definition given of the word ‘marvellous’ is ‘passing human comprehension’. The events described here are also beyond the ability of humans to effect. John records: “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God” (v. 2).

The sea, which represents the nations, is no longer turbulent as a result of wicked human rule (see Isa. 57:20,21), but is at rest, even a “sea of glass”. This is the direct result of the righteous judgements described in Revelation 14 and also foretold by Isaiah: “Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment . . . Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever” (Isa. 32:1,16,17).

John records that the princes who rule in judgement are those who are victorious over the beast, his image, mark and name. They did not succumb to the influences of this wicked system, whether violent or subtle; they were faithful to Christ whom they followed. They stand on the sea of glass, indicating that they rule over it. They sing the song of deliverance from the bondage of sin and death, and they extol the righteous acts executed in truth and justice of their Maker and Redeemer: “And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest” (Rev. 15:3,4).

(To be concluded)

Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls

Dennis M. Elliott

ANY SCHOLARS take the view that the book of Daniel was not written by the prophet during his exile in Babylon, but by a scribe in the Maccabean era round about 165 B.C. The basis for the view that Daniel is of late date is that the prophecies contained in it are clearly defined and meticulously fulfilled. Sceptics find the principle of Divine revelation unacceptable, leading to claims that Daniel was penned after the prophecies were fulfilled.

However, the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in Cave 4 in 1947 has impelled Professor Gerhard Hasel of Andrews University in Michigan, USA, to respond to the critics by citing evidence in the scrolls that proves their contention to be false. Professor Hasel makes the pertinent observation that the book of Daniel appears to have engaged much of the attention of the Qumran sect as they busied themselves in making copies of the Scriptures. While pointing out that no complete scroll of Daniel has been discovered, Hasel reveals that no fewer than eight different fragments were found, more than from most of the other books of the Bible.

Archaeologist David Downs, in his magazine Diggings, comments on this: “The oldest Daniel manuscript has been dated to about 115 B.C., close enough to the date of the authorship claimed by the critics to make it highly unlikely to be accepted as genuine if it was of such recent origin. Those scribes were no fools. They would surely be able to recognize it as spurious”.

Down raises the issue of whether the Dead Sea sect considered the book of Daniel to be within the canon of Scripture—that is, accepted as of Divine inspiration—and remarks that Orthodox Jews allowed quite a deal of time to elapse before such books were pronounced as authentic. The attention given by the Dead Sea community to making copies of Daniel shows plainly that they considered it to be of Divine origin and therefore to be regarded as an integral part of the canon of Scripture. It is highly unlikely that they would have come to this conclusion if Daniel had been written only fifty years earlier.

It was truly fortuitous, observes Down, that the fragments of the book of Daniel in the scrolls constitute portions of every chapter in the book with the exception of chapter 12, which “being on the outside of the rolled up scroll was the least likely to survive”. These discoveries have silenced many of the critics who expressed doubt concerning the Bible record.
Hasel makes the comment that all the scrolls were written in words that identify closely with those in the Masoretic Text, and says that the manuscripts copied by the Qumran ascetics—thought by many to have been the Essenes—reveal that the Hebrew and Aramaic texts have been faithfully preserved by their scribes. Diggings makes the comment that Gerhard Hasel was not able to be conclusive as to when the book of Daniel was written, preferring to say: “The large number of manuscripts in this community can be much better explained if one accepts an earlier origin of the Book of Daniel than the one proposed by the Maccabean hypothesis of historical-critical scholarship”.

There is no doubt that the book of Daniel was composed by Daniel himself, for Jesus said: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains” (Mt. 24:15,16). The book of Daniel is one to be regarded seriously, and properly appreciated, because of the prophecies which have come to pass, as proved by history, with still more to be fulfilled in these last times as the faithful followers of Jesus await with keen anticipation his return in power and glory to rule this greatly troubled world in righteousness, justice and peace.