

Sabbath School Department.

[From the Christian Helper].

International Bible Lessons.

THE HEAVENLY SONG.

DEC. 7.—Rev. 5: 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Forthly is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.—Rev. 5: 12.

INTRODUCTION.

The letters to the churches end with ch. 3. In ch. 4, the real revelation (unfolding of the things yet to be) begins; chs. 4-11 contains the singing of the seals and the sounding of the trumpet. In chs. 4 and 5 we have a description of the heavenly scenery in the midst of which the visions are laid. Of these, ch. 4 is probably the scene itself; ch. 5 being a further unfolding of its details, with a view to the vision of the seal which is to follow. In ch. 4 we have the seal of God's presence in heaven.—Alford.

EXPLANATION OF TEXT.

HIM THAT SAT ON THE THRONE. See ch. 3. It is God who sits on the throne. A book. This book contains an account of the things as made known in the following chapters: WITHIN AND ON THE BACKSIDE. This book contains the completeness of the book, everything in the future is here to be found. SEALED. SEVEN SEALS. "A sealed book is a fitting emblem of the future." It is not stated in what order the seals were attached to the volume, but it is clear that they were so attached that each seal covered one part of the volume, and that when broken and the portion which that seal was designed to fasten was unrolled, a second seal would be come to, which it would be necessary to break in order to read the next portion.—Alford.

A STRONG ANGEL, one whose voice could be heard throughout the universe. Who is the angel, i. e., who is so exalted in rank, so great in power and wisdom, as to be able to do it? 3. HEAVEN, EARTH, UNDER THE EARTH. These three divisions, with the ancients, denoted the whole universe. No one is able to read the destinies of the church and of the world. LOOK THEREON, to obtain a view of what it contains. 4. I WEPT MUCH. See the promise in John in ch. 4: 1. Now it would seem that that promise were not to be fulfilled. His weeping indicated the intense longing of men to know the future. What is going to be in the world? What after we leave this world? How we grapple with these questions. To what goal are we tending? This is the problem of our life.

THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDA. Gen. 49: 10. "The lion is an emblem of kingly authority and power." Christ was of the tribe of Judah. Heb. 7: 14. THE ROOT OF DAVID. Christ a root-shoot, i. e., a shoot springing up from the root or family of David, Isaiah 11: 1. He knows and can reveal the future.

FOUR BEASTS. This ought to be translated living creatures instead of beasts. See ch. 4: 7-10. There is much diversity of opinion as to what these symbolize. Some think they mean God's sentient creation, man, birds, beasts. Some think they represent the four elements of God, as intelligent, universal, mighty, authoritative. FOUR AND TWENTY. The representatives of the redeemed church in heaven.—Barnes. Thus we have the Lion in the midst of his church and of animated creation. A LAMB. Christ, the Son of God: "This is the battle whereby the Lamb has overcome; viz. that he has suffered himself to be slain as a lamb."—Elyard. AS IT HAD BEEN SLAIN BEARING MARKS OF HIS CRUCIFIXION. SEVEN HORNS: horn symbol of power; seven, of perfection, hence perfect power. SEVEN EYES. Perfect intelligence. SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD. The Holy Spirit in all His varied operations of power and intelligence in the world of redemption. Christ sends forth the Holy Spirit to the world.

FOUR BEASTS AND FOUR, &c. All created things unite with the redeemed in praising God. Ps. 148: 10. EVERY ONE OF THEM, i. e., the angels. HARPS * * * VIOLS. Praise prayer.

A NEW SONG. "New in the sense that it was sung consequent on redemption, and distinguished therefore from the songs sung in Heaven before the work of redemption was consummated.—Barnes. FOR THOU WAST SLAIN. Christ's giving Himself up to death is stated as the real reason of his worthiness to open the book, i. e., to declare what shall be in the future to rule this world in such a way that his people shall triumph and his people be saved. Phil. 2: 6-11. KINGS. This denotes the dignity to which believers are exalted, and implies their triumph over all foes. PRIESTS. They can be God acceptably. Next to the Throne are the living creatures and the elders then around these are the angels, who now join in the song of praise. To RECEIVE, i. e., to have all these things ascribed to him, to be declared the possessor of them. At last, every creature throughout the universe joins in praise to Christ. "The praise having made the circuit of the universe, centres back again to those who gave it, and dies away as the FOUR AND TWENTY ELDERLY fall in lowly homage before the throne of HIM THAT LIVETH FOR EVER AND EVER."—Maconald.

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