

In the Spirit one Lord's day, John heard behind him the trumpet-like voice of One who declared Himself to be 'the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last', telling him to write what he saw in a book and to send it to seven churches in Asia, vv. 10-11. John was usually very quick to recognise the Lord Jesus – as witness his being the first to identify the Risen Lord when the Saviour showed Himself to the disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias in John 21 (at Peter's suggestion, seven disciples, that night caught nothing, in morning Jesus stood on shore, but disciples knew not that was the Lord, called, 'children, any food?', answered, 'no', cast right side boat, did, so not able draw for multitude of fish, therefore John to Peter, 'It is the Lord', not need tell twice. But it seems that on this occasion John totally failed to recognise Him – until the Lord identified Himself unmistakably in verse 18 by referring to Himself, not only as the First and the Last, as He had back in verse 11, but as the One who had died but who was now alive for evermore.

There are several indications in John's gospel that, together with other of our Lord's disciples, John would often look back on the things which he had previously seen and heard – and reflect on their significance. For example :

(i) In John 2. 19-22, John tells us that, in response to the Jews' demand for a miraculous sign, 'Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and will you (emphatic) raise it up in three days? But he spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore He was risen from the dead', John notes, '*his disciples remembered that he had said this to them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said*'.

Again, (ii) in John 12. 12-16, John records that 'many people who were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went out to meet him, crying out, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel who comes in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat on it; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things', John notes, 'understood not his disciples at the first (that is, they didn't understand – they failed to grasp – the *significance* of these things): but when Jesus was glorified, then *remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him*'.

It seems then that John was rather fond of later looking back on those things which he had seen and heard. And I think it at least possible therefore that John later reflected on what he saw and heard here in Revelation 1. And I can't help wondering whether – if John did so – he thought about some of the fairly obvious contrasts between the glory of the transcendent Lord which he saw then – and the earlier sufferings of that same Lord – who – as He (the Lord Jesus) Himself pointed out to John in verse 18 – had 'become dead' (lit.).

John was the one disciple we know to have been at the cross. And, as we will see, in his gospel he records those very events and features which provides us with a whole series of contrasts with the all-glorious Lord of Revelation 1. It is, as I said, at least possible therefore that John *later* came to ponder those contrasts – contrasts between, if you like, the Lord Jesus *as He is now* and the Lord Jesus *as He once was*.

1. On this Lord's day, *John saw Him as He is*, v. 13 – 'in the midst of the seven lampstands – One like the (better, 'a') Son of Man'. The expression 'like a son of man' had been used over 600 years before by Daniel in chapter 7 of his prophecy when relating his dream-vision of the throne of God. There he describes One 'like a son of man' – that is, in human appearance – who appeared before the Ancient of days to receive everlasting dominion and a kingdom which should never be destroyed, v. 13. But the resplendent Person who John saw in human appearance wasn't *standing* – as John saw Him doing in chapter 5, as the little Lamb in the midst of the throne – but, according to His (the Lord's) own words to the angel of the church at Ephesus in 2. 1 – who was *walking* in the midst of the seven golden lampstands'. The Lord's movement among the lampstands indicates, of course, both His keen interest in the churches and His intimate knowledge of them – and paves the way for the specific and relevant messages He has for each – with their differing emphases by way of commendation, warning and encouragement.

'In the midst of the seven lampstands'. I wonder, *did this prompt John to remember the Lord Jesus as He once was?* Did John perhaps recall the time – which he recorded in his gospel – when 'bearing His (own) cross' this One who, as John noted, Pilate had presented to the Jews as '*the Man*', 19. 5, 'went out to a place called 'Of a Skull', which is called in the Hebrew, 'Golgotha', where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, on either side one, and Jesus *in the midst*' – then hanging in the midst – not, as now, walking in the midst, John 19. 17-18.

2. *John saw Him as He is*, v. 13 – 'clothed with a garment down to the foot' – a garment which certainly expressed high rank and dignity – *possibly* suggesting our Lord's offices both of High Priest and of Ruler and Judge. For I note that the word translated 'down to the foot' – not found elsewhere in the New Testament – is used in the Greek Old Testament to describe both the *priestly* robe of Aaron in Exodus 28 and 29², and the *royal* robes of Saul and Jonathan.³

'Clothed with a garment down to the foot'. I wonder, *did this feature of the now transcendent Lord prompt John to remember the Lord Jesus as He once was?* Did John perhaps recall the time – which he recorded in his gospel – when 'the soldiers, after they had crucified Jesus, took (removed) His *garments* and made four parts, to each

soldier a part, and also his coat' – the tunic – the shorter seamless undergarment, John 19. 23? Our Lord wore no robe of high rank and dignity *then*. And what garments He did have, even these men took from Him – because by law, an executed criminal forfeit all rights even to his own garments, and *His* (our Lord's) garments therefore automatically became the property of the soldiers on duty at the time.

3. *John saw Him as He is*, v.13 – 'girded about the paps (breast, chest) with a golden girdle (sash or belt)'. Again, a sash around the breast was not necessarily confined to priesthood, Rev. 15. 6, but Josephus (writing about this time) tells us that the priest's sash was 'girded to the breast a little above the elbows', Antiquities III, VII, 2. John informs us in his gospel that he was known personally to the High Priest – and that, as such, he had access to the High Priest's palace (or court) – to which he was also able to secure access for Peter, John 18. 15-16. I assume therefore that John was familiar with the High Priest's garments as described by Josephus – and it is at least possible that John may have interpreted both the Saviour's garment to the foot and the golden sash in terms of His priesthood. We are told in Exodus 28. 39 that the sash of Aaron was the work of an embroiderer. And Josephus assures us that it was woven – along with the purple, scarlet and blue of Exod. 39. 29 – with gold thread – 'with a mixture of gold interwoven', VII, 4. If the priestly office of our Lord is in view here in Revelation 1, we can hardly miss the detail that the sash of our *Great* High Priest – who has passed, not through the successive compartments of an earthly tabernacle, but through the heavens themselves, now able to succour, sympathise and save His people – is all gold!⁴

'Girded about the breast with a golden sash'. I wonder, *did this feature of the now transcendent Lord prompt John to remember the Lord Jesus as He once was*? Did John perhaps recall the time – which he recorded in his gospel – when – just days before the Passover – Jesus 'rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples and to wipe them with the towel with which He was *girded*' – on both occasions, the word 'girded' being the same as here in Revelation 1.

There, in John 13. 4-5, John's words stand in marked and deliberate contrast with what he had said in the verse immediately before : 'Jesus, knowing that the Father had given *all things* into His hands', John 13. 3. Back in chapter 3, we read that 'The Father loves the Son (a fact to which John makes seven references in his gospel), and has given all things into His hand', 3. 35. But now in His hands, John tells us, He (the Lord Jesus) has not only 'all things' but 'a towel'. The word translated 'towel' comes from the Latin term for a linen cloth, which, according to the Roman historian Suetonius, was worn by a slave. Previously John the Baptist had acknowledged himself as altogether unworthy to kneel and unloose the straps of the Lord's sandals – in all likelihood to remove them with a view to washing His feet. In scripture, it was normal for a person to wash his or her own feet. In New Testament days, however, the task was often performed by a slave – although to the Jews of those days, feet-washing was regarded as such a menial and demeaning task that no Jewish slave could be required to wash the feet of his Jewish master. That duty was reserved for gentile slaves. John had been in the upper room and had had his feet washed.⁵ Did he remember that the One now *girded with a golden sash about the breast in glory was once girded with a slave's towel about the loins in service*.

4. *John saw Him as He is*, v. 14 – 'His head and his hair was white like wool (possibly, 'His head, even His hair, was white like wool), as white as snow'. Daniel said of '*the Ancient of Days*' Himself in Daniel 7. 9 that 'the hair of his head was like pure wool'. White hair was a characteristic of great – of venerable – age, and of the wisdom which long years and long experience brought. Here also the whiteness of the hair no doubt indicates both (i) the dignity of age – in this case, as in that of the Ancient of Days, the dignity of eternal existence – and (ii) great wisdom. But – given the words of Isaiah, 'Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool', Isa. 1.18 – I suspect that the linking together of the whiteness of wool and snow here may also suggest the Lord's stainless purity and sinlessness – remember that it is John who insists that 'in Him is no sin', 1 John 3. 5.

'His head, even His hair, was white like wool, as white as snow'. I wonder, *did this feature of the now transcendent Lord prompt John to remember the Lord Jesus as He once was*? Did John perhaps recall the time – which he recorded in his gospel – when 'the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns – the emblem of the curse – and put it on *His head*', John 19. 2 – when His head wasn't white that day – but red – red with drops of His own blood, which, as C H Spurgeon expressed it – comprised the rubies set in His crown?⁶

5. *John saw Him as He is*, v. 14 – 'His eyes as a flame of fire' – expressing His piercing, penetrating, all-seeing gaze. Hence His 'I know' addressed to each of His churches.

Did this feature of the now transcendent Lord prompt John to remember the Lord Jesus as He once was? I wonder, did John perhaps recall – not so much the very many occasions when the Lord '*looked*' with tender compassion on multitudes and individuals⁷ – but perhaps (i) the time – which he recorded in chapter 11 of his gospel – when – as the Lord approached the tomb of Lazarus – 'Jesus wept', v. 35 – the word used there of Jesus being different to that used in the same passage to describe the loud wailing and lamentation of Mary and the Jews – and meaning properly 'to shed tears'? Although the Lord Jesus didn't weep and wail, His eyes didn't blaze with

fire then – they ran with real tears. Or did John perhaps recall (ii) the time – again recorded by John in his gospel – when ‘there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene’, and how, ‘when Jesus – with a look of great love and consideration – saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved (that is, saw him, John) standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!”’, John 19. 25-26? John may well have reflected that the eyes which met his that day at Golgotha carried no flame of fire then! Anything but!

6. *John saw Him as He is*, v.15 – with ‘His feet like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace’. The single word translated ‘fine brass’ is not found anywhere in the Greek Bible outside the book of Revelation. It denotes bright shining bronze - here spoken of as refined in a furnace⁸. It is interesting to note that this particular feature of the transcendent Lord is referred to by Him when He addresses His letter to the church at Thyatira, 2. 18 - for we know that Thyatira was a great trading and manufacturing centre and that, among its many trade-guilds, there was at least one guild of bronze-workers.⁹ Interestingly, inscriptions have also shown that another powerful guild there was that of the cloth dyers. So it is hardly surprising that Lydia, a seller of purple – that is, of cloth dyed purple and worn by the wealthy, came from Thyatira.

Bronze is a relatively hard alloy, used to make weapons. And the description of the Lord’s feet as burnished bronze points to the irresistible power and might with which He is finally to trample and crush all His foes – when – in the language of chapter 19 – ‘He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God’, v. 15 – clearly referring back to the words of Isaiah 63, ‘I have trodden the winepress alone ... I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment’, v. 3.

‘His feet like burnished bronze’. I wonder, *did this feature of the now transcendent Lord prompt John to remember the Lord Jesus as He once was*? Did John perhaps recall the time – which he recorded in his gospel – when Jesus was crucified – and of which the Lord had spoken prophetically in Psalm 22. 16 – ‘they pierced my hands and my feet’? Did John perhaps also remember the occasion when the risen Lord had appeared to the eleven – himself included – and had said, ‘Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see’, Luke 24. 39.¹⁰

7. *John saw Him as He is*, vv. 15-16 – ‘His voice as the sound of many waters ... and out of His mouth going a sharp two-edged sword’. Perhaps the sound of the voice suggested to John the words of Ezekiel in chapter 43, ‘Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and *His voice was as the sound of many waters*’, v. 2. Nineteen years previously, Ezekiel had seen the glory of God depart from the temple and the city by way of the east, 10. 18-22; 11. 22-24. Now he sees the glory of the God of Israel returning to the temple in Jerusalem – and hears the thundering of His voice. Small wonder that the prophet fell on his face, 43. 3 – as he had three times earlier and later would once again.¹¹

Or perhaps the sound of our Lord’s voice suggested to John the roar and thunder of the Aegean Sea crashing and pounding against the shore of Patmos – a rocky and barren island, chosen as a penal settlement by the Romans. The two-edged sword – the word indicating a long and heavy broadsword – which issues from the Lord’s mouth is that of chapter 19, verse 15 – ‘out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations’ – when the awesome Warrior King will come to visit withering destruction on all His foes – and ‘with the breath of His lips’ to ‘slay the wicked’, Isa. 11. 4.¹²

‘His voice as the sound of many waters ... out of His mouth going (proceeding) a sharp two-edged sword’. I wonder, *did this double feature of the now transcendent Lord prompt John to remember the Lord Jesus as He once was*? We might well contrast His majestic voice and destructive word with the time in the synagogue of Nazareth when, initially at least, ‘all bare Him witness, and wondered (marvelled)’ – not at the thunder of His voice or the sharpness of the two-edged sword which ‘proceeded out of His mouth’ – but ‘at the gracious words (the words of grace) which proceeded (same word) ‘out of His mouth’’, Luke 4. 22. But did *John* perhaps recall the time – which he recorded in his gospel – when Jesus ‘gave Pilate no answer’, John 19. 9? Did John link our Lord’s silence with the prophecy of Isaiah, ‘He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth’, Isa. 53. 7? Or did John recall how, at the cross, Jesus spoke so gently both to His own mother and to himself? For neither he nor Mary heard the deafening roar of many waters or felt the keen edge of the Lord’s sharp two-edged sword then!

8. *John saw Him as He is*, v. 16 – having ‘in His right hand seven stars’ – expressing His sovereign control over the angels of the seven churches. It is interesting to compare God’s challenge to Job – ‘Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion? Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season? Or can you guide the Great Bear with its cubs?’, Job 38. 31-32. No - of course Job couldn’t. No man can control the stars. But He - the Risen Lord holds the stars in His hand. But we are told plainly at the end of the chapter, v. 20, that the stars represent - symbolise if you like - ‘the angels of the seven churches’.¹³

‘*In His right hand seven stars*’. I wonder, *did this feature of the now transcendent Lord prompt John to remember the Lord Jesus as He once was*? Did John perhaps recall the time when the soldiers thrust ‘a reed *in His right hand*...and...spat on Him, and took the reed and (repeatedly) struck Him on the head’, Matt. 27. 29-30. And did John perhaps think of the moment – which he recorded in his gospel – when Jesus was crucified – when they

pierced *both* His hands? For men gave Him not only – for His back the cross to bear – and for His head the thorns to wear – but for His hands the nails to tear.

9. *John saw Him as He is*, v. 16 – with ‘His countenance (His appearance¹⁴, His visage¹⁵) as the sun shines *in its strength*’. The brightness of His countenance is stressed by the addition of the words ‘in its strength’ – that is, when the sun is at its zenith, with no clouds or mist to obscure or diminish the intensity of its rays. The exact expression is found in the Septuagint of Judges 5. 31 – the very closing words of the triumphal song of Deborah and Barak over Jabin, King of Canaan – ‘let them who love Him (the Lord) be as the sun when it goes out *in its strength*’.

‘His countenance – His visage – as the sun shines in its strength’. I wonder, *did this feature of the now transcendent Lord prompt John to remember the Lord Jesus as He once was*? John had been one of the three favoured disciples on the so-called Mount of Transfiguration who were given a foretaste of the glory of His manifested kingdom – when the Lord’s ‘face shone like the sun’, Matt 17. 2. But did John rather recall the time – which he recorded in his gospel – when the High Priest’s attendant (officer, not servant/slave as Malchus) struck our Lord’s face with the palm of his hand, John 18. 22¹⁶; and the time when the Governor’s soldiers struck Him with their hands, John 19. 3. Did John think of the time when, in the very moving language of Isaiah over 700 years before, ‘His visage (His ‘appearance’, His ‘countenance’) was marred (‘disfigured’, Hebrew) more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men’, 52. 14 – when the face which had been transfigured on the Mount was cruelly disfigured.

10. *John saw Him as He is* – and, as he says, v. 17 – ‘when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead’ – overawed – overwhelmed – by His all-surpassing glory. Just as Ezekiel and Saul of Tarsus before him, John’s unrehearsed response was to fall prostrate to the ground in the presence of the all-glorious Lord. When the Lord was on earth, few if any knew Him more intimately than the beloved disciple – but today there can be no suggestion of John ‘handling the Word of life’, 1 John 1. 1, or of him reclining and pillowing his head on Jesus’ bosom, John 13. 23. The apostle’s place now is not on Jesus’ breast but at His feet! And this not to clasp them as had the women who encountered the Risen Lord when they sped from the sepulchre and the angel of the Lord with fear and great joy, Matt. 28. 9 – but to lie prostrate there!

And it is at this point that John feels the Lord’s hand – His *right* hand – touch him. John had felt the touch of that hand before. On the holy mount, when Peter, James and *John* heard the voice come out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”, they – as John now – ‘fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus’, we read, ‘came and *touched* them and said, “Arise, and be not afraid”’, Matt. 17. 5-7. Yes, in one sense, John has been here before – but with this one all-important difference – that *this time* the hand which was stretched out to touch him was nail-pierced!

As John thought back on his own prostration before this all-glorious Lord, I wonder, *did John remember Him as He was*? Did he perhaps recall the occasion when the soldiers of the Governor, Matt. 27. 27, didn’t fall in awe and wonder before Him – but ‘bowed the knee before Him and *mocked* Him, sneering, “Hail, King of the Jews!”’, v. 29 – a scornful title picked up by John in *his* account of our Lord’s trial, 19. 3.

Well, did the vision of the Lord Jesus *as He is* prompt John to remember Him *as He was*? In the end, I can’t be sure – but, as you will gather, I shouldn’t be at all surprised. It was on the Lord’s day that John saw the transcendent Lord, 1. 10 – and an early Christian document – the *Didaché* – the so-called ‘Teaching of the Twelve Apostles’ – written perhaps no more than 25 years after the book of the Revelation – instructs believers – ‘on the Lord’s day gather yourselves together and break bread’, 14. 1 – the Lord’s Supper on the Lord’s day! I’m not claiming that John had just broken bread – or that he was about to do it – in the quarries of Patmos. But I have no doubt that, as one of those personally present when our Lord instituted the Remembrance Supper, that was where his heart and mind were. So it is by *no means impossible* that John *would* have made at least some of the connections I have suggested.

And we still meet to break bread today – and, as we do so, we still remember the Lord Jesus *as He was* – with particular focus of course on His death, which by means of the bread and the cup we ‘proclaim’. But we only do this ‘until He comes’ – and then, as John assures us elsewhere, ‘when He appears, we shall see Him (*not* as He was, but) *as He ‘is*’, 1 John 3. 2 – not in what Paul calls ‘the body of His flesh’ but in what he calls ‘the body of His glory’¹⁷. Lord, hasten the day! But meanwhile, let us take away these two wonderful pictures today – and perhaps have them in mind when, in the will of God, we meet to remember the Lord Jesus this coming Lord’s day:

- (1) That of our Lord *as He was* in His *intense sufferings* – a picture calculated to fill our hearts with gratitude, love and praise. And
- (2) That of our Lord *as He is* in His *transcendent glory* – a picture calculated to fill our hearts with reverence, awe and wonder.

Footnotes

¹ Many details of the description of the transcendent Lord may seem strange to us – but this is a book of imagery and is largely coloured by Old Testament language. Revelation is littered with allusions to the Old Testament. Swete, p. cxxxv, claimed that 278 of the 404 verses in Revelation contain references to the Old Testament. The United Bible Society's Greek New Testament (2nd ed., pp. 897-920) lists over 500 Old Testament passages. But, in spite of all these allusions, there are no formal quotations from the Old Testament.

Many of the features are later applied to the needs of the churches – and may well have been influenced by those needs in the first case. Including the Lord's words in verses 17-18, no less than eight of these details feed through into His addresses to six of the seven churches.

13 In the **midst of the seven lampstands** [Ephesus] One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His **eyes like a flame of fire** [Thyatira];

15 **His feet were like fine brass** [Thyatira], as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

16 He had **in His right hand seven stars** [Ephesus/Sardis], out of His mouth went **a sharp two-edged sword** [Pergamos], and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am **the First and the Last**.

18 **I am He who lives, and was dead** [Smyrna], and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I **have the keys** [Philadelphia] of Hades and of Death.]

13 In the **midst of the seven lampstands** [Ephesus] One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His **eyes like a flame of fire** [Thyatira];

15 **His feet were like fine brass** [Thyatira], as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters;

16 He had **in His right hand seven stars** [Ephesus/Sardis], out of His mouth went **a sharp two-edged sword** [Pergamos], and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am **the First and the Last**.

18 **I am He who lives, and was dead** [Smyrna], and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I **have the keys** [Philadelphia] of Hades and of Death.]

² Exod. 28. 4-5; 29. 5; Lev. 16. 4 LXX.

³ The same Greek words are applied to the man in Ezek. 9. 2, who was charged with setting a mark on the foreheads of some of the men of Jerusalem before the destruction of the rest, vv. 1-11 . That is, to one whose activity extended mercy and shelter to those exempted from the punishments about to fall; c.f. Rev. 7. 3; 9. 4; 22. 4.

⁴ Compare the 'man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with pure gold of Uphaz', Dan. 10. 5 – but note the difference is in the location of the girdle. In Daniel's vision the girdle is about the loins, but in the Patmos account about the breast. It is an open question whether the 'man' in Daniel 10 was Christ or an angel.

⁵ John 13. 12 suggests that most of the feet-washing was performed after Peter's interjection.

⁶ 'The Procession of Sorrow', March 1st, 1863.

⁷ In the days of His flesh, the Lord often *looked* with compassion on multitudes and individuals : 'when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with *compassion* for them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad (were distressed, harassed and were prostrate, helpless), like sheep having no shepherd, Matt. 9. 36; 'when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with *compassion* for them, and healed their sick', Matt. 14. 14; the widow of Nain – 'When the Lord saw her, He had *compassion* on her and said to her, "Do not weep", Luke 7. 13. At times His own eyes filled with tears, 'as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it (in a loud expression of grief), saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes"', Luke 19. 41-42; 'Jesus wept (shed tears)', John 11. 35.

⁸ See the word in Rev. 3. 19.

⁹ Chapter 24 of 'The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia' by Sir W. M. Ramsay. Inscriptions show that one of the powerful guilds in Thyatira was that of the dyers, 'St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen', Ramsay. The waters of Thyatira are said to be so well adapted for dyeing that in no place in the world can the scarlet cloth be so brilliantly and so permanently dyed as there; see Unger's Bible Dictionary by Merrill F. Unger.

¹⁰ These were the feet clasped by the women who encountered the Risen Lord as they sped from the sepulchre and the angel of the Lord with fear and great joy, Matt. 28. 9.

¹¹ Ezek. 1. 28; 3. 23; 11. 13; 44. 4 - plus 43. 3.

¹² Compare, 'then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming', 2 Thess. 2. 8.

¹³ In that the 'angels' are themselves symbolized by 'stars', Rev. 1. 20, they cannot themselves be symbols of something (or someone) else – anymore than the 'churches', which are symbolized by 'lampstands', are themselves symbols of anything else. The 'churches' are literal churches and it follows that the 'angels' are literal angels. Nor is there any ground for translating the Greek word as 'messenger'. Out of 185 occurrences in the NT, it is translated 'messenger' on only six occasions – and never in the writings of John. In Revelation, all the other occurrences of the word (all 68 of them) unquestionably describe literal angels, including one in the letter to

the church at Sardis, 3. 5. John was 'in the Spirit' when he saw the events he records and would therefore have had no more difficulty in writing to an angel, 2. 1, 8, 12 etc, than he would have had in conversing with one, 17. 1; 19. 10; 22. 9-10. True, we do not understand the relation between the angels and the churches; note, for example, how the singular 'thy' and 'thee' (referring to the 'angel') merges into the plural 'you' and 'ye' (referring to the members of the church) in the letter to Thyatira, 2. 18-29. But then neither do we understand the relation between angels and the nations, Dan. 10. 13-21, or between angels and individual believers. Matt. 18. 10; Heb. 1. 13-14.

¹⁴ As often in the Septuagint; e.g. Dan 1. 4; Gen. 24. 16.

¹⁵ One of the meanings quoted by Liddell and Scott.

¹⁶ The word 'bondservant' occurs in verses 10 and 26.

¹⁷ 'The body of His flesh', Col. 1. 22, is as He was. 'The body of His glory', Phil. 3. 21, is as He is.