The ministers of Jehovah, angels have skill and power and great strength, *being commissioned to go forth from heaven to minister to His people.* They are given the work of keeping back the raging power who has come down like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The Lord is a refuge for all who put their trust in Him. He bids them hide in Him for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. He is soon to come out of His place to punish the world for its iniquity. Then the earth shall disclose her blood and no more cover her slain" (*E. G. White Letter 79, 1900, May 10, 1900*).

## CHAPTER NINE--CONCLUSIONS BASED UPON POSITIVE FACTS

The time will come when many more among us will refuse to interpret "the Kings from sunrising" in relation to the nations of the Orient. Nothing could be surer than that loyal, sincere, God-fearing Adventists will return again to the teachings of the Pioneers of the Advent Movement and believe that Rev. 16: 12-16 does not refer to a military war. With James White, and other Pioneers, it will be declared among us freely: "The great battle is not between nation and nation; but between earth and heaven". Then, this great fact will not be, regarded as heresy but as the truth of God.

Where the belief exists that "the kings from the sunrising" refer to Asiatics there also exists a hazy appreciation of the greatness of the Sabbath reform message-that it is a call from the Creator to the whole world to take a stand for His Commandments and not to be enlisted among those who are deceived into disobedience through the deceptions of Satan. The Lord classifies the world into only two classes: "the saints and the sinners the converted and the unconverted" (TM.87). "There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognized in the judgment" (COL.283). The whole world will eventually be on Satan's -side, except the remnant church-see GC.618; PK.587. Then the three sections comprising Babylon will be united (to a certain degree at least) *as one until the time of the outpouring of the 6th plague*-this unity of the forces of Babylon is emphasised in Rev. 17: 12, 13, 17 and in this united state they make war with the Lamb" (Rev. 17: 14; Rev. 16: 13, 14). This unity is broken up by the outpouring of the 6th plague-compare Rev. 16: 19; 17: 16, 17, when world-wide fratricidal internecine slaughter will break forth. Thus no provision is made in the prophecy whatsoever for West and East, professing Christians and the "heathen"-all the unsaved are classified in the prophecy under the term Babylon.

So long as mistaken ideas ' are held with regard to the kings of the east referring to Asiatics, so long will contradictory beliefs be held regarding the consummation of the message itself. Those who believe that the kings of the east refer to Asiatics, and Rev.16:12-16 portrays a military conflict between the "heathen" of the East and Christendom of the West cannot believe the plainest statements in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy that Sunday laws will be enforced in all countries of the world-including China, Russia, Japan, India, and all other Oriental nations. How utterly out of harmony with the rest of our teaching on the third angel's Message concerning the coming of God's judgments upon the whole world for its continued violation of His law! This Message declares that the whole world must accept or reject the Sabbath truth-either receive the seal of God or the mark of the beast. It surely is obvious, that "heathen" nations as such will not enforce the Christian Sunday. And yet the Spirit of Prophecy clearly declares that "every country on the globe" will enforce Sunday laws. Asiatic nations will join the West in the enforcement of the mark of the beast-the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy both declare it in the plainest of terms. "Great changes are soon to take place in our world, and the final movements will be rapid ones" (9T.11).

The Scriptures make it clear that the Lord's providence keeps the world from uniting in strength under Satan's control until God's people are ready for what will eventuate when that does occur. How foolish, however, to interpret the prophecies relating to "the final conflict" in the light of the divided state of the world today and interpreting those prophecies as if East and West will *still* be divided until the time of the 6th plague when the misinterpreted military war of Armageddon *between East and West is supposed* to be fought. How foolish to build one's ideas of what will occur at the time of the 6th plague upon the fact that West and East are divided today, when the Spirit of Prophecy clearly states that "great changes are soon to take place in our world"; that Satan will unite all his forces in all the world in his attack upon the people of God. Surely there is no prophetic truth more clearly stated in the Bible than that the prophecies depicting "the final conflict" describe "the kings of the earth and of the whole world"-West and East-all united-outwardly, at least-in their warfare upon Christ and His church (Rev. 16: 13-16; 17: 10-14; 19: 11-21).

The world-wide nature of God's last-day Message is clearly presented in Matt. 24: 14; 28: 19; Rev. 7: 1-3; 10: 2; 18: 1, etc. Repeatedly the servant of the Lord has emphasised: "God has given us a *world-wide* Message" (3T.388). "John sees it [the message] increasing in strength and power until *the whole earth* is lightened with its glory" (5T.383).

The messages and warnings of Rev. 7 1-3, 14: 6-12, etc., are to be proclaimed "in *all the world . . .* unto *all nations*"; "*the whole earth*" is to be "lightened with His glory" (Rev. 18: 1) including countries governed at present by "godless" Communists or the "heathen". Already great changes have occurred in the political economy of nations, and the Spirit of Prophecy has informed us that "great changes" are yet to take place that will speed the world to its climactic hour before probation closes. The Lord's servant has plainly declared that "the Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict in which *all the world* will act a part" (6T.352).

While the world today is politically divided into the nations of the "West" and those of the "East" it is quite obvious from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy that a great change will be brought about and the nations in the "East" will also participate in the enforcement of the mark of the beast. The world will not remain divided into "West" and "East" from now until the time of the 6th plague, when, as some assert, "West" and "East" will meet in deadly combat in Palestine-such a conception is utterly at variance with the clearest of light shining to the contrary. How could the "East" continue as at present under the leadership of "godless" Communists, or of the "heathen", and yet the prophecies be fulfilled which distinctly declare that "*all the world*" is to wonder "after the beast", that "*all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him*"? The third angel warns against the "worship of the beast and his image", a *world-wide* message which is not confined to the nations of the "West".

Statements of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy declare unequivocally that the warning against the "worship of the beast and his image" must go, and is going, to all the world-including Russia, China, etc. Thus it will be readily seen that a belief in the magnitude of the third angel's Message, a belief that it is worldwide in scope, automatically rules out the idea that the world will remain divided between "West" and "East" until the 6th plague. It is impossible to believe that the world will remain divided as at present between "West" and "East" until the 6th plague and at the same time believe God's last-day Message depicting the exaltation of the Papal power among the nations of the world and the consequent peril and threat of death to God's people "in *all parts of the world*" over the Sabbath-well before the time of the 6th plague. Observe the following Explicit Declarations from The Spirit of Prophecy:

"The Sabbath question is to be the issue in the great final conflict in which *all the* world will act a part" (6T.352).

"Soon the last test is to come to *all the inhabitants of the* earth. At that time [i.e. before probation closes] prompt decisions will be made" (9T.149).

"Soon *all the inhabitants of the earth* will have taken sides, either for or against the government of heaven" (7T.141). The context refers to "the substitution of ... Sunday in place of the Bible Sabbath".

"As America, the land of religious liberty, shall unite with the papacy in forcing the conscience and compelling men to honour the false sabbath, the people of *every* country on *the globe* will be led to follow her example" (6T.18).

"*Foreign nations* will follow the example of the United States. Though she leads out, yet the same crisis will come upon our people in *all parts of the world*" (6T.395).

"The substitution of the laws of men for the law of God, the exaltation, by merely human authority, of Sunday in place of the Bible Sabbath, is the last act in the drama. When this substitution becomes universal, God will reveal Himself.... He will come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the world.... Soon all the inhabitants of the earth will have taken sides, either for or against the government of heaven" (7T.141).

It would be impossible for words to be employed to make a clearer declaration than these statements from the Spirit of Prophecy that "*all the world,*" "all the inhabitants of the *earth,*" every country on the globe," "all parts of the world," will follow the example of the United States "in forcing the conscience and compelling men to honour the false Sabbath". It can bring nothing but confusion or even disaster to those who thrust aside these clearest of statements concerning "the final conflict" and the state of outward unity that will prevail among the forces of evil opposing God's people in "all parts of the world", in "every country on the globe", and instead maintain one's own "private interpretation" of what will eventuate under the 6th plague *based upon the present political designation of West and East.*

Let expositors of the prophecies relating to the final conflict remain loyal and steadfast to that which has been so clearly revealed, and no longer be influenced by the great enemy of souls who hates the presentation of the true interpretation that the Kings from the Sunrising depicts the coming of "the armies of Heaven" (Rev. 19: 11, 14, 19) to destroy the forces of Babylon in all the world. Devout Christians will rejoice in knowing that it was the Lord Jesus Who promised His people in Rev. 16: 12 that He would pour out His judgment upon the persecuting Babylonian Euphrates; that He, "The Sunrising from on high", "The Sun of Righteousness", would arise "with healing in His wings" healing them of all their maladies and ushering in for them the dawning of the day of eternity.