

Revelation 4, Part 1

He Upon the Throne

by Edward Irving

From *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Lecture XI, Revelation 4.

Chapter 4 of the book of *Revelation* begins with a view of heaven. First John saw a throne, and upon the throne one seated:

Revelation 4

¹ After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

² And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

This throne is mentioned often in the Old Testament, for example:

Psalms 103

¹ The Lord has prepared His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.

And in the New Testament also:

Matthew 5

³⁴ Swear not by heaven, for it is God's throne.

Acts 7

⁴⁹ Heaven is my throne.

It is also mentioned in the last words of the preceding vision:

Revelation 3

²¹ To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.

With these words the former vision concludes. And as if to link them together, as if to make the next vision the argument

and illustration of that which went before, this begins with the description of that heavenly throne, and of Him who sat upon it.

Now if so be, according to Christ's own declaration that He is set down upon His Father's throne, whom should we expect to find seated there but Christ Himself? And yet in the hundred and tenth Psalm, so oft referred to in the New Testament as the great authority upon this subject, the Father saith unto Christ,

Psalm 110

¹ Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.

...by which words we have Christ advanced unto:

Hebrews 8

¹ ...the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.

And again, in the second Psalm, where the kings of the earth and their peoples are represented in confederacy against Jehovah and His Anointed, it is said:

Psalm 2

⁴ He that sits in the heavens shall laugh; Jehovah shall have them in derision.

Here, Jehovah, or the Father, in contrast to the Son, is represented as sitting in the throne; for He speaks concerning Christ:

Psalm 2

⁶ Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

The Father's throne is in the heavens, and Christ's throne is on Mount Zion. So, in like manner, in the passage already quoted from the former vision, Christ makes a distinction between His own throne, to be established against a future time upon the earth, not for Himself alone, but for every one who overcomes, and His Father's throne now in the heavens, occu-

pied by His Father and Himself.

There can be no doubt, from these passages of Scripture, that the throne in heaven is properly the throne of the Father, and the throne which is hereafter to be established upon Mount Zion is the throne of Christ. And, likewise, that Christ, who is to occupy the throne of David promised to Him in all the Scriptures, presently occupies in heaven the throne of the Father; not indeed alone, but at the Father's right hand, with, or beside, the Father.

Are we then to look for two persons seated upon the throne of the heavens? No, because no one has seen, neither can see the Father. He is essentially invisible, incomprehensible; never to come within the region of creation, nor within the region of the senses. What then are we to expect to find upon the throne which is set in heaven? We are to expect to find the person of the Father, represented in the Son.

We will not find him represented by the symbol of light, but as a man. The glory of the Father will now be exhibited on the throne in the form of a man. In the Old Testament, God was represented in the most holy place of the temple, which represented heaven. He was represented by light, because Christ was the Light. But now that the Light has become the life of man, and been incarnated in our nature, and been taken up to the throne of the Father, we must expect to behold the Father revealed through the risen glorified body of Jesus.

And so do we have the Father and Christ upon the throne: Christ the visible, the Father the invisible; yet though invisible, still revealing Himself through Christ. I am dwelling upon this point because in this vision Christ appears as a Lamb that had been slain; and in this character He receives the sealed book out of the hands of Him that sits upon the throne. To these two persons are the adorations and exaltations of heaven poured forth.

The Holy Spirit also has His place in this representation of

the invisible world, being the seven lamps before the throne, which are the

Revelation 4

⁵ ...seven Spirits of God.

Therefore, the person represented upon the throne is the Father; the person represented in the Lamb is the Son, and the person represented in the seven lamps of fire is the Holy Ghost; all indeed represented under symbols derived from Christ, in whom “dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (*Colossians* 2:9). Therefore Christ himself said:

John 14

⁹ He that has seen Me has seen the Father.

John 16

¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

¹⁴ He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

As in the days of His flesh, when wishing to be shown the Father, a certain disciple was directed to look upon Christ:

John 14

⁹ Have I been so long with you, Philip, and you say, “Show us the Father?”

So say I unto you, if you would know how the Father is beheld by the hosts of heaven, look upon Him, even Christ, seated upon the throne, and say unto yourselves, “he that has seen Him has seen the Father.”