

AT HAND;

OR

THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

On the anniversary of my marriage, 43 years ago, this work is now published. My beloved partner in life, sharer in the blessed Hope, and faithful and devoted companion in service, in sorrow and joy, unites with me in laying down this work at the feet of our adorable Lord, whose coming is *At Hand*. His awakening and assembling shout may fall on our ears at any moment.

May God use the work to the help and blessing of many.

June 14, 1908.

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AT HAND ;

OR,

THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS.

Scripture Testimony to the Lord's Personal Coming.

THIS commanding subject occupies about a third of the contents of the sacred volume. Its important place in biblical teaching is second to none. From Gen. iii. 15 to Rev. xxii. 20, the truth of the Lord's Coming or presence is like a silver cord running through all Scripture. It is the main burden of the sixteen prophetic books of the Old Testament—from Isaiah to Malachi. The book of Psalms is full of it, especially psalms 90-106. The Revelation treats of it almost exclusively ; while in the two epistles to the Thessalonians the Coming is unfolded in every chapter. It formed the special theme of the Lord's discourse on Mount Olivet on the eve of His crucifixion (Matt. xxiv., xxv.). This prophetic sermon in its bearing upon Israel, the professing Church, and the nations is undoubtedly of immense value, and of great practical profit to students and readers alike. Then the Coming again was the first subject to which the Lord called the attention of the disciples in His touching farewell discourse (John xiv.-xvi.). "I come again and receive you unto Myself." It was also that to which the angels directed the thoughts of the disciples, as with rapt gaze they beheld their departing Lord go up to heaven. "This Jesus (omit *same*) which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11).

Carefully compare two distinguishing portions—1 Thess. iv. and Zech. xiv. In the former He is seen coming into the "air" for His saints ; in the latter He is witnessed descending to Mount "Olivet" *with* His saints.

The Christain Hope.

Our Hope as Christians is the Personal Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven into the air to take us to Himself (1 Thess. iv. 17), to introduce us into the already prepared place in His Father's house (John xiv. 3), then, subsequently to share His reign and glory (Col. iii. 4; 1 Thess. ii. 12). "This Jesus" (Acts i. 11)—Who trod the streets of Jerusalem, Who walked beside the sea of Galilee, and trod on the angry waters, hushing the hurricane by the power of His omnipotent word, Who lived, died, and ascended from the Mount of Olives before the gaze of His rapt disciples—"Shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." He returns to Mount Olivet (Zech. xiv. 4) for the deliverance of His ancient people, but ere doing so, He breaks the journey in the air. From this trysting place—only once named—He gathers from the earth and sea the whole company of the redeemed then alive or dead. Every saint of God is removed from the earth—all caught up in the clouds; the living changed, with the raised sleeping body of saints.

The Hope of the Bride is the arrival of the Bridegroom (Rev. xxii. 17). The Hope of the Church, as an espoused virgin to Christ (2 Cor. xi. 2), is to enter upon the established relation of wife to the Lamb (Rev. xix. 7). Christ's love to the Church covers the whole past, the present, and the future. He presents it to Himself—glorious, spotless, holy, and without one trace of old age or decay (Eph. v. 25-27). This presentation of the Church to Himself, is prior to the marriage in heaven (compare Eph. v. with Rev. xix. 7).

Caught up to Christ in the air, then on to the Father's house, and subsequently into the dignities and glories of the kingdom, constitute, in brief, the Christian Hope. There is nothing vague, nothing uncertain in such a Hope. It is intensely personal and real. The *fact* of the Lord's coming is stated in precise terms in John xiv. 3; the *order* of events is noted in 1 Thess. iv. 15-17; and the *rapidity* of the whole action in 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

But while the Hope of the *Christian* is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17), his Hope as a *servant* is to find the fruit of his labour in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming with all His saints. It was so with Paul (1 Thess. ii. 19-20); with John (1 John ii. 28). "And

now little children, abide in Him: that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." Note that 'we' the servants, are in contrast to the saints or little children. It is the former who may be ashamed, and not the latter: see also 2 John 8. "Look to yourselves (the *saints*) that we (the *servants*) lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." The sphere where rewards are bestowed is not the Father's house, but the kingdom (Luke xii. 37; 41-44; Matt. xxiv. 45-47; xxv. 14-23).

There are four crowns each promised as encouragement and reward: (1) A crown of gold (Rev. iv. 4), this every Christian receives. (2) A crown of *life* (Rev. ii. 10), this is bestowed on every faithful witness for God. (3) A crown of *righteousness* (2 Tim. iv. 8) is put on the head of every devoted servant. (4) A crown of *glory* (1 Peter v. 4) is bestowed by the chief Shepherd Himself, on every pastor labouring diligently amongst the flock of God. Other rewards, as rule and delegated authority in the kingdom, are grand incentives to a life of Godliness and Service. But love must be the all-constraining motive.

The two parts of our Hope are distinguished, yet united in one passage. "Looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing, (rather, appearing of the glory) of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13). Thus these two closely related events—the 'Hope' and the 'Glory' form the sum of our expectation. The first is Himself: the second is His glory. Between the realization of the blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing several years transpire, but both are here united so as to form character and morally lift us out of this present evil age. The appearing of the glory does not refer to His coming *for* His saints, but expressly to the coming *with* the heavenly army. It will be a grand public event. A spectacle to men and angels. It is not however glory in general, but the glory of the great God and our Saviour. The displayed glory of God and Christ. But the blessed Hope is Christ Himself (1 Tim. i. 1)—Christ in the intimacies of His own love taking us to Himself as His own eternal companions in His dignities and honours. In the one we are immediately connected with Himself as the morning star; in the other with the glory displayed in the kingdom—reign of righteousness. But we hope for both.

The shadows are passing, and the morning star is about to appear to the exuberant joy of the bride. No prophetic event can be adduced, nor intervening circumstance prior to the Lord's return for "His own." The "Blessed Hope" is not the subject of prophecy, but of New Testament revelation *only* (1 Thess. iv. 15). Nothing, therefore, must be allowed to eclipse the brightness nor dim the joy of the Hope in our souls, *i.e.*, His personal return *for us*. Subsequently we come from heaven *with Him*: for the former, see John xiv. 3; for the latter, see Jude 14-15.

The Jewish Hope.

Israel is prophetically destined to become head of the nations (Deut. xxviii. 12, 13), the centre of the world's interests—civil and religious (Isa. ii. 2-4). Their conversion, settlement in the land, supremacy amongst the nations, wealth of temporal blessing, and grandeurs and glories in the coming palmy days of the kingdom—all are dependent on the presence and power of the Messiah—"Oh the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble" (Jer. xiv. 8). The spiritual and temporal deliverance of the nation (Luke i. 68-75) is the ardent expectation of the Jew in all ages. The sum of Jewish Hope is contained in the glowing predictions of the prophets of old, in the strains of the Hebrew harp, in the song of the bard, and in the visions of the seer. The goal of sacred Hope, nourished in the breast of every Israelite, is to have the kingdom restored to Israel (Acts i. 6; Micah iv. 8); and to bask in the glory and sunlight of Messiah's presence. The national deliverance of the people from the grasp of their enemies, is effected by the intervention of the Lord, at the epoch of His descent to the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv. 3-5). Their spiritual salvation is dependent on three facts: (1) they own their offence (Hosea v. 15); (2) welcome their rejected and scorned Messiah (Matt. xxiii. 39); (3) look upon the once pierced Christ of God (Zech. xii. 10). Israel's Hope, then, whether for conversion as a people, or for the enjoyment of blessing in millennial times, is the personal return of her Messiah. "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord" (Isa. lix. 20). The predicted return of

Judah to her natural home—Palestine—is foretold in Isaiah xviii.—a remarkable chapter of but seven verses. The last verse probably includes the whole nation—Judah and Ephraim.

The description of Zion's glory, of Jerusalem's grandeur and greatness, by the Hebrew prophet (Isa. lx.), is probably unequalled in the whole range of human literature. We know of nothing like it for sublimity and beauty of language, while, of course, its absolute truthfulness constitutes the chapter one of the most magnificent descriptions ever penned. The spiritual blessing of the people, and of all successive generations is secured to the end of time (verse 21), whilst their settlement in the land is guaranteed (Ezek. xxxvii.) till the kingdom passes into the eternal state, when all time and national distinctions cease. What a future lies before the Jew! For maintaining the Jewish Hope, Paul was a prisoner in chains (Acts xxvi. 6-7; xxviii. 20).

The Imminency of the Coming, but the date withheld.

There are certain unmistakable signs which, singly and combined, forcibly indicate the near end. Those signs, moreover, mark the Coming as a necessity. Iniquity in the Church and in the world—the respective spheres of God's grace and government—is advancing by leaps and bounds. The coming crash is feared and dreaded. There is no power to effectually check the incoming torrent of evil. The apostacy is within measurable distance. What hinders the full development of evil is the presence of the Church (2 Thess. ii. 6), and the restraining power of the Holy Ghost (ver. 7). The Coming is at hand. It may be momentarily expected.

1. The great *political* sign is the budding of the fig-tree—the chosen symbol of Israel as a nation (Luke xxi. 29-30). The doom pronounced upon Israel of *perpetual fruitlessness* (Matt. xxi. 19) is surely answered in the history of the "tribes of wearied breast and wandering foot" during these nineteen centuries. But the star of Jacob, long hidden behind the dark clouds of national unbelief, is about to rise. "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise

ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors" (Matt. xxiv. 32, 33). This, then, is the sign that the present age of Jewish unbelief and national rejection is closing up, and the new age under the Messiah about to dawn. This sign is easily read. The Jewish question is coming to the front. The political arrangement of the powers in Europe and Asia demands the restoration of the Hebrew Commonwealth in Palestine—the natural home of the Jew. To that *end* events are rapidly tending. Every effort to settle the Jews in large numbers in Africa or America (for Europe won't have them) must prove a signal failure. The fig-tree is budding. Israel is coming to the front. The Jewish question is forcing itself upon *general* attention. We are on the eve of vast changes which will alter the whole political complexion of the powers on earth.

2. The great *Church* sign is the alarming and rapid progress of the "downgrade movement." There are seven successive stages of Church history written down in brief but pungent sentences in Rev. ii. and iii. The picture whether viewed in detail or as a whole is a dark one. The seventh and last stage of its history is already present, the next is the apostacy itself. Christendom has its character fully and accurately described in 2 Tim. iii. 1-7; Rev. iii. 15-18; Jude iv. 19: while its doom is prophetically announced in Rev. xvii. and xviii. Within the last ten years *every* distinctive truth of Christianity has been called in question: the Personality of God, the virgin birth of our Lord, the Deity of Christ, eternal punishment, the substitutionary sacrifice, and other vital truths of Revelation are openly and boldly flouted in pulpit and class-room. Many books and portions of the Bible are denied as *Divine*. Thus the nominal faith of thousands has been rudely shattered, carrying with it the destruction in the soul of moral obligation and responsibility to God, hence the general lawlessness in all departments of life. This in the main has been the work of the "Higher Critics", for which they will have to account to God. Christendom is *ready* to plunge into the vortex of the apostacy. What is before us as Christians, is to be "caught up" to meet the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 17).. What is before the christless profession of the day is to be "spued out" (Rev. iii. 16). Soon after the translation of all saints to the Father's house, the general abandonment of Christianity takes place, and

a *new* religious system inaugurated under the headship of the personal Antichrist. We are not pessimists. Yet we solemnly declare that we are on the very eve of the great apostacy, and that Scripture-events and signs, proclaim with trumpet voice "the Lord is at hand." The *eighth* condition of the professing Church is apostate—out and out. The *seventh* is presently existing, and may terminate at any moment by the translation of all true believers. Thus Scripture and facts must surely demonstrate even to the dullest understanding, that the end is at hand.

3. The great *social* sign. An ominous sign of the times is the spread of Socialism, or the gospel of equality amongst the nations and peoples. Contempt of authority—parental and magisterial—is prevalent and a growing evil. Combination is a marked feature in all departments of social, religious, and political life. Individualism and the sense of *personal* responsibility are being crushed out. The prophetic re-arrangement of Europe, as detailed in the prophecies, is owing to a combination of powers which will crush the smaller states, annex their territory, and ultimately resolves themselves into ten confederated kingdoms. What is the harlot of the Apocalypse (chap. xvii. ; xviii.) but the fusion of all religious parties! The spirit of combination is rife. The sure result is near. This sign is easily read. The tyranny of trades unions, in their interference with the personal right and liberty of every man to work as he may, and for what he may, also in controlling work and wages, makes free and independent labour next to an impossibility. Co-operative societies have ruined numerous small and individual traders. The great trusts are object lessons. The seed is being sown, a full harvest is the sure result. All these things point forward to a gathering of forces, to a concentration of activities which will produce the most frightful tyranny ever witnessed on earth (Rev. xiii. 16, 17). In those days which are *at hand*, individual thought and action are trampled under foot. Men will be denied the right to live and labour for their daily bread unless active or passive adherents of the beast (verse 17). The complete control of all commerce and labour will be in under one system—one master-hand will enforce His decrees upon *all* classes, under the penalty of death and starvation. What awful times lie before this christless age! The incipient stages of the coming

tragedy are being enacted before our eyes. How significant this sign! No wonder that monarchs tremble, and capitalists are justly alarmed. The Spirit of God *may* continue to restrain for a brief season after the removal of the Church (see last clause of Rev. i. 4), but the principles are actively at work which are certain to effect the destruction of the social system providentially ordained of God, and herald in a state of things, truly satanic in conception and character. How near He is! Events cry aloud, He is *at hand*!

But the Church should not look *for* signs, nor need them as a stimulus to faith. God's Word is the sure anchorage of our souls. Yet signs may be looked *at*. Israel looks *for* signs. The Church looks *at* signs. Faith does not rest on any number of signs but on God's words. God has put shame and confusion upon *every* attempt to fix the date of the Coming. "But of that *day* and *hour* knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark xiii. 32-33). The Coming is not bound by time or season, nor to be settled by mathematical calculations however ingeniously or learnedly wrought out. What comes in between day and hour? Moments. Then the Lord may come at any *moment*. How emphatic the terms employed to designate our attitude towards the Coming: BE READY, WATCH, WAIT, LOOK, PRAY. The period of His absence—from His departure (Acts i. 9) till His return (1 Thess. iv. 16)—is divided into four periods: even, mid-night, cock-crowing, morning. "Even" is past and He has not come. "Midnight" is past and He has not come. "Cock-crowing": Is it past? We think so. "Morning" is about to break and He about to come. Such is the faith of our souls!

The Translation, Order of Events, and how effected.

The resurrection of the dead in Christ and the change of the living—both into the moral (1 John iii. 2) and physical (Phil. iii. 21) likeness of Christ—is a magnificent outlook. But that does not exhaust the tale of grace. Both classes are then caught up in the clouds to meet their Lord and Saviour in the air, and "for ever with the Lord" is the grand and happy consummation.

The force of the words in 1 Thess. iv. 14 has been lost sight of by many: "Even so them also which sleep in (rather *through*) Jesus will God bring with Him." What the apostle asserts is, that when God brings Christ into the world amidst the acclaim of angels (Ps. xcvi. 7; Heb. i. 6), those now, and all along the ages, "who sleep through Jesus" will accompany Him in His triumphal march from heaven to Olivet. Angels and saints shall swell His triumph, and share in the magnificent pageant. There is no such thought in the passage as the spirits of the departed dead coming with Christ to enter the resurrection-body, as some have strangely supposed. Then to anticipate a real difficulty which would naturally occur to the mind, "How can this be?" the apostle, in a parenthetical statement of divine revelation, unfolds *how* the saints, dead and living, are first taken up to heaven, in order that they may be brought by God with Christ, when He comes to assume the public government of the world. Then the main theme interrupted by the parenthesis is resumed. Thus the latter part of verse 14 connects itself with chapter v.; of the times and seasons when God would bring Christ and the saints into the kingdom, he would not write of. But it is self-evident that, if the dead in Christ are to accompany Him when He comes, they must have been taken to heaven previously, and this very fact is the burden of the parenthetical portion of chap. iv. 15-18. We, all the dead and living saints, come with Him (verse 14), but in order that this may be accomplished the dead are raised, the living are changed, then *all* are caught up to meet Him in the air; subsequently, as we have said, we return with Him in glory (Jude 14).

Now we return to our parenthesis, in which alone the divine order of events connected with our translation from earth are unfolded.

First—"The Lord Himself descends from heaven." We have no intimation that He is accompanied by angels. His death, resurrection, and descent from heaven are individual actions. The expression "The Lord *Himself*" seems to preclude attendants, and is the first and necessary step in the divine programme of events. He comes with shout, voice, and trump (verse 16). The shout is one of command. It is the shout of the General to the troops scattered throughout the scene of conflict. The voice is individual. The Lord is the head of the angelic hierarchy. We do not read of archangels; there is only *one* such (Jude 9). The trump of God, termed the last trump in 1 Cor. xv. 52, is

the final summons to leave the field. This trump is *not* one of the seven Apocalyptic trumpets; is independent of them. The seven are trumpets of judgment. The one before us is to summon us up to glory.

Second—"The dead in Christ shall rise first," that is, before the living saints are changed. In the order of events, the dead take precedence of the living. The latter shall not precede or go before them that are fallen asleep (verse 15 R.V.). The first who shall answer to the Lord's shout and voice is the dead." "THEN we who are alive and remain." The dead in Christ includes all who have fallen asleep from the death of Abel till the moment of the translation (see 1 Cor. xv. 23). The sleeping dead of Old and New Testament times, shall rise at the same instant and in the same way. In this great event no distinction whatever is possible either in manner or measure. All saints share alike in the glory and blessedness of resurrection, of which Christ's resurrection is the glorious pattern. The harvest partakes of the character of the first fruits (1 Cor. xv. 23).

Third—The living saints are changed. The first action of the coming Christ is upon His dead or sleeping people. He comes as the resurrection to the dead and as the life to the living (John xi. 25). Such is the order. Saints alive at the coming shall be glorified in bodies immortal and incorruptible (Phil. iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 53-54).

Fourth—Both classes of saints—the raised dead and the changed living—are caught up together in the clouds. Of Christ alone, is it said that He "descends" and "ascends" from and to heaven. The terms imply independent power in Himself, inherent right (Eph. iv. 8-10). We, on the contrary, are caught up, by the exercise of a power outside of ourselves. The clouds, in which we are caught away from earth, are heaven's royal carriages to convey us into the presence of our adorable Lord and Saviour.

Fifth—The meeting-place between the Lord and His saints is the air. *There* the ransomed throng—"numberless as the sands on the sea-shore"—gather in holy triumph around their adorable Lord. No building on earth could hold the millions of the redeemed. We meet Him in the air. This is the first and only meeting in which there shall be no parting. We meet to part no more. At this wondrous meeting and greeting of saints, no farewell shall ever be spoken.

But while the foregoing is the order in which the translation is to be effected, no delay between the separate events can take place, no hitch can occur. The Lord Himself shall secure the meeting and make it good. None shall be left behind, and none shall be late. Satan the wolf of John x. 12 has scattered the sheep, and broken up the displayed unity of the one flock, but Christ shall undo the work of Satan and gather His own—one grand, great flock—in the air around Himself never again to be scattered.

The Coming Meeting in the Air.

O, what a rush of holy and blessed recollections at the mention of the Lord Himself! "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (*i.e.*, the raised and glorified dead) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17). "The Lord *Himself* shall descend from heaven" (verse 16). His love to death has won our hearts. Yes, He Himself, Who loved, and died, and triumphed, shall descend from heaven with a shout, with Archangel's voice and trump of God. His shout will alone be heard by the righteous. It will be an awakening and gathering shout, falling alike on the ears of the dead as on the living. "God is gone *up* with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." Yes, Lord, Thou didst spoil principalities and powers—triumphing over them in Thy wondrous cross, and Thou hast gone up to Thy glory in holy triumph; the glory of God now shines in Thy face, Thou Blessed One; but Thou wilt come, and with an assembling shout gather to Thyself the fruit of Thy love and death! He will speak with Archangel's voice. There is but one Archangel named in Scripture. The voice is individual, the shout is general. We heard His voice out of the darkness. It was the most desolate cry God and man e'er listened to—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And He bowed His head and died. Risen from the dead, He met us in our unbelief and fear, and again His voice fell upon our ears and souls—"Peace be unto you." He enters the circles of mourning, and announces Himself as the Resurrection and the Life. He counts upon our knowing Him and recognising His voice. "He calleth His own sheep by

name—they *know* His voice.” Ah! it cannot be long ere He will speak to us each one—“Come up *hither*.” Then the trump of God sounds—called in another place “the *last* trump”—and thus close in detail the blessed action of the coming Christ. All will be done in the “twinkling of an eye,” and in subjection to God Who is over all.

WHO WILL MEET THE LORD ?

Every saint, from Adam until the descent from heaven, shall meet the Lord in the air. Not one will come short of the blessed meeting, and of the subsequent scenes of glory. The “dead *in* Christ”—sweet thought! lose nothing by absence from the body—rise first, *i.e.*, before the living are changed. Priority is thus accorded to the sleepers. The Lord, as the Resurrection, sweeps the tombs, the earth, and sea of every particle of the precious dust of His sleeping people, for “precious to the Lord is the death of His saints.” The voice of Christ, as of old, sounds amongst the tenants of the tomb, and at His word, “Come forth,” every slumbering saint will rise unto the resurrection of life. Then the living are changed; to them Christ appears as the life, and our bodies of humiliation be changed and fashioned like unto His body of glory. Thus every trace of mortality as to our bodies will be swallowed up of life; “Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

“Caught up *together*,” the raised dead and changed living—“together.” O precious word! This is the second great Church gathering. The Lord Himself was the centre in Acts ii.; the Lord Himself shall be the centre of 1 Thess. iv. The first general gathering of the Church was at Pentecost; but, alas! Satan soon succeeded in spoiling the lovely work of God. Like another garden of the Lord—a second Eden of delight—the Church continued to bloom for a brief hour; but the flower has faded, the fruit has withered, and the spouse of the Lord has offered herself to many lovers. But now the meeting takes place in the air, where the serpent’s hiss, the tempter’s seductions, and the weakness of nature can have no place. They leave the world blighted by the curse; they weep no more, they sin no more. The “air” is the meeting place. It is not heaven, for *it* will be entered by the Lamb and His fair company; nor is it earth, the scene of our sin and sorrow.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE MEETING.

The meeting! Who can describe, what pen portray the blessedness of that grand gathering together of Christ and His saints, away from the poisonous breath and humid atmosphere of a ruined world! The moment has fully come; the desert crossed, and we see Him as He is. Changed into His image, to which we are predestinated, we shall bear His likeness, morally and physically. Lord Jesus, speed on the moment! When does the meeting take place? We cannot say. It may be, beloved reader, before the closing lines of this paper are read. There is no intervening event spoken of in Scripture before the meeting of 1 Thess. iv. One brief sentence sums up the blessedness of the gathering together—

“For ever with the Lord.”

The Lord is at Hand.

This divine statement does not need the use of italics to emphasise its truth, nor to force itself in upon the soul. The yearning hearts of disciples in all ages, and in all parts of the world respond to it; while the moral and significant signs of the *near* return are multiplying around us. “The Lord is at hand” is a burning sentence. May it burn itself into the hearts of our readers! Does it not seem a piece of insensate folly to shut our eyes, to wilfully blind ourselves, to the character of the times? We are on the eve of vast and unparalleled changes in the political and religious worlds. At any moment a bomb-shell might be thrown into Europe which would rouse a conflagration of unspeakable horror. The late conflict between Russia grasping in her greed for extension of territory, and Japan for national existence, has left the former defeated and crippled. But Russia will yet rise in her strength and play one of the most important parts in the universal conflicts at hand. Prophecy turns upon the restoration of Judah to Palestine. God, however, is very good, and He *may* delay for a little while the GREAT CONSUMMATION—Europe and Asia in the throes of a struggle unequalled in magnitude since the downfall of the empire, under whose sanction the Lord was crucified, and by whom the Jews have been dispersed world-wide.

Again, the fierce search-lights of science and of a dishonest criticism are thrown upon the Holy Scriptures. When we assert that in all departments of science *finality* has not been reached, and that succeeding investigators are continually correcting the mistakes of their predecessors, we simply assert what can be proved to a demonstration, and what in fact is admitted on every hand. We ask one pertinent question: Mention one scientific *fact* which contradicts any statement in the Bible? Produce it if you can. Is science, which is ever progressing and never complete either in its conclusions as to principles or facts, a reliable judge of Scripture? We trow not. We invite in the certain light of science the keenest research into the Word of God. Creation and the Bible are from the same source, from the same Author; they are in harmony, not in contradiction. The Bible is a written Revelation of God to man. The Scriptures are inspired, and hence incapable of error and mistake. That they have suffered somewhat in copying is no more than what we might expect. By all means let criticism correct these human blunders. But to deny Prophecy and Miracle, to maintain that the Bible is part fact and fiction, is a direct and public attack upon the veracity of the Living God, Christ, the Holy Ghost, and the sacred writers. The truthfulness of the Divine Records are vouched for in every part of the sacred volume, while Eastern discovery in Egypt, in Palestine, and, above all, in Assyria, positively teem in overwhelming evidence to the exact and literal truth of Bible prophecy and history. Better at once face the question: It is the Bible or no Bible, Christianity or Atheism.

THE LORD IS AT HAND.

We adduce two considerations in proof of the imminence of the Coming. *First*, we are in the Laodicean condition of the Church, a condition out of which there is no corporate recovery. There are seven distinctive church-states (Rev. ii., iii.). The first three are consecutive, and have long since passed away; the moral features, of course, remain for every day practical use and profit. In the addresses to the first three churches, or rather to their representatives (the angels), there is no direct reference to the Lord's coming; in each of the last four the goal of hope is the Coming. Thyatira, *the papacy* exists, but is not the characteristic church-state of to-day. Sardis,

protestantism in death and indifference exists, but is not the distinctive church-state of the early years of the 20th century. Philadelphia, *reality and true godliness* exists, but is not the broadly-marked feature of present church-life. Laodicea presents the *worst and most loathsome* condition of the Church recorded by the Seer of Patmos. This is the last, the final state of the professing body about to be cut off (Rom. xi.), to be spued out of the Lord's mouth (Rev. iii. 16). There is not an eighth condition of the Church; there is nothing beyond Laodicea, but the guilt and doom of the harlot (xvii., xviii.). We have entered upon the last and closing stage of Church-history. Ecclesiastically, Laodicea stamps its character upon our age, and we are finding ourselves to-day between the threat of excision (Rev. iii. 16) and its accomplishment. We refer, of course, to the general professing body, not to true Christians, nor to the mystical body of Christ, which latter does not come within the domain of judgment, being solely in counsel and work—God's. Now let our readers compare the facts open to all with Rev. iii. 15-17, and say, Is not the correspondence complete? We have already remarked that this, the last state of the Church, is one of hopeless recovery. Christ is outside, standing, knocking, and speaking. He asks for admission. But the angel of the church hears not the voice of her grieved Lord. The Church is indifferent, only one here and there hears and opens the door for Christ to enter. Recovery is *individual*, not *corporate* (verse 20). How near, therefore, the Coming! The last hours of the Church on earth are rapidly running out. We see the *end*.

The *Second* consideration which distinctly intimates that the Lord is at hand, is the striking revival of Jewish national independence amongst the Jews themselves. The return of Israel to Palestine is no longer regarded as an academic question, but is within measureable distance of accomplishment, and well within the region of practical politics. The fig tree is symbolic of Israel as a nation (Luke xxi. 29). Now in Matt. xxi. the Lord blasts the fig tree, the then generation of Israel was utterly rejected. But in xxiv. where Israel again comes within the sphere of prophecy, the fig tree begins to bud and blossom. In the former Israel is rejected—the fig tree is blasted; in the latter Scripture, God commences dealing afresh with Israel, and hence the fig tree puts forth her leaves. "Summer

is *nigh*" and "It is near, even at the doors" (verses 32-33). Here we are furnished by the Lord Himself, with a clear and unmistakable sign that the glad summer of a thousand years is nigh, and He for Whom we wait is at hand. Israel is coming to the front. The Jewish question cannot long be deferred. It must be taken up. The Zionist movement, which has as its *one* aim the restoration of the nation to Palestine, is probably the most significant sign of the centuries. The Jew is getting ready for Canaan, and the land is getting agriculturally ready for its ancient inhabitants. The fig tree is beginning to bloom and blossom.

Now, reader, weigh carefully those two considerations which utter no uncertain sound, which tell no doubtful story, severally and together they proclaim the glad truth, "The Lord is at hand." The silence of God is about to be broken, The voice of our descending Lord is about to fall on our ears. The testimonies in John xiv. 1-3; 1 Thess. iv. 13-17; and the greater part of 1 Cor. xv. are on the eve of fulfilment. The hearts of the redeemed are quivering with eager and holy desire. The Church is waking up and is grasping the reality of her Hope—the personal return of the Lord. The conviction is growing and deepening that the Coming is at hand, and should be momentarily expected. The descent of the Lord from heaven to the air to translate all His redeemed then alive on the earth, and to raise and change His sleeping dead, is that for which we look, and wait, and hope, and is an event absolutely independent of prophetic circumstances—one prior to the opening of the coming prophetic scheme. However much you may defer prophecy, you cannot, without serious loss to the soul, postpone beyond next moment the coming of the Lord for His Own. "The Lord is at hand."

The First Resurrection.

"The first resurrection" and "the second death" are contrasted expressions (Rev. xx. 6). Those not embraced in the former, or changed at the coming which is equivalent to it, must undergo the eternal agony of the latter. The resurrection of the just, and of the unjust are totally distinct in character and time.

The first is to life; the second is to judgment (John v. 29). But a period of 1000 years separates the two distinctive acts (Rev. xx. 5). The first resurrection covers a period of about 2000 years, commencing with Christ the first-fruits (1 Cor. xv. 23); then of all the righteous dead from Abel on to the Coming (verse 23); lastly of two separate companies of martyred saints in the future crisis (Rev. vi. 9-11; xiii. 7-10 with xx. 4). No saint on earth after the coming into the air shall die a natural death. All who die in those awful days do so as martyrs. The first resurrection is completed at the epoch of the introduction of the kingdom-reign (Rev. xx. 4). "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." In the expression "they lived" the resurrection of the Apocalyptic martyrs is implied. Thus every saint of God who has died or will die is embraced in the first resurrection.

To have part in the first resurrection was the eager and longing desire of the apostle (Phil. iii. 11). The resurrection of the dead is a truth common to both Testaments, and formed an integral part of Jewish faith (Heb. vi. 2). It formed one of the main and fundamental doctrines dividing the rival sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees; the former affirming it, the latter equally emphatic in denying it (Acts xxiii. 6-8). But a resurrection *from* the dead is the subject of New Testament revelation alone. It is an integral part of Christian truth, and is first taught in Mark ix. 9; see also Luke xx. 35. The Revelation is made up of symbol and literal statement. Rev. xx. deals mainly with the literal. "But the *rest* of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (verse 5). "The rest of the dead" are of course the wicked, which conclusively proves that no saint on earth shall die during the kingdom reign of a thousand years. Methuselah lived 969 years; millennial saints shall not only live a thousand years amidst the joys of the kingdom, but shall never die (John xi. 26). They pass from the *millennial* earth into the yet deeper rest and enjoyment of the *eternal* earth (Rev. xxi. 3).

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." It is a matter of individual blessedness in which every raised saint shall share. The first term is descriptive of his happy condition; the second of his character. Thus the happiness and holiness of *all* in the first resurrection are inseparably associated and eternally secured, for over all such the second death hath no power.

There are five statements gathered from 1 Cor. xv. as to the bodies of the raised saints. (1) They are raised *immortal*—no longer subject to death. (2) *Incorruptible*—no more subject to decay or waste. (3) Raised in *glory*—not raised *to* glory, but in it. The first time that a saint touches glory is not when he dies and goes to heaven, but when his body is raised. (4) It is a *spiritual* body—one like Christ's, "flesh and bones," not flesh and blood (Luke xxiv. 39). (5) A body characterised by *power*—we shall be able to accomplish mighty acts of power in the glorified-resurrection state. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom. viii. 29), and this divine purpose must be accomplished. We shall take on His likeness in all respects, save in the marks of the agony of Calvary which He bears in His own Person—an eternal reminder of the Cross.

The Judgment Seat of Christ.—2 Cor. v. 10.

"We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."
(R.V.)

We have had tracts, booklets, and diagrams, circulating largely under the titles, "The Four Judgments" and "The Seven Judgments." Now the solemn subject of judgment is a large one, and cannot be distributed into four or seven or more distinctive acts.

THE MULTIPLICITY OF JUDGMENTS may surprise some who have not considered the matter. The primeval earth (Gen. i. 2); Adam, Eve and the serpent (Gen. iii.); Cain (Gen. iv.); the old world (Gen. vii.); the race (Gen. xi.); Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. xix.); Egypt—her king, gods, and military power (Exod. viii.-xv.); Israel at Sinai (Exod. xxxii.) and in the wilderness (Num. xiv.); the seven nations of Canaan (Deut. vii.); Judah by the Chaldeans (2 Kings xxv.), and subsequently by the Romans (Luke xxi.); Israel by the Assyrians (2 Kings xvii.); Babylon (Jer. li.); Nineveh (Nah. iii.); the four universal empires (Dan ii. and vii.)—these, besides numerous countries, cities, and towns specified in the prophets have been the subject of divine judgment. The ancients divided the world into "the

blessed east" and "filthy west." The east—the scene and sphere of divine governmental action—is a huge waste. We have not referred to the most awful judgment of all, **THE CROSS**. *That* stands out and alone from all before and all to come. The past and future, heaven and hell, light and darkness, good and evil, love and enmity, centre and circle around that wondrous meeting place—**THE CROSS**, and by it all is eternally fixed and settled.

As the rays of the prophetic lamp fall on the yet unwritten page of history, judgments as numerous as those already past; unsparring and final too in character, are revealed to our gaze. The future is crowded with distinctive acts of judgment on individuals and peoples. We instance a few:—The Jews in the coming tribulation (Mark xiii.); the ten tribes, or, Israel in the wilderness (Ezek. xx. 33-38); the nations to whom the Gospel of the kingdom is to be preached (Matt. xxv. 31-46); Russia, Persia, and other allied north-eastern powers politically hostile to Israel (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.); Philistines, Moab, Amalek, and other tribes and peoples settled within the borders of, or, contiguous to Palestine (Ps. lxxxiii.); Edom and the heathen (Obad; Isa. lxiii. 1-6); nations and armies of the west gathered in mad opposition to God and to the Lamb (Rev. xix. 11-21); Christ-rejecting Christendom (2 Thess. i.; ii.); the beast—personal head of the civil power (a *Gentile*), and the false prophet, or Antichrist—personal head of the religious apostacy (a *Jew*) (Rev. xix. 20); the great whore, or corrupt Church (Rev. xvii. 16-17; xviii.; xix. 2-3); the Assyrian, or king of the North (Isa. xxx. 27-33); the devil (Rev. xx. 10); and lastly, the wicked dead (Rev. xx. 11-15).

Then, there are coming judgments of a providential character, truly inflicted by the hand of God, altho' the hand is unseen, and the agents and instruments only appear. Seals are broken (Rev. vi.); trumpets are blown (viii.; ix.; xi.); vials are poured out, all in quick succession till the wrath of God and the wrath of the Lamb are openly manifested, which consume in their fierceness the sin and sinners of an apostate earth. Whose wrath?—the wrath of God Who loved the world and gave His Son to die for sinners. Whose wrath?—the wrath of the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world.

THE SUBJECT OF JUDGMENT IS A GRUESOME ONE TO MANY; not so to us. We gaze on the uplifted axe without a quiver,

and as it righteously falls, "Amen, Amen," say we, "for righteous and true are His judgments." In all future judgment not only are believers exempted, but they themselves are, through grace, associates with the Judge in the judgment of others (1 Cor. vi. 1-3; Psalm cxlix. 6-9). Perfect love casts out fear (1 John iv. 18), yea, gives "*boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world*" (verse 17). Believers on Jesus Christ "shall not come into judgment" (John v. 24, R.V.). The scope of each executed judgment: its far reaching results; and how it redounds to the glory of God, as indeed everything must do in heaven, earth, and hell, are considerations of prime importance; *here* thought and study would be well repaid.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST does not refer exclusively to any *one* coming moment, nor to any specified act of judgment, or manifestation. The expression has been but little understood. It is a comprehensive term, embracing in its range the whole period from the translation of the saints to heaven (1 Thess. iv.), till the judgment of the dead which ushers in eternity (Rev. xx). Now between these two events which cover a period of at least 1000 years, the Judgment Seat of Christ is set up, and *every responsible human being* is manifested before it—good and bad, saved and unsaved—not, of course, at the same time. The issues of this manifestation are very different as regards the two classes, saved and unsaved.

THE JUDGE IS CHRIST, THE SON OF MAN, which is clear from John v. 22-27, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." "The Judgment Seat of Christ," therefore, is that of the Son of Man." "I saw the dead small and great stand before *God*" (Rev. xx. 12), is a seeming contradiction to John v. 27. The Revised Version, however, clears up the difficulty: it reads, "I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the *throne*." The Son of Man is the sole judge of living and dead. Before Him Who was here personally on earth, living and moving amongst men, every responsible human being must be manifested. In His character of Son of God He quickens the dead—spiritually and corporeally—(John v. 25; xi.), as Son of Man He judges (John v. 22). This distinction is an important one.

"WE MUST ALL BE MADE MANIFEST", refers to and includes

every responsible person, not believers only. The "all" of our passage is as universal as the area of human responsibility. The life of *everyone* from the opening of responsibility till its close shall be fully revealed, every act, word, deed, and thought be scrutinised, and Christ's approval and disapproval expressed. We shall be made manifest; every individual be turned inside out, his moral being thoroughly exposed, and the light from the judgment seat thrown upon the past. This universal, personal, and minute manifestation (*not* judgment) is between Christ and each individual, not a manifestation of one in presence of others, but each one for himself before Christ. What a solemnizing thought to all! What a sanctifying one to believers! We have only, as yet, got partial or one-sided views of ourselves. We have never fully fathomed the depths of our moral being. What we *are* and what we have *done* are but partially known. "*We know in part,*" and "*now we see in a mirror darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I have been known*" (1 Cor. xiii. 9-12). All believers and unbelievers—at different times, and under totally different circumstances—shall be displayed in the absolute truth of what they are and were, before the full and unclouded blaze of divine glory. To be in eternal bliss with Christ, without this individual manifestation, would be indeed a serious loss. All is to be fully revealed, and manifested too, in presence of the One Who perfectly loves us, even Christ, whose judgment seat it is. What, if in eternal ages, a forgotten act, a careless word, or foolish thought should be remembered? The recollection would be intolerable. "The bride hath made herself ready," (Rev. xix. 7) surely intimates that she has been at the judgment seat before the glorious blaze of light; now all having come out, she can happily take her place at the side of her heavenly Bridegroom.

There will be a vast amount of healthy work transacted at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The mistakes of time will there be rectified; wrong judgments reversed; misunderstandings corrected; ungenerous attempts to impute falsehood or evil where such does not exist exposed; and in short, persons, ways, words, motives, and acts shall then appear in their true light and character. It will be a clearing-up moment, so that the Church and every member of the redeemed company shall enter into the enjoyment of eternal blessing, in the perfect knowledge

that all has been fully exposed between the soul and Christ. Then in the eternal rest of God, no cloud shall ever darken our sky ; no unsettled question ever arise to dim the joy ; no lurking suspicion ever cross the soul. Every difficulty and question between believers and God, and between brother and brother shall then be righteously adjusted. False charges *must* be withdrawn in light of heaven, and every cloud and misunderstanding for ever removed. Wrong condemned, and right eternally vindicated ! Personally, we have enjoyed the comfort and strength which manifestation before the Judgment Seat of Christ imparts to the soul, and that, too, amidst circumstances of trial, wrong, and unjust charge. Christ's vindication of every injured saint and servant is most sure. In meantime, wait on God, be of good courage, and pass on in light of that coming day.

NO JUDGMENT AND NO CONDEMNATION FOR BELIEVERS are expressly and distinctly affirmed in the New Testament. If this can be satisfactorily shewn, it may lift a cloud from many a weary heart. NO JUDGMENT is the emphatic declaration of the Lord in John v. 24 ; " Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me hath eternal life, and cometh *not into judgment*, but hath passed out of death into life " (R.V.). Who with such authority pronounces on the absolute security of believers, and divinely guarantees immunity from judgment to come ?—Christ, the Son of God and quickener of the dead, yea, Christ, the Son of Man and judge of living and dead. His right, therefore, to announce beforehand the ultimate destiny of " His own " is unquestionable. Instead of standing in the *dock* as criminals, we shall sit on the *bench* as judges : " Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world ? Know ye not that we shall judge angels ? " (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3). Judgment upon kings, nobles, and peoples is an honour conferred upon " all His saints " (Ps. cxlix). At the return of our Lord, the righteous dead are " raised in glory " (1 Cor. xv. 43). Weigh for a moment the absurdity and grotesque character of the situation : believers in a glorified condition, crowned and robed, and morally and physically like Christ standing their trial to have it determined whether or not they are fit for heaven and glory ! Why, Scripture in its teaching reverses, exactly reverses the position. The Judge was once God's victim for sin on the cross. He bore our

judgment—divine judgment justly due to us. Our trial and judgment are long since past. The cross settled the question of judgment for all who believe. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 17). God will never judicially remember the sins of His own. But shall we not remember them? (Eph. ii. 11). If, too, raised *in* glory, how put on trial to ascertain our fitness for it? But on this, Scripture utters no uncertain sound. We are as completely beyond judgment as the Judge Himself. It is a bold word to say, that the weakest and feeblest believer on earth is as safe from divine judgment as Christ Himself; it can no more overtake *them* than it can reach *Him*; for Christ and us it is past and forever gone; such is the glorious teaching of 1 John iv. 17, "As He is," *i.e.*, beyond judgment, "even so are we in this world." We are as the Judge. We dare not, and must not quote 2 Cor. v. 10 in opposition to John v. 24. The former affirms the manifestation of all at the judgment seat; the latter expressly exempts believers from future judgment. Manifestation and judgment are different words and convey different ideas. Paul wrote of the former; the Lord spake of the latter. We shall be manifested, says Paul. We shall not be judged said the Lord. *Before* the judgment-seat we are manifested. *On* the judgment-seat we judge. Carefully distinguished between manifestation and judgment.

But the testimony of the Holy Spirit is equally conclusive that for believers there is NO CONDEMNATION. "There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). Condemnation is future, final, and necessarily succeeds judgment. If therefore believers shall not come into judgment, it is self-evident that there can be no condemnation. O, glorious position! Now no condemnation. For believers it does not exist. The testing of our works (1 Cor. iii.) and consequent praise given or withheld, in no wise enfeebles the truth as to the absolute immunity of believers from judgment, both as to their persons and sins. For us judgment is *past*. Glory and not judgment is our hope. Christ on the cross bore our judgment, consequently we are free.

RECEIVE PRAISE OR BLAME; "that each one may receive the things done in the body according to what he hath done whether it be good or bad." Righteous and eternal retribution follows every act of time. What about the bad? What about

our sins? Christ has borne them all in His own body on the tree. He has perfectly answered to God for our failed responsibility as His creatures, and as for the good—alone produced by the Holy Spirit—that shall carry its own eternal recompense with it. Christ shall publicly approve of all done in the body which has been the fruit and action of the Holy Ghost. Is there cause for fear? Is there any dread of personal loss? Does the soul shrink and tremble at the thought of manifestation before the judgment-seat of Christ? Nay. The Judge is our Saviour and the Bridegroom of the bride. He once hung on the cross for our sins. For us the judgment-seat can have no terror, why should it have? but as we think of sinners of a guilty world, we haste to carry the message of sovereign grace to every creature. The judgment-seat of Christ has its terrors to the unbelieving—to such only. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men.”

Earth's Coming Jubilee.

This planet of ours is certainly the most wonderful in the sisterhood of worlds. The centre of the solar system is the sun. Ancient astronomical science regarded the earth as the centre with the sun, moon, and stars revolving around it. The immobility of the earth, its central position, and the daily revolution of the heavenly bodies around it in circular orbits, were considered unquestionable facts. Christianity with its facts, principles, and truth is a fixed system in which there is not, and necessarily cannot admit of development. Science is simply the discovery of forces and principles which exist, and which are co-eval with Creation itself, and then making an orderly arrangement of these facts and principles, and reducing them into a system. But it must ever be borne in mind that the secrets of nature were there before their discovery. God is the Creator and Designer, while the creature is but the discoverer. There are vast fields of enquiry yet unexplored in all departments of nature—physical and moral.

The earth is not the centre of the solar system, nor is man the object of God's vast system in which material creation, grace, and glory form one magnificent whole. Christ is God's

object and we revolve around Him, and whatever importance we have, whether as created or saved, it is derived from Him—what would the earth be without the sun? What would we be without Christ? The former would be a huge waste, a physical wreck; the latter a moral ruin.

We gather that the millions of stars discovered by telescope and photography, and the millions not yet brought within human observation, are probably inhabited by races whose constitution and being are adapted to their respective spheres. The moon is an exception; without an atmosphere, without air and water, and absolutely without sound, and without sign of life, apparently a physically ruined world, the conditions are such that no life known to us could exist on its surface. But on the other hand, Mars, our nearest neighbour is surely a peopled world? From its north pole downwards, the channels dug are so vast, and show such evident design in their construction, that we are almost irresistibly led to the conclusion that Mars is inhabited by a race of beings, strong, skilful, and exceedingly powerful. The earth, as we know, stands between Venus and Mars. These two are our nearest neighbours. Venus is nearer the sun than we are, while Mars is further off. The nearest planet that revolves round the sun is Mercury—"the messenger of the gods," so termed by the Ancients. Its face is ever turned towards the sun. A lesson surely for us! Then Venus—a little smaller than our earth—is both "the morning star," and "the star of the evening." But little is known of Venus because of its brilliancy, hence no satisfactory telescopic-examination is possible. As to the vexed question, Are the stars inhabited? We shall know with certainty when with the Lord, and not the least of heaven's interesting occupations shall be to know (not learn 1 Cor. xiii. 12) by visits to these worlds all about them and their inhabitants, occupations, etc. For that we wait. "They shall walk with Me in white" (Rev. iii. 4).

Before passing from the consideration of the planetary system—the most elevated of sciences—notice facts. There are fixed stars at such an immense distance, that it is computed hundreds, even thousands, of years would be required for a ray of light from them to reach us. The sun is about ninety-five million miles distant from our planet, and it takes eight minutes for a ray of light to travel that inconceivable distance. There are

stars and worlds innumerable which are hundreds and thousands of times larger than our planet. The sun is an incomprehensible ocean or body of light and heat, a million times larger than our planet, and yet the star *Sirius* is one hundred and forty times larger than the sun. The wonders and marvels of creation are simply beyond all human conception. Jesus—our Lord and Saviour—made all these vast worlds as also the tiniest insect. O the vastness of creation! He is not only the Creator of all, but “by Him all things consist”—all are sustained in order, in beauty, and unity. One gets staggered at the vastness of these things; such distances and greatness baffle the mind of man to form anything like an adequate conception of. But beyond the almost infinite distances of the fixed, and other stars, we have a sight! The whole of the heavenly bodies—the vast celestial system—are beneath the throne of Jehovah, at whose right hand sits JESUS—the purger of our sins—His descent from God’s right hand to the air (1 Thess. iv. 17) shall occupy not eight minutes, but in the time comprised in “the twinkling of an eye,” including, too, our gathering to Him. O that gathering shout! that flash and we are with Him!

But we ask—What makes our world a subject of such thrilling interest? Why should it in the solar system occupy such a unique and magnificent place, and centre of interest? We are apt to forget this. We forget that God the Creator has singled out this world of ours, has sanctified it, separating it from its millions of sisters—larger and grander far than our earth. Why is this? It is not because of its place in the heavens, not because of its size, not because of its physical configuration, not because of its brilliancy, nor because of its relation to the sun—the centre of the solar system. Let us gather up and group some of the reasons *why* God has so graciously thought of this our planet, and as we do, may we worship and adore.

God is the Architect and Creator of the vast terrestrial and vaster celestial systems. Of the latter no details are given; but this we do know, that Christ the Son created all things—the seen and unseen—thus a brilliant witness to His power and wisdom, and all created as a witness to His glory. But particulars are given of the creation of this planet. God Himself planted a garden in it. Here in the midst of its bloom, and beauty, and fruit, God placed the man, and then in the

cool of the day came down and walked, holding intercourse with His creature, the terrestrial lord of the scene. In this earth, too, the patriarchs walked and meditated. Here stupendous acts of divine power have been wrought. Here God bared His arm of judgment in Egypt and at the Red Sea. Here He prepared a morning meal for His beloved people for nigh forty years. Here the torrent of Jordan was arrested as the Ark went down, and the people passed over. Here the illustrious monarchs of Israel, as David and Solomon, reigned. Here the Hebrew harp was swept to the glories of the coming day. Here the bards of Judah sang their joyous notes, and celebrated in anthem—grand and strong—the grandeurs of Messiah's reign. But beyond all this, *here* the Son of God was born. Bethlehem received Him, Jerusalem crucified Him. Here He lived, walked, talked, loved, wept, and bled. His cross and tomb are with us. The adoring gaze of angels rested upon Him here, and they have occupations and services toward the heirs of salvation, which no other world can claim. This planet has an intensely thrilling story. This glorious orb has a living Saviour, a Cross of glory, and a Bible peerless in perfection, and these no other world has.

But what is the present condition of the world? Has it stood in its pristine beauty? No. It has been dragged down to ruin. It is shorn of its original beauty: its glory is dimmed; its excellency has been cast down. Its ruin—physical and moral—has been brought about, not by its own will, but by the will of its lord and head (Rom. viii. 20). It groans in pain; sob, tear, and sigh tell their own tale. There is agony everywhere; in the heights and depths there is one universal groan. O what a sight for heaven! Here is heard the wail of the wounded and dying on the battlefield. The muffled cry of the tortured victim in the underground dungeons of the cursed Inquisition entered the ears of the Lord of Hosts! He, too, heard and took note of the hellish proceedings in the gardens of Nero, as on either side of the beautiful walks and chariot drives, the Christians, smeared over with oil, were set up as burning torches, and thus served as objects of brutal delight to the Emperor and his nobles. What a seething mass of wretchedness! This planet lies bleeding at every pore; its heart is broken. Tears have been shed enough to drown the guiltiest city in existence. The very animals share in the

universal wail, expressing themselves in the minor key. The seas alone are exempted from the curse (Gen. iii). But the story is going to be reversed. Christ is about to hush the wail and groan, and dry up the fountain of sorrow. His voice, more powerful than many waters, shall fall on the mighty roar of human agony, and hush it for ever. Earth shall thrill with a new joy exceeding that on the day of her birth, when she took her place in the sisterhood of worlds. The consecrating footstep of Jesus, and His sceptre laid on the scene of sin and sorrow shall create a great calm for 1000 years. Earth's jubilee is at hand.

Two great associated facts characterise the coming era of blessing: The Lord's personal reign and the confinement of Satan in the abyss for a thousand years (Rev. xx. 1-6). What a day! The throne of the Lord in the heavens over the earth in splendour and greatness surpassing anything ever before seen or heard of. Nations and kings shall bring to it their wealth and glory (Rev. xxi. 24-26). A grand time, surely, when Israel and the earth shall rest at length from their long, long sorrow of many centuries under the heavenly overspreading canopy of light (Isa. iv. 5-6). Around the throne above, the aristocracy of heaven—the redeemed—with cherubim, seraphim, and angel are gathered and "there is no night there," no bursting heart; the street of gold, the jasper wall, the gates of pearl, a high and everlasting noon, no artificial light as the candle, no borrowed light as the moon, no supreme light as the sun, for God and the Lamb are the light thereof. We shall take our part in that unsullied scene. The throne on earth shall be established in righteousness, and characterised by grace and power, for the reign on earth shall be priestly and royal in happy combination (Zech. vi. 13). The throne and temple set up in connection with a beautified and restored Jerusalem (Isa. lx.) will attract the nations (Jer. iii. 17). The vice-gerent of the King of kings a lineal descendant of the royal David, will sit on the actual throne and enter the actual temple then firmly set up on earth (Ezek. xliv.; xlvi.). The nations shall yearly gather to Jerusalem (Zech. xiv.) Wonderful times these, when the Lord Himself attended with *all* His heavenly saints—an innumerable host—and with *all* His angels—countless as the sand—shall tread once more the Mount of Olives, the last spot of earth touched by His blessed feet. Then war shall cease, for the Prince of Peace has come,

and the weapons of war are broken (Hosea ii. 18) or burned (Ezek. xxxix. 9), or adapted for agricultural purposes (Micah iv. 3). Happy times, when the long-continued feuds of the east shall be buried, and the kingdoms of Egypt, Assyria, and Israel shall take rank and precedence in the millennial earth (Isa. xix. 24-25). An enlarged Palestine of 300,000 square miles, stretching from the Nile on the west to the Euphrates on the east, and up towards Damascus (Gen. xv. 18), with the tribes of Israel arranged in straight parallel bands across the face of the country (Ezek. xlviii.), and all the people righteous and their children's children as well (Isa. lix. 20-21), and the land held in perpetuity (Ezek. xxxvii. 24-27)—intimate a grand and certain prospect for saved and happy Israel. Then the earth at large shall yield its increase (Ps. lxxvii. 6). "All the earth shall worship Thee and shall sing unto Thee; they shall sing unto Thy name; *selah*" (Ps. lxvi. 4). The bare and rugged mountains shall be crowned with rich and luxuriant vegetation (Ps. lxxii. 16). So abundant the fruit and harvests of millennial days that the ploughman shall tread close on the heels of the reaper (Amos ix. 13).

The expulsion of Satan from the heavens (Rev. xii.), is followed three years and a half after, by his deportation to the bottomless pit, or abyss (xx. 1-3); a thousand years afterwards he is finally consigned to his eternal abode—the lake of fire (verse 10). A millennium with no Satan to tempt, and the Man of Calvary, publicly and personally reigning, with the heavens and the earth in closest fellowship and touch (Hosea ii. 21-22; Rev. xxi.), is a magnificent prospect, and one as sure as it is grand. But the story of the earth is not yet told. "And I," said the seer of Patmos, "saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea" (Rev. xxi. 1). The present earth, the scene and theatre of divine and human display, has served its purpose. It has witnessed the Cross and the Glory of Christ. Now for eternity it is re-made suitable for everlasting conditions of bliss. There is then no withered leaf, no hurricane to sweep across its beautiful surface, no restless sea to dash upon its cliffs and shores. Its inhabitants shall weep no more, shall die no more, cry and sorrow no more; pain, too, shall be for ever banished from the beauteous earth. God shall come down and dwell amongst men. The new heaven, the abode of the heavenly

saints, and the new earth, the dwelling of the earthly people, shall both respond to the character of God as light and love. Worlds of perfection! Worlds of everlasting joy! O, the grandeur of these eternal scenes! No pen can trace, no mind conceive, no tongue tell what the new earth shall be. O, to be there! O, to walk the streets of the eternal earth, with an eternal noon-day sun overhead, and to go out no more. But heaven shall claim us, for the everlasting distinction shall then be as now carried out, for I saw a *new heaven* and a *new earth*. Earth's coming Jubilee is nearing. Come, Lord, come quickly!

Revolutionary Principles And Socialism.

Revolutionary principles are being actively spread all over Europe, most certainly to be followed by horrors which history has yet to record. The forces of evil are gathering volume and strength. Socialism is gaining ground amongst the working classes. It is leavening the social life and municipal government of England. "No Bible; No God; no Hell; no Heaven" is the devil's creed, and millions in Europe are receiving it. It will be hell upon earth when, and where socialism gets the upper hand (see Rev. vi.-xix.) Then thousands of young men are being ruined by an intellectual Christianity, which either explains away or boldly denies the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ, and laughs at the childish notion of the necessity of the Cross for the guilt and sin of a poor sinner. Ah! it will yet be seen that the old paths are paths of blessing; the old doctrines of the Cross, the new birth, and the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures are indeed imperishable truths of God. "The old, old story of Jesus and His love," is God's resource for ruined men, and the joy of the saved in time and eternity. Satan is behind the scene, and leading on to victory! Nay, but to utter, final, and ignominious defeat (Rev. xix., xx.) We have stepped into the dark days sketched by Jude, by Peter, by Paul, by John, but judgment will burst forth, and the coming Christ shall crush the movement in the height of its impiety and rebellion (Jude 15). The checks and curbs imposed by duly constituted authority, are in themselves ineffectual to arrest the devastating flood, besides they are being brushed aside by the rising power of a lawless democracy determined to

trample upon all individual liberty and impose its own wild absolutism upon kings and governments alike. The crash is at hand! Out of the civil and political chaos, Satan's man shall emerge who will establish a despotism so awful in character and dire in its results, that death will be gladly welcomed as a relief from the grinding tyranny of these coming days. Socialism is a curse to any country. As a rule Socialism and atheism go hand in hand.

The democratic ball was set rolling over England, by the hero of Waterloo, in 1829—a great soldier but a poor statesman—in passing that ill-starred measure, the Catholic Emancipation Act; three years afterwards, 1832, the first great Reform Bill was passed. From the former date till the present, the masses have not ceased to knock loudly and persistently at the doors of the Legislature for further liberty and increased power; nor will they be denied. Democratic principles and practices we abhor; all our sympathies and leanings run counter thereto. The way our rulers, both Conservative and Liberal, alternately pet and fear, cringe to and oppress the working classes, is an ominous sign. The people are not slow to perceive the weakness of those in power, who ought to govern solely in the fear of God—Whose magistrates they are, and from Whom their authority is derived. The masses are conscious of their rising power and increasing importance in State affairs. Insignificant men, whose talents and personal influence should consign them to obscurity, suddenly find themselves through pandering to the popular will and taste, in positions of authority and influence in the State. Raised into the position on the shoulders of the working class, it can only be maintained by the same means, hence, the revolutionary-rush and wave in this country. The lower classes are not slow to express their mind in word and *act* as occasion presents itself. There is much more intellectual activity and force of character with the people, than amongst the rich and aristocratic; but, we are compelled to add, more pride, independence of God, and practical infidelity. Ritualism demands money and the rich can pay for that. There are, of course, in every class many noble exceptions. We refer to what is characteristic.

Then the rage and passion for amusement, and a light and sensational literature are leavening the mass, and producing a generation utterly unfitted for serious thought and action. The

general result will be disastrous to this country ; it is bound to be so in the nature of things.

The growing contempt for law and order is sure—unless sharply checked—to undermine the whole fabric of society. As you sow you reap, so a bitter harvest of trouble awaits this and every other country where the tide of a lawless democracy is not rolled back and sternly repressed. The first and elementary principle of all government is the maintenance of order and the protection of life and property. Some of those short-sighted politicians (for statesmen they are not), who are leading in the van of this revolutionary movement (who, instead of altering or abrogating bad laws by constitutional means, deliberately break them—glory in their shame and poise as martyrs—doings which threaten the extinction of all lawfully constituted authority) may yet suffer severely in the recoil certain to follow the short-lived triumph of principles which the Word of God reprobates. Honest labour commands our respect and has its claims and rights equal to capital. Labour and capital are indispensable to each other. There are some born to command, but by far the greater number are constitutionally fitted to obey. “The Gospel of Equality” is an absurdity, and were all men equal to-day—all reduced to one common level—in a day’s time distinctions and differences would assert themselves. The wild efforts to revolutionise society on the basis of socialism will have its day, but its triumph is short-lived. It is a remarkable fact that in the first series of Apocalyptic Judgments, the masses of the people are chastised before the rich and governing classes. There seems to us righteous retribution that the people are first made to suffer in the very circumstances in which they seem to triumph. They are visited by a famine, during which a day’s wage scarcely provides food for one : what of the family ? (Rev. vi. 5). The prohibition, “Hurt not the oil and the wine” seems to intimate that for a time at least the luxuries of the rich are to be spared. The wealthy come in for judgment at a later period : see verses 12-17. Other nations besides England are suffering from this malignant distemper. The aim, and in many instances the openly avowed object, being to break every sceptre and shiver every royal crown into fragments. No wonder that the governments are justly and seriously alarmed. “Honour the king” is a bounden duty on all. The principle of obedience and honour

to the head of the government under which we live, is always and ever true. It may be to the Emperor of Russia, the Sultan of Turkey, the Shah of Persia, the King of Great Britain, or the President of the United States. The first of the four universal monarchies (Dan. ii. 38), was set up directly by God—"Thou art this head of gold"—the other empires succeeded providentially in occupying the seat of Nebuchadnezzar. The further we are removed from God's idea of power in the world—an *absolute and universal* monarchy as was the Babylonian—we are, of course, a witness to our own departure and failure from the original grant of government conferred upon the Gentiles. All, however will be made good in perfection in a coming day, when the crown shall flourish on the brow of the Lord Jesus—King of kings and Lord of lords—Undisputed supremacy is His by right and divine counsel.

On the other hand, the wealthy and aristocratic are tending to Popery—a system rapidly gaining ground in England, and again putting forward her arrogant claims to supremacy over the nations. The great aim of the Papacy at present is to hold once again Great Britain in her grasp. That accomplished means the political and commercial ruin of the country and its degradation. The priests of Rome are utterly unfitted for political government. Their training and principles are inimical to true liberty. In our judgment, there will not be large accessions to Popery from the masses, but it need not surprise us, if we soon witness an exodus of the rich into the pale of the Church of Rome. It almost looks as if the National Church—the eldest daughter of the Church of Rome—is about to jump into the arms of its mother. Popery on the Continent, and even in Ireland is losing ground, but then Infidelity is gaining where the Papacy is declining—Ireland, perhaps, excepted. There is a double religious movement abroad which is being actively prosecuted. Satan, no doubt, is at the bottom of it, and will grant success to it, while God will guard His own. The fusion of the British Churches into one great National Church, under the specious plea that it will thereby be great for God, and become, too, the expression of a Scriptural unity so greatly desired, is the *first* step; the *second* is to unite Christendom, and so heal the breach between the Anglican, Western, and Eastern Churches. What a project! What a sight! The Primate of England, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the Pope of Rome

sitting in holy conclave over their differences—the Pope, of course, being in the chair! Truly this will be the devil's counterfeit of God's unity—the one body of Christ! We firmly believe that the 1,300 sects of Christendom will yet coalesce with Popery, and form the great whore of Rev. xvii. These events and days are not so far distant as many suppose, nor are they wild dreams; ponder carefully Rev. xvii.; xviii.

“Into the Kingdom.”

“The kingdom of heaven”—alone employed in the first Gospel—and “The kingdom of God”—the distinguishing phrase in Luke's Gospel—refer to the same kingdom. In some respects they are interchangeable terms, but with few exceptions, as in Rom. xiv. 17, &c. Persons enter *into* it by the new birth, and not by baptism, nor by any external ordinance. On this, Scripture speaks with no uncertain sound. Entering *into* the kingdom is nowhere a matter of mere profession. It is a divine reality, as the following proof-texts show :

- “Into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. v. 20).
- “Into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. vii. 21).
- “Into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. xviii. 3).
- “Into the kingdom of God” (Matt. xix. 24).
- “Into the kingdom of God” (Matt. xxi. 31).
- “Into the kingdom of God” (Mark ix. 47).
- “Into the kingdom of God” (Mark x. 23).
- “Into the kingdom of God” (Luke xviii. 24).
- “Into the kingdom of God” (Luke xviii. 25).
- “Into the kingdom of God” (John iii. 5).
- “Into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Col. i. 13).

Profession brings one within the sphere of the kingdom, within its range of influence, but not *into* it, unless the profession is genuine. Only true believers enter “into” the kingdom. “In the end of this world (*age*), the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity” (Matt. xiii. 40, 41). That scandals and wicked persons *are* in the kingdom is, alas! too true. That a clearing time, a clearing process, is to be carried out by angelic instrumentality when the Son of Man arrives on the scene, is undoubtedly taught in the passage before us. But INTO THE KINGDOM is only predicated

of saved people. 'The moral elements of the kingdom, as "righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17), can only be expressed by those who are born of God. "Into the kingdom," some 13 times repeated, signifies that persons have been made divinely competent to express the true character of the kingdom in its living power—a true subjection of heart and conscience to God, and to the just requirements of the kingdom.

In Matt. xiii. the first four parables present the *outward* aspects of the kingdom: the fifth and sixth refer to its *vital* character; while the seventh states the *general* results. The first of the parables is not spoken of as a similitude of the kingdom of heaven, as it is intended to set forth the personal ministry of the Lord on earth, but the seed sown is the *word* of the kingdom (verse 19), not the kingdom itself. This is easily understood, when it is borne in mind that the kingdom of heaven in *mystery* (the subject of that interesting series of parables: Matt. xiii.) could not take effect or come into view till the King was in heaven. The kingdom of *God* signifies that the kingdom is His, that He is supreme and exercises all authority, whether administratively by Christ and the heavenly saints, or by Israel on earth. The kingdom of heaven (rather the "heavens") refers to the rule of heaven on earth (Dan. iv. 26)—the sphere of rule.

It could be said when Christ was on earth, "The kingdom of God is among you," for the King was actually present in their midst (Matt. xii. 28; Luke x. 9-11; xi. 20; xvii. 21). But whilst it could be said that the kingdom of *God* was in existence when Christ was on earth, and displaying by miracles its power, yet it would neither accord with fact nor with the accuracy of Scripture to predicate the same of the kingdom of *heaven*; for this latter the King must be above. Earth is governed from the heavens. The mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens, as presented in chapter xiii. of the first Gospel, cover the history of Christendom from the ascension of Christ till the end of the age.

The *Gospel* of the kingdom was preached by the Baptist, and by the Lord (Matt. iii. 2; iv. 23; ix. 35; Luke viii. 1), but that Gospel was suspended by His rejection. It will be taken up again, however, on the near return of the Messiah to reign (Matt. xxiv. 14; Rev. xiv. 6). But although the Gospel of the

glad tidings of the kingdom is not *now* preached, yet the kingdom itself is preached and taught (Acts xx. 25 ; xxviii. 31). What is preached now is the Gospel of God's grace ; by it the heirs of the kingdom are being gathered in. When all is complete, then the kingdom is set up in power by Christ Himself, who receives it from God (Luke xix.). That kingdom will stand for aye (Dan. ii. 44). Its heavenly or upper department is termed the kingdom of the *Father* ; its earthly or lower department is spoken of as the kingdom of the *Son* (Matt. xiii. 41-43). In the former, Christ and His heavenly people are located ; in the latter, Israel and subordinately the nations are regarded.

We may here remark, in closing, that the parables of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew, are termed parables of the kingdom of *God* by Mark and Luke, which it would be well and profitable for the reader to compare (Matt. xiii. ; Mark iv. ; Luke viii.).

The Four Great Gentile Empires : Especially the Fourth.

Because of the unfaithfulness of Judah the throne of Jehovah in Jerusalem occupied by Solomon (1 Chron. xxix. 23) was cast down. The people were sent into captivity, and the government of the earth transferred from the Jew to the Gentile, and from Jerusalem to Babylon. From that point of time commenced "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi. 24) ; that is in government the Gentile is supreme on the earth. The degradation of the Jew and the supremacy of the Gentile covers the whole period from Nebuchadnezzar till the return of the Lord in power.

The four great Gentile empires are the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. They are represented as metals (Dan. ii.) and as beasts (Dan. vii.). The respective symbols correspond : the gold to the lion, the silver to the bear, the brass to the leopard, and the iron to the dreadful and terrible unnamed beast. The great image was beheld by Nebuchadnezzar in vision. The wild beasts were seen also in vision but by Daniel. He interpreted the dreams of the heathen monarch, while an angel interpreted for him.

The image represents Gentile power as a whole. As one complete system of Government it was established, and as a

whole it is destroyed at the coming of the Lord. The first and fourth empires are the most interesting. The Babylonian was the only one of the four *directly* set up by God (ii. 37, 38). The other empires came successively into prominence and power providentially, as we may say. The four metals were not of the same value. The decreasing value of the metals would teach the deterioration of the power and the inferior character of the successive empires. The complete destruction of Gentile power originally granted to Nebuchadnezzar, is *necessary* in order that the vast kingdom of our Lord may be established. This is accomplished by the stone cut out without hands (verse 34) descending with crushing force upon the extremities of the image—the toes and feet. The stone is not the Gospel, but Christ personally (Gen. xlix. 24). Before the stone filled the whole earth it completely destroyed the image. The millennial kingdom of our Lord is founded on the ruin of all great and exalted amongst men. The solemn lesson graven on the chapter is that the Gentile can no more be entrusted with the reins of government than the Jew. The ruin of both stands out in marked contrast to ONE who will reign in life and righteousness, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end (Ps. lxxii.).

In Chapter vii. of our prophet we have the same empires and in the same order as in chapter ii. Here however we have (vii.) the historical rise of the empires out of the unformed, struggling masses of humanity, symbolised by the ever restless sea (verse 2). In chapter ii. the divine establishment of Gentile power is the prominent subject. But why are the empires here spoken of as beasts? The Judean monarchy was never so spoken of. What has characterised Gentile power as a whole is just the main features of the wild beast—no conscience, no sense of responsibility to God, but self-will and brute force. We are wont to extol the virtues and excellencies of the ancient monarchies, and hold up their rulers to the admiration and example of the moderns, but the thoughts of God are not the thoughts of man. He terms the empires beasts—bestly in character.

But this seventh chapter calls for more detailed examination. The visions in this important portion of the word have an intimate bearing upon those Apocalyptic chapters xiii. and xvii. We refer especially to the second and third visions commencing respectively with verses seven and thirteen. The first vision is of a general character relating to the historical rise of the

empires, and in a few touches of the divine pen giving the main characteristics of the first three. The fourth is the subject of the second vision, the interpretation of which is given under the third vision. It will be observed that but one verse each is devoted to the first three empires or beasts. The lion or Babylonian (verse 4). The bear or Persian (verse 5). The leopard or Grecian (verse 6). This first vision is comprised within verses one to six.

The second vision occupies the next six verses. Here the fourth beast is the subject of the vision and indeed it is the prominent one in the chapter, especially in its re-appearance in the closing crisis of the age. The leading characteristics of the empire as presented in verse seven are just what history records of it. A mighty, cruel power, insensible to pity, grasping, crushing, and bearing down ruthlessly all opposition—a terror to the nations, and what it failed to incorporate within itself, trampling down with its iron feet; all national liberty, and as far as possible, individual liberty as well, disappeared under the power of the wearer of the purple. "It was diverse from all the beasts that were before it." It combined the main features of the preceding empires in addition to those peculiar to itself. The Apocalyptic seer writes, "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard (the Grecian), and his feet were as the feet of a bear (the Persian), and his mouth as the mouth of a lion (the Babylonian); and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rev. xiii. 2). The first empire was established of God. The fourth empire after its disappearance from the arena of history for fourteen hundred years, is to be revived and re-established on the earth by Satan. What a picture of the apostasy of human government. The satanic character of the empire covers the most solemn and interesting crisis in the world's history—one of three years and a half preceding the Lord's advent in glory.

But the prophet adds yet one other feature of the beast, which can only be described, not named, "it had ten horns." These horns represent kings or kingdoms. In the past the empire never was composed of ten kingdoms. At no period of its history would Rome have allowed such a distribution of its power or territory. The absolute unity of the empire is a fact graven on its history. The empire of the Cæsars ceased to exist A.D. 476. Then on its ruin numerous petty states and kingdoms

were formed—Europe as it presently exists. But the empire is to be revived. This is a main factor in the prophetic programme. The future will witness a resurrection of the empire in a ten-kingdom form. These ten kingdoms define the territorial extent of the revived empire. We cannot enumerate them, nor locate them; all such attempts are but speculation and the merest guess-work. Their identification will be simple enough when God in His providence brings them into the prophetic arena. Our prophet, in verse seven, does not give us history, but simply the characteristics of the empire. It is in the Apocalypse we learn that the empire re-appears in this form.

Having had a complete picture of the empire as a whole (verse 7), the prophet seems surprised at the territorial arrangement into ten kingdoms. Then the prophetic scroll unfolds itself, and at once we are transported into the scenes and events of the last days. A royal personage rises from the kingdoms already formed, but before the unity of the empire is an accomplished fact. This king is the only one of the chapter termed a "little horn," referring to the mean and insignificant beginning of this one who is prophetically destined to play an important part—second to none—in the coming day. He destroys three of the kingdoms, and by his intelligence, boldness of speech, and capacity to govern and impress his own character upon others, he assumes the government of the empire. The separate kingdoms into which the empire is distributed cannot exist as distinct nationalities. Mutual fears and jealousies hinder, but one arises whom they willingly own as master (Rev. xvii. 13), hence the beast of the Apocalypse, and the little horn of Daniel can really be spoken of and regarded as *one*—as identical. The head of the empire stamps his own character upon it.

"I beheld till the thrones were set," or established, not "cast down" (verse 9). The earthly people do not sit on thrones, these are occupied by the heavenly saints; Rev. xx. 4 shows who they are. Then we get the throne of judgment set up and the greatness of the Judge. The characteristics of the Ancient of Days are those of the Son of Man, hence, if Dan. vii. 9 is compared with Rev. i. 14-15, it will be seen that the *same* Person is meant. All future judgment is committed to the Son of Man (John v. 22). It is the open and public blasphemy of the little horn that brings utter, full, and final judgment

upon the empire. The "little horn" perishes miserably. The empire and its personal ruler are destroyed. We have simply the fact stated here, but in Rev. xix. some interesting and solemn particulars are furnished. The beast, *i.e.*, its personal ruler, the "little horn" of our chapter, is consigned *alive* to the lake of fire—the eternal place of punishment. Such is the end of the vaunted civilization of the west. Its religion in the person of the Jewish false prophet, and its civil authority embodied in the great Gentile chief are closed up in eternal judgment. The prolongation of life granted to the three preceding empires (verse 12), simply implies that they exist but weak and powerless, and that is exactly their present condition. Those once great and ancient empires are but shadows of what they once were.

The third vision commences at verse thirteen. Here we get the establishment of the universal, glorious, and enduring kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, instead of successive earthly monarchies marked by failure, and at their close of apostacy. Verses 13 and 14 introduce the millennium. The prophecies in this book never go beyond this. Ezekiel goes forward, and relates events and state of things subsequent to Daniel. This latter prophet gives the history of the times of the Gentiles from Nebuchadnezzar to Christ's assumption of power. The character of the millennial reign, and enumeration of its blessings must be sought for in the prophets generally, not in this book. In verse thirteen the Son of Man came to the Ancient of Days, but in verse twenty-two the Ancient of Days Himself came. There the prophecy closes. It does not go beyond Christ's assumption of the kingdom.

In the interpretation of the visions which commence with verse sixteen and occupies the rest of the chapter, additional points of interest are furnished, not disclosed in the vision itself. It is a principle in the Scriptures that in the explanation of parable, or dream, or vision, further information is given—added light. Here, too, it is to be noted that the interpreter of the dreams of the heathen monarchs (ii. ; v.) had himself to have his visions interpreted. How dependent one is upon the Spirit of God! In this supplementary portion we learn four things about the "little horn" or head of the fourth empire: (1) he blasphemes against the Most High God—he impiously defies the God of heaven (verse 25); (2) he persecutes the saints,

and murders at his will in Jerusalem (Rev. xi.), and throughout the empire (Rev. xiii.). It will be a time of affliction hitherto unknown for sorrow in the past history of the world (verses 21, 25; Mark xiii. 19); (3) he shall abolish Jewish sacrifice, and abrogate their laws and customs, and generally destroy the ecclesiastical polity of the restored nation. These "times and laws" shall be given into his hands for the latter half of the closing prophetic week—three years and a half (verse 25); (4) he triumphs politically in Western Europe (verse 24).

The distinction between the heavenly and earthly saints, and the connection of both to the millennial kingdom, forms part of the interpretation given to the prophet. The expression, "Most High," occurs five times; only once, however, does it refer to *God*. "He (the little horn) shall speak great words against the Most High" (verse 25). In the other instances it is in the plural, and should read "high places." We meet with substantially the same phrase five times in the epistle to the Ephesians—"heavenly places." While the heavenly and earthly saints have their respective portions in the kingdom, elsewhere spoken of as the kingdom of the *Son* and the kingdom of the *Father* (Matt. xiii. 41-43), yet the kingdom in all its extent and glory belongs to Him—the Son of Man. "There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (verse 14). Again, "whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (verse 27). The saints of the "high places" referred to in our chapter are killed under the beast, and go to swell the number and enrich the noble army of martyrs, which are specifically pointed out in Rev. xx. 4 as part of the company who reign with Christ a thousand years. It is the saints of the high or heavenly places to whom judgment is given (verse 22 with 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3), as a company distinct from the saints who "possessed the kingdom" mentioned in the same verse. "The *people* of the saints of the high places," to whom the kingdom is given (verse 27), is evidently the Jewish people as a whole, then saved from their enemies, and from their sins. This singular statement, which is a puzzle to many, denotes that those on earth are in closest connection with those in the heavens, and that the earthly blessing is dependent upon the heavenly saints.

Chapters ii. and vii. of our prophet should be read and studied with Rev. xiii., xvii., xix., and the first few verses of xx. In fact, the two books as a whole should be examined and compared together.

An Outline of the Prophetic Future.

To us "upon whom the ends of the ages are come" the future prophetic situation is presented in a series of moving panoramic pictures, as also in statements, numerous and diversified in style and character. The seer in vision, and the prophet in word and symbol, have made us fully acquainted with the future. If, as we firmly believe, the days of the Church on earth are numbered, the moment of her triumph at hand, the greater shame to us that the scrolls of the prophet are as yet unread, and the visions of the seer of Patmos regarded as a mysterious riddle.

Here are a few of the leading prophetic portions, which we commend to the reading and study of friends of the Bible. Do not shrink from the delightful and easy task of having read to you, or reading yourself, those precious parts of the inspired Word, on the ground that you are illiterate or have not the mind to understand. There is no real difficulty whatever. Are you willing to learn? "We have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. ii-16); that is the reasoning faculty divinely given to *all* believers. Do not set yourself up as a prophet and dabble about "times and seasons." Be more willing to *be* taught than to teach. Be patient, wait, and do not jump at hasty conclusions. "Be not many *teachers*" (James iii. 1) is ever a needed word, but especially so in prophetic studies. The *role* of the learner suits us all best.

THE LORD'S GREAT PROPHETIC DISCOURSE.

Suppose we first listen to the Lord's great prophetic sermon, fully recorded in chapters xxiv. and xxv. of St. Matthew's Gospel. This discourse—delivered on the mount to which the Lord will return in delivering power on behalf of Israel (Zech. xiv.)—is divided into three separate sections. Olivet was the *last* spot on earth trod by the blessed Lord, and is the first on which He stands at His return. The first section is wholly occupied with

Jewish scenes and circumstances, and shews the Lord's coming to Palestine: verses 1-44, chap. xxiv. The second discloses the general state of things in Christendom, or the professing Church, and the second advent in connection therewith: verses 45-30 of chap. xxv. The third section reveals the millennial and eternal results to the nations, consequent on the return of the Son of Man in power and glory. The nations dealt with in blessing or judgment are those to whom the (future) gospel of the kingdom is preached: verses 31-46, chap. xxv. First, then, we have the Lord's coming in reference to the Jews; second, His coming to deal with christian profession; third His return to the nations. *One* Coming in its bearing on three distinct parties, viz. the Jews, the professing Church, and the nations.

In the *first* or Jewish aspect of the Coming, verse 15 demands special attention! In that verse the Lord refers to Daniel ix. 27 and xii. 11. In the middle of Daniel's prophetic week of seven years yet future, the head of the revived Roman power aided by the Antichrist, seeks to force idolatry upon the Jewish people then returned to the land. The godly part of the nation will resist. In consequence, a fierce outburst of unequalled persecution will overtake those Jewish witnesses and continue for 42 months or 1260 days. The character of that period is graphically described in verses 16-28. In verse 28, the mass of Judah then apostate is likened to a "carcase"—dead and loathsome, and only fit for judgment.

In the *second*, or Church aspect of the Coming three parables describe the general position in these lands of light and privilege: Service in the Church, true and false (chap. xxiv. 45-51); the christian profession true and false (chap. xxv. 1-13); and Service in the world faithfully or unfaithfully rendered (chap. xxv. 14-30).

In the *third*, or Gentile aspect of the Coming the assembled nations are arraigned before the throne of the Son of Man, and are separated and divided according to their treatment of the King's messengers, viz., Jewish preachers or heralds of the kingdom sent out in the interval between the Rapture and the Appearing—Daniel's 70th week of seven years, and a period added besides. As the King's messengers were received or rejected, so judgment is meted out accordingly. The judgment of the *dead* is recorded in Rev. xx. 11-15; that of the *living* in Matt. xxv. 31-46.

A careful study of these chapters will throw a flood of light on the prophetic scene. The coming of the Lord is *nigh*. He may be momentarily expected. One moral effect of His coming should be to rouse up His slumbering people to *reality*. Earth's shadows are across our path. The gleams and glints of our long promised glory are breaking here and there, and soon, O how soon, the full undimmed glory will burst upon us: Jesus our hope, our Saviour waits too for the long delayed meeting in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17). May we diligently serve, and love, and witness till He come!

THE REVELATION.

The "Revelation"—the only prophetic book of the New Testament—next claims attention. Here the veil is rolled aside (such is the meaning of the word "Apocalypse" or "Revelation") and the future in judgment and glory; of heaven, earth, and the lake of fire, laid open to view. The reader will find the key to the study of the book hanging up in verse 19 of chapter one. The Old and New Testament saints are witnessed in heaven in chapters iv. and v. Then follows the course of prophetic events which relate to earth, to Israel chiefly, and to the Gentiles at large, *not* to heaven or the dwellers there. From chapter vi. to xix. 11, the events described by the prophet and seer of the west in the lonely Isle of Patmos, have their place and fulfilment (with one or two exceptions) between the translation of the saints to heaven—the subject of revelation, *not* of prophecy (1 Thess. iv. 15-17)—and their subsequent return in glory with the Lord, to set up the kingdom in power on the earth (Rev. xix. 14). Now this consideration greatly simplifies the study of these prophecies! Then the millennial reign of a thousand years, and the general features of the eternal state occupy chapters xx.-xxii. 5.

THE LAST TWELVE CHAPTERS OF EZEKIEL.

Now turn to the prophet of the east, Ezekiel, the last twelve chapters of whose book positively team with prophetic details of exceeding interest. These millennial scenes and circumstances, which circle round Israel and enlarged Palestine, are not described in the lofty style of Isaiah, nor in the weeping strains of Jeremiah, nor in the homely language and symbols of Amos, nevertheless the future is unfolded with such precision

and fulness of detail, that the attempt to divert the obvious application from Israel's future—her temple, modified Mosaic ritual, the greatly-increased size of the country about an area of 300,000 square miles, the orderly location of the tribes from east to west, and other geographical and moral features—is to do violence to human language. The reader may be helped by a brief table of contents. In chapter xxxvii., the national restoration of Israel is announced; the union of the two long-separated houses of Ephraim (the ten tribes) and Judah (the two tribes); the one undivided nation of Israel securely settled in her land under the reign of a lineal descendant of David; the people saved and sanctified, and God's tabernacle in the midst—their glory and centre of gathering. In chapters xxxviii. and xxxix. we have fully described, the last attack of Gog (Russia, leader of the confederated powers hostile to Jewish independence) upon restored Israel, then dwelling in unwalled towns and villages, Jehovah being her glory and defence. Plunder is the bait which lures on the allied forces of the north-east to their utter destruction (verses 11, 12, chap. xxxviii.). Ah! little do they dream that Jehovah is a wall of fire round about His people. The mountains of Israel become the scene of judgment to the countless hosts; their fury is checked, and but a sixth is spared (verses 2-5, chap. xxxix). to carry home to their respective lands the tidings that Jehovah, God of Israel, had miraculously bared His arm in judgment, and gained Him a victory unparalleled in history. Russia, too, and the lands of Jewish hatred and persecution, will be visited in direct divine judgment (verse 6). The implements of war supply firewood for seven years (verse 9), the spoil of the heathen swell the accumulated treasures gathered in the land of Emmanuel (verse 10), for "the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold and silver, and apparel in great abundance" (Zech. xiv. 14). An extensive valley, east of the Dead Sea, is devoted as a huge grave for Gog and his mighty host (verse 11), giving employment to the people of Israel for seven months (verse 12). This city of the dead is named Hamonah, *i.e.*, *the multitude* (verse 16)—a perpetual reminder of divine judgment: see also Isa. lxvi. 24. In chapters xl.-xlii. the construction and measurements of the fifth or millennial temple are accurately given. This vast structure—probably a mile in extent—forms a centre of gathering for instruction and prayer for all peoples

(Isa. lvi. 6, 7; Micah iv. 1, 2). The Lord Himself builds it (Zech. vi. 12, 13), others being privileged to assist in the holy work (verse 15). In chapter xliii. the glory of the God of Israel, which many centuries before had disowned the house because of Israel's idolatry, and left it a prey to the Chaldeans (chaps. x. xi), returns, and enters the temple; the glory radiates the earth, but its home and centre is the holy house. The altar of acceptance is carefully measured, for the sacrifices of Israel, also those of saved Gentiles, are to be offered thereon (Isa. lx. 7; lvi. 6, 7). The ordinances of the altar are appointed, consisting of burnt offerings and sin offerings, offered daily for seven days; on the eighth day and afterwards, burnt offerings and peace offerings are offered by priests of the seed of Zadok. There is a perpetual *morning* sacrifice, but no *evening* offering as of old. These sacrifices are *commemorative*, as those under Moses were *anticipative*. In chapters xliv.-xlvi. we have the duties and place of both priests and prince assigned them. The prince will be Christ's vicegerent on the throne of Israel—a lineal descendant of the royal house of David. Verse 22, chapter xlv., besides other considerations, would negative the thought of the prince being Christ personally. In chapters xlvii. and xlviii. the land then immensely enlarged—from the Nile to the Euphrates—is portioned out amongst the tribes, not in irregular portions, as under Joshua, but in regular, carefully measured parts across the face of the country, from east to west. Jerusalem with its gardens, and magnificent temple—beautified and costly beyond all telling—will occupy the space measured for the purpose—of about 50 miles—between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. What a mass of interesting details are furnished in those dozen chapters! What a delightful and fruitful field of study!

THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL AND ZECHARIAH.

The former prophet in Babylon, directs the rays of his prophetic lamp upon the course of the Gentile monarchies for about 2,000 years, then shows the latter-day relation of the fourth or revived Roman power, *once* Christianized, *then* apostatè, in friendly alliance with unsaved Judah returned to her land, closing with the re-transference of power and dominion from the Gentile to the Jew, and from Rome to Jerusalem. The four universal empires are the subjects of chap. ii and vii—the fourth especially. A comprehensive sketch of Gentile

power (ii) and the successive history of these empires and their character—*beastly* (vii.) form a subject of interesting study to all. But the historical, or rather the prophetic unfolding of these visions culminate in the end of the age. Zechariah looks on to Jerusalem and its vicinity—where every governmental question must be solved, and the millennial-political situation be arranged by the Lord in Person. The gathering of the nations situated on the other side of the Lebanon mountains to the north, and of those across the Euphrates to the east, are witnessed in hostile battle array against Jerusalem. The miraculous changes on the surface of the country and in the heavens are of a most striking character (xiv).

THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH.

This book is the most complete and orderly of any of the prophetic books, and unfolds in language unequalled for grandeur and sublimity, the whole circle of God's thoughts respecting Israel. We simply call attention to the interesting fact, that six of the divisions of this book end with a millennial scene, for it is *that* to which the ways of God tend. The *first* three divisions, closing respectively with chaps. xii., xxvii., and xxxv., present the *bright* side of the millennial era. The *second* three sections end respectively with chaps. xlvi., lvii., and lxvi., and disclose the *dark* side of the coming age. We may remark that chaps. xxxvi.-xxxix. are a needful historical episode, which bind up in *one* the two great parts of the book. *Prophecy* (chaps. i.-xxxv.). *Moral Dealing* (xl.,-lxvi.).

MANY PROPHECIES, YET ONE WHOLE.

No one book of Scripture presents the prophetic future as a complete whole. The numerous separate prophecies were penned during the slow progress of many centuries, which in their range and extent cover the whole circle of God's thoughts toward Israel and the earth. Yet it is quite possible to gather up the many detached portions and piece them together, so as to enable one to grasp the general situation intelligently. But in doing so we must steadily keep in view God's great object in prophecy, *the glory of Christ*, the end to which all persons and events contribute, willingly or unwillingly, under the good hand of God. Israel, not the Church, is the great factor in prophecy.

The prophetic plan cannot be understood; in fact all is a muddle, when the Church is substituted for Israel. No prophetic scripture is of private interpretation (2 Peter i 20); that is, no particular or separate event should be considered apart from the general prophetic scheme of which it forms a part, nor severed from its object, which is to display Christ's glory.

A GENERAL OUTLINE.

All true believers who have died in the Lord, and those alive on the earth at the moment of Christ's descent from heaven to the air (1 Thess. iv. 16-17), shall be caught up in the clouds, the aerial clouds, to meet Him. The air is the appointed meeting-place (verse 17); the Father's house the destination (John xiv. 3). Now this blessed Hope is not prophesied of in the Old Testament Scriptures. It is only unfolded by Paul, by none other of the sacred writers (1 Cor. xv. 51; 1 Thess. iv. 15). The first prophetic event, therefore, after the translation of the raised-dead and changed-living believers, is the restoration of the Jews as a nation to Palestine. Jewish emigration from the lands of her exile is steadily on the increase, and the recent cruel persecutions in Russia and elsewhere, are creating earnest home-longings in the heart of the wearied Hebrew. Palestine is being rapidly occupied by Jewish refugees. They are returning as individuals and as families, aided by private liberality. But this does not meet the demands of the prophetic word, which in one short chapter of but seven verses (Isa. xxviii.), predicts a national and public return, effected by the mercantile navy of a great commercial kingdom, and on purely political grounds. It is presented as a matter of universal interest: read "*Ho to the land*" (verse 1). Probably the unnamed nation described as a great colonising power (verse 2), who will restore Judah to Palestine, is Great Britain, but we do not dogmatise. Amongst the first acts of the restored nation is to set up as speedily as possible the Mosaic ritual, modified necessarily by the peculiar circumstances in which they find themselves. (Mal. iv. 4; Dan. ix. 27; with Matt. xxiv. 15-20; Rev. xi. 1, etc.). Then place themselves under the protection of the civil power of the amalgamated kingdoms of Europe, *i.e.*, the beast (Dan. ix. 27; Isa. xxviii. 14, 15; Rev. xii. 16, etc.). Now be it remembered, that the Jew is the kernel of the situation and the pivot round which the political interests of the world revolve

(Amos iii. 2 ; Deut. xxxii. 8 ; Ezek. v. 5), hence it is impossible to effect any permanent settlement of the great political questions of the day apart from the Jew. These are to be settled by the Lord Himself, and in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem (Zech. xiv.). The Jew will then take his place of supremacy amongst the nations.

But we must gather together the main parties in the coming political crisis, and group them in their order.

The great actor on the prophetic platform is "the beast," so frequently referred to in Daniel and in the Revelation. "The beast"—when used without qualification in the prophecies—signifies the revived imperial Latin or fourth empire. The distribution of the empire into ten kingdoms, then the subversion of three, and the subordination of all to the energetic chief who will from Rome sway the destinies of the empire, finally destroying the apostate church system, established by Constantine in the fourth century, are features distinctly peculiar to the future Gentile monarchy. The beast and its personal head are distinguished in Dan. vii. 7-11, but as the empire is morally and politically characterized by the character and doings of its head, "the beast" is a term more than once applied to the distinguished Gentile who commands it (Rev. xix. 20 ; xx. 10). The relation of the beast to Antichrist is unfolded in Rev. xiii. ; to apostate Judah in Dan. ix. 27 ; to apostate Christianity in Rev. xvii. ; and as witnessed in open rebellion and mad opposition to the King of kings and Lord of lords in Rev. xix. 19-21.

The Antichrist (1 John ii. 18), the man of sin (2 Thess. ii. 3), "another beast" (Rev. xiii. 11), the false prophet (Rev. xix. 20), "the king" (Dan. xi. 36), the idol shepherd (Zech. xi. 17), and the bloody and deceitful man (Ps. v. 6), are titles expressing the character and doings of the future anti-christian king, whom the restored unbelieving nation will accept as the promised Messiah (John v. 43). As Saul, the people's choice, reigned in Jerusalem before David Jehovah's anointed king, so the Antichrist exercises royal sovereignty in Judea before Christ assumes the royal diadem. The Antichrist as to his nationality is a *Jew*. The great political chief in the west is a *Gentile*. Those two work together and they miserably perish together.

There are other two powers claiming attention, viz., the kings of the north and the south—geographically situated in relation

to Palestine. The wars, intrigues, policy, and family alliances of the opposed and opposing kingdoms of Syria and Egypt are minutely described in the first 35 verses of Daniel xi. In that portion we are historically brought down to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian king (whose iniquitous doings shall never fade from Jewish memory), and the bold Maccabæan attempt to recover the freedom of the country. Then comes a vast break which has lasted 2,168 years, and we are landed in the crisis yet future. This gap comes in between verses 35 and 36. The northern and southern kings, to reach each other's country, had of course to travel through Palestine, which became the coveted object of ambition by each of the contending powers. The future relation of these kingdoms to each other, to restored Judah, and to "the king," or Antichrist, then established in the land, is the subject of verses 36-45 of that same chapter. The first 35 verses are *historical*; the last 10 verses are *prophetic*. But God will heal the bitter sore, and unite all in one brotherhood of peace and love (Isa. xix. 23-25). The king of the north (Dan. xi.) is identical with the Assyrian (Isa. x.; Micah v.) and little horn of the north (Dan. viii. 9). This latter-day "king of fierce countenance" (Dan. viii. 23) does not reign in his own right, although a mighty and powerful monarch. He is the subordinate of Gog, or Russia, and the determined oppressor and enemy of the restored Hebrew nation. He acts as the subordinate, yet in the power of Gog, or Russia, in southern Asia. The cruelties and ceaseless sorrows he inflicts upon the people as a whole, and to escape which the leaders of Jerusalem vainly make a seven years' league or treaty with the revived Latin power (Dan. ix. 27; Isa. xxviii. 14. 22), are graphically described in the pages of Isaiah and Daniel. The king of the south, or Egypt, will be the ally of the western power. Egypt will be oppressed similarly as she oppressed Israel in the days of Moses, according to that righteous principle, "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt. vii. 2). But God is equally righteous in remembering the least service done to Christ or His people. Egypt sheltered the infant Jesus when rejected by His own (Matt. ii.). Hence the land of Egypt will yet be healed; its people saved; and become one of the third kingdoms in the millennial earth (Isa. xix.).

The following rough plan may enable some to seize the general outline:—

THE NORTH-EASTERN ENEMIES OF ISRAEL.

Gog (Russia), Persia, Ethiopia, and many other allied powers (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix. ; Ps. lxxxiii. ; Zech. xiv. 2, etc.).

THE LEADER IS THE GREAT NORTHERN OPPRESSOR OF ISRAEL.

The king of the North, or the Assyrian, dependent however on the power of Gog (Dan. viii., xi. ; Isa. x., xxviii. ; Joel, etc.).

The Beast, *i.e.*, revived power of Rome, the antagonist of Russia and political ally of restored Judah (Dan. vii., ix. ; Rev. xiii., xvii.).

The Mediterranean, or Western Border of Palestine.

LAND OF
PALESTINE.

ANTICHRIST
reigns as
KING
IN JERUSALEM.

He divides the
land amongst his
followers
(Dan. xi. 39).

The Euphrates—1,500 miles in length—the Eastern Boundary of Palestine (Gen. xv. 18) and limit of the Roman Conquests in the East.

THE SOUTHERN ANTAGONIST OF THE ANTICHRIST

(Dan. xi. 40) is the king of the South, or of Egypt (Isa. xix. ; see especially Dan. xi.).

FILLING IN OF THE DETAILS.

The Jews as a people are restored to their land in unbelief, and for political reasons. They accept the Antichrist as king, and proceed at once to build their temple, establish sacrifice, set up the law anew, etc. The beast, or apostate civil power, enters into an alliance with the nation for seven years. This covenant or agreement is to guarantee protection from the northern oppressor, and also preserve the people in their religious liberties. Neither of these stipulations or treaty engagements are kept, save for a brief season. The land is overrun, Jerusalem

besieged, and horrible cruelties inflicted upon the inhabitants by the northern power—Jehovah's scourge and rod of anger in punishing His guilty people. When half of the time of the league is expired, the beast, energised by Satan (then cast down from heaven, Rev. xii.), suddenly stops Jewish worship, and, aided by Antichrist, forces idolatry upon the Jews and throughout Christendom, setting up the ensigns of idolatry in the temple. All divine restraints gone, the blasphemy of the beast against God and His saints in the heavens, and his rage against the God-fearing in Palestine and other lands knows no bounds. The great tribulation, involving believing Jews and Gentiles, but from which the Church is exempted (Rev. iii. 10), is the result of this satanic outburst. This coming period of tribulation—unequaled since the world began—covers the second half of Daniel's 70th week—three and a-half years, less seventeen days and a-half. The object of the great western power being to establish the Hebrew commonwealth as a buffer to further Russian aggression, necessarily places her in antagonism to the Asian despot, Gog, or Russia, whose aim is to plunder and possess the land.

Jerusalem has been besieged about 34 times ; the last siege will be the most terrible of all. Two attacks upon Jerusalem are yet future (Zech. xii., xiv.). At the critical moment, when the apparently doomed city is about to fall, Christ unexpectedly appears on Mount Olivet in power and glory on behalf of His people (Zech. xiv.). Another and subsequent attack is made by Gog in person, at the head of his almost countless hosts. Not Jerusalem simply, but the land itself is the subject of attack and invasion, but again Jehovah intervenes, and His people's enemies are scattered as chaff before the wind (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.). The western powers—the scene of light and Christian privilege—are even more guilty than those who gather against the people and land of Emmanuel, and are first dealt with in judgment. The former are found gathered in battle array against the *Lamb* (Rev. xix.); the latter against the *Jew* (Zech. xiv.). The beast and the false prophet—the confederated leaders of Christendom's wickedness—are cast *alive* into the lake of fire. What an awful example of the righteous judgment of God to eternal ages! (Rev. xix. 20 ; xx. 10). The king of the north has signal judgment executed upon him also (Isa. xxx. 31-33). The devil, first bound or confined during the course of

the millennial reign of the Lord, is subsequently cast into the lake of fire, *there* the most suffering and tormented creature in God's universe (Rev. xx. 1-3, 10). CHRIST REIGNS FOR EVER AND EVER. Amen, and amen.

The Great Jewish Problem.

The Jews are by far the most interesting people on the face of the earth, Palestine the most memorable of all lands, and Jerusalem the most renowned of all cities. The history of the Jew is the romance of ages. In Palestine the most thrilling events of time have been witnessed. The crucifixion of the Lord outside the city walls of Jerusalem, and the subsequent siege of the city by the Romans, are enough to make Jerusalem immortal in history, and of undying interest to all.

The respective systems of Judaism and Christianity have been each attested and divinely accredited by miracle. But were we asked for external proof of the truthfulness of the Divine Records as a whole, we would point to the Jew to-day. In the history of this wonderful people, we have the most ample fulfilment of Scripture, not in some particulars, but in hundreds, and down even to minutest detail. The Messiah and the Jew are enshrined in the pages of the Old Testament, equally so is Christ and the Church in the New.

The Jews as a people are unique in this respect, that they alone possess a body of laws and ordinances—the wonder of the world—in which is wrapped up an easily read *anticipative* history. *Commemorative* monuments and institutions characterise other nations. The history of Israel is written *in advance*. This is a fact undeniable to even the enemies of Revelation, and is a truly remarkable one. All prophetic Scripture concerns the Jew. "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private (*special*) interpretation" (2 Peter i. 20). Prophecy is one connected whole. Distinct prophecies concerning Russia, Assyria, Rome, etc., must be viewed in their relation to Israel. Israel is the subject of prophecy. In the drama of human history the Hebrew is the chief actor. In the domain of prophecy he is equally prominent. The past and future circle round the Jew. The Jew is the great factor in prophecy, and

yet many regard him as but an insignificant element in the situation. What is said of the Jew in Constantinople may be said of him in eastern lands generally: "The Greeks detest them, the Turks loathe them, the Christians abhor them." Yet the Jew is the kernal of the whole question, the crux of the situation, and the key to the world's blessing in *present* grace (Rom. xi. 11), as also in *future* governmental blessing (verse 12). We may remark that the Jew points to Scotland as the only country where he has not been persecuted.

The hand of God has been heavy on that people. "His blood be on us and on our children" was their cry to the representative of Cæsar, the unwilling instrument in the blackest crime which ever stained the records of time. "His blood be on us," was awfully answered in the unparalleled horrors in the siege by Titus. "His blood be on . . . our children," yet awaits the more awful tribulation, under a combination of satanically inspired persons in the near crisis. The world-wide dispersion of the Jews in the year 70 A.D., has enabled God righteously to open the flood-gates of mercy to the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 11, 12). When once again the olive tree flourishes in its native home and soil, *i.e.*, Palestine, the Gentiles shall be brought into marvellous governmental blessing: "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people" (Rom. xv. 10). The world owes more than tongue can tell to the despised down-trodden Hebrew. "Salvation is of the Jews" is a nigh-forgotten text, and yet it was the Lord's own express declaration (John iv. 22). The Lord after the flesh was a Jew. Even now in the political, social, and national life of every nation the Jew makes his presence felt, and leaves his indelible mark. The Jew is a potent power, and exercises a determinate and wide-spread influence. Financially, and to an overwhelming extent, the Jews control European commerce (Gen. xlix. 13); their wealth is fabulous, and if common report be true, the Holy Land is mortgaged to a great banking Jewish-house, to which the Sultan is deeply indebted.

"He hath not so dealt with any nation"—(Ps. cxlvii. 20). In Asia—the oldest of the continents—we witness the birth-place of the race, of religion, of civilization, of empire, and of the most renowned nations of antiquity. The once mighty monarchies of Egypt, of Assyria, of Babylon, of Persia, of Greece, and of Rome have risen, flourished, and fell, leaving no permanent

results behind. But the Jews, whose reliable history goes further back than any of those ancient kingdoms, are with us *to-day*. In physiognomy and national characteristics the Jew is unchanged. In a history of nigh 4,000 years the Jews are identically the same. For about three-fourths of their national existence they have been wanderers on the face of the earth. They have been driven from pillar to post. Attempts innumerable have been made to decimate them, to crush them, to regulate and diminish their remarkable fertility, but all to no purpose. It has been the custom to put the Jewish population at the highest estimate of twelve millions, but so rapid is the increase in late years, that it is computed on best authority to be now about twenty millions. Pharaoh, the prototype of Jewish persecutors, sought ineffectually to curb the natural growth of the nation, "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Exod. i.). No doubt the dietic laws of the Talmud based upon the ordinances in Leviticus, founded on the natural laws of health along with other causes, form the main grounds of Jewish longevity and fruitfulness. God has signally thwarted every effort to suppress the growth of the Hebrew population. The Jew nationally is immortal. The re-juvenation of the people after the most prolonged and severe persecution is a *fact*, however it may be accounted for. "The Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him" (Gen. iv. 15), so God's mark upon the Jew, in physical appearance, and other national characteristics, preserved through ages of wandering and suffering is indeed a marvel. The Jews as a people cannot be destroyed. God is their keeper and preserver, even while under His governmental judgment as they are to-day. The Jews, without a home, without a country, without a government, without a head, are yet a people as distinct from the Gentiles in national faith, feeling and hope, as in the days of David and Solomon. There are, of course, certain differences due to climate, speech, &c., but in all essential characteristics the Jews are everywhere the *same*. Their nationality is unquestionable. The existence of, and increasing numbers and influence of the Jews, after all their sufferings for the last nineteen centuries, is without a parallel in the records of the race. "God hath not so dealt with any nation." His dealings—governmental dealings—with the Jews are unique and peculiar in every

respect. The preservation of the Jewish people is for a distinct and *divine purpose*. From the days of Abraham till now the good hand of God has been over the Jew. Who can doubt it? Facts accessible to all, and Holy Scripture confirm it. When once the Jewish star rises it shall never set.

THE PROBLEM.

“The Eternal Eastern Question,” as it has been contemptuously termed, is a great open sore which no human skill can heal. It is the great political problem, which has defied and baffled the diplomacy and wisdom of the most astute statesmen of Asia and Europe. Till the Lord Himself takes up the question and permanently settles it, every human effort is the merest tinkering. Why cannot the Chancelleries of Europe successfully grapple with the political situation in the East? with the misgovernment and disorder in these eastern lands? Simply because the main factor in the world's politics is the Jew. The non-recognition of this fundamental truth is fatal to any attempted settlement of the Eastern Question, which is really the Jewish Question. How can you settle that in which the vital, the determining factor, is deliberately omitted? What is the net gain of repeated Cabinet deliberations in London, Berlin, Vienna, Constantinople, and St. Petersburg? Has a satisfactory settlement been arrived at? Has a solid and lasting peace been secured? Certain remedial measures have been proposed, a piece of patchwork applied here and there, a plaster to the open sore. In fact, anything and everything is done to stave off the evil day. Well do statesmen know that a thorough settlement of the Eastern Question involves consequences of the most serious character. A vast and unparalleled European War, Asia, too, in the scene of conflict; and Great Britain and Russia—the two largest empires in deadly strife—the certain result when God withdraws His restraining hand. The Eastern Question when opened in right earnest, demands the dismemberment of the long decaying Turkish Empire—an independent kingdom in northern Syria—and the restoration of the Hebrew Commonwealth in Palestine, the natural home of the Jew. “Turkey is dying for want of Turks,” large numbers of whom are crossing the Bosphorus to find a grave in Asia. What, too, about the squabbling amongst the interested powers for the possession of Constantinople—the

gateway of the East? Russia's determination to dominate the whole of Asia, to annex India, China, Japan, and the whole of the Asiatic provinces of Turkey, has received a severe check of late years. But still, with that dogged perseverance characteristic of her rulers and people, she is steadily pressing on with that all absorbing object before her. In this aim, inherited from her first and most distinguished Czar, Peter the Great, she has to reckon on the open and declared hostility of Great Britain, who will hold India and her other possessions in the East with a deadly grip. Russia and Great Britain in Asia are diametrically opposed in aim and policy. The opening of the Eastern Question in earnest will drench Europe and part of Asia in blood, change the whole political situation, and introduce the question of the Jew into the scene—the determining factor in the world's politics.

We need not be surprised, therefore, at the grave anxiety with which governments regard this question, and hand over its settlement as a painful legacy to a future generation. Who could with calm equanimity contemplate the coming struggle amongst the nations?—a struggle in which certain kingdoms and peoples may be wiped out of national existence in *torrents of blood!*

One great result of these vast changes *at hand* will be not only to crush out the smaller states and nationalities, and throw almost universal power into the hands of a few, creating another Europe on the ruins of the present, but the then *political* situation will resolve itself into

THE PROPHETIC SITUATION,

as unfolded in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Gog (Russia), the Colossus of the North, and the Beast, or Revived Empire of Rome in the West, shall divide the spoils in Europe and Asia. But the interests of these two gigantic confederacies are opposed. Judah in her land is the bone of contention. Gog seeks to *destroy* the restored Jewish Commonwealth. The Beast seeks to *maintain* it. This brings the North-Eastern powers into deadly conflict with those of the West. To Palestine, and especially in the vicinity of Jerusalem, the opposing nations gather (Ps. lxxix.; lxxxiii.; Rev. xvi. 14, 16; xix. 19-21; xiv. 18-20, &c). Blood flows like water, the dead are piled up in heaps, women are vilely used, and for

200 miles an ocean of blood reaching in depth to the horse's bridles, attest the sanguinary nature of the closing conflicts. Armageddon is the gathering-place of the nations (Rev. xvi. 16). There the decisive battles are fought, which will settle once and for ever the Eastern Question.

THE RESTORATION OF THE HEBREW COMMONWEALTH

is the first and indispensable necessity for the arrangement of the situation, to suit the requirements of the prophetic orderly system mapped out in the Word. The whole prophetic future depends on *that* primary fact. The Jew and not the Gentile is the centre of God's government of the earth, hence, all take shape and colour from the settlement of Judah in her land. This will be the great political event of the centuries, and one which will attract universal attention. "*Woe to the land,*" reads, "*Ho to the land.*" That is, attention is called to a great maritime power which for the first time in history, espouses the cause of the Jew. Who is this Restorer of Judah to her land? Not the name, but characteristics are given which, so far as we see, can only apply to Great Britain (Isa. xviii. 1). The Zionist movement, which is purely a political one, is spreading rapidly, and is finding favour and support in high quarters. Its *one* aim is to secure Palestine for its rightful inhabitants, and establish once again the Jewish nation and monarchy. Whether it will succeed we cannot say, but we attach *great importance* to the movement, as it is creating national hopes and aspirations in the heart of the Hebrew, and keeping the question of Jewish independence well to the front. But the movement is not one of *faith in God*, nor does it profess to be. But whenever, and by whomsoever, the return of Judah is effected, the result will be to change the whole political government of the world.

We know by **WHOM** and **WHERE** the Eastern or Jewish Question is to be settled. After the horrors of the Great Tribulation of 1260 literal days, during which the Jewish people shall drink to the full the cup of the Lord's vengeance, all governments, all authorities—supreme and subordinate—are shattered (Matt. xxiv. 29). Then suddenly that burst of power and splendour—the coming Christ with His heavenly saints—shall be seen on the ever memorable Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv.). His feet, not theirs, tread the sacred mount—the mount

from which He ascended in view of the rapt gaze of His disciples (Acts i. 9-12), and the same mount on which He sat and instructed His disciples in the truth of His Return to Israel and Palestine (Matt. xxiv. 1-44), to the professing Church (xxiv. 45-xxv. 30), and to the nations (xxv. 31-46). There and then the Lord will unsheath His glittering sword, and pour out His righteous judgments upon the enemies of Israel, trample them down, "for the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come" (Isa. lxiii. 1-4). Then shall the governing power on earth pass from the Gentile (Dan. ii.) to the Jew, and a saved, happy, and united Israel take headship of the nations, and Jerusalem become the centre and capital of the world's government. "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the Name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer. iii. 17): see also Isa. ii. 2-4; lx. This then, and nothing short of it, can be a permanent settlement of the Great Eastern Question or Jewish Problem.

Restoration of the Two Houses of Israel— Blest and Saved.

The Jew is the heart of the Old Testament. The Church is the heart of the New Testament. Prophecy circles round the Jew. He is the all-important figure in the historical books under the *government* of God, and equally prominent in the prophetic books, in which the *counsels* of God are witnessed in operation. Many nations, empires, countries, and cities are treated of in the older Revelation, but only so far as they stand related to the ancient people—geographically, commercially, politically, or otherwise. It is a serious thing to meddle with the Jew, especially in the day of her coming distress (Zech. xii. 2-3). If you cannot reach the Jew in blessing, let him alone.

The restoration of Israel to Palestine is the first and fundamental necessity demanded by prophecy. The return of both houses of Israel—Judah and Ephraim—from the countries of their captivity commence about the same time. Judah was deported to Babylon about 130 years after the destruction of her

sister nation by the Assyrian. After a 70 years' exile in Babylon, large numbers of the people returned: see the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. To this highly-favoured part of the whole nation Christ came. How was He received? The four Gospels answer: The Jews rejected their Messiah, they slew the Lord of Glory! But the measure of their guilt was not yet filled up. The murder of the Messiah was used by God to open the flood-gates of mercy to Jew and Gentile. The story of Divine grace, of redeeming love, was clothed in the power of the Holy Ghost. This testimony and the Holy Ghost Himself was proudly rejected by the Jew (Acts vii.), thus filling up the cup of his iniquity. As the sin of Judah was perpetrated in the land, so it shall be the special scene of her judgment: "Two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third part shall be left therein" (Zech. xiii. 8).

Judah is to be politically befriended by a certain unnamed but important nation—one who had not in the past been brought into direct association with Judah (Isa. xviii.). This nation (Is it Great Britain?) employs her vessels to bring back the Jews to their own land. The public character and magnitude of the action rouses universal interest, "Ho (not *woe*) to the land shadowing with wings" (verse 1). Unbelief in God characterises the movement both on the part of the deliverer and delivered.

The returned people establish a ritual modelled on the lines of the ancient Mosaic system, and make an alliance with the head of the ten confederated kingdoms of Western Europe. The treaty of seven years is broken in its main provisions in the midst of the period (Dan. ix. 27). These were to guarantee protection from the attacks of the Assyrian, or king of the north (Isa. x.; xxviii.), and to confirm the people in their religious system. Both public honour and conscience are sacrificed by the distinguished Chief of the revived empire. The representative of the Cæsars yet more ignominiously failed in a far more solemn crisis (Matt. xxvii. 1-26). The western power is unable to arrest the progress of the northern invader, who marches through the land: murder and yet worse marking his triumphs, he besieges Jerusalem, and attacks Egypt (Dan. xi. 40-45). The Roman prince, instigated by Satan, suddenly interrupts the national worship, and seeks to force idolatry upon the nation: "He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease"

(Dan. ix. 27). To accomplish his purpose he sets up certain idols on the "battlements" of the temple: see margin of Dan. ix. 27. Then follows the unspeakable horrors of "the great tribulation." The vengeance of an angry God bursts forth on the guilty scene. The outraged laws of heaven cry for blood, and God hears and answers the righteous cry. The land, the sanctuary, and synagogues are given over to the northern enemy, who boisterously wrecks and destroys at his will (Ps. lxxiv.). The blood of the people is shed like water, the bodies of the righteous slain are thrown to the fowls and beasts, Jerusalem is laid in heaps, the temple defiled, and the people become a scorn and derision to the surrounding nations (Ps. lxxix.).

But the drawn-out night of agony is shortened, else deliverance for any were impossible (Matt. xxiv. 22). In the darkest moment of a history which has extended through many centuries—a marvellous history it has been—the Lord intervenes in power. The sacred mount lying east of Jerusalem is again trod by the Lord of Glory and the Messiah of Israel (Zech. xiv. 4). "The Lord whom ye seek shall *suddenly* come to His temple" (Mal. iii. 1). The deliverance is complete and glorious. Then the nation is brought under the new covenant, the law written in their hearts, and their sins forgiven (Heb. viii. 8-13). They take headship of the nations (Micah iv. 8). Their blessing—spiritually and governmentally—is secured to the end of time (Isa. lix. 20, 21; Ezek. xxxvii. 25-27).

Ephraim, or the ten tribes, were not so guilty as her sister Judah. The special sins of Ephraim were idolatry and turning to Assyria for help instead of to God (see Hosea). The guilt of crucifying the Lord was not *her* sin, hence she is dealt with differently. Her restoration to the land is accomplished in a way and by means peculiar to itself. Previous to their restoration the prophet of the captivity gives in one verse a striking picture of the ten tribes: "That which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone" (Ezek. xx. 32). Quite at ease amongst the heathen and utterly indifferent to Jehovah and His interests, they are content to take up and adopt the gross and multitudinous forms of idolatry around them. The jealousy of Jehovah is roused, and His fury breaks out against them. "With a mighty hand and with a stretched-out arm" (verse 33) He gathers them out from the

countries wherein they were scattered. We are not aware that the human instrumentality employed to gather "the outcasts of Israel" is revealed. God Himself is presented as the source and power of their return. In the meantime, till God moves in the matter, the descendants of the long-lost tribes are hid. God knows *where* and *who* they are. No single nation or people can claim to be *the* lost tribes, for they were scattered world-wide (Ezek. xx.; xxxiv.). The English people are descended from *Japheth*, eldest son of Noah, Israel from *Shem* (Gen. x.). The attempt to identify the English with Ephraim seems simply absurd and unworthy of serious notice.

Israel then, not Judah, is brought out of the countries of their scattering, but into "the wilderness of the people," *i.e.*, the wilderness between Egypt and Palestine (south), and also the wilderness between Assyria and Palestine (north). *There* the rebels are dealt with in judgment and purged out from the congregation, whilst those spared and saved are brought into the land to rejoin their brethren of Judah. There is an after return of individuals—both of Judah and Ephraim. This individual return must not be confounded with the national one. The latter takes place *before* the Lord comes, the former *after* the Lord's return. For the national restoration of Judah, see Isaiah xvii.; xviii. For the national gathering out of Ephraim, see Ezek. xx. 33-38; xxxiv. 11-16. For the individual gathering of the Israelitish elect, see Matt. xxiv. 31; Isa. xxvii. 13; lxi. 19-20.

Ephraim then saved, chastened and broken in spirit, enters the land after a long and weary exile of more than 2700 years. In Jer. xxxi. 6-9 we have an exceedingly touching picture. There is shouting and gladness amongst the nations as they contemplate the weeping "great company" of Israel—weakness and sorrow amongst them—the objects of Jehovah's tender and unwearied care. *He* will lead them. *He* will see that they stumble not, and thus they enter the land. Another beautiful prophetic picture is presented in Isa. xlix. 12-23 in which the delight and surprise of Judah in the land is expressed in receiving once again her long-lost children of Israel. The re-union of *all* Israel is then complete (Ezek. xxxvii. 15-28; Zech. viii.; Jer. xxx.), and this singular people takes her divinely appointed place as chief amongst the nations (Isa. lx. 12, 14, 16; ii. 2-5; Deut. xxviii. 7-13).

Gog, the Great Enemy of the Jew.

Russia is the second largest empire in the world, her area being more than 9,000,000 square miles, Great Britain is much larger. "Go East! Go East!" has been the Russian cry for the last 200 years, since the days of Peter the Great, the most distinguished of Czars. Russian ambition is insatiable. To be sole master in the east does not measure the desire of the Russian. He wants to press on eastward and return home westward, thus laying the world at his feet. Russia's greed of territory, love of conquest, and unscrupulous methods of gaining her ends, has made her a dreaded Power, and almost generally disliked—even by peoples who court her alliance. She sacrifices honour, public faith, and treaties in the prosecution of her one mission, which is to girdle the globe. She has already established herself nearly 1,300 miles by sea from St. Petersburg, and for the first time in her history has had a serious check on her onward course of eastern expansion. Japan, the England of the East, is but comparatively a small country, consisting of a number of islands, but can boast of an uninterrupted succession of sovereigns for 2,500 years. This Asiatic power has inflicted a series of humiliating disasters, both on sea and land, on the proud and haughty despot of the north. The legions of the Czar, supposed to be invincible, when not confronted by a western Power, have been hurled back by the superior strategy and daring bravery of the soldiers of the Mikado. England, too, is fully alive to Russia's ambitious designs on India—the brightest pearl in his Majesty's diadem. "Hands off," is England's cry, and yet spite of repeated checks, Russia presses on. Her favours and gold in India amongst the native princes and people, are to a large extent undermining England's influence. She exercises a predominating influence in the ancient, now effete, kingdom of Persia. Spite of diplomatic checks, there and elsewhere, the stubborn and unconquerable will of her rulers and people asserts itself, in a dogged determination, to accomplish her purpose, by fair means or foul—either comes handy to the Russian.

Russia commands a military force of about four millions, and as her population numbers 135,000,000, having the most rapidly increasing population of any country (being at the rate of nearly a million yearly), it will readily be seen that her military

advisers can make drafts upon the people to an almost inexhaustible extent. We, of course, rejoice in every check given to Russia in the near and far east, but we are perfectly satisfied that by the force and strength of her battalions she will yet crush all opposition. She is the destined master in the east. Her battalions will by sheer strength of numbers sweep all before them. The inference deduced from the place which Russia, or Gog, occupies in the prophetic Scriptures, as the dominant power in Asia, master of Persia, &c., the trend of events, and the general direction of her conquests, make her a justly-dreaded power in Asia.

Japanese successes we attribute directly to God's governmental chastisement on the Russian cruel and heartless persecutions of the Jews—of whom there are about six millions in Russia—and of her numerous Christian subjects. It is a serious thing to meddle with the people of Jehovah's choice. Those who do so, do it to their own hurt (Zech. i. 15 ; xii. 2, 3). We are satisfied that the present Czar would not personally sanction these repeated Jewish persecutions and massacres, but the Emperor can only govern as he is governed. He is by far too good a man for the exalted position he occupies, and lacks strength of character to assert himself. He is an autocrat only in name. The nobles of the empire are the virtual rulers, and were the Czar to strongly oppose the accepted policy of his Counsellors, probably means would be found to substitute another and more pliant ruler. We would also remark that the character ascribed to the last holder of Russian sovereignty—the Gog of the prophets (Ezek. xxxviii. ; xxxix.)—do not, in our judgment, apply to the present ruler ; it may, however, to his successor. It is a joy also to know that there are many true children of God—even amongst the higher circles—in Russia, that land of cruel despotism.

A few further particulars about Russia may prove interesting. The kingdom was founded in 862 A.D. by Ruric, a Norman pirate, and who commenced its first royal dynasty, which lasted till 1598. Its present greatness, however, must be traced back to the reign of Peter the Great, and of Catherine II. These two sovereigns are justly regarded by the Russians—especially the former—as their greatest and most distinguished rulers. The bold, daring, and grandly comprehensive political aspirations of Peter the Great are embodied in his will, and which for 200

years have dominated the policy of Russia. The darling ambition of her rulers and people is to make good the terms of that will. Not only do they regard "Constantinople as the gate to Jerusalem," but almost every intelligent Muscovite has treasured up in mind and memory the significant and bold scheme propounded by Peter the revered, "We must progress as much as possible in the direction of Constantinople and India. He who can once get possession of these places is the real ruler of the world. We must hasten the downfall of Persia, and force our way into the Indies, which are the store-houses of the world. Once there, we can dispense with English gold." Russia makes no secret of her determination to plant the eagle on the heights of Constantinople, and from thence proceed on her victorious march to India. She has already two or three buildings of considerable height and strength on the summit of Mount Olivet, well known as designed for military purposes—especially in the Intelligence Department. One-third of the mountain has been bought by Russian gold. "Russia's influence in Syria and Palestine increases daily." Russia longs to possess Palestine, and Jerusalem in particular. The first Napoleon was shrewd enough to foresee the aim of Russia, and plainly foretold her yet future conquests in these parts. Alexander earnestly sought the consent of Napoleon to the Russian scheme, which was to sweep down on the then decaying Ottoman Empire, seize Constantinople, command the Mediterranean, laying hold of India and adjacent countries; but the far-seeing Napoleon sternly refused his consent. Russia has long coveted access to the Mediterranean, as all her seas are inland. From the days of the Conqueror of Austerlitz, England has determinedly stood in the way of Russian encroachment towards the Bosphorus.

"Russia" derives its name from Ruric—the founder of the first Royal dynasty. St. Petersburg, the capital of the empire, was founded by Peter the Great in 1703. The first Christian Czar, Vladimir, abolished Paganism 988, but it was not till two centuries afterwards that Christianity was nationally accredited. The title Czar or Emperor was first used by Ivan III., who became sole ruler of the empire in 1462, and thus founded the present Russian monarchy. One remarkable feature of Russia is, that no power desires to annex her territory, yet she is the most grasping and greedy of conquest of any European or

Asiatic country. From the days of Ruric in the ninth century—when the first attack upon Constantinople was made—and from the time of Peter the Great in the eighteenth century, who meditated the conquest of India, these two, *i.e.*, the Bosphorus and India, form the goal of Russian hope in the first instance—the rest of the civilized world would follow in due course, unless checked by a higher hand. The Bosphorus is only about 16 miles long, and not above, at its widest, a mile and a half. The Asiatic and European shores of the Bosphorus, at their narrowest, are about 500 yards apart. Thus, a loud speaker on the older continent can be distinctly heard in Europe, or *vice versa*. Constantinople on the Bosphorus, is a grand centre for commerce, as linking up the two continents. Constantinople fell before the Crescent in 1453, and thus perished the ancient Roman power, till revived in a coming day—at least in its western seat of power. God is Governor amongst the nations.

Russia is named in Scripture 1450 years before its historical rise, and, of course, before it was known as such. This striking fact should be pressed upon the attention of the critics—few of whom refer to it. *History* first named Russia in the ninth Christian century. *Prophecy* expressly names the country fourteen centuries and a half previously. We refer to the interesting prophet of the captivity, Ezekiel, chaps. xxxviii. 2, 3; xxxix. 1. Our version reads, “Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal,” but in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, it reads, “Prince of *Rosh*, Meshech and Tubal;” see also “Revised.” “Rosh” is Russia; “Meshech” is Moscow, the former European capital of the empire, the city of 370 churches; “Tubal” is Tubolsk, the Asiatic capital. Here, then, Russia and her capital cities are expressly mentioned in prophetic Scripture many centuries before they had a national existence. As to their origin, see Gen. x. 2.

The Last Attack upon the Restored Hebrew Commonwealth.

There are two chapters in the book of the prophet Ezekiel—xxxviii. and xxxix.—which present Gog—a symbolic title of the last holder of Russian sovereignty—in undying hatred to Israel,

then restored to her land and dwelling in safety in her unwallied towns and villages. Jerusalem alone shall have walls and gates—a counterpart to the heavenly city (Rev. xxi. with Isa. lx.; Ezek. xlvi.)

The wealth and treasures of the Gentiles are willingly gathered to the land of Emmanuel (Isa. lx. 9). Gold and silver will be plentiful, as in the days of Solomon. This offers a tempting bait to the cupidity of the powers. Ah! little do they dream that Jehovah has returned to Jerusalem with mercies, that He has appointed Salvation for walls and bulwarks (Isa. xxvi. 1), and that He Himself has become the glory and defence of His people. There will be several attempts made to crush and destroy the restored Hebrew commonwealth, and to capture the renowned city of Jerusalem (Ps. lxxxiii.; Zech. xiv.) During the Tribulation the land is entered from the north, and rapine, massacre, and lust, dog the footsteps of the oppressor on his victorious and brutal march down even to Egypt. The temple will be laid in heaps, the synagogues burned, and blood flow in torrents in Jerusalem and its vicinity (Ps. lxxix.; lxxiv.; Isa. xxviii. 14-22; x. 5-34; Dan. viii. 24, 25; xi. 40-45; Matt. xxiv. 15-28). But the most gigantic military confederation ever known in history is that described by Ezekiel under Gog. *After* the scenes described in Dan. viii. and xi., Gog falls, *after* too his subordinate, the king of the north. The beast and his armies—the Political and Commercial power in the west—necessarily enter Palestine by the Mediterranean, but Gog and his allies enter the land from the east. The literal drying up of the famous and ancient boundary river—the Euphrates—will, of course, facilitate the progress of the mighty expedition (Rev. xvi. 12-14).

The prophet of the captivity (Ezek. xxxviii.; xxxix.) gives an exceedingly graphic and vivid description of Gog's attempt to destroy the Jewish Commonwealth. You are almost transported into the scene of these stirring events. Ezekiel—the representative of the prophetic feeling—is against Gog and his land. Jehovah, too, is against the last autocrat of all the Russias. The powers as Persia, Ethiopia, &c., are marshalled under the banner of Gog. Like a storm these powers shall bear down upon Israel, and like a cloud they cover the land. The wealth of Israel tempts the cupidity of Gog and his allies,

while the apparently defenceless condition of "the land of *unwalled* villages" promises an easy conquest. Gog and her armies are challenged by the revived western empire, and the true character of the mighty expedition exposed. Before, however, the actual descent upon Israel, then dwelling safely in her land, the western power is destroyed (Rev. xix.). God Himself directly intervenes for Israel, and creation—at least that portion directly interested—trembles at the presence of the God of judgment. "And I will call for a sword against him (Gog) throughout all My mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many peoples that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." The result of this complete, overwhelming, and divine judgment is stated by Jehovah Himself: "Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD." But a sixth part is spared from the slaughter to spread the tidings of Jehovah's victory in the respective lands from whence they came. The weapons of war afford fuel for seven years, while seven months shall be occupied in burying the dead. The vast sepulchre is specially named, "The Valley of Hamongog" (xxxix. 15), and will be remembered to all generations. The *end* of all is the presence of God with His people, and His Spirit poured out upon them for blessing. How marvellous are the ways of God! The full fulfilment of Ps. cxxvi., the returning again of the captivity of Zion, is then witnessed. Then Jehovah builds the house (Ps. cxxvii.), and the people settled securely, and in the fulness of domestic and national life, trusting in Jehovah (Ps. cxxviii.)—are some of the succeeding features of the blessedness of Jehovah's intervention on their behalf—then returned to Zion. Compare these psalms with the chapters in our prophet following the destruction of Gog.

The Gog of the Apocalypse (xx.) must not be confounded with the Gog of Ezekiel. There is a thousand years between the two attacks upon Israel. The former is under the direct leadership of Satan, the latter under the last reigning Czar. The former, too, is from "the four quarters of the earth," the Russian attack is from the "north."

The Assyrian : The Great Political Oppressor of Israel.

Let us clearly distinguish the chief actors in the coming crisis for Israel and Jerusalem.

The beast is the ancient empire of Rome re-appearing on the stage of history before it is finally crushed by the epiphany or appearing of the Lord in glory. The beast is the sum of the ten kingdoms of western Europe. The term *beast* is used of the empire, and also applied to its personal ruler. The first Apocalyptic reference is in chap. xi., as the satanic persecutor of the Jewish witnesses in Jerusalem (verse 7). The ten kingdoms comprising the material strength, and possibly the territorial extent of the empire, have each a separate existence, but each and all in subordination to the distinguished chief, or the "little horn" (Dan. vii.). The monarchies of Europe, wearied of mutual jealousies, and unable to preserve any longer "the balance of power"—the principle which has dominated European politics for more than a century—shall willingly lay down their crowns at the feet of the august ruler in Rome (Rev. xvii. 17).

The cry used to be "Italy and Rome for the Italians," and God in His providential dealings heard and answered the cry. Now it is "Palestine and Jerusalem for the Jews," which God will give effect to, and that *soon*. Italy is rapidly coming to the front, and no political checks can arrest her destiny. Prophecy decrees that the ancient fourth empire, after many centuries of political non-existence, shall emerge out of a social and political upheaval. Satan will revive it. When it re-appears under certain new forms hitherto unknown in the past, it excites the wonder of the world (Rev. xiii. 3). After a brief continuance it goes into perdition (xvii. 8). What makes the empire such a prominent figure in the prophetic crisis just at hand, is its past connection with Christ and with Judah. The beast's direct relation was and will be with the Judah part of the nation only, not with Israel as a whole.

The next chief actor is the Antichrist, who reigns as king in Palestine during part of the time between the Translation (1 Thess. iv. 17) and the Appearing (Rev. xix. 11). He is accepted by the restored nation on his own credentials as their prophet-king (John v. 43). His arrogance and blasphemous pretensions know no bounds. He takes God's place in the

temple (2 Thess. ii. 4), and works miracles in the wider domain of Christendom (Rev. xiii. 13). Both he and the distinguished political chief of the empire work together ; they wreck their vengeance on godly Jews and Gentiles who witness against their wickedness. Both perish eternally together (Rev. xix. 20 ; xx. 10).

The role ascribed to the king of the south, or Egypt, is not of such evil character as that of the other prominent personages who stand out conspicuously in the last days. Egypt, we gather, will be a power in subordination to the western confederacy, but certainly not one of the ten kingdoms into which the revived empire is distributed. Egypt is one of the most interesting and ancient of monarchies, and long and eagerly contended with Syria for possession of Palestine, and for mastery in southern Asia—the territories now governed, or rather misgoverned, by Turkey. The old feuds and conflicts between the kings of the north and south (Dan. xi. 1-35) are to be resumed. Each of those kings attack *the wilful king* in Palestine (verse 40), besides opposing one another—the Holy Land is the battlefield of the contending powers.

The Assyrian of the prophets Isaiah, Micah, Joel, and the king of the north of Daniel, are one and the same. *Historically*, the Assyrian kingdom (not empire, for it never attained to that dignity), preceded the rise of the Babylonian empire. *Prophetically*, the order is reversed. Babylon, mystically, is the whore (Rev. xvii.), and representatively in the beast (Rev. xiii. 2) perishes before the Assyrian. The kingdom of Israel, *i.e.*, the ten tribes or Ephraim, was destroyed by Assyria. The kingdom of Judah, *i.e.*, the two tribes or Judah and Benjamin, was overthrown by Babylon. The Assyrian is termed the king of the *north*, as indicating the geographical position of his kingdom towards Palestine. But this distinguished chief of the north-eastern confederacy of the peoples opposed to restored Israel, demands more than a passing notice. He is the great external enemy of Israel, and a scourge in the hands of Jehovah for the punishment of His guilty people.

The "beast," or Rome, has never been in relation to Israel as a whole, nor will it be in the day to come. Centuries before the fourth empire came into direct contact with Judah, the deportation of the ten tribes had taken place. Judea was annexed to the Roman dominions 63 B.C. In the prophetic

arrangement the beast and his ten vassal kings perish *before* Ephraim, or the so-called "ten lost tribes" enter publicly the prophetic arena. The relation of the beast is to Judah *only*.

We now return to the consideration of the Assyrian. In Psalm lxxxiii., as also in Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix., we have two coalitions of nations formed against Israel in both of which the Assyrian is the recognised leader. The avowed object of the former is to blot out the name and existence of Israel from the earth: see the psalm, especially verses 4, 5. The object of the latter is to plunder and rob: see Ezek. xxxviii. 11, 12. Both attempts are signally defeated. The combination referred to by the prophet of the captivity, seems to consist of larger powers than those named in the psalm. These latter, with the exception of Asshur (Assyria), are of peoples who in the past were opposed to Israel. They come up again. They re-appear to complete their respective histories, and manifest, in even greater intensity than before, their undying hatred to the people of Jehovah's choice. But no weapon yet forged against Israel can prosper, and so, utter and overwhelming ruin is the divinely-appointed portion of *all* the enemies of Israel: see Isa. viii. 9, 10. The peoples mentioned in the psalm were Israel's near neighbours; and as Edom is first named (verse 6), we gather that the awful slaughter of the heathen on the mountains of Idumea are those named by the psalmist: see Obadiah; Isa. lxiii. 1-6, *peoples*, not people. Judah will assist in the work of judgment, but none of the peoples or Gentiles: also Ezek. xxxv.; Isa. xxxiv. The greater powers under Gog (Russia) fall on the mountains of Israel (Ezek. xxxix. 4). Those judgments upon the Gentile enemies of Israel, whether upon her mountains or in Edom, *are subsequent to the destruction of the beast and the false Messiah or Antichrist.*

The northern army (Joel ii. 20) under its renowned leader, the Assyrian, invades Palestine from the north (Isa. x. 28-32). "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets" (verses 5, 6). Again, "Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them (Israel) the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go

over all his banks. And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of Thy land, O Immanuel" (Isa. viii. 7, 8). The country is devastated and laid waste, Jerusalem besieged and captured, and that, too, in spite of the guaranteed protection by the western power who makes a seven years' treaty with apostate Judah (Dan. ix. 27; Isa. xxviii. 14-22). This the Lord terms a covenant with *death and hell*. There is a second and subsequent siege of Jerusalem, which, however, is not successful. The Lord's personal intervention on behalf of His people turns the tide. Israel, not the two tribes only, are delivered, and their enemies perish for ever.

The conqueror of Jerusalem behaves with great brutality. The city is laid in heaps, the houses despoiled of their contents, the temple defiled, half of the population—probably the most influential—are sent into a miserable captivity, murder and unbridled lust riot unchecked, and Judea resounds with the sobs, groans, and tears of the afflicted remnants. The bodies of the slain are denied burial, and contemptuously thrown to the fowls of heaven and beasts of the earth. It is an appalling picture of human misery: see Ps. lxxiv; lxxix; Zech. xiv. 1, 2.

We have another view of the state of things in Jerusalem in that most awful crisis of their history (Rev. xi). But while Psalms lxxiv. and lxxix. disclose the condition of things in the captured city and in the country itself, they must not be confounded with the earlier sorrows of the godly in Jerusalem under the beast. It is the Assyrian, or king of the north (*not* the beast), who invades Palestine, captures Jerusalem, and lays it in heaps. It is the Assyrian (*not* the western power) who desolates the land, burning the synagogues, destroying the sanctuary, and roaring in the midst of "Thy congregations," while his armies breathe the spirit of their master and are not a whit behind him in deeds of rapine and blood. Jerusalem is fully occupied with the soldiers of the northern army (Joel ii. 9). The Antichrist *defiles* the temple; the Assyrian *destroys* it. The beast, moreover, is the would-be protector of Judah. The Assyrian is the enemy of Judah. The beast is the enemy of the *saints*; he makes war against them (Rev. xiii. 7); the Assyrian against the *nation*. The Assyrian is opposed to the policy and aims of the beast and Antichrist. We may add that Psalms

ix. and x. depict the feelings, and lay bare the exercises of soul of the godly remnant in Jerusalem and in Judea during the period of political oppression by the Assyrian and the persecution by the beast.

The doom of the Assyrian is foretold. Many of the countries bordering on Palestine are overthrown. Edom, Moab, and Ammon escape (Dan. xi. 41), but only to be destroyed by conquering Judah (Isa. xi. 14). Egypt seems to be the goal for the northern army. Egypt falls a prey to the Assyrian. The country is despoiled of its gold and treasures. "But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him" (Dan. xi. 44). What those tidings are, we are not informed. It may be the arrival of the ten tribes to Palestine, for in the second attack upon Jerusalem Ephraim is *there*. The arrival of such a large body of Israelites would necessarily cause anxiety, and it may be, too, that he hears the Lord has come. The tidings, whatever they are, are evidently connected with the Jewish people. The enraged conqueror hastens back laden with the treasures of the south. Filled with rage and a grim determination to destroy, and wreck his vengeance, "he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas (the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea), in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him" (verses 44, 45). In the moment of his pride, rage, and exaltation, he is utterly and eternally destroyed. "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king ALSO (read) it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (Isa. xxx. 33). This, then, is the decreed doom of the Assyrian. He is cast into the lake of fire, of which Tophet is the expression, beside his enemies, the beast and the Antichrist. What a miserable trio in the endurance of eternal punishment—probably the most wretched save their master—the devil—who after 1000 years is consigned to the same awful doom.

The Two Beasts. Rev. xiii.

Those two beasts are the instruments and ministers of Satan, in and by whom he works to accomplish the destruction of Israel (Rev. xii. 14, 15), failing that, "the remnant of her seed"

(verse 17). At a later period, he urges on his blind dupes, under the leadership of the two beasts, to enter in deadly conflict against Christ and His heavenly army of saints (xix. 11-21). How utterly futile the mad attempt!

The first beast is a *Gentile*, characterised by brute force (verses 1-10); the second beast is a *Jew*, distinguished by subtle influence (verses 11-18). The two beasts are confederates in evil; they work to one another's hand. Their operations are not confined to Israel, but they also act in the wider sphere of Christendom. They control commerce, and force idolatry upon the peoples of the prophetic earth. Both are consigned to the lake of fire at the commencement of the millennial reign.

Beasts usually denote kingdoms or empires (Dan. vii.), but in our chapter the expression *beast* is several times employed to signify its personal head or chief. Thus the frequent use of the masculine and personal pronouns: see verses 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12-18. The *beast* may denote either the empire or its personal and living head, as he impresses his own character upon it: see also xix. 20.

The main features of the three preceding world-wide empires are, severally and combined, stamped upon the character and latter-day history of the revived Roman power, while also possessing characteristics peculiar to itself. Thus the rapid conquests of the Grecian (the *leopard*), the tenacity of purpose and cruel grip of the Persian (the *bear*), and the strength and majesty of the Babylonian (the *lion*), all help to make up a character utterly unknown in the past (verse 3). The political resurrection of the empire is a matter of world-wide astonishment (verse 3)—“*All the world wondered after the beast.*” The dragon (Satan) and the beast are openly and universally worshipped (verse 4). The beast will be a great blaspheming and persecuting power, the enemy of God, and of all then seeking to maintain a good conscience in those corrupt times. A martyr's death is the appointed lot of those who seek to maintain a faithful testimony to God and truth. This is what the civil power is coming to, and that too by those who have had Christian light and privilege in its fulness. The civil power in the last phase of its history is here witnessed in open rebellion against God and His people. Its total destruction however is fully assured.

The second beast is more subtle and thus the more dangerous enemy than the first. *Pagan* Rome was bad, but *Papal* Rome was infinitely worse. This beast whose character and doings form the subject of the remaining part of the chapter (verses 11-18) acts as king and prophet in Palestine, and religiously in Christendom. He supports the claims of the first beast. He deceives vast multitudes by his miraculous signs and wonders. He is the head of the *ecclesiastical* apostasy, as his great coadjutor is head of the *civil* apostasy. He is equally worshipped with the dragon and the first beast. This awful character—a Jew—is spoken of in John's epistles as the Antichrist, by Paul as the man of sin and the lawless one, and son of perdition (2 Thess. ii.), as "the king" by Daniel (xi. 36-39), and as the false prophet by the seer of Patmos (Rev. xvi. 13; xix. 20). The Psalms too utter their testimony to this terrible Jewish character terming him a "bloody and deceitful man" (Ps. v. 6). Zechariah contemptuously stigmatises him as the "idol shepherd" (xi. 7). In 2 Thess. ii., his daring impiety is witnessed rising to a height, he actually declares himself *to be God* (verse 4). There could be no conceivable wickedness beyond such pretension. Alas! what is man? Jewish and Christian unbelief will coalesce and centre in *one* person and he a *Jew*! He is a man, not the devil incarnate, nor Judas Iscariot, although both the wilful king and Judas are each termed "the Son of perdition." While the Antichrist seeks to set all true thought of God aside, even taking His place in the temple, yet he cannot do without a religion of some sort, hence he establishes one of his own. He offers to the god of his own creation, not sacrifice, but gold, silver and things of value (Dan. xi. 38, 39)—his god will be a representative of Satan.

The Coming Personal Antichrist.

The rise of a personal Antichrist in the last dark days of Gentile and Jewish apostasy, was an undoubted article of belief in apostolic and succeeding Christian times. There have been many Antichrists, and Antichristian systems of deadly error, but there is yet a blacker outlook. The Antichrist to come, an apostate of Jewish extraction, shall be the incarnation of Satanic wickedness, and the greatest soul-destroyer which has ever trod the earth; moreover, he shall sum up in himself every form and

phase of sin, and head the most awful system of corrupt and damnable evil ever known—a combination of Jewish and Christian religious profession, “natural religion” too, all then in open daring rebellion to God. He assumes Christ’s place, titles, and functions on earth. He works miracles. Supernatural signs accredit his mission; by these he deceives guilty Christendom, and thus lures it on to hopeless destruction.

It is during the last phase of the revived power of Rome when distributed into ten kingdoms, that the personal Antichrist arises. This final character of Rome was therefore dreaded by the early Christians. In their minds the future revival of the civil power of Rome, and the presence of the Antichrist, were co-eval and connected events. The early Christians were wont to pray for the continuance of the empire in its then imperial form, and even for the rule of the cruellest of the Cæsars, as the one undivided empire was regarded as the last bulwark against the coming sway of the Antichrist. The subject of the Antichrist was a common one to the Fathers of the Church. Some held that he was the devil incarnate; others spoke of him as “the devil’s son.” The relation of Satan and the Antichrist in the traditional lore of the first four Christian centuries, may be resolved into two distinct thoughts: 1st, that the coming Antichrist (John), or man of sin (Paul), is a real man of earthly Jewish parentage controlled directly by Satan; 2nd, that he is Satan incarnate and thus in his conception simulates the miraculous birth of our blessed Lord. The former notion is undoubtedly the Scriptural one, and it is an interesting fact that Jerome in the west, Chrysostom in the east, distinctly taught that the Antichrist is a man energised by Satan, and in direct opposition to those who maintained that he was the devil in human form, “henceforth the assumption that the Antichrist is the devil himself practically dies out of ecclesiastical tradition.” The early Christians regarded Nero and Claudius, especially the former, as precursors of the Antichrist. The almost super-human wickedness of Nero marks him out in the page of history as the most apt and fitting historical type of the coming man of sin and blood.

The mass of Protestant expositors apply the term Antichrist to the papal system. But this we conceive is a blunder. The term Antichrist whether employed in the singular or plural, denotes a person or persons, never a system. The Roman

Catholic interpreters have written much and learnedly on this theme, and, we are compelled to add, more correctly than many of their Christian opponents. The former look on to the end for the rise of a personal Antichrist, and in this they are right. He is yet to come. Dr Manning, one of the most distinguished of Roman Catholics in modern times, holds that the Antichrist, or "the man of sin," is one individual, and not a succession of persons, nor a system. He says, "To deny the personality of Antichrist is therefore to deny the plain testimony of Holy Scripture." The learned Cardinal adds, "He (the Antichrist) may indeed embody a spirit, and represent a system, but is not less, therefore, a person." Bellarmine, second to none as a Roman Catholic writer, tersely sums up papal belief on the subject of the Antichrist, saying, "All Catholics hold that Antichrist will be one individual person." One special person, a man, a Jew, an apostate, is the Antichrist of the prophetic Scriptures.

Some modern expositors regard the Antichrist as the civil head of the Roman empire, but this is not so. He is the false Messiah, the minister of Satan amongst the Jews in Jerusalem, working signs and displaying wonders through direct satanic power. He sits in the Temple of God then set up in Jerusalem, and claims divine worship. Rome and Jerusalem as cities are the respective centres of the coming apostasies. The beast in Rome; the Antichrist in Jerusalem. The beast (Rome), the false prophet or the Antichrist, and the dragon (Satan), are deified and worshipped, counterfeiting the worship of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The apostate nation accepts the Antichrist as king. In no sense is he a great political power. True, he influences Christendom, but religiously, not politically. The then governing power of the world—civil and political—is in the hands of a great Gentile chief. It is he whose throne is in Rome who rules politically under Satan. The Antichrist has his seat in Jerusalem; the head of Gentile dominion in Rome. The two men are ministers of Satan, confederates in wickedness; the one a Jew, the other a Gentile. Both are found alive at the coming of the Lord in judgment, and both are consigned alive to the lake of fire—their eternal doom. Both are spoken of as beasts. The Antichrist first arises as a beast, but it is to the head in Rome, and a Gentile, to whom Satan grants the kingdoms of western Europe.

The term "Antichrist" is used only by the writer of the Apocalypse, and by him four times (1 John ii. 18, 22.; iv. 3; 2 John 7), and once in the plural (1 John ii. 18). From these texts we gather several important points. The rise of Antichrists is a definite mark of "the last time"; they are apostates. The Antichrist sets himself in direct opposition to what is vital in Christianity—the revelation of the Father and the Son—and also to the distinguishing truth of Judaism—Jesus the Christ (1 John ii. 22). The holy person of the Lord is also the object of satanic attack by devil-inspired Antichrists (2 John 7). Evil of this character is found fully developed in the coming Antichrist in whom every form of religious evil culminates.

Paul in one of his earliest and briefest epistles—2 Thess.—sketches a personage characterised by impiety, lawlessness, and assumption towering far beyond all the world has ever seen, a character clearly identical with the Antichrist of John. They are one and the same person, and on this in all ages, there has been an almost complete concensus of thought.

It is evident that Paul had personally instructed the Thessalonian Christians on the solemn subjects of the coming apostasy or public abandonment of Christianity, and consequent thereon the revelation of the man of sin (verse 5). He now adds to former verbal instruction. There are three descriptive epithets here used of the Antichrist—"the lawless one" (R.V.), "the man of sin," and "the son of perdition." The first intimates that he sets himself in direct opposition to all divine and human authority. The second that he is the living and active embodiment of every form and character of evil—sin personified. The third that he is the full-blown development of the power of Satan, and as such perdition is his proper doom and portion. This frightful character takes God's place on earth, and sits in the temple then set up in Jerusalem, claiming divine worship and honour (verse 4). His religious influence (for he is not a political person of any account) dominates the mass of professing Christians and Jews. They are caught in Satan's snare. They had already given God up, had publicly renounced the Christian faith, and the essential truth of Judaism, now in retributive justice *He* gives them up to the awful delusion of receiving the man of sin, while believing him to be the true Messiah (verse 11). What a lie! The Antichrist received and believed on instead

of the Christ of God! If verse 9 is compared with Acts ii. 22, a remarkable correspondence is shewn. The very same terms are found in both texts, namely, power, signs, and wonders. By these God would accredit the mission and service of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts ii. 22), and by the same credentials Satan presents the Antichrist to an apostate world (2 Thess. ii. 9). In the latter case, however, lying and deceit significantly characterise the more than human signs of that day (verses 9-10).

The Lord Himself refers to the Antichrist and to his acceptance by the Jews as their Messiah and prophet (John v. 43). In the book of Psalms he is prophetically written of in his character as "the man of the earth" (x. 18), as also "the bloody and deceitful man" (v. 6), while these descriptive epithets are in themselves characteristic of the wicked in general in the coming crisis, yet there is one person, and but one to whom they can in the fullest terms refer. It is the character of the Antichrist, and not his person that is before us in these and other psalms.

Daniel in chapter xi. of his prophecy refers to three kings: The king of the north (Syria); the king of the south (Egypt); and the king in Palestine (the Antichrist). The wars, family alliances, intrigue, so minutely detailed in the first thirty-five verses of this interesting chapter, have had an exact historical fulfilment in the history of the Syrian and Egyptian kingdoms, formed after the break-up of the mighty Grecian empire. It was this prophecy in its exact and detailed fulfilment which so roused the ire of that bitter pagan and opponent of divine truth, Porphyry in the third century. His "Treatise against Christians" is the armoury, which, from the seventeenth century has supplied material for attacks upon Christianity. Think of Christian teachers eagerly availing themselves of the help of a pagan in their wicked campaign against the truth!

In verse 36 "*the king*" is abruptly introduced into the history. This king is the Antichrist whose reign in Palestine precedes that of the true Messiah, even as king Saul preceded that of king David. The former pointing to the coming Antichrist, and the latter to Christ. This portion of the chapter (verses 36-45) is yet future, carrying us on to the time of the end (verse 40). The Antichristian king exalts himself and magnifies himself above man and God. The pride of the devil is embodied in this terrible Jewish character, and yet the human

instinct to worship is seen even in him. He worships a god of his own creation (verses 38, 39). He partitions out the land to his followers as if it belonged to him (verse 39). The land belongs to Immanuel (Isa. viii. 8). God's place alone will satisfy his ambition. What a contrast to the true Messiah, to Jesus, Who humbled Himself as none other ever did. He who was God humbled Himself even to the death of the Cross (Phil. ii. 5-8).

That the Antichrist is of Jewish descent seems evident from verse 37, as also from the consideration that otherwise he could have no claim even with apostate Jews to the throne of Israel. The king, or the Antichrist, is attacked from the north and south in the land, Palestine lying between the two. He is unable, even with the help of his ally the powerful chief of the west, to ward off the repeated attacks of his northern and southern enemies. The former is the more bitter and determined of the two. Palestine is overrun by the conquering forces of the north, but its king escapes the vengeance of the great northern oppressor, of whom Antiochus Epiphanes of infamous memory is his prototype. The Antichrist is the object of the Lord's judgment.

In the Apocalypse, chap. xiii., two beasts are seen in vision. The first is the Roman power and its blasphemous head, under the direct control of Satan (verses 1-10). The second beast is the personal Antichrist (verses 11-17). The *first* is characterised by brute force. It is the political power of the earth in those days. The *second* beast is clearly subordinate to the power of the first (verse 12). It is religious and not political ends he has in view. Religious pretension is supported by the might and strength of apostate Rome, thus the two beasts act together, and both under their chief—Satan.

The second beast, or Antichrist, is identical with "the false prophet," named three times, chaps. xvi. 13; xix. 20; xx. 10. The respective heads of the rebellion against Christ in His royal and prophetic rights, are two men directly energised and controlled by Satan—a trinity of evil. "The dragon has given his external power to the first beast (xiii. 8), to the second he gives his spirit, so that having this spirit it speaks as the dragon" (verse 11). Both are cast *alive* into the lake of fire. They are not judged as their followers—no need for that. What an awful doom (Rev. xix. 20).

Finally, Zechariah refers to the Antichrist as "the idol shepherd," who feeds upon the flock, and exercises cruel tyranny over it; but judgment is sure. His arm and eye—strength and intelligence—are broken and darkened (chap. xi. 15-17).

The Beast: His Image, Mark, and Number, Rev. xiii.

The public intimation to Christendom to "make an *image* to the beast which had the wound by a sword and did live," is a startling announcement. It is remarkable that at the beginning of Gentile supremacy men were compelled under pain of death to worship an image representing the greatness and majesty of the first empire (Dan. iii.). Now at the close of Gentile dominion it is repeated. How incorrigible is human nature! Likeness and image are distinguished in Scripture. Man has lost the likeness (moral, of course) of God (Gen. i. 26), but, fallen as he is, he is yet God's image or representative in power (Gen. ix. 6). An image is something that represents one, not necessarily *like* one. The "image to the beast" will be an actual, literal, vast representation set up in the centre of Christendom by means of which the beast will be worshipped. It was an actual image that was set up in the plains of Dura, and by which Nebuchadnezzar was worshipped: see also Matt. xxiv. 15.

The death-wound of the beast, *i.e.*, the Roman power, is three times stated (verses 3, 12, 14). In the third notice of it, the wound is said to have been given by the sword, implying a violent break-up. The hordes of barbarian savages from the north swept down upon the decaying empire and quickly brought it to a political end.

"He had power to give *breath* (not life, that is ever in God's hands) unto the image of the beast." The Antichrist, or second beast of our chapter (verses 11-18), is the actor here, but he is merely a tool in the hands of his master who is the unseen power behind the scenes. He could not of himself energise the image or give it a real or even spurious vitality. It is Satan who acts through the beasts. It is an image "*to* the beast," that is to his glorification; but it is also an image "*of* the beast," that is it represents him, calls the attention of the world to him, and keeps the thought of the beast before the

eyes and minds of men of the then religious world. The object, Satan's object, is to bring the world down to the feet of the beast in worship. The image is made to speak. What it says shall only be known to those who hear it. Death is the appointed portion of those who refuse divine honours to the beast, or to its distinguished chief, "the prince (Roman) that shall come" (Dan. ix. 26). Thus by signs and wonders of a miraculous kind, wrought by the second beast, he deceives the guilty and apostate Christian mass, so that not only is all true conception of Christianity lost, but idolatry of the rankest character is openly and unblushingly practised. What a future lies before these lands!

In those awful days, individual thought and action are crushed out. The most abject submission to the vilest tyranny ever witnessed, is the order which none dare disobey. "He caused *all*, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their forehead" (verse 16). The various classes named are a comprehensive designation of all within the range of the influence of the beast, and are mentioned in pairs. None however insignificant, none however exalted, can escape. Neither riches nor poverty can buy nor find exemption from the iron rule of the beast. The free and the bond are alike on one dead level—absolute submission to the beast—all from the least to the highest are equally his slaves. To resist the will of the beast is to be deprived the right to live (for he effectually controls all commerce), and to court certain death. A certain mystic mark is put either upon the right hand, or upon the forehead of all, save the martyrs who lay down their lives in stern and faithful protest against such awful satanic assumption. The mark, whatever it is, upon the "hand" would denote that the person so branded was an *active* slave of the beast; stamped upon the "forehead" would serve as a *public* acknowledgment of slavery. In either case all must own the absolute supremacy of the beast and worship him. It was usual to brand slaves with the name or special mark of their owner. Paul (Gal. vi. 17), Israel in her tribes (Rev. vii. 3), the preserved of Judah (xiv. 1), the glorified and heavenly saints (xxii. 4) are marked by God as belonging to Him and that publicly: see also Ezek. ix. 4.

Let it be carefully noted that Satan gives unity and strength to this vast political and social organization termed "the beast,"

hence all must belong to it under the pains and penalties of a relentless ostracism (verse 17). The necessities of life obtained by legitimate trading, will be denied those who in faithfulness to God and fidelity to the truth, refuse allegiance to the beast and his powerful and wily supporter and satellite, the Antichrist. Social ostracism and death are the appointed portion of all faithful to God in that most awful crisis in human history. Combination is the order of the day. Religion demands it, the political world demands it, wealth and capital demand it, labour—skilled and unskilled—demands it. All is working for the *one* great end, Satan's fusion of *all* religious parties under the Antichrist, and of *all* political and social parties under the beast. Out of the seething masses of democracy, out of the wild forces of revolution, and of anarchism which knows no law, out of the struggles and conflicts between capital and labour, out of the crashing of crowns and overturning of kingdoms a strong and Imperial power will emerge by direct satanic influence, and one which will crush all standing in its way, or bar its progress, and to this power all without exception must submit or pay the penalty—*death*.

“The mark, the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (verse 17). We have not three specific items. The “mark,” the “name,” and the “number” are not independent things. The mark is general, and consists of either the *name* or *number* of the beast. The two latter are embraced in the first, and are explanatory of the mark. The name of the beast is withheld, so also is the personal ruler of Russia in the last days—destined to play such an important part in connection with Israel (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.). We do not hold that it is impossible to know *who*, and *what*, are meant by the name and number of the beast, but no doubt God will give light and intelligence on these points to saints then in the scene, and to whom such knowledge will be most useful, and even necessary in order that the true character of the beast may be known. But to us, as Christians, who shall not be in these prophetic scenes, but view them from above, the name of the beast could be of no practical value. Conjecture and guess-work innumerable have been advanced, and human ingenuity have been taxed to its utmost to solve this Apocalyptic enigma, but a satisfactory solution is as far off as ever. We leave it where God leaves it, till He makes it plain, as undoubtedly He will; if not to us, at least to those

who will be in the position to profit by it. Various heathen emperors, as Nero, Caligula, Mohammed, Genseric; the Pope, Luther, Calvin, the first Napoleon, and numerous others have been suggested as the *name* of the beast. In our judgment all this research represents just so much wasted time. Those who receive the mark of the beast in either its name or number are doomed to eternal misery. The words in which their awful fate is recorded are unequalled for horror. We know of nothing in the Word to exceed in dread solemnity the utter, irrevocable, and everlasting ruin of the adherents of the beast. God alone could describe it, and He has done so in words and terms which express unspeakable anguish (xiv. 9-11). The door of hope is closed to the beast, his fellow-associate in evil, and his numerous worshippers. The rejection of Christ by Christendom shall most surely be followed by the acceptance of the false Messiah, and *that* crowning act of guilt and human folly when fully consummated can have but one end—the lake of fire for the beast and all his supporters.

“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six” (verse 18). Expositors have brought skill, learning, and in some instances great research to the elucidation of the question: What is meant by the number 666? The most fanciful interpretations have been given, thereby shewing the lack of that wisdom and spiritual understanding required in our text. This as yet unsolved enigma will be known when the time arrives for the full development of Satan’s plans in the crisis, so that the godly shall be able to discern Satan’s great counterfeit and refuse his mark. In the text, the last head of the empire and the empire itself, seem strangely mixed, but all shall be plain when the time comes for the beast to play his last card ere he goes into perdition. “Then the wise shall understand” (Dan. xii. 10).

Babylon and the Beast. Rev. xvii.

We have the fall of Babylon announced as the third in the chain of events unfolded in chap. xiv. Under the seventh vial the judgment of that guilty system takes place. In other words, Rev. xiv. 8 synchronises with xvi. 19, 20, hence events four, five,

six, and seven in chapter xiv. have their place *after* the pouring out of the seventh vial. This is important as helping to a due understanding of the various parts and visions of the book. Then the character of Babylon, her relation to the beast, and to the kings of the earth in general, and details of her judgment are unfolded in the two following chapters (xvii. and xviii.). It must not be supposed that the subject matter of these chapters follow on *from* the seventh vial. The account is not consecutive. Babylon occupies a prominent place in history, and figures largely in the Scriptures as the enemy of God and enslaver of His people. Besides, she is specially singled out for judgment, and hence the need for a disclosure of her character, her relations, and her end. The *literal* Babylon situated on the Euphrates is the subject of Jer. li. The *mystical* Babylon whose seat will be at Rome on the Tiber is the great subject of Rev. xvii., xviii. The literal must not be confounded with the mystical. The literal city, Babylon, is never to be rebuilt, "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her" (Jer. li. 64). It is the religious system of that name which is before us here. Why should Babylon be distinguished above all as the subject of the Lord's vengeance? by *whom* and by *what* means is her judgment executed? Chapters xvii. and xviii. of the Apocalypse answer these and other questions, naturally suggested to enquiring minds. Thus, then, chaps. xiv. 8; xvi. 19; xvii.; xix. 4 all go together, and should be read as one story.

Great Babylon, the mystic harlot of the Apocalypse, is far more guilty than her partner in crime—the beast. The beast and the woman are both marked out for judgment, but the latter especially. The two previous notices of Babylon (chaps. xiv. and xvi.) left a huge blank to be filled up which these two chapters do (xvii.; xviii.). Who and what was Babylon that the Lord should wreak His utmost vengeance upon her (xvi. 19), and cause her downfall to be proclaimed and reiterated too in the heavens? (xiv. 8; xix. 2, 3).

The chapter naturally divides into two parts. The first describes the Great Harlot as seen by the Seer in vision (verses 1-6). The second is more full, and deeply interesting, as giving a marvellous compendium of the future history of the beast, both in its relation to the whore and to the Lamb of God. That the city of Rome is meant is certain from verse eighteen.

This part of the prophecy is comprised within the last twelve verses of the chapter, and ought to be studied carefully, and with prayerfulness by all students of the prophetic scriptures.

There are four representative women named in the Apocalypse.

1. Jezebel, or the *papal* system (ii. 20).
2. Woman clothed with the sun, etc.; *Israel* (xii. 1).
3. Babylon, the mother of harlots, the corrupt and blood-thirsty *religious church* of the future (xvii., xviii.).
4. New Jerusalem, the *bride and wife* of the Lamb (xxi.).

We may add, millennial Jerusalem is the consort of the King, and her companions the cities of Judah (Ps. xlv.). Israel is the *mother* of Christ according to the flesh, and the *wife* of Jehovah in their distinct personalities. In every point of view the bride and the harlot are set in sharp contrast. The harlot is subject to Satan. The bride is subject to Christ. It is one of the vial-angels which shows both to the wondering seer. A wilderness (trackless and without resources—spiritual destitution) (xvii. 3), and a great and high mountain (greatness and stability—established authority) (xxi. 9) are the respective points of observation. Great Babylon comes *out* of the earth; its historical origin is human (Gen. xi. 1-9), its latter-day development satanic as shown in the Apocalypse. The New Jerusalem descends *out* of heaven, its native sphere, and from God, its blessed source. Satan decks the one (xvii. 4); God adorns the other (xix. 8; xxi. 11). Eternal ruin is the portion of the harlot; eternal glory the happy lot of the bride.

The Seer first beholds the great harlot sitting "upon many waters" (see Jer. li. 13). In the explanation of the vision (verses 7-18) we are informed who these waters signify: "The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sits, are peoples, and *multitudes*, and nations, and tongues" (verse 15). The introduction of *multitudes* into the usual formula expressing universality (vii. 9) marks the heterogeneous character of those subject to her sway. "The great harlot *sits* upon the many waters." She rules and dominates the nations religiously, as the beast does politically. Her following is an almost universal one, as she herself is a vast religious system. The woman and the beast represent distinct ideas. The former is the religious system; the latter the civil power. Corruption of the truth is characteristic of Babylon. Daring self-will and open opposition to God are marked features of the beast. Corruption and self-will have been at work from earliest ages, and in fact were the

two great evils let loose amongst the race in the period preceding the flood (Gen. vi. 11). Here is seen the full-blown development of these same crimes which are to the ruin of soul and body. Corruption is Godward; violence manward. The former is embodied and concentrated in the woman who is a licentious one, for she is termed a harlot and the mother of harlots; the beast is openly bad and exercises brute force, trampling down ruthlessly all that opposes, and at the end, daringly comes out in military force and array against Christ and His heavenly army (xix. 19). The beast first destroys the woman, then flushed with victory and intoxicated with power madly and impiously leads on his armies against the Lamb and His militant host. The principles of Babylon have been at work from earliest times, but its full-blown development is here witnessed. It is not the papal system *alone*, but the fusion of all bearing the Christian name into one vast system of evil. The characteristics of the papacy in the middle ages are evidently witnessed in the whore of the Apocalypse. Does *pagan* Rome or *papal* Rome inherit the character and features of the Apocalyptic Babylon? The latter surely. In so far as popery has corrupted the truth, persecuted the saints of God, advanced arrogant and blasphemous claims, assumed universal dominion, and otherwise drunk into the spirit and adopted the principles and practices of the "Great Harlot"—she is in character the Babylon of the Apocalypse, but as we have already remarked, the Babylon of prophecy is worse—ininitely more than ever the papal system has been. We look for a fuller development of evil. Babylon is *future*. "The great whore" is not only Satan's counterfeit of the true Church, but is the concentrated expression of every antichristian movement and sect then in existence—consolidated and controlled by Satan. The pretensions of the whore or harlot are supported by the military forces and prestige of the apostate empire, whilst her influence extends throughout the known world—far reaching on every hand. This gigantic system of spiritual whoredom is, without doubt, Satan's masterpiece, and the vilest thing beneath the sun.

This, then, is Babylon the Great: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication; and they that dwell on the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (verse 2). This is future, although a past resemblance may be sought for in the character and doings of the papacy in the

truly dark times of the middle ages. The harlot first forms a guilty alliance with the kings of the earth, *i.e.*, the great political leaders of Christendom, and then makes drunk with the wine of her fornication "they that *dwell* on the earth," that is the mass of Christian apostates. The wickedness of these once Christian professors is now filled up. Christ, the heavenly calling, and Christianity in toto, are now abandoned and they give themselves up to the short-lived joys of the harlot's cup of wine. It is truly awful to contemplate the career, the character, and the doom of those *dwellers on the earth* , thus morally distinguished, and singled out as the worst on the face of the earth.

Adultery, or idolatry—with their idols have they committed adultery (Ezek. xxiii. 37)—is the special sin charged upon Israel of old, as being the married wife of Jehovah (Jer. iii. 14 ; Isa. liv. 1). For this she was divorced. But in the purpose and grace of Jehovah, Israel will be reinstated in her former and blessed relation to God—one never again to be forfeited so long as sun and moon endure. *Fornication* or illicit intercourse, and connection with the guilty and apostate world, is the solemn indictment upon Babylon—the corrupt and licentious woman who ensnares and captivates with her short-lived pleasures all within her influence—kings and people, high and low. The seductive glitter and meretricious display of this abandoned woman affect all classes, and morally ruin those over whom she casts her golden chains and who drink of her cup. Every right and true thought of Christ perishes where the woman's blandishments are received and her smile courted.

"I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" (verse 3). The beast, if not the most prominent figure in the vision, is yet an integral part of the prophecy as a whole. The subserviency of the beast to the harlot is expressed by the Seer, "I saw a woman *sitting* upon a scarlet-coloured beast." The action intimates the thorough and complete subjection of the civil power. The rule and supremacy of the woman over the vast imperial and apostate power is a singular sight. The woman not only sits upon, or beside the nations and peoples comprised within the prophetic area (verse 1), but also rules the beast—the then dominating civil and political power on earth (verse 3). She sits upon the waters and upon the beast.

The scene in vision where this strange sight is beheld is a *desert*—a place of loneliness and utter desolation. What a striking contrast to the display both of the woman and the beast. The surpassing splendour of both captivates the heart and intoxicates the senses of all, save a suffering remnant to whom this pageant is as a wilderness—for God is not there. It is but a grand flash, a magnificent spectacle before the final crash and overthrow.

But who is the scarlet-coloured beast on which the woman sits, from which she derives her material strength, and through whom she enforces her commands? The political government of the world, its glory and greatness are indicated by the *scarlet* colour. Without doubt it is the world power of Rome that is here referred to, revived in grandeur and greatness and controlled by Satan. The beast is first named in the Apocalypse in chap. xiii., and is abruptly introduced into the history as a subject well known and understood, and possessing certain characteristics which clearly and unmistakably point to Rome (verses 1, 2).

“Full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.” In chap. xiii. 1 the seven heads or complete governing authority of the empire have upon them “names of blasphemy”; see margin of the Authorised Version, *names*, not *name*; here the beast itself is said to be “*full* of names of blasphemy.” It is not simply that the executive of the empire is given over to many and varied expressions of a blasphemous character, but the empire itself—in all its parts—is wholly corrupt, while open blatant blasphemy characterises it throughout. “Names of blasphemy,” intimate many and varied forms of rebellion and self-will against God.

“Having seven heads and ten horns.” In the earlier notice of the “seven heads” upon the beast, there is indicated the completeness of administrative power (xiii. 1), but here, as is shown in the subsequent explanation (verse 10), the heads represent successive forms of government. The horns represent royal personages (verse 12). In chap. xii. 3 the dragon has seven heads and ten horns, the former being crowned, not the latter. In chap. xiii. 1 the beast has ten horns and seven heads, in this case the horns being crowned. In the former instance the *heads* are crowned; in this latter the *horns*. In our chapter, however, neither heads nor horns are crowned. The royal personages seen in the vision were not in full possession of their

royal dignity, thus in the angel's explanation of the ten-horned beast we read, "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have not yet received a kingdom, but receive authority as kings one hour with the beast" (verse 12); that is they reign in royal authority in conjunction with the beast; the little horn of Daniel vii. 8, 20, and the beast of the Apocalypse being their Master. As the actual reign of these ten kings is regarded as subsequent to the vision, the horns or kings are not seen crowned.

"And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls" (verse 4).

Having had the state in the beast, we again turn to witness the church in the woman, and her ascendancy for a time over the civil power. She rides the beast, and controls it for her own selfish ends and purposes. But she is by far the more dangerous of the two. The beast openly blasphemes and persecutes the saints then standing for the rights of God. The woman is seductive and attractive, and having gathered to herself the weight and splendour of courts, palaces, and in short the tinsel and glory of the world, she sits as a queen, having by her arts and seductive flatteries gained the heart of Christendom. God is displaced in the thoughts of men.

Her *vesture*—purple and scarlet—is that which particularly distinguishes pope and cardinal. Her *ornaments* of gold, precious stones, and pearls are amongst the chief symbols of papal pride and glory. Silver is not named. In the services of the papal church, silver is being discarded for gold. But whatever resemblance there may be between Babylon and the Romish Church, the great point is that the woman is here arrayed and decked out in the world's tinsel and finery. She surrounds herself with what the world regards as its highest and most valuable possessions and material wealth—that too, for which it lives and labours to amass and accumulate.

"Having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornication" (verse 4).

Babylon as a system is covered with an external grandeur and glory that attracts the natural heart and imagination of man, thus she dazzles and bewilders. But worse still, she holds in her hand a golden cup. How tempting! The cup is of gold, but its contents reveal the depths of iniquity to which she has sunk. The scarlet beast—the colour of the dragon

(xii. 3)—was *full* of names or expressions of blasphemy (verse 3), so here the woman's cup was "*full* of abominations, and filthiness of her fornication." These two evils—idolatry and corruption—characterise the last phase of the professing church on earth. "Abominations" refer to idolatry (2 Kings xxiii. 13; Isa. xlv. 19; Ezek. xvi. 36), and "fornication" to gross corruption (chap. ii. 21; ix. 21). Idolatry and the grossest and worst forms of wickedness characterise the woman. Her cup is full of these horrible evils. The climax has been reached. They might have been looked for in the midst of the heathen. But Christendom, *now* the scene of light, of grace, and truth, *to become* the very hot-bed and cesspool of all that is religiously filthy and vile, is indeed a marvel, yet this chapter sketches in plain word and symbol the future of these lands. *Now* the Holy Ghost dwells in the professing church, *then* Satan will fill it, both with his presence and awful deeds. We thank God for the sure testimony of Jesus that the Church which He builds is invulnerable (Matt. xvi. 18), and its ultimate triumph secured (Eph. v. 27).

"Upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (verse 5). The shameless character of Babylon is next shown. Her name is publicly borne, indelibly stamped upon her forehead, so that all may read and understand the true character of this awful system—a travesty of the true Church. Her name is a compound one. First, "mystery." There are no mysteries in the Old Testament. The general usage of the word in the New Testament signifies what had hitherto been kept a secret (Matt. xiii.; Eph. v. 32, etc.). The Church is subject to Christ; the woman is subject to none. She usurps Christ's place of supremacy over the nations. She is indeed a mystery, but it is one of pride and lawlessness. She should have stood for God and truth, but now she is witnessed as the embodiment of error, and of all that is morally vile and wicked. Second, "Babylon the Great." It is a huge system of spiritual evil. Great and bad as Babylon was—the enslaver of God's people of old—so bad that its doom is irrevocable (Jer. li. 64), yet it is exceeded far by its spiritual counterpart, the great Babylon of the Apocalypse. The former was guilty, but the latter much more so. In Babylon the Great we witness the gathering up in one vast system all the evils which in past

times have gone to wreck the Church. Herein is the culmination. The evils which have ever afflicted Christendom are here focussed. The last days of the Church on earth are her worst. Christianity is the combined production of the Godhead, but Christendom is here viewed as the vilest thing on earth. Truly, the woman is entitled to the appellation "Babylon the Great." That which should be her shame and sin she publicly glories in. Third, "The mother of the harlots, and abominations of the earth." Her offspring are numerous. She is the parent, the source of all and every religious system which courts the world. Religious idolatry of every shape and form, every ensnaring thing and object; in short, systems, things, doctrines, and objects used by Satan to turn men from God are here traced to their source—Great Babylon. The moral features of Babylon are ever the same—unchanged through all ages. Here she is seen in her worst because in her last and closing hours, the parent of all that is vile and morally loathsome. This, then, is the character publicly borne by the woman, just as in ancient times it was the practice in certain places for harlots to bear their name and evil reputation on their foreheads. If the admirers of the woman fail to see her true character because intoxicated with her finery and grandeur, the spiritual do. To those whose eyes have been opened by the Spirit to see the real character of the woman, it is indeed a mystery, but one which they can read and understand, if to all others an undisclosed secret.

"And I saw the women drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her I wondered with great admiration or 'wonder'" (verse 6).

One could readily understand the hatred of the pagan power to the followers and witnesses of Jesus, but that the woman—the church of these days and times—should herself shed the blood of God's saints is indeed a cause of wonder to the Seer. She devised the hellish cruelties and tortures of the middle ages, and shall do so of the equally diabolical cruelty and murder of the coming persecution in which the blood of God's saints is shed like water (Ps. lxxix. 1-3). The secular power is an instrument in the hands of the woman. The real instigator—the power behind the civil authority—is the whore. In her skirts is found the blood so wantonly shed in all ages. Babylon inherits the guilt of every previous persecuting religious power

(see Matt. xxiii. 35). She has never judged the past. Her history is black enough, and stained in every page with blood—the blood of those dear to God and Jesus. Here the guilt of Babylon culminates. The Seer marvels at the awful sight. The church is here witnessed as the wickedest thing on earth. This, then, is what the professing church is coming to. Nothing can exceed her in grandeur, in greatness, in idolatry, in filthiness, and in cruelty. “I wondered, seeing her, with great wonder.” The earth-dwellers are drunk with her wine (verse 2), and the woman herself is drunk with blood. These two, *i.e.*, the apostates and the woman, are the worst then on the face of the earth, and on both the full fury of God’s indignation shall burst forth in flames of inextinguishable wrath.

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall be present” (verse 8, R.V.).

Here we have the history of the greatest empire the world has ever beheld compressed into four crisp sentences, as remarkable for their brevity as for their truth. Two of them are yet future. We again repeat, the woman and the beast are distinct. The former is the ecclesiastical power, the latter the civil authority. Both are viewed as wicked and apostate. The woman is viewed in the vision as in the zenith of her prosperity, proud, seductive, and murderous. She is on the highest pinnacle of pride and power just previous to her downfall. The beast is viewed as about to enter on the third phase of its history—*out* of the abyss. This most awful feature is to be added to its *human* rise and history—Satan bringing it out of the prison house of demons, out of the darkness and wickedness of that domain where the authority of Satan reigns supreme, to be succeeded by its everlasting ruin. These, then, are the two powers beheld in vision by the wondering Seer.

The angel turns from shewing the harlot, now he will explain to us the beast. John would cease to wonder at the appalling picture (verse 7).

The ancient empire beheld in vision *was*; that is, it existed in its imperial form in John’s day, and on till its destruction in 476, A.D.

“And is *not*.” It has no present political existence. The kingdoms which composed it, of course, remain, but the empire as such no longer exists. Modern Europe, with its many conflicting interests, mutual jealousies, and separate kingdoms is the result of the complete break-up of the once undivided empire of the Cæsars. The western part of the empire, which fell last, is by far the guiltiest, as being the scene of Christian light and grace. These two phases of the empire are simple matters of history, but the remaining features are prophetic, and are alone written in the pages of the sacred volume. God lifts the veil, and we see, after the lapse of many centuries, the empire once more filling the gaze of men—an astonishment to an apostate Christendom.

“Is about to come up *out of the abyss*.” Satan will revive the empire, and then stamp his own character upon it. The human rise of the beast must be carefully distinguished from its satanic revival, in the midst of the 70th prophetic week at the epoch of Satan’s expulsion from heaven (xii.). The Seer beholds it in vision on the eve of its revival. “Is *about* to come up.” The abyss produces this monster of iniquity—the beast.

“Go into destruction.” This is the final phase of Gentile power. Rome came into existence B.C. 753. It passed through many trials, weathered many political storms, till it reached the zenith of its glory in the time of Christ. Its connection with Christ and Judah is the great crisis in the history of the empire. The beast in its representative crucified the Lord after thrice declaring His innocence, and shed the blood of the people in such multitudes that millions were involved in the most awful slaughter yet recorded in history, while the miserable remnants were either sold in such numbers that the slave markets were glutted with the human merchandise and purchasers could not be found, or dispersed throughout the world. God remembers these deeds. The hour of vengeance has arrived. The beast is consigned to the lake of fire. Final destruction overtakes the once mighty empire of the Cæsars.

When the empire re-appears in its last and satanic form, it will be an object of universal wonder, save to the redeemed. What a state of things we have arrived at! Satan brings out of the darkness of the pit a power which he fashions and controls, outwardly like the ancient empire, yet diabolically featured. Men then will wonder, and worship both Satan and

his human instruments (xiii. 4-12). The elect had their names written in the book of life *from* the foundation of the world. Ah! these future times were all thought of and provided for in the foresight of God. This book is the same as that of xiii. 8—only there we are told that the book belongs to the slain Lamb. We read of another book of life in iii. 5; there, however, it is the book of christian *profession*—true and false—hence some names will be erased and others stand. But in our chapter the book or register of life is that of *reality*, hence no name will be blotted out. All within the wide domain of Christendom shall be carried away in wonder at the re-appearance of this marvellous phenomena—all save the elect. To such the true character of the beast will be apparent.

“Here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, the other is not yet come: and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition” (verses 9-11).

(Of all the subjects embraced within the circle of biblical revelation, we know of none which has so occupied unintelligent minds, and produced such a wild crop of the merest conjecture, as that of prophecy. Surely in all that concerns the future, sobriety of thought is needful. In the domain of prophecy human learning is of little account. Human wisdom which would deduce from the past or present, facts and principles, are of no avail here. The future is alone unfolded in the Holy Scriptures, and the gravest mistakes in the interpretation of the prophecies have been made, not by the ignorant, but by learned men. We are absolutely dependent on the teaching of the Holy Scriptures for any knowledge we possess of coming events. God alone can unfold the future (Isa. xli. 21-23). Hence the force of the pre-fatory words, “Here is the mind that has wisdom.” True wisdom takes its stand at the threshold of prophetic enquiry, and reverently asks, *what is written*, and to that and that only, yields implicit subjection. *History* lies open to the natural mind. *Prophecy* can alone be understood by the spiritually wise. To the further explanation of the vision the wise are now directed. The two prominent features of the beast which carried the woman, are its seven heads and ten horns (verse 3, 7), these occupy the chief place in the explanation. The heads are first

named. There is a double application of the symbol "seven heads."

First, "The seven heads are seven mountains, whereon the woman sits." These hills or mountains are Palestine, Nierinal, Aventine, Cælian, Virninal, Esquiline, Janiculum. The seven-hilled city of Rome is here indicated as the seat and centre of the women's almost universal authority and influence. "The seven-hilled city" is a term common enough in the history of Rome, especially in its earliest ages. It was one familiar in the social intercourse of the people, as also in its literature. Roman historians and poets seemed proud in so designating their city. It is where the papacy has been located and flourished—more or less—for 1500 years. The papacy is now slowly recovering from the wounds inflicted upon it; first in the sixteenth century, and then in our own times when stripped of its temporal power, its vitality is wonderful. Its energies are now consecrated in winning back to its fold the nations of Europe. To effect this, the present occupant of the papal throne is bending his untiring energies, aided by all the skill and chicanery of cardinal, priest, and people. The conversion of England is the dazzling project, and is an event within a measurable time—so thinks and says the papacy. That the peoples of modern enlightened Europe will ultimately be gathered under the sway of the woman seems an evident truth from our chapter, if a sad and sorrowful one. The mighty work of the Reformation in its general and outward results are disappearing, while the acceptance of Romish principles and practices are steadily gaining ground. The persistent and insidious advances of popery in every department of life—political, social, and religious—is an alarming factor in the present situation. Protestantism as a whole is supremely indifferent. The old war cry, "no Popery," cannot now rouse the nation. It is asleep. The Higher Critics with their infidel and destructive criticism have undermined faith in the Holy Scriptures; while the efforts of true Christians to stem the torrent of popish error are paralysed owing to the multiplicity of sects, in which combined action is rendered impossible, and further, because of the growing indifference to what is of God.

Second, "There are seven kings," or heads of forms of civil and political government. The local reference to Rome in verse nine is undoubted. But a further and additional explanation is offered. The seven heads on the beast represent seven successive forms of

government, from the rise of the fourth universal empire on through its history till its end.

"Five are fallen." These are Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, and Military Tribunes. "Fallen" or "fell" intimates the ruin or destruction of a system or kingdom (xiv. 8; xvi. 19). The death of an individual ruler would not be so spoken of. Hence the term "kings" in our passage signifies the ruling authority for the time being. The four beasts of Daniel vii. are said to be four kings (verse 17). Thus the term *kings* must not be confined in its application to royal personages. The context in each case must determine.

"One is." This is the sixth, or imperial form of government set up by Julius Cæsar, and under which John was banished to Patmos under Domitian. The previous forms of authority had ceased. The first Emperor Julius absorbed the power covered by the old names under which Rome had been governed, and commenced the long and imperial line which became extinct in the year 476 A.D.

"The other is not yet come." Thus, between the dissolution of the empire and its yet future re-appearance, many centuries have elapsed. "When he cometh he must continue a short space." This is the seventh head. It is the rise of the fallen empire under new conditions as presented in chap. xiii. 1. When the beast next comes upon the scene, it will be characterised by the completeness of administrative authority, but of a blasphemous kind, and formed of ten kingdoms each having its separate monarch, yet all in complete subordination to the great Gentile chief who will control the empire and hold all with a firm grasp. The brief continuance of this special form of government is plainly stated. "A short space" or little while, marks the duration of the anomolous condition of things under the revived empire, yet worse is to follow.

"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven." The gigantic confederation of Rome is here regarded in its essential features as ever the same. He is an "eighth." We have here an advance upon the historical revival of the beast (xiii. 1). For the three years and a half preceding the advent of the Lord in power and glory, the beast is dominated and controlled by Satan. He has revived it out of the abyss. The beast in its last, and worst state, is said to come out of the abyss, as distinct from its rise at the first (Dan.

vii. 1), or its future human revival (Rev. xiii. 1). Thus it presents a complete picture by itself, and is thereby entitled to the appellation an "eighth." Its diabolical character as revived by Satan accounts for the use of the ordinal.

"Is of the seven." There will be certain features peculiar to the beast in the last two stages of its history. Probably the form of power under the seventh head will be continued, and in some other respects the last holder of Gentile power will tread in the steps of his predecessor. Thus he will be "of the seven," yet an eighth as a distinctive person. We may here remark, that the beast and its personal ruler are so vitally connected, that the two are spoken of in interchangeable terms; thus the beast perishes and is thrown in the person of its last great chief into the lake of fire. The last sovereign ruler stamps his own character upon the empire. They can be regarded separately as in Dan. vii.; or as identical in our chapter.

"Goeth into perdition" or destruction. This is accomplished at the commencement of the Millennial Reign and is graphically described in chapter xix. 17-21. The fowls of heaven are summoned to the "supper of the Great God." They are called to feed and feast upon the great and mighty of earth. The two great chiefs—heads respectively of the secular and religious powers—are consigned to the lake of fire, cast in alive; their subordinates and armies everlastingly perish. The first five heads fell in succession. Then the sixth came to a violent end; the seventh is merged in the eighth which suffers a judgment more awful than history records. This head is identified with the beast itself, and hence if it is destroyed the beast must go into utter ruin; compare with Dan. vii. 11.

Having had the "seven heads" explained we are now informed as to "the ten horns" (verse 12). These horns refer to royal persons. The term "horn" denotes *power* in the abstract (v. 6; Lam. ii. 3); but as used here it refers to *kings*. The ten horns therefore represent as many distinct royal personages or their kingdoms. Another has tersely said, "The ten kingdoms shall be *contemporaneous* in contradistinction to the seven heads which were *successive*." But the ten kingdoms which as to actual territory existed, are here viewed as coming into power *with* the beast: see also verse 16, not the ten horns "upon the beast," but the ten horns "and the beast" (R.V.).

They are viewed as separate existences. They do not exist as separate kingdoms or nationalities. There are ten, but co-existent with the reign of the beast. They "received power as kings one hour with the beast." When the beast re-appears on the arena of history it will do so in a ten-kingdom form. After the dissolution of the empire in 476, it will next come up in a form hitherto unknown in history. The revived empire shall consist of ten kingdoms with their respective chiefs. The duration of the reign of these kings is measured by the reign of the beast. But not only are these kingdoms in existence during the time that the beast plays his terrible *role*, but they are subordinate to him. Willingly they place themselves in absolute subjection to the beast. "These have one mind, and give their power and strength to the beast" (ver. 13). The beast and the horns are contemporary powers, but the latter bow implicitly to the will of the former. When the empire was broken up, then separate kingdoms were constituted, such is the historical fact, but our prophecy demands the existence of the beast *and* the ten kingdoms—the latter subservient to the former.

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (verse 14). Here is recorded the final public act of the beast and his allies. The conflict itself is fully described in chap. xix. 19-21. The angel here simply notes the fact, passing over many intervening events. The war has not been actually entered upon, but it is anticipated. Its issue is in no wise doubtful. "The Lamb shall overcome them." Victory is assured ere the conflict is entered upon, for the mighty Conqueror is King of all who reign, and Lord of all who exercise authority. He is supreme. All power in heaven and earth is His (Matt. xxviii. 18). O the madness and folly of men and governments to enter the list with God's Lamb who will publicly wield the authority of Jehovah's throne! How touching the blessed association of the Lamb with the mighty King—tenderness and power combined (chap. v. 5, 6).

"They that are with Him." The militant hosts, the heavenly armies, consist of all embraced in the first resurrection. There will be other companies of redeemed persons in heaven besides the Church (Heb. xii. 23). The whole body of heavenly saints

accompany their Lord through the opened heaven, and come down to crush the confederated opposition to the rights of the Lamb. For this universal gathering of heavenly saints see Jude 14; Zech. xiv. 5; Rev. xix. 14. In the morning of the Lord's triumphal return "all the holy angels" shall swell His triumph (Matt. xxv. 31; Heb. i. 6). But "they that are with Him" must be confined to saints only. *Angels* have their part in the war in heaven (Rev. xii. 7). *Saints* alone form the conquering army of the Lamb.

Those who take part in this conflict and who serve under such a renowned Leader are each and all spoken of as "called, and chosen, and faithful": called in time (2 Tim. i. 9); chosen in eternity (Eph. i. 4); and proved faithful in all and every relation of life and that even unto death (Matt. xxv. 21-23; Rev. ii. 10). These epithets, called, chosen, and faithful, can only strictly apply to saints.

The angel then proceeds with the interpretation. "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (verse 15). The *woman* sits upon the beast (verse 3). The *harlot* sits upon or beside many waters (verse 1). Having the explanation of these "many waters" before us, we can the more readily understand the immense and universal influence which the apostate church exercises. The peoples and nations—organised and unformed—specially outside the limits of the then Roman world, are ensnared and captivated by the allurements of the harlot. She sits enthroned in greatness, and richly adorned with the glories of the world, but without the affections of her deluded followers. There is display, but no reality, no heart for Christ whose bride she impiously professes to be. Her own exaltation, and that to the spiritual ruin of the deluded millions who receive her favours and court her smile, is her sole aim. Her supreme regard is for *gold* (xviii. 12), her least concern is for the *souls* of men (verse 13). The four divisions of the human family are employed to set forth the far-reaching influence of the woman (vii. 9; xi. 9).

"And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire; for God did put in their hearts to do His mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God should be accomplished" (verses 16, 17).

“The ten horns *and* the beast” (see R. v. for this important emendation). The ten kingdoms separately and as a whole combine with the beast in hatred to the whore. What a change! It is evident that the beast and confederate kings exist after the destruction of Babylon, as they, *i.e.*, the beast and the horns, are the human instruments in inflicting the Lord’s vengeance on that guilty and religious apostate system. The secular power is reserved for destruction at the hands of the Lord in Person, and at His coming in power (xix). The ten horns act in conjunction with the beast in hatred to the whore—all were united in supporting the claims and pretensions of the woman, *now* they are equally agreed in effecting her ruin.

The world’s glory and might—religious and secular—is but a passing dream. All not founded on God withers, fades, and perishes. Babylon when on the highest pinnacle of pride and greatness, in the zenith of her glory is cut down. Her ruin is complete and final. In righteous retribution her partners in crime become the active instruments in her political overthrow, and displacement from power over the nations.

There seems a gradation in the punishment meted out to the harlot. First, *hated*; this refers to the loathing and disgust in which her late confederates and supporters regard her. Second, made *desolate*; despoiled of her wealth, and utterly wasted (xviii. 19). Third, *naked*; stripped of her purple and scarlet robes, she appears before all in her true character as a shameless and abandoned woman (Ezek. xxiii. 29; Rev. iii. 18)—her moral nakedness and shame would be apparent to all. Fourth, “*eat her flesh*”; there is significance in the fact that *flesh* is in the plural; the abundance of her wealth and all she gloried in is devoured by her late admirers, *now* her bitterest enemies: compare with James v. 3 and Ps. xxvii. 2; Micah iii. 2, 3. Fifth, “*burn her with fire*”; utter social and political ruin is here indicated. The main element in the destruction of the literal Babylon was water (Jer. li.). The mystical city of that name “shall be utterly burned with fire” (xviii. 9). Both Babylons are doomed to everlasting desolation. The one has fallen; the other is sure to follow. There is “no healing of the bruise.”

The powers who destroy Babylon glut their vengeance on the guilty system which had so long enslaved them. But here the veil is drawn aside, and we find that whatever *they thought*,

they were simply carrying out the will of the Lord. God had decreed the destruction of the worst system on the face of the earth, and the beast and his vassal kings were His instruments in doing so. "God did put in their hearts to do His mind." Note the distinction, "their hearts" and His *mind*." Heartily they entered on the work of destruction, but after all they unknowingly accomplished the settled purpose of God. Both the heart and mind of the destroying powers are united. They love the service to which, while they know it not, they have been divinely set apart, and they execute it with fixed determination. Such seems to be the thought conveyed in our text. Further, the ten kings "give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God should be accomplished." There is absolute subjection to the beast; unable to maintain separate and independent kingdoms, the ten kings voluntarily place themselves and their kingdoms under the rule of the beast, and from henceforth he becomes their master who allows them but the shadow of royalty. The real power is in the hands of the beast (xiii. 2-7). What is attributed to the kings in verse 13 is traced to God as the source in verse 17. All this movement amongst the powers of Europe in the coming crisis is in accomplishment of the prophetic "words of God." We would further add, that the complete subjection of the ten kings to the beast, as indicated in verse thirteen, is a condition subsequent to the destruction of Babylon. They had previously given their power to the woman, now it is transferred to the beast. The duration of the reign of the beast in the last great crisis defines the length of time when the ten horns or kings exercise sovereignty, the horns and beast exist together (verse 12). But that describes a state previous to and also subsequent to the downfall of Babylon, whereas the abject slavery of the powers to the beast is consequent upon and subsequent to the utter ruin of the Romish system.

God works unseen, but not the less truly in all the political changes of the day. The astute statesman, the clever diplomatist is simply an agent in the Lord's hands. He knows it not. Self-will and motives of policy may influence to action, but God is steadily working towards one end—the heavenly and earthly glory of His Son, the exaltation of Jesus; thus instead of kings and statesmen thwarting God's purpose they are unconsciously forwarding it. God is not indifferent, but is

behind the scenes of human action. The doings of the future ten kings in relation to Babylon and the beast—the ecclesiastical and secular powers—are not only under the direct control of God, but done in fulfilment of His words.

Connected View of the Apocalyptic Seals, Trumpets, and Vials.

THE SEVEN SEALS (Rev. vi.).

First Seal.—An imperial and victorious conqueror, as the first Napoleon. A series of nigh bloodless victories and extensive conquests.

Second Seal.—Bloody wars and civil commotions will extend throughout and desolate the whole prophetic earth, namely, the scene of the four Gentile monarchies.

Third Seal.—Awful time of mourning, followed by a famine, especially felt by the working classes, and from which the rich and governing portion of society will in great measure be exempted.

Fourth Seal.—The providential judgments of God will overrun a certain portion of the prophetic earth. (See Ezek. xiv. 21). The "fourth part" does not describe a geographical sphere, but intimates a *limited* area.

Fifth Seal.—An outburst of hot and fiery persecution upon the then saints of God, whose souls invoke vengeance, and whom God quiets and vindicates for a season. The company of the martyred are not yet complete.

Sixth Seal.—Society—political and civil—is shaken from its centre to its circumference. The general dread is that the wrath and day of the Lamb are come, but that is man's fear only, as it was in the year 1000. Judgments more severe are yet to follow.

Seventh Seal.—The course of the succeeding judgments are delayed, and a solemn pause ensues, heaven in meantime, being interested in the prayers of suffering saints on earth. The Angel-Priest is Christ, Who answers these prayers by further judgments on the earth, more severe than those under the seals. Chap. viii. 1-5.

NOTES.—The Seals are *after* the translation of the heavenly Saints, and are connected with the *Lamb*.

These judgments are of a providential character, and are not so directly witnessed as immediately divine and from heaven. The signs preceding the Advent of the Son of Man detailed in Matt. xiv. 15-30 are similar to the judgments under the first four Seals. Delete the words "*and see*" in verses 1, 3, 5, 7.

The call is not to the seer but to the instrument or minister of judgment. The strictly prophetic part of the book commences with this chapter.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS (Rev. viii.).

First Trumpet.—Judgment upon distinguished persons and eminent authorities, and the destruction of the general prosperity in the revived empire.

Second Trumpet.—A power itself, under the judging hand of God, becomes the means of judgment to others. Destruction of men and of the commercial life of the empire are the results. The fourth or Latin empire not exclusively regarded here.

Third Trumpet.—The poisoning and moral corruption of all political and moral principles of action amongst peoples, so as to cause intense misery, is indicated under this plague.

Fourth Trumpet.—Here all supreme, derived, and governing authority within the limits of the revived empire is smitten by the hand of judgment. Intense moral darkness and a dark night follows.

Fifth, or Woe Trumpet.—The power of Satan is let loose against APOSTATE ISRAEL. The anguish is intolerable; death would be a welcome release from their misery, but they must drain to the dregs the bitter cup of agony.

Sixth, or Woe Trumpet.—THE WESTERN EMPIRE, the scene of light and privilege, is now the subject of judgment, if not a wider area. This judgment comes from the East, and will be both of a temporal and moral kind. The complete apostasy of these lands is not far distant.

Seventh, or Woe Trumpet.—The angry nations rage, but God's wrath falls upon man universally. Christ's Omnipotent and Universal power and glory are celebrated, and the results are eternal. Compare "the time of the dead" with chap. xx. 11-13. We are thus brought down to the era of the kingdom which closes the second part of The Revelation. Chap. xi. 18.

NOTES.—The Trumpets will be blown *after* the translation of the Saints, and are connected with *angelic* power.

The Trumpets succeed the Seals, are much more severe in character, but are confined to the revived Roman power. Observe the speciality of the last three being "Woe" Judgments. A "third" denotes the Roman earth.

The previous symbol was a *sea*, here it is a *trumpet*. Events group themselves and are in keeping with these respective symbols.

THE SEVEN VIALS (Rev. xvi.).

First Vial.—All in immediate or remote connection with the apostate civil power will be caused intense mental distress and anguish.

Second Vial.—The whole scene of religious light and privilege, Europe, America, etc., will become utterly corrupt and apostate.

Third Vial.—The peoples and nations of the whole prophetic earth—the scene covered by the four Gentile monarchies—have their sources and springs of life and action poisoned. Most awful judgment.

Fourth Vial.—The supreme authority on earth is judged, and becomes the means of awful anguish and distress to others. Blasphemy against God instead of glory to Him is the effect of those terrible plagues which express the wrath of God upon man.

Fifth Vial.—The satanic authority of the beast is smitten in judgment, not yet the personal head of the empire. Christ will deal personally with *him* (Rev. xix. 20). Anguish unspeakable and dreadful blasphemy follow.

Sixth Vial.—The river Euphrates will be literally dried up, so that the powers north and east will be gathered in and about Palestine by satanic energy for the last and closing judgments to be executed by Christ in person.

Seventh Vial.—The civil and ecclesiastical powers in the Roman world, and within the sphere of the Gentile monarchies generally, completely break up. It is the last outburst of vengeance, the last outpouring of God's wrath upon men. "*It is done.*" As in the seventh trumpet, we are here brought to the introduction of the world-kingdom of Christ. Come, Lord, come!

NOTES.—The vials will be poured out *after* the translation of the Saints, and are connected with the wrath of *God*.

These judgments are much more severe than the preceding, and are universal in their range. Direct wrath from God is the special character of the judgments under the Vials. The first *four* Trumpets and the first *four* Vials are similar in character, the latter embracing a wider area, however. In the execution of these Vials the wrath of God is exhausted. The wrath of the Lamb follows on the execution of these judgments.

Coming Struggles.

PRESENT STATE OF THINGS.

The Church as a public profession lies broken and shivered, and no human hand can repair the wreck. The world is beginning to rock and reel, and governments—monarchical and republican—are trembling at the wild and tumultuous rush of the forces of anarchy and disorder. Europe, with its numerous incoherent states and conflicting political interests, seems nearing its final phase of existence, when the strong, blaspheming, and infidel ruler of the west (Dan. ii. and Rev. xvii.) unites all in one vast kingdom. Were the present a thousand times worse than it really is, the heart would be calm and confident as the eye rests on these holy words: "Jesus Christ, the *same* yesterday, and to-day, and forever." God is at the helm and guides the world and the Church, while Jesus Christ ever abides the *SAME*. Here, then, faith takes her stand, and neither weakness nor discouragement can rob the heart of its strength. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength" (Isa. xxvi. 4).

HUMAN GOVERNMENT.

Human government has its root in the commission given to Noah (Gen. ix.). For 1,656 years God left the guilty race to pursue its course unchecked by law or visible authority. The earth, which the Creator had decked out in beauty as man's home, was rapidly becoming a vast pandemonium, when God interposed, and wrapped the guilty scene in a winding sheet of judgment. Yet, again, the earth is to be swept by the besom of destruction. It has undergone a baptism of *water* (2 Peter iii. 6). It awaits a baptism of *fire* (verse 7). The coming conflagration, more than a thousand years hence, shall embrace the heavens and the earth. "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this?"

When Abel was slain, there was neither law nor magistrate to take cognizance of the crime. The blood so wantonly shed appealed to God, not to man. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto ME from the ground" (Gen. iv. 10). Yet, natural conscience (however ill instructed or even perverted), instinctively feels that "capital punishment" is the fitting answer to the crime of murder. The fears of the terror-stricken

fratricide witnessed to the truth of it: "It shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me" (verse 14). From the times of Gen. ix. 5, 6, till the return of the Lord in judgment (2 Peter iii. 5-10), the crime of murder should be punished with death. The Noachic Covenant, in which for the first time the principles of civil government were revealed, has not been abrogated. It was made with the earth through Noah its head and representative. It was made between God and man, and remains till this hour unrepealed by any divine statute. It was not a *Jewish* law, but a *human* law given centuries before the Jewish people were in existence.

Previous to Noachic times there was no human government, every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Robbery became the high-road to possession. Brute-force—the child of unbridled self-will—trampled on every natural right and rioted in nameless deeds of violence (Gen. vi. 2, 5, 11, 12).

Hence arose the necessity of curbing the passions and restraining the violence of man. This was effectually provided for in the institution of the Noachic Covenant. The first divinely-appointed magistrate was Noah. The world was then placed under entirely new conditions. Strict justice was to be enforced. The ruler was not to bear the sword in vain. "Fear of the *people*" is always a sure sign of a weak government. "Fear of the *Lord*" is ever a marked characteristic of a strong and stable one.

Forty-three centuries ago God revealed the first and fundamental principles of civil government. These principles abide and should be enforced by every nation and government under the sun. They are neither Christian nor Jewish, and were called into being for the welfare of the race more than 850 years before Israel was placed under law, and 2350 years before the Church was called out as the witness of God's grace in the world. The world is about 6000 years old, Israel about 3500 years, and the Church 2000 years old. Every political form of government established on earth is doomed, where the principles and terms of the Noachic Covenant are disregarded. The authority of God must be respected; His right to govern reverentially owned. The abolition of capital punishment for the crime of murder is a distinct breach of the old Covenant. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers" is a command which it is treason to disobey.

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS.

Revolutionary and socialistic movements are a curse to any country. Constitutional changes—where the creatorial rights of God are conserved—may result in blessing. But the present wild hurricane of democracy, unless sharply checked and its aiders and abettors severely punished, shall yet wreck every government, overthrow every dynasty, and plunge these nations into a sea of anarchy and misery. The absence of a firm government, regardless of the fear of the people, of a strong restraining grasp upon human passion, is a dire calamity. England was never more feared and respected than when Cromwell in the fear of God ruled the country. Ireland never so prospers as when governed with a firm hand.

The working classes are putting forth their strength. The conflict thickens all along the line. Labour is matched against capital and loudly clamours for the distribution, or rather plunder, of wealth in money and property. Social title and position from the king downward is sneered at, and the hereditary chamber of this great empire, the House of Lords, is threatened with overthrow by men who ought to know better. The people are determined to rule. We deliberately assert, that the working classes are being taught, and adopting principles which are sure to result in ruining the commercial prosperity of the country and drive the trade away from her shores. Other nations, notably Germany and Italy, are coming to the front as the world's great work-shops. Soon England may be left behind in the commercial race. Trades' Unionism, in its tyranny in preventing free labour as between servant and master, and in seeking to control the labour markets of the world, is wholly unscriptural in its aims and methods, and should be shunned by all desirous of conforming their lives to the Word of God.

England seems to have reached the zenith of her prosperity. A retrograde movement has apparently commenced which may land Great Britain as a third-rate power amongst her continental compeers. Is property safe in Ireland? Let the immoral Plan of Campaign in which righteous rent is withheld, cattle driven away and maimed, the owners boycotted, and many ladies and gentlemen reduced to beggary, and some to end their days in the workhouse, answer the question: Will it be long safe in England? Already laws have been proposed to confiscate the

property of the rich, to *compel* them to sell their land to the poor at prices fixed by the State. Many practical and far-seeing men are selling out, and others contemplate a similar step. The repudiation of the national debt, and the doctrine of public plunder, or "share and share alike," are loudly and strongly urged by agitators—by men who have nothing to lose, but may gain in a scramble for wealth which they have neither heads nor hands to produce. The people, as a whole, are losing sight of the fact that capital and position have also their respective rights and privileges. Capital and labour are indispensable to each other, and there is no necessary antagonism between them.

The labour wars in America and in the Continent are a sad indication of the lawlessness which is everywhere abroad. We have not reached in this country such an acute development of the labour trouble, but the teachings and principles, of which the armed conflicts of lawless men with the authorities are the outcome, have been loudly proclaimed and earnestly advocated in press and platform for years, and really the adoption of revolutionary principles by the peoples of Europe is an alarming sign of the times.

The rule of the people according to the teaching of a large and growing party amongst working men, and especially amongst the ignorant and uneducated, means the confiscation of property, the making of weak laws and their feeble execution. This goes to the destruction of national prosperity. How can you expect laws to be made and obeyed by the self-same persons?

Socialism, the handmaid of Atheism, is rampant in this country and on the continent. It saps the foundation of morality, corrupts individual and corporate conscience. It ruthlessly tramples on the rights of capital and class privilege. Socialism never gives; it demands. It is destructive; never constructive. It is intensely selfish. One broadly-marked feature of political life is the absence of independent thought and action. All political parties are alike in the eager bid for the solid labour vote. A government put into power by the popular will is one of inherent weakness; and its tenure of office being dependent on the capricious will of the people must necessarily be a brief one. It cannot be otherwise. Government by many is a huge blunder.

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE.

We are rapidly nearing that *final* form of human government on which, like a mighty avalanche, the Lord of Glory shall descend and grind to powder, and on the ruins of which He will establish His Kingdom, wide as the globe, stable as the throne of the Eternal, and everlasting in its duration. By a general consensus of thought from friend and foe alike of Christianity, the final struggle is nigh.

The signs of the times portend a catastrophe as certain as it is near and appalling. That the sword will spring from its scabbard, and the roll of musketry again deafen our ears and sadden our hearts, is an event which, like a clap of thunder, may suddenly burst upon us at any moment.

The French Revolution of the eighteenth century is a conspicuous example of revolutionary principle—of government established by the populace and administered by the popular will. Rank, wealth, beauty, religion, and right were guillotined with the victims of the popular will. Ah! little did fair Gaul dream that her streets littered with corpses and her rivers reddened with the blood of her sons, would but serve as a miniature and scenic representation of the more awful and desolating result of the *same* revolutionary principles and acts throughout Europe.

SCRIPTURAL HISTORY OF GENTILE POWER.

In Daniel ii., we are furnished with a general history of Gentile power from its rise till its consummation, presented in panoramic vision. The dreams of the Babylonian monarch were interpreted to the king, and to all succeeding rulers and generations of men. How wise is God!

At what point in the history of the world have we got? Are we near the end of man's rule, of mere human government—to the feet and toes of the great image (Dan. ii. 33, 34; 41-44)? We firmly believe that the present uprising of the peoples and their evident determination to grasp the reins of government, bring us to the *last* phase of governmental rule, to be succeeded by the horrors of the brief reign of the anti-christian king, and then the coming of the King of kings who will still the universal groan, stanch earth's bleeding wounds, and pass a healing hand o'er the fevered brow of man. After the government by the people there is no other form of human political rule. It is on

that the judgment of God descends, and hence the working-classes may be permitted to shiver royal diadems and break imperial sceptres, but their triumph is but short lived. The kings and great of earth may cry for shelter to rock and hill (Rev. vi. 16). But the working-classes, now so eager to taste the sweets of power, shall in God's righteous ways be the first to suffer in the coming storm of divine wrath which will desolate Christendom, and turn Europe into a charnel house (Rev. vi. 4-8; xiv. 20). The image beheld in dreams by the eastern despot (Nebuchadnezzar) consisted of four metals, each inferior in value to the other. The head of gold represented the majesty of the Babylonian empire in the person of its mighty monarch. "Thou, O king, art a King of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory" (Dan. ii. 37). Imperial rule, absolute government was divinely committed to Nebuchadnezzar. It was a pure and simple autocracy. It was the rule of one over many. Nebuchadnezzar was the autocrat of the earth. He made the laws and enforced their execution. Nebuchadnezzar was *alone* responsible to God.

The second empire, symbolised by silver, was foretold by Isaiah, and the surname of the renowned Persian monarch mentioned 150 or more years before Persia rose on the ruins of the Babylonian monarchy, and succeeded to its power and empire (Isa. xlv.). Cyrus was inferior to Nebuchadnezzar, as silver is inferior to gold. The second empire pales in glory and grandeur before the first (verse 39). The laws were made, not by the king, the supreme head of the state, but by the hereditary aristocracy of the empire, and bound even the king to obedience (Dan. vi. 14-17).

The third or Grecian empire shows a still further departure from the direct and original grant of power conferred upon Nebuchadnezzar. The military controlled the state. The generals of Alexander were invested with power to make and unmake laws. It was a military despotism, and much inferior in greatness to the empire it overthrew.

The fourth or Roman empire was a strong and aggressive power (verse 40). A yet further depreciation of monarchical greatness is witnessed in the "iron" kingdom of Rome. The emperors were elected by the people, or military, or both, and were, in theory at least, expected to consult the Senate on grave matters of state.

In the interpretation of the dreams of the royal autocrat additional features of interest are supplied, not found in the vision itself. Thus the toes of the image—the extremities—composed of iron and clay, bring us to the final point of Gentile rule on earth, and that on which the descending Lord shall crush and grind to powder. He falls on the feet, but the whole image is destroyed. The consolidated political power in the hands of the Gentiles is crushed for ever. The irruption of barbarian hordes from the north led ultimately to the ruin of the kingdom of the Cæsars, and the consequent formation of modern Europe out of the chaos formed thereby. There have been attempts to revive the imperial greatness of Rome, but in vain. Government *of* the people and *by* the people has been steadily advancing. Popular elected bodies for the government of local and municipal affairs is the idol of the hour, and are serving as an educational process for the management of imperial interests. The working-classes are a recognised and potent power. They are at once feared and courted. The representation of the people as a whole in imperial affairs is now a recognised principle in the government of this great empire on which the sun never sets. The King and Emperor of India rules over many millions of people. His 100 vessels of war and 100,000 sailors sweep her seas. His empire exceeds by far the largest, the strongest, the most populous of ancient and modern kingdoms. Personally, the sovereign is powerless to stem the torrent of radicalism which threatens, at no distant date, the dismemberment of his mighty empire. The fusion of iron and clay—the union of strength with the government of many—is an impossibility. Scripture (Dan. ii. 42, 43) and facts demonstrate the truth of this. The union of the people with a strong and independent executive cannot hold long together. The people in Great Britain, in France, in Germany, in Italy are loudly demanding an equal share in the government of their respective countries. We seem to be on the eve of a general uprising of the peoples. You cannot successfully check the popular movement. When it has reached the giddy heights of power, and the reins of government are grasped by the sons of toil, and socialism sits in high places, then the vengeance of an angry God will scatter like chaff the power of man, close up “the times of the Gentiles,” and establish the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. The death-throes of the great political

struggle shall usher in a thousand years of rest for wearied men. The stone cut out without hands (verse 34) refers to the coming of our Lord in destructive power upon the kingdoms of the earth, then divided into two vast opposed and opposing camps. The stone smites the image on its feet and toes—the last phases of Gentile rule on earth. How near is His coming? But ere the blow descends and kingdoms crash, and crowns are shivered, and the earth rocks and reels, and the magnates of the civilised scene seek to hide themselves in terror, the redeemed of the Lord shall be caught up from earth to heaven. The moment of our triumph is at hand. Are we each ready, waiting, working, watching, and praying?

Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Dan. ix. 24-27).

The late Sir Edward Denny—a distinguished prophetic student—writing us on certain prophetic subjects termed the 70 weeks of Daniel “the back bone of prophecy.” Within these 70 weeks or 490 years the prophetic programme is mapped out. The times of the Gentiles are not included within the scope or terms of this prophecy, which alone concern Israel as a people, and Jerusalem their royal City. The times of the Gentiles (Luke xxi. 24) *date from* the transference of governmental power on earth from the Jew to the Gentile, from Jerusalem to Babylon, and *close with* the destruction of Gentile imperial power, and the supremacy once again of the Jew and the seat of royal government established in Jerusalem. The laboured attempts of late years to find a solution of this prophecy in relation to our times, and to us Gentiles, have covered these false prophets with ridicule. Their dates have been demonstrated to be false, even to themselves. The confidence with which the ancient science of Astronomy is appealed to, and a mass of figures introduced, bewildering to most brains, has captivated many. The effect has been injurious in the extreme. The fixing of dates for the Lord’s return, for the rise of the personal Antichrist, etc., has ever been a favourite occupation with ingenious minds, and a profitable monetary one to certain prophetic speculators. The public are easily influenced in a wrong direction. Boldness of assertion is

mistaken for proof. Thousands have been deluded, and discredit thrown on the prophetic scriptures by erroneous applications of a prophecy which in itself is simple enough.

The 70 literal years' captivity of Judah in Babylon were drawing to a close. The prophecies of Jeremiah—especially those contained in chaps. xxv. and xxix.—were being carefully studied by Daniel (ix. 2). He gathered from "books"—inspired writings—not from current events, the exact duration of the captivity. Why 70? Why not 80 or other denomination of time? We are supplied with the answer in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. The 70 years was the aggregate of the yearly sabbaths. During the time Israel was in the land (490 years) she never once granted the land a Sabbath of seven years. Now God makes good His own ordinance as ordained in Lev. xxv. 2-7. The effect was salutary. It led him into the presence of God in the confession of national sin. If God was preparing deliverance for His people Israel, they must be morally prepared for that deliverance. The former was the work of Jeremiah, the latter the service of Daniel. The confession of the prophet (ix. 3-19) was answered by a revelation of a fuller deliverance than that wrought instrumentally by Cyrus—the destroyer of Babylon and deliverer of Judah. The spiritual blessing of the whole nation, as well as their temporal exaltation to the headship of the nations is hereby pledged and secured.

The whole prophecy is summed up in brief terms in verse 24. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy." These are weeks of years. The late learned Tregelles wrote "I retain the word *week* for convenience sake, and not as implying seven days to be the import of the Hebrew word." Literally it reads 70 sevens. To whom does the prophecy refer?—to Jews or Gentiles? That question is easily answered. "Seventy weeks are determined upon *thy* people, and upon *thy* holy city." *Israel* was Daniel's people, and *Jerusalem* Daniel's city. The prophecy then, concerns ISRAEL and JERUSALEM. Mark it well, dear reader, and do not hesitate to give a wide berth to certain well-known serial and other publications, whose prophetic theories are based on the assumption that this prophecy relates to the times of the

Gentiles. Were it a mere mistaken application carrying with it no serious results, it might be allowed to pass without much notice. But in this instance, the whole prophetic situation gets muddled up, and the most ingenious speculations are indulged in, to get the 70 weeks or 490 years to fit in to the present time. It cannot be done, and why? Because the prophecy applies to Israel and not to the Gentiles. "Thy people" and "thy city" determines the application. The full temporal and spiritual blessing of Israel is divinely guaranteed, and within a specified time, namely 70 weeks of years, or 490 years in all.

But now in verses 25, 27 the whole duration of the prophecy is broken up into three parts:—(1) Seven weeks or 49 years; (2) Sixty-two weeks or 434 years; (3) One week or one year. The first two periods are subjects of verse 25, and the third of verse 27, while between the second and third periods the events recorded in verse 26 have their place. The important subjects treated of in verse 26 have their application in *Christian* times, and form no part whatever of the prophecy proper. The 70 weeks give us the sum of *Jewish* prophetic times. We shall now read verse 25. "Know therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times." How true it is that Israel and Jerusalem are the subjects of this prophecy! The "commandment" referred to defines the starting point or commencement of the 70 weeks. Now in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah we have recorded several degrees or commandments promulgated by the heathen conquerors of the Jewish people. Ezra was a priest and so he occupies himself with the religious condition of restored Judah; whereas Nehemiah mainly concerns himself with the civil state of things, this being in accordance with his position as governor over the restored commonwealth. His Persian title, "the Tirshatha" (Neh. vii. 65), expresses his relation to the second empire. Now there is but *one* commandment recorded in these past captivity books which expressly refers to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and that is found in Nehemiah ii., in the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes the Persian monarch. He issued a decree 13 years previously which had respect to the *temple* (Ezra vii.); this to the *city* (Neh. ii.). This celebrated prophecy dates

from Neh. ii. Pray do not confound these commandments or decrees.

Now what is meant by "Messiah the Prince?" That Christ is referred to, no one doubts and mentioned too in Jewish connection as "Messiah." But is the reference here to the birth of Jesus? to His triumphal entry into Jerusalem? or to His death? Not to His death surely. Messiah the *Prince*," does not mean "Messiah the victim" for our sin. Then do the words point to His Incarnation? No, for Joseph the legal heir to the throne and royalty of Judah was then alive, and hence the Messianic claims of Jesus could not be pressed till Joseph died. We take it then, that "unto Messiah the Prince" points unmistakeably to the remarkable scene narrated in Matt. xxi.—the royal march to Jerusalem and entrance into the city of the king of Israel—a few days before the crucifixion—in fulfilment of the prophecy of Zech. ix. 9. Having had the *commencement* of the prophecy in Neh. ii., and the *close* of the 69th week in Matt. xxi., (for seven and threescore and two make 69) we may enquire; *why* are these two periods separated from the full number? Seven weeks or 49 years were occupied with the rebuilding of the city and of its walls during "troublous times," so termed because of the opposition of the enemy to the work of restoration which are fully detailed in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Then from the completion of the work, *i.e.*, the city and wall built, there is a further period of 62 weeks or 434 years, in all 69 weeks or 483 years, the *exact time* till "Messiah the Prince."

We shall now read verse 26, "And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself, and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." "After three score and two weeks," and, of course, in addition to the seven which were occupied in building the city. The 62 weeks followed on the completion of the seven. "*After*" these periods then Messiah was cut off, not during any part of the foregoing periods, and certainly not during the 70th week which is the subject of verse 27. The events narrated in verse 26 occur between the *close* of the 69th week and the *opening* of the 70th. It (ver. 26) records a lengthened parenthesis between the periods of 69 and 70—a parenthesis covered by these Christian times or 20 centuries. During it the Messiah was cut off and had nothing

(see R.V.). He came for His crown, His throne, His people. He was denied all these. Then follows the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the total subversion of the whole Jewish estate—sacred and secular—succeeded by a long period of appointed desolation for Judah and her city. The suspension of the further history of the concluding week of seven years is of deepest interest to us. It is doubly characterised: first by the calling out of the Church; second by the desolation of Judah and Jerusalem.

Verse 27 reads, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." The pronoun "he" refers to the prince whose people, the Romans, destroyed the city and temple (verse 26). The prince has yet to come; his people have already come and done their work. This Roman prince is the future head of the Revived Roman Power. He is the same person spoken of by our prophet (chap. vii.) as a "little horn" (king), and as the "beast" (an insubject power), by the seer of Patmos (Rev. xiii.; xvii.). After the translation of the heavenly saints (1 Thess. iv.), the Jews as a nation will be restored to Palestine in unbelief by an unnamed maritime power (Isa. xvii.; xviii.). Their first care will be to build a temple, the foundation, materials, and design *already* prepared, and establish as far as they can their ancient ritual. The king of Italy, or supreme head of the ten confederated nations of Europe, shall offer his support to the restored Jewish nation and guarantee immunity from attack by the king of the north—practically Russia. The terms of the unholy agreement are embodied in a treaty or league to last seven years, the remaining week of the 70. In the midst of it, namely, three years and a half, this Roman prince and would-be protector of the Jewish people, a blasphemer and a cruel persecutor, seeks to force idolatry upon the nation, which is the force of "abominations" (see 1 Kings xi.). This is resisted by the pious portion of the people. The rage of the prince energised by Satan is let loose against these godly Jews who dare to resist his will. This awful time of unexampled sorrow and tribulation lasts nearly the whole of the second part of Daniel's closing week. It is the subject of the Lord's discourse

in Matt. xxiv. 15-30; and Mark xiii. 14-26. The history of this last half of the closing week is detailed in the Apocalypse. The Revised Version of verse 27 corrects the Authorised on various important points of interest.

The events within the 70th week have not been fulfilled and hence it is vain to conclude the week at the death of the Messiah. It is yet future. But Dan. ii., vii., viii., xi.—each brings us down to the close of all—to the Coming of the Lord in Judgment; but in none of those portions have we the history of these Christian times, hence you have in each of them a lengthened parenthesis. The past and the future are linked. Take one example. In xi. 35 the history brings us down to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabean period, then verse 36 transports us into the future crisis—into the centre of the stirring events contemplated in the last of the 70 weeks. That fact alone necessitates, as indeed all prophecy does, a break off of Jewish dealing, the introduction of Christianity while the Jews are Lo-Ammi, “not my people.” But when God’s dealings in grace are over, then Jehovah takes up again His people and the star of Jacob is again in the ascendent, never to sink as before behind the clouds.

Prophetic Periods.

70 weeks of years with three sub-divisions, Dan. ix. 24-27.

Time, times, and the dividing of time,	Dan. vii. 25.	}
Time, times, and a half,	„ xii. 7.	
42 months,	Rev. xi. 2; xiii. 5.	
1260 days,	„ xi. 3; xii. 6.	
Time, times, and half a time,	„ xii. 14.	
Five months,	Rev. ix. 5, 10.	
An hour, a day, a month, and a year,	„ ix. 15.	
Three days and a half,	„ xi. 9, 11.	
2300 days,	Dan. viii. 14.	
1290 days,	„ xii. 11.	
1335 days,	„ xii. 12.	

All denominations of prophetic time are based upon and computed with reference to the 70 weeks of Daniel, and

especially to the last or 70th week of seven years. It will be observed that the periods are variously spoken of as days, months, and times, but only in Dan. ix. do we meet with the term "week" in its prophetic sense. Only let it be seen that the dates do not refer to this dispensation of grace on the one hand and of Jewish degradation on the other, but apply only when God is dealing directly with His people in the land, *then* the understanding of them in a literal sense is simplicity itself.

The 70 weeks, or "sevens," are weeks of years, in all 490 years. In chapter x. 2 of our prophet we have weeks of *days*; in chapter ix. it is weeks of *years*. The Hebrew word *week* simply means *seven*—of days, or months, or years the context must determine. The word itself does not.

This noted prophecy is sub-divided thus:

1. Seven weeks, or 49 years, were occupied in the re-construction of the city (see Neh. ii.), which had been destroyed by the universal autocrat, Nebuchadnezzar—the head of gold (chap. ii. 38), and the lion amongst beasts (chap. vii. 4). The books of Nehemiah and Ezra give the history of this period, or "troublous times."
2. Three score and two weeks, or 434 years, which commenced from the city rebuilt, and the restoration of its social and ecclesiastical polity—which occupied 49 years—till Messiah the Prince. Thus, from the decree of Artaxerxes in the 20th year of his reign (Neh. ii.) commanding the rebuilding of Jerusalem, till the triumphal entry of Christ as Messiah into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi.), we have the two former periods multiplied; in all 483 years.
3. One week, or seven years, yet future. This interesting event, which introduces the closing sorrows of Judah, commences *after* the removal of the heavenly saints, and *after* the restoration of Judah to Palestine. All prophecy, more or less, is concentrated in its final character in this interesting crisis. It is a week in which the gravest events which the world has ever known—political and otherwise—have their place.
4. 'Midst of the week of seven years, or, when three years and a half have run their course. This last week is divided into two equal parts. The attention of the reader in the books of Daniel and The Revelation is fixed on the history of the *second* half of the week. The *first* half will be one of general

peace, one, too, of preparation for the awful outburst of satanic blasphemy, power, and cruelty, which will characterise the closing half of the week. The history of the first three years and a half is not written either by the Hebrew prophet or by the Apocalyptic seer.

The bracketted periods next claim attention. A time is a year (for the force of the term, *time*, see Dan. iv. 16-37); times, two years; dividing of time, or half-a-time, signifies half-a-year; months are of 30 days; days are literal days of 24 hours. Now all these periods refer to the *same* time, namely, the last half of the 70th week. They cover the period of the tribulation. It will be observed that in Rev. xi. 3 and xii. 6, days, and not months or times, are spoken of, the reason being that God's suffering saints are in view, hence the days of their testimony and trial are carefully numbered. Days of interest to Him, Who has also numbered the hairs of our heads. But when the power and blasphemy of the great political enemy of God and of the Lamb, as also the persecutor of the godly-fearing part of Judah, the king of the west is in question, and we may add, of the oppressing Gentiles as well, then the period is curtly spoken of as 42 months (chap. xiii. 5; xi. 2). The *days* are twice named in reference to God's saints. The *months* are twice named in relation to the enemy of God's people. "Times and laws," not the saints, are given into the hands of the little horn, or head of the revived Roman empire, "until a time, and times, and the dividing of time" (Dan. vii. 25). He rages and ravages in the wide scene of Christian profession, but especially in Palestine is his iron hand felt, not against the nation as such, but against the God-fearing part of the people who boldly witness for God in these awful times. The Antichrist will support the pretensions of the arrogant, blaspheming king, energised by Satan cast down from heaven, whose expulsion therefrom is noted in Rev. xii. Dan. vii. 25 and Rev. xiii. 5, refer to the *same* personage and to the *same* period. The continuance of the last and satanic phase of the empire (chap. xvii. 8) is limited to 42 literal months. Thus the 1260 days of suffering, 42 months of Gentile domination, and time, times, and half-a-time of Judah's abject misery synchronise.

Five months of torment (Rev. ix. 5-10). The locust judgment under the sounding of the *fifth* angel is a terrible one, and spite of the assertion of Hengstenberg to the contrary, we

believe that the "five months" of torment is in allusion to the ravages of the natural locust which usually lasts five months. A limited and brief period is referred to, and one which may not exceed five months.

An hour, a day, a month, and a year (Rev. ix. 15). The angels of judgment bound at the Euphrates were to be loosed, not *during* the time specified, but at that particular moment. These evil agencies were to be let loose at an exactly defined moment. The very hour of the day of the month and year is noted. It is an exact note of time.

Three days and a half (Rev. xi. 9, 11). The dead bodies of the witnesses lying unburied in the streets of Jerusalem, and exposed to the cruel and public gaze of the Gentiles, is a scene of three and a half days duration, literal days undoubtedly. Be it observed that their testimony extends during the last half of the unfulfilled week. Then they are killed, and after the public exposure of their bodies for three days and a half, a public resurrection is granted them. The prophetic days in Daniel and in other parts of the Apocalypse are literal, why then should this particular passage form an exception? This is a special scene, confined in its peculiar features to events in Jerusalem.

2300 days (Dan. viii. 14), is an historical statement referring to the desecration of the temple and the cruel treading down of the Jewish people by the Syrian monarch of infamous memory, Antiochus Epiphanes. That there is a typical bearing on the last days of Gentile supremacy and misrule over the restored Jewish commonwealth, seems evident from verses 17 and 19. Antiochus figures the future Jewish antagonist, the king of the North.

1290 days (Dan. xii. 11). These days exceed by a month the tribulation and the forced interruption of Jewish worship. They commence with the well-known and divinely-appointed sign (Matt. xxiv. 15)—idolatry—which will mark the commencement of the closing sorrows of the coming crisis. The extra month is needed to complete the destruction of Israel's enemies. The prophet does not speak of blessing in connection with this period, because not only must judgment clear the scene of evil and evil men, but the people themselves must be morally prepared for the full tide of millennial blessing. The days are literal, of course.

1335 days (Dan. xii. 12). Here 45 days are added to the former number. "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred, and five and thirty days." Thus we have 75 literal days added to the 1260, before the full blessing of Israel is secured. What a busy two months and a half! The tale of judgment will be finished, "the filth of the daughters of Zion" washed away, temple worship restored under new conditions (Ezek. xl.), and the people morally cleansed from all defilement in heart and life; then "blessed is he" who waits and reaches that moment of wondrous blessing for Israel and the earth.

Prophetic Queries and Difficulties.

"One shall be taken and the other left" (Matt. xxiv. 40-41).

The words have an exclusive Jewish application, and refer to the separation of person in Judea at the coming of the Son of Man. The one "taken" is for judgment, the other "left" is for blessing. Jewish hope is blessing in the land, as taught in the Psalms and in the Prophets. *Taken* for judgment, *left* for millennial blessing. Were the words given a Christian application, then it would be just the reverse. The one *taken* would be for heavenly glory, the other *left* for judgment. Hence the importance of seeing that the words occur in the Jewish part of the Lord's Sermon on the Mount (xxiv. 1-44). Christian blessing is *heavenly*, Jewish blessing is *earthly*.

"The brethren, sheep, and goats" (Matt. xxv. 31-46).

The Lord terms the Jewish preachers "My brethren." They are a distinct class from either the "sheep" or "goats." These preachers had gone into the Gentile world to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, in the interesting interval between the Rapture of the Saints into the air (1 Thess. iv. 17) and their return with the Lord (Rev. xix. 11). God will work mightily in those days, and a work of grace accomplished more extensive than even that of Pentecost. The truth-rejecting sinners of Christendom (2 Thess. ii.) are given over to judicial judgment in time, and eternal punishment in the lake of fire. But immense numbers from amongst the heathen receive the messengers of the King, and gladly accept the message (see Rev. xiv. 6, 7; vii. 9-17).

These are the sheep—the saved Gentiles on earth at the Coming. They are not characterised by intelligence as the heavenly saints are, hence their questions and difficulties, which the Lord graciously explains and answers (verses 37-40). The “goats” are the wicked of those days. They refused the Gospel and insulted the heralds of the King. Their doom is sharp, sudden, and eternal.

THE JUDGMENTS OF MATTHEW XXV. AND OF REV. XX. CONTRASTED.

Rev. xx. records the judgment of the dead, Matt. xxv. of the living; *that* of individuals, *this* of nations; *that* in the eternal state, *this* in time; *that* speaks only of one class of persons, *this* of three classes; *that* has books of works, *this* has none; *that* has its book of life, *this* has not; *that* does not speak of a Coming, *this* does; *that* speaks of God and men only, *this* of the Son, men, and angels; *that* shows the heaven and earth fleeing away, *this* shows a continuance of the heaven and the earth; *that* speaks of a great white throne, *this* of a throne of glory. There are other contrasts between the two throne-judgment scenes.

WHO SHALL APPEAR AT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE? (Rev. xx. 11-15).

Several important questions arise as to the judgments executed by the Lord in Rev. xix, 21 at His Coming in power, and of that in Matt. xxv. 41-46 subsequent to His return. Also those who perish in the last conflict (Rev. xx. 9).—this the last governmental dealing with the wicked on earth.

- (1) Rev. xix. records judgment *at* the Coming.
- (2) Matt. xxv. records judgment *after* the Coming.
- (3) Rev. xx. records judgment at the *close* of the Kingdom.

Do the subjects of these judgments come up for their final doom at the great white throne?

We are in happy agreement with the mass of commentators in holding that the final judgment is recorded in Rev. xx. 11-15. It is the last act in the drama of human history. Beyond it lies stretched out the everlasting agony of the wicked in the lake of fire, which, so far as Scripture shows, reveals no cessation and no mitigation. Now it is not said, “I saw *all* the dead, small and great, stand before the throne” (R.V.). Had the passage so read, then argument or question there would have

been none. But the text reads, "I saw the dead, small and great." Thus, then, there is room for holding that all the wicked shall *not* stand before this throne. If Rev. xix. 20 be compared with chap. xx. 10, it will be readily allowed that the two *men*—the Gentile and Jewish chiefs referred to, as the beast, and false prophet, are in their final doom, and do not appear for further judgment, and what is undoubtedly true of these may be equally true of others.

The Judgment executed on the western powers (the beast) and those of a wider area (the kings of the earth) gathered together in battle array against Christ and His saints, is of a governmental character and apply to the bodies of men—death by the sword (Rev. xix. 21). All the subjects of this Judgment (save the two chiefs) will certainly be raised, and in their bodies stand before the throne to receive the sentence of everlasting condemnation.

Then the last gathering of the wicked on earth seems under the personal leadership of Satan. We read of no human leaders as in the earlier confederacy (xix. 19-21), but here Satan directly controls the whole movement. He will never be without instruments to accomplish his purposes; here they are not seen however (xx. 7-9). In the earlier rebellion the two leaders were cast alive into the lake of fire. In this later scene of madness, Satan, the leader, is thrown into the same place, where his confederates are, and had been for 1000 years. The vast multitudes are destroyed by fire from heaven. The sword did its work in the earlier judgment. The devil, the deceiver of men, and especially of those whom he has lured on to their temporal and everlasting ruin, is permitted to see his plans frustrated, and *then* he is cast into his doom, not to reign as king in the lake of fire but to be "tormented day and night for ever and ever." All his followers in the last great conflict shall, of course, be raised and stand before the great white throne. They were destroyed by fire on the earth, but being destroyed by fire is one thing, and sent away *into* everlasting fire is quite another, and this latter is the doom pronounced by the Lord Himself in solemn assize (Matt. xxv. 41-46). These, *i.e.*, of Matt. xxv., shall go at once into their awful doom, just as the righteous *at once* enter into life eternal. There is no delay in either case. It would be derogatory to the Judge to hold that the sentence pronounced is not final and

eternal. For be it remembered, that it is the *same* Who sits on the Judgment Throne in Matt. xxv. as on the Throne of Rev. xx.: see John v. 22-27. The subjects of judgment in Matt. xxv. shall not appear at the great white Throne, but those of Rev. xix. and xx. shall, and we may also add the wicked of all ages, with the exceptions named.

Prophetic Notes.

- Increase of evil foretold 2 Tim. iii. 1-9
 Size of Palestine from west to east, *i.e.*, the Nile to
 the Euphrates Gen. xv. 18
 Area of enlarged Palestine about 300,000 square miles.
 Unconditional gift of the land Gen. xiii. 14-17
 National restoration of the Jews Isa. xviii.
 Individual return of Israelites ... Isa. xxvii. 12, 13; lxvi. 20;
 Matt. xiv. 31
 The Antichrist will be a Jew... .. Dan. xi. 37
 The Antichrist will reign as king in Palestine ... Dan. xi. 36
 "Little horn" of Dan. vii. arises from the *west*.
 "Little horn" of Dan. viii. arises from the *east*.
 King of the South is Egypt Dan. xi.
 "Gog" of Ezek. xxxviii.-xxxix. is the last Czar of Russia.
 The second beast (Rev. xiii. 11) is the Antichrist.
 Idolatry rampant again in Judea Matt. xii. 44
 Satan revives the fourth empire Rev. xvii. 8
 Revived empire of Rome a persecuting power ... Rev. xiii. 8
 The empire a blaspheming power Rev. xiii. 7
 The Roman Prince and apostate nation make a seven
 years' covenant Dan. ix. 27
 The weeks of Dan. ix. are weeks of *years*; the weeks
 of Dan. x. 2 are weeks of *days*.
 The Great Tribulation will last 1260 days Rev. xii.
 King of the North and the Assyrian are identical personages.
 Jerusalem besieged and partly captured Zech. xiv.
 Church saved from the Tribulation Rev. iii. 10
 Western Europe will espouse the cause of and politically
 favour the Jews.
 Eastern powers will politically hate the Jews Ps. lxxxiii.

The "woman," or mother, of Rev. xii. is Israel.	
The "man-child" of Rev. xii. is Christ.	
Miracles wrought by Satanic power	Rev. xiii. 12-15
The gathering of the ten tribes	Ezek. xxxiv.
The beast and the false prophet—two men—cast alive into punishment	Rev. xix. 20
The prophetic part of "The Revelation" commences with chap. vi.	
The Coming of Christ to Mount Olivet	Zech. xiv. 4
All Israel shall be saved	Rom. xi. 26
Satan confined in the abyss for 1000 years	Rev. xx. 3
Christ will reign for 1000 years	Rev. xx. 4-6
The three leading millennial powers	Isa. xix. 24, 25
Jerusalem to be rebuilt and adorned	Isa. lx.
A large and costly Temple erected	Ezek. xl.
Israel's sacrifices commemorative	Ezek. xliii.-xlvi.
New land-arrangement of the tribes	Ezek. xlvi.
"The Prince" of the royal tribe to be Christ's vicegerent on the throne of Judah	Ezek. xlv.-xlviii.
Jerusalem holy for ever	Zech. xiv. 20, 21
Jerusalem the city of the great king	Ps. xlviii. 2
Palestine and the whole earth to become exceedingly fruitful	Ps. lxxii.
Israel greatly multiplied	Ezek. xxxvi. 37, 38
Waters of the Dead Sea healed and stocked with fish...Ezek. xlvii.	
The Egyptians blest and saved	Isa. xix. 18-22
No more war	Isa. ii. 4
No more idolatry	Isa. ii. 18-20
Instincts of the animals changed	Isa. lxv. 25
Long life on the earth	Isa. lxv. 22
The spared nations flock up yearly to Jerusalem ...	Zech. xiv. 16
The church displayed in governmental glory ...	Rev. xxi.
No tears, no curse, no night	Rev. xxi.
Christ and His heavenly people over Zion—a glory and defence	Isa. iv. 5, 6

The Coming may be momentarily expected, The Lord is at hand. The wise virgins roused by the midnight cry are trimming their lamps.

ARE WE READY?

Prophetic Explanations.

(I.) FROM THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

1. *The Great Image*.—Gentile Imperial power as a whole, not separately viewed as in chap vii. : see Luke xxi. 24.

2. *The four Metals of the Image*.—The four Gentile empires.

3. *Decreasing Value of the Metals from gold to iron*.—The gradual decline of the governmental power, at first immediately derived from God : see chap. ii. 37.

4. *The gold, silver, brass (or copper), and iron*.—The empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, also symbolised by four *wild* beasts (chap. vii.).

The supreme power was granted to Nebuchadnezzar, the "head of gold," responsible and subject to God *alone*, from Whom he directly received his kingdom and power. In the second, or Persian empire, the nobles and princes made the laws, which the king confirmed. The laws and decrees of the realm were irrevocable, binding even the monarch himself (chap. vi. 7-15), a clear departure from God's original order, which placed the king as maker of, and above the law, God alone being *his* law-giver. An inferior order of power characterised the third or Grecian empire, the government being administered by the military authorities, who were created at the will and pleasure of Alexander. A still lower character of governmental power characterised the fourth or Latin empire. The Emperor was a mere puppet in the hands of the lawless soldiery, and the imperial crown was generally bought, and its continuance secured by currying favour with the legions. The empire was essentially military and aggressive, hence the "iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things" (chap. ii. 40). At a triumph accorded to Pompey (one of Rome's ablest generals), there were exposed to view, besides kings, captives of the highest rank, and an immense treasure, the names of 15 conquered kingdoms, of 800 cities taken, of 29 recaptured, and of 1000 castles brought to acknowledge the empire of Rome," and, adds the historian : "such was the *bruising and breaking to pieces* effected even by one single general."

5. *The mixture of iron and clay* (chap. ii. 41, 42).—"Brittle" or constitutional government, as at present, previous to the last phase of the empire—a tenfold division.

6. *Stone cut out of the mountain without hands.*—Not a triumphing gospel, but Christ descending in power and glory to wind up the times of the Gentiles in judgment: See Rev. xix. 11-21.

7. *The winds of heaven upon the sea* (chap. vii. 2).—God in providence calling the empires in succession out of the troubled mass of peoples, then in anarchy and confusion, to bear rule over the earth.

8. *The Lion, Wings, etc.*, (chap. vii. 4).—The majesty of Babylon (the lion), its ambition and conquest (the eagle's wings), its supremacy destroyed (the wings plucked), its utter degradation (standing upon its feet). Nebuchadnezzar's repentance is expressed in the last clause of the verse; see also chap. iv. 34-37.

9. *The Bear with ribs, etc.* (chap. vii. 5). The Medo-Persian empire, cruel and tenacious of its grip over its conquered provinces, like the "bear," "arise devour much flesh," see Esther chap. i. 1. The one side rising up higher than the other, would express the ultimate supremacy of the Persian over the Median; thus Darius the *Median* reigned before Cyrus the *Persian*, the latter, however, made the empire essentially Persian, and raised it to the supreme place of power on the earth. In Daniel the order is "the *Medes* and *Persians*." In Esther it is "the *Persians* and *Medes*." In the times of Daniel the Medes were in the ascendant; in the days of Esther the Persians were the leading power. Thus the difference is accounted for.

10. *The Leopard with wings and heads* (chap. vii. 6).—The Macedonian empire under Alexander, remarkable for its rapid attacks, like the leopard's spring, and the swiftness of his movements, like the wings of the fowl, built up his mighty empire in the course of twelve years. The "four heads" would denote the fourfold division of the empire, soon after the death of the mighty Grecian chief: see fuller details in chaps. viii. and xi.

11. *The fourth beast with ten horns, etc.* (chap. vii. 7).—This unnamed beast sets forth the oppressing power, vast extent, and cruel character of the fourth or Roman power; its ten horns represent the ten kings or kingdoms into which the empire will be distributed when revived in the coming crisis.

12. "*The little horn.*"—The historian specially directs attention to the personal and future head of the Western empire.

13. "*I beheld till the thrones were cast down*" (chap. vii. 9) read, "*I beheld till the thrones were set*" or "*established.*" The sitters on these thrones are the heavenly saints (Rev. xx. 4).

14. "*Ancient of days*" and "*Son of Man*" both refer to Christ; compare vii. 13 with Rev. i. 13-16.

15. "*Saints of the most high*" (or heavenly places) as in Eph. i. 3.—The heavenly saints are meant, not Jewish or earthly ones. "Most high" in verses 18, 22, 27, of chap. vii., does not refer to God, but to the "heavenly places"—the sphere of blessing.

16. *The two-horned Ram* (chap. viii.).—The second empire, Medo-Persia in its constitution; "the higher (horn) came up last," i.e., the Persian (Cyrus) who made the nation famous succeeded his uncle Darius the Median.

17. *The he-goat from the West*.—The Macedonian kingdom or king.

18. *The notable horn*—Alexander the Great.

19. *The great or notable horn broken*.—Death of Alexander in the zenith of his glory and power.

20. "*The four notable ones,*" i.e., horns.—The fourfold partition of the Grecian empire after the death of Alexander.

21. "*A little horn,*" chap. viii. 9.—Historically, Antiochus Epiphanes whose rage and cruelty against Israel knew no bounds. Typically, the king of the north (chap. xi.) or Assyrian (Isa. x.), the future north-eastern power who oppresses Israel in the coming crisis of her history.

The "little horn" of chap. vii. is the great blaspheming power in the west and persecutor of the saints of God; while the "little horn" of chap. viii. is Israel's great political enemy in the east. These horns or powers are opposed to each other in the coming crisis.

22. "*His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power*" (chap. viii. 24). This "little horn," or northern king, will be upheld by his great chief, i.e., "Gog," or Russia, Ezek. xxxix.

23. *King of the South*.—Egypt.

24. *King of the North*.—Northern part of Syria.

(Observe that from the time of the vision and prophecy, down to the era of the Maccabees, we have exact historical fulfilment (although typical of the future Jewish crisis) in the first 35 verses

of chapter xi. From the 36th verse of the chapter to the end, all is future; "the king" of verse 36 must be distinguished from the northern and southern kings, the "Antichrist" being meant.

25. *The ships of Chittim.*—The war galleys or naval power of Rome.

26. "*Abomination that maketh desolate.*"—"Abomination" refers to Idolatry, 1 Kings xi. 5-7; "maketh desolate." Jewish idolatry will bring a desolator on the scene, *i.e.*, the king of the north.

27. *Instructors amongst the Jewish people* (chap. xi. 32-35).—Historically, the Maccabees; Typically, godly Jews seeking to instruct the nation in practical righteousness; Jewish teachers, "the rebellious also" (Ps. lxxviii. 18); that is Israel will have teachers sent them by Christ as ascended. The first part of that verse has had its fulfilment to us (Eph. iv. 8). The second part is yet future for Israel.

28. *The time of trouble* (chap. xii. 1).—The coming tribulation; see also Jer. xxx. 7; Mark xiii. 14-24; Matt. xxiv. 15-29; Rev. xii.

29. *Sleep in the dust of the earth* (chap. xii. 2).—At the epoch of Messiah's personal intervention on behalf of Judah, a portion of the nation will be amongst the Gentiles in the utmost depths of moral degradation; verse 1 refers to the Jews *in* the land; verse 2 to those then *out* of the land. It is not literal resurrection as some suppose, but the reappearance of the nation once again from her utter degradation.

(II.)—FROM ZECHARIAH.

30. *Vision of chap. i.* The coloured horses, red, bay, and white, represent the character and energy of the three Imperial powers, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The man riding on the red horse sets forth Cyrus the Persian, the destroyer of Babylon and deliverer of the Jews, prefiguring however, Christ, Israel's Saviour, and Judge of the mystic Babylon (Rev. xviii., xix.). The *four* horns (verse 18) are the four Gentile empires which scattered Judah, while the *four* carpenters (verse 20) represent the instruments used of Jehovah, for the judgment of the empires, who, in punishing Judah, exceeded their commission (verse 2).

31. *Vision of chap. ii.* The man measuring Jerusalem is Jehovah's prophetic intimation that He will yet appropriate to Himself the land and people of Judah; see Rev. xi. 1, 2.

32. *Vision of chapter iii.* Here the future justification of guilty and defiled Israel, and her place in millennial glory according to the sovereign grace of Jehovah is intimated. Joshua prefigures the nation in her guilt in verse 1; in her defilement in verse 3; in her justification in verse 4; in her acceptance in verse 5; and in her responsibility in verse 7. Joshua represents Christ, however, in verse 8. The stone with seven eyes (verse 9) sets forth the stability of Messiah's government exercised according to the intelligence of God.

33. *Vision of chapter iv.* Saved Israel, in millennial glory, will be God's vessel of light on the earth; *now* the Church is the light, or candlestick. The testimony (the olive trees) will be to the priestly grace and kingly glory of the Messiah, the former represented by Joshua, and the latter by Zerubbabel. The power—the *oil*, and the instruments—the golden *pipes*, maintain the testimony of the Lord for at least 1000 years.

34. *Vision of chapter v.* Jehovah will surely punish His guilty people; the flying roll intimates sure and certain judgment; but the idolatry of the Gentiles, which will again be rampant in the land of Judah, will be removed and sent back from whence it came—the land of Shinar. Jehovah will punish His people, but He will remove her guilt, and banish her national sin to its original scene and centre.

35. *Vision of chapter vi.* The character and geographical course of the four Gentile kingdoms are here set forth as accomplishing, unknowingly, the counsels of God. The black horses (Persia) go forth into the north country, viz., Babylon, and destroy it; while they, in turn, are destroyed by the white horses (Greece); the grisled horses (Rome) establish themselves in the south (verse 6). God grants universal dominion to Rome (verse 7), and rests in the destruction of Babylon (verse 8). From verse 9 to 15 we have Christ building up Zion in glory, as a Priest, too, upon His throne (verse 13), His people crowned (verse 14), and the Gentiles willingly lending their aid (verse 15). This symbolic representation beautifully confirms the prophetic Word.

36. *The details of chapter xiv.* are to be accepted in their literal import, which are of exceeding interest.

(III.) FROM THE REVELATION.

37. *The Angel of the Church.* The representative or representatives of the moral condition of things; a godly person or persons, not necessarily gifted; but competent to reflect the light of heaven upon the state of things, as "stars" shine in a dark night—not "the minister" in or of a church. The New Testament knows of no such office. Chaps. ii.; iii.

38. "*I will spue thee out of my mouth*" (chap. iii. 16). The rejection of the professing Church. Its judgment is executed instrumentally by the western powers in chap. xvii.; by God, the source of her judgment, in chap. xviii., and celebrated by the hallelujahs of heaven in chap. xix.

39. "*The morning star.*" The joyful return of the Lord in Person: see chap. xxii. 16.

40. "*Four and twenty seats.*" Four and twenty *thrones*.

41. "*Four and twenty elders.*" Representatives of the Old and New Testament saints: founded on the distribution of the priesthood into 24 orders (1 Chron. xxiv.).

42. *The beasts, or "living ones"* are so described as to set forth the judicial authority of God—His character and attributes in governmental exercise. The Seraphim announce the holy character of God (Isa. vi.); the Cherubim sets forth the executive government of God (Ezek. i.). The living creatures of Revelation combine the characteristics of both.

43. *The seven-sealed book* (chap. v.). The title deeds of Christ's inheritance claimed by the Lamb from Jehovah, in virtue of His Person and sacrifice.

44. A "*Beast*" signifies an Imperial power, or its personal head.

45. A "*Horn,*" a kingdom, or its king.

46. A "*Horse,*" warfare.

47. A "*Throne*" sets forth established conquest, hence set up for exercise of government, for reward and punishment. In prophetic symbology the horse precedes the throne. Thus Rev. xix. precedes Matt. xxv. 31.

48. A "*Crown,*" general and special reward.

49. A "*Sword,*" bloodshed.

50. *The "Sun,"* supreme and controlling authority.

51. *The "Moon,"* derived governmental authority.

52. *The "Stars,"* ruling but subordinate powers ; also ecclesiastical personages.

53. *The "Lion,"* majesty.

54. *The "Jasper,"* divine glory.

55. *The Sea,"* masses of people in anarchy and confusion.

56. *The "Land,"* or earth, settled government.

57. *The "Trees,"* eminent political personages.

58. *The "Grass,"* general prosperity.

59. *The "Ships,"* commerce.

60. *The "Rivers,"* the moral life and principles of nations.

61. *The "Dragon,"* satanic authority in the fourth empire.

62. *The "Man Child,"* Christ : see Ps. ii.

63. *The "Woman"* (chap. xii.), Israel.

64. *The "Harlot,"* corrupt church.

65. *"Babylon,"* the corrupt professing church, in her future wickedness and worldly grandeur.

66. *"New Jerusalem,"* the glorified bride and wife of the Lamb in heavenly and divine splendour.

There are four representative women mentioned in "The Revelation." Jezebel—the papal system (ii.). The woman and queen—Israel the mother of the Lord (xii.). The harlot—the apostate religious system (xvii.). The New Jerusalem or Bride of the Lamb (xxi.).

67. *The "Harvest,"* discriminating and separating judgment.

68. *The "Vintage,"* unsparing judgment.

69. *The "Wine Press,"* the execution of divine wrath.

70. *"Virgins,"* moral purity.

71. *"Vine of the Earth,"* future union of apostate Judaism with corrupt Christianity.

72. *"Heads" and "Horns"* (chap. xvii. 7), forms or phases of government, and also kings.

73. *"Gog and Magog,"* symbolic representation of the last uprising of the wicked from all parts of the earth ; the expression in Ezek. xxxviii. refers to Russia and to the north, and to her future chief and lord.

Prophetic Thoughts.

The future is mapped out in the Word both in bold outline and in detail. Isaiah would serve as an illustration of the former, and Zechariah a witness of the latter. A few preliminary observations to its study may prove helpful.

1. Prophecy commences, not with the Translation of the saints to heaven, but with the Restoration of Judah to Palestine. The former, *i.e.*, the Translation, is the subject of New Testament revelation (1 Thess. iv. 15); the latter, *i.e.*, the Restoration, is the subject of Old Testament prophecy (Isa. xviii.). Israel is God's centre amongst the nations (Deut. xxxii. 8); Jerusalem His special object of interest amongst the countries (Ezek. v. 5). God's historical dealings with His ancient people were broken off in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, and in the world-wide dispersion of Judah. The history is resumed when Israel once again occupies the prophetic scene.

2. The various geographical positions, as *north, south, east, west*, are in relation to Jerusalem and Palestine. This borne in mind, will enable any one with a good map of eastern biblical countries, to locate with certainty the numerous nations and places referred to in the prophecies, besides fixing their position in the memory. Take Palestine as your centre, then apportion the nations in relation thereto, and the general prophetic situation is before you.

3. The revival of the old Roman political Power must be constantly borne in mind. The beast, *i.e.*, revived Rome, plays a fearful part under Satan in the scenes of the last days (Rev. xiii.; xvii.). Its personal head is the king or "little horn" of Dan. vii., *not* that of chap. viii. The relation of Rome to Christ and the Jewish people, past and future, is the fact which makes the empire so prominent in prophetic dealing.

4. The personal Antichrist who comes upon the scene *after* the revival of the empire, is in himself the embodiment of Christian and Jewish apostacy. He is also termed "the false prophet" amongst the Jews; and "king" in Palestine. He is confederate with the beast, but inferior to him in political power, while his superior in strategy. Brute force and unbridled passion characterise the beast, but the other is the more

dangerous of the two. Religiously he supports the blasphemous pretensions of the beast. They work together and are eternally punished together. He is a Jew, whilst the beast is a Gentile.

5. The translation of the heavenly saints paves the way for the introduction to the event of the centuries, and which is also the fundamental factor in the prophetic programme:—*Wrest Palestine from the grasp of the Turk and restore the Jews to their rightful land.* The Zionist movement—a most remarkable one—has quickened the pulse of the Hebrew nation. It is also creating a national sentiment. The progress of the movement is attracting general attention to the Jewish question. Already efforts are being made to get the United States of America, or Great Britain to politically espouse the cause of the Jew. Perhaps the situation is not yet ripe for either nation restoring the Jews to the land. A rupture with Turkey is possible, nay highly probable, and indeed the dismemberment of that corrupt Mohammedan Power is only a question of time. Circumstances may bring it about sooner than any of us expect. But in whatever way the restoration of Judah is to be effected, the result is certain. It will soon become an accomplished fact. “The land shall not be sold for ever: *for the land is Mine*” (Lev. xxv. 23). The present movement on the part of influential Jews to recover the land, is one apart altogether from faith in God. The Jew is trying to work out his own destiny. He will fail without doubt. The solution of the Jewish problem is in God’s hands. The present is a national movement, which aims to give practical expression to the desire for the consolidation of the tribes of “wandering feet and wearied breast” in the land which is theirs, and to assume a national position amongst the peoples of the earth. The governmental hand of Jehovah is yet upon the Jew. The national restoration whenever it takes place, or by whatever means it may be effected, is an event most sure. The word of the Lord hath spoken it, and that is enough (Isa. xviii.).

6. The coming of the Lord to the Air (1 Thess. iv. 17) and His descent to *Olivet* (Zech. xiv. 4) are distinguished in time, circumstances, and objects.

7. The coming of the Lord to receive the saints of Old and New Testament times, precedes His return to the earth by *at least seven years* (Dan. ix. 27). This special aspect of the

coming is first mentioned by the Lord Himself when on *earth* (John xiv. 1-3), and last named by the Lord in *heaven* (Rev. xxii. 20). The *order* of events (1 Thess. iv. 15-17), and the *rapidity* of the whole action (1 Cor. xv. 51-54) were revealed to Paul and by him to us.

8. The political outlook is dark enough, but it will yet be darker. Between the rise of the Morning Star to us Christians, and the shining forth of the Sun of righteousness to Israel, the blackest period of the world's history takes place. But the dark night of sorrow shall end, and glory burst upon the scene, and there shall be a great calm and great light, and great gladness in the heavens and on earth.

9. The ten horns or kings forming the material strength of the empire first support the whore, *i.e.*, the anti-Christian system, then turn and destroy her, but these ten kings are to be distinguished from the kings or chiefs of the earth, *i.e.*, Christendom, at least that part of it outside the Roman world. These are not numbered. The former, *i.e.* the ten kings are the destroyers of the whore; the latter mourn over her destruction. The respective relation of these two sets of powers to the whore throw some interesting side-lights on latter-day scenes. The whore is destroyed by the beast, and the latter by the Lord at His coming (Rev. xvii. ; xviii.).

10. The nations, countries, and peoples of the earth may be distributed into three divisions as follows:—*First*, the Powers of western Europe consolidated and prophetically spoken of as the beast, *i.e.*, the revived Imperial empire of Rome. The city of the Cæsars once again its capital, and the little horn of Dan. vii. its personal head: see Rev. xiii. ; xvii. The empire is the political friend and supporter of the restored Jewish commonwealth. *Second*, the Powers north and east of Palestine, under Gog, the last Czar of Russia, and the Assyrian, or king of the north. These peoples are far more numerous than those under the beast, and are politically hostile to the restored Jewish nation, and, consequently, to the gigantic confederation in the west—the would-be friend and protector of the Jew: see Ezek. xxxviii. ; xxxix. ; Ps. lxxxiii. ; Zech. xiv. 2 ; Isa. x. ; xxviii. ; Dan. viii. ; xi., etc. *Third*, the Nations outside the sphere of direct prophetic dealing, which will be brought into blessing when the millennial kingdom is set up. They are spoken of as heathen: see Isa. lx. 2.

11. The little horn of Dan. viii. and the Antichrist are confounded by many. The little horn *overthrows* the sanctuary. The Antichrist *defiles* the sanctuary: compare Deut. viii. and 2 Thess. ii., and it will readily be seen that their respective nationality and doings mark them off as distinctive persons. The little horn is a *Gentile*. The Antichrist is a *Jew*. Antiochus Epiphanes prefigures the little horn, or king of the north of Dan. viii.

Prophetic Blunders.

The Translation of the Church is an oft-repeated remark from the lips and pen, of students of prophecy. It is incorrect, however. We know of no Scripture teaching to warrant such an assertion. Those composing the Church—from Pentecost (Acts ii.) till the Rapture (1 Thess. iv.)—as *also* the redeemed of Old Testament times from Abel onwards, are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. But this distinguished blessing, which may be momentarily expected, is not predicated of the Church as such, but only of saints, of the aggregate of believers—the dead in Christ, and those alive at the Coming. Individually we have our part in it. When the Church is before the mind, individual privilege and blessing are necessarily merged in that which is corporate. Besides, if one speaks of the Translation of the Church, it shuts out of view the fact that Old Testament saints are caught up at the same time, and in the same way, as those of New Testament times. Caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17) is a blessing common to all. Saints before the Church was formed, must not be relegated to an inferior order of blessing in the manner of their translation, nor even when in heaven itself from chapter iv. of the Revelation till chap. xix.; only in the latter, scripture distinctions between saints then come into view, *i.e.*, in chap. xix., hence the bride and the guests. If you do not include the saints of the Old Testament in the Rapture, as predicated in 1 Thess. iv. and 1 Cor. xv., you have nowhere else to place them, as after the translation only martyred saints are subsequently raised.

Heaven opened is a title frequently applied to chap. iv. of the Revelation. The expression occurs in chap. xix. 11. The

former passage reads, "Behold a door was opened in heaven"; the latter, "I saw heaven opened." A door opened in heaven was to let the Seer pass in. Heaven opened is for Christ and the saints to pass out. The necessity for the former is apparent. It is in heaven where the whole scheme of prophecy is planned, where, too, the ways of God to bring about the grand consummation have their source, hence heaven had to be entered by the Seer, that in its calm he might learn the future of this world. Morally needful for us as it was for John in Patmos. The grand triumphal march of Christ and His heavenly army *out* of heaven to deal with the rebellious powers of earth, necessitates "heaven opened." How different the wording of the passages: "A door opened in heaven" for *one* to go in; "heaven opened" for *many* to come out.

The little horns or kings of Dan. vii. and viii. are frequently confounded. The little horn of chap. vii. 8, 11, 20-26, is the personal ruler of the revived Roman empire. The little horn of chap. viii. 9-12, 23-25, is the future political antagonist of the restored Jewish commonwealth—the king of the north. In chap. vii. the *western* power is the prominent actor in the scene. In chap. viii. the *northern* power set up in the present Syrian possessions of the Sultan, is the main subject of the prophecy. His terrible doings are here written down many centuries before he plays his awful *role* in the coming drama. Now in chap. vii. the four universal empires are before us; almost the whole of that chapter is devoted to the consideration of the Roman or fourth empire, only one verse each for the three preceding empires—the Babylonian (verse 4); the Persian (verse 5); and the Grecian (verse 6). But in chap. viii., neither the *first* nor *fourth* empires are referred to—only the second and third. These horns, therefore, are so totally distinct in the geographical area of action, in their respective relations to the Jews, and in their aims and political projects, that it is surprising they are so generally confounded. This mistake is almost inexcusable. These two horns, instead of being one and the same, are opposed and opposing powers. The western one espouses the cause of the Jew, the northern one is the political and civil oppressor of the Jew.

The Heavenly Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem are generally regarded as meaning the same thing. But it is not so. The former is in part the subject of Hebrews xi. and xii. The

heavenly Jerusalem refers to an actual, literal city, built and adorned by God Himself, the actual location of the heavenly saints of Old and New Testament times. It is also termed "The city of the living God." It will be a grand city of which God is the builder (xi. 16). But the New Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev. xxi. 2). The apocalyptic city is a *mystical* city. The city of Hebrews is a *literal* city in the heavens.

The Antichrist regarded by many as the Head of the Roman Empire. The two great apostates in the approaching crisis are the beast and the Antichrist. The former represents the *civil* power, the latter the *religious* state, but both at the end are found in open hostility to Christ, and both the fruit of direct satanic energy in their respective spheres of action. The Antichrist is not the head of the empire. He does not control the armies of the west. He is rather the ally, the confederate of the Emperor whose capital seat of government will be at Rome. He is subordinate to the beast. Some of his titles and actions are recorded. The Antichrist so termed in John's epistles *only*, as he denies Christianity and Judaism, and is thereby opposed to Christ. He is the man of iniquity (2 Thess. ii.), as combining in himself every form of sin—sin personified. He is spoken of as "the king" in Palestine, and as such distinguished from the king of the north and the king of the south (Dan. xi. 36-39), and a Jew as to his nationality, as verse 37 proves. He is the second beast mentioned in Rev. xiii. 11; the first being the great political chief, the head of the empire. The one to whom "the dragon (Satan) gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rev. xiii. 2). Antichrist is also termed "the false prophet," and as such with his chief and confederate in wickedness is cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20). The head of the civil power will be a Gentile, at least as a king he rises out of western Europe; whereas the Antichrist will without doubt be a Jew. The two are distinct personages and however closely related, yet in action and person they are easily distinguished.

The Thessalonian hope and position was to wait for God's Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 10). It has been said that their hope perished in their death, for the Lord has not yet come. But the Thessalonian saints were converted to *wait* for the realization

of that Blessed Hope. Well, they are waiting ; they waited on earth, now they wait in heaven. Whether, therefore, we "wake or sleep," we wait for the Coming. Death in no wise interferes with the Hope. Death changes the waiting *place*, but not the waiting *position*. The Thessalonian saints are waiting with Him, for they and we are called into the patience of Jesus Christ (Rev. i. 9). The kingdom is yet a matter of expectation to Christ and to us (Ps. cx. 1 with Heb. x. 13). Saints in heaven and earth are *waiting*.

Countries, Nations, etc.

PHILISTIA, EDOM, MOAB, AND AMMON.

Nations, cities, and peoples are only named in Scripture in so far as they relate directly or indirectly to God's ancient people—Israel. Christ in His glory is the great object in the prophecies. Israel the main subject, and the Gentiles subordinately. The history of the Old Testament circles round the Jew.

In that remarkable millennial chapter, Isa. xi., Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon are especially named as being brought into thorough subjection to Israel in the day when she assumes headship of the nations. The whole land of Israel will then be occupied by her rightful inhabitants (Obadiah, verses 18-21). Esau, regardless of his near relationship to Jacob, was yet the most bitter and hostile of enemies (Ps. cxxxvii. 7), hence after the restoration of Edom, that people shall be utterly destroyed, for they—the Edomites—are "the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever" (Mal. i. 4), and their mountainous country shall form part of the then extensive country of Palestine : see Obadiah.

ISRAEL, ASSYRIA, EGYPT, AND SODOM.

The once guilty city of Sodom and adjacent towns are to be remembered in mercy. When the Lord comes in millennial power (Rev. x.)—the rainbow upon His head (verse 1) proclaims the grand truth that mercy shall triumph over judgment, hence Sodom and her sisters once so vile "shall return to their former

estate" and share in the blessings of the millennial reign (Ezek. xvi. 46-63). Samaria and Sodom shall be accounted as daughters to restored and happy Israel.

Israel, Assyria, and Egypt will be the three leading powers in millennial days. The long-standing quarrels of Egypt and Assyria (Dan. xi.) about the possession of Palestine will be healed. Palestine, geographically situated between the two, shall be the land *par excellence*. "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance" (Isa. xix. 25).

TURKEY AND THE EUPIRATES.

Turkey is not once mentioned by name in the Word of God. The Euphrates—the largest river in western Asia—and supposed to point out the decaying Mohammedan power (Rev. ix. 14; xvi. 12) was originally the seat of the first of the universal monarchies, Babylon. In John's day, 96 A.D.—the period of the Apocalyptic visions—the Euphrates first named in Gen. ii. 14, formed the eastern boundary of the Roman conquests—a natural separating bulwark between the west and the east. The prophetic references (Gen. xv. 18; Deut. xi. 24) mark it as the eastern limit of extended Palestine in the future. The Euphrates is ever a boundary river. It is to be literally dried up to facilitate military movements from the east (Rev. xvi. 12 read, "the kings *from* the east"). A somewhat similar judgment is dealt with in the west (Isa. xi. 15). "In the same day, the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates" (Gen. xv. 18). Thus the vast extent of country lying between the Nile on the west and the Euphrates on the east are the prophetic limits of the land.

GREECE AND PERSIA.

Greece is the "brass" of the "great image" beheld by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. ii. 32), and the "leopard" to whom dominion was given in the vision of Daniel (chap. vii. 6). Its life has been "prolonged for a season and a time" (Dan. vii. 12), but its final destruction is decreed and declared in the Scriptures

of truth. The strength of the Grecian kingdom shall yet be matched against the sons of Zion, but will be thoroughly vanquished in the coming struggle (Zech. ix. 13). Greece will be destroyed at the advent of the Lord in judgment (Dan. ii. 35).

Persia will be found under the banner of Gog, or Russia (Ezek. xxxviii. 5). Greece seems to act an independent part (Zech. ix. 13); while Persia acts along with Gog, or Russia (Ezek. xxxviii. 5). Both of these ancient monarchies, greatly curtailed in territory, crippled in resources, and weak in power will yet be in conflict with Judah in the coming crisis. A mere prolongation of life has been granted to these ancient and once powerful monarchies.

NINEVEH AND BABYLON.

These cities being the respective centres of hatred to God's people—Babylon to *Judah*, and Nineveh to *Israel*—are doomed to perpetual desolation. As cities they shall never again rear their heads. For Babylon, see Jer. li. 62-64; for Nineveh, consult Nahum iii. 18-19.

CHINA.

We believe the Celestial Empire is referred to in Isa. xlix. 12, where the prophet, referring to the future gathering of Israel, says, "these from the land of Sinim"—the Asiatic name for China. Many Jews are settled there.

AMERICA.

América has no hereditary principles. Her institutions are, on the whole, no doubt the best of their kind, but they have no hold on the affections of the people. Her laws are good enough, but exceedingly lax in execution, for corruption and bribery from the judge down to the meanest policeman can secure from just punishment almost any criminal. Corruption is rife in the civil and military organisation of the country. The "almighty dollar" is the dominant factor in American politics. War between America and England would be *the* insane act of the 20th century.

America is not named in the prophetic word, and hence its exact place in the prophetic plan is difficult to determine! It is outside the geographical sphere of the four universal monarchies (Dan. ii.), but that her government will fall to pieces in virtue of inherent weakness seems to us most certain.

The reign of our Lord will cover every inch of American soil, and her people of varied nationalities own the sway of our Lord Jesus Christ. It goes without saying that the free and unconventional character of her peoples, and the democratic character of her institutions afford a congenial soil for the propagation of doctrines and teachings of an anti-Christian character. The devil has planted the poisonous weeds of a soul-destroying character all over that vast continent, and it must be admitted that they flourish abundantly. This very character of open evil, but throws into greater relief the godliness, love, and open-hearted hospitality of American Christians. To this the writer can bear personal testimony.

The Great Tribulation.

The awful trouble of the coming period of tribulation is solemnly and strongly expressed in Mark xiii. 19. "In those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be." Its duration is limited to 1260 literal days, at the close of which, after a brief interval (Matt. xxiv. verse 29), the Son of Man comes (15, 30). The principal Scriptures which speak of this period of unequalled trouble are, *first*, Jer. xxx. 7, where it is spoken of as *Jacob's trouble*." *Second*, Daniel xii. 1: Daniel's people, the *Jews*, are in the tribulation. *Third*, Matt. xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 19. In the New Testament references to the coming tribulation, our Lord distinctly refers to Dan. xii. 1, 11. On Mount Olivet He carefully instructed His disciples (the then representatives of those in the tribulation) on the salient points of the coming trouble. He directed them to pray so that the tribulation might not burst forth on the Sabbath day, nor in the winter. Being under law in those times, a Sabbath day's journey (Acts i. 12)—within a mile—would hinder an escape from the pursuing enemy, and the winter with its cold and storms would tell severely upon the very young and aged. He also provides the mountains as a place of safety. He also urges instant flight when it bursts forth. These and other interesting particulars are found written down in Matt. xxiv. 15-28, a portion of the Word which will be found of immense value in the special circumstances yet future.

All this shows clearly enough that none but persons in Jewish circumstances will be in *this* tribulation. That others besides Jews will suffer is true ; the tribulation will rage hotly and fiercely in Jerusalem ; there the iron furnace of affliction " will be seven times heated," but it will enlarge and widen until the whole earth is embraced (Rev. vii. 9-17). *Fourth*, it is evident that those Gentiles who come out of the great tribulation (Rev. vii. 14) are in marked contrast to the heavenly saints, for one of the elders speaks of the innumerable company who have emerged out of the tribulation as a distinct class of persons from themselves (verse 14). No portion of the Church will pass through the tribulation. There is an express Scripture exempting them from it : " Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee *from* the hour of temptation (or trial) which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth " (Rev. iii. 10). The promise is not to be kept *through* the hour of trial, but *from* it. Jews and Gentiles, therefore, but not the Church, will pass through the unequalled tribulation. The terms used in 1 Thess. iv. 15, " alive and *remain*," and in John xi. 26, " *liveth* and believeth," forbid the idea that saints of this age will be left to pass through the horrors of the coming tribulation. In these passages there is no question of faithfulness, but the terms employed denote believers simply as such ; neither faithfulness in service nor devotedness in life are in these passages.

Ascension of the Church.

We frequently meet with the statement that " Christ descends from heaven and the Church ascends from earth to meet Him in the air." Ascension implies independent power, an inherent right. We, on the contrary, are translated or caught up by a power exterior to ourselves. It is nowhere said, saints " ascend " ; they shall be " caught up." Rev. xi. 12 presents seeming contradiction, but the R.V. reads " they went up." John iii. 13 is decisive on the point : see also Acts ii. 34 ; Eph. iv. 8-10. But there is another error in the statement. The Church *as such* is not said to be translated to the air (1 Thess. iv. ; 1 Cor. xv.). The raised dead and the changed living embrace more than those composing the Church. The sum of Old Testament and New Testa-

ment saints are caught up together. But the Church dates from Pentecost. Would you exclude the saints previous to Acts ii. from the happy and joyous translation? Surely not. "The dead in Christ" embrace the company of the redeemed of all ages *before*, as after the Church historically began. Scripture shews that saints as such, believers in that character are translated to the air to meet Christ, and not the Church as a corporate body. Those embraced in it along *with others* form the innumerable company caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The Church as such is not the subject of the rapture, nor after the translation does it come into view till Rev. xix. 7. The "translation of the Church" is a faulty statement; the "ascension of the Church" is worse still. The twenty-four elders represent the redeemed of Old and New Testament times and *not* the Church. The elders (twelve times mentioned in the Apocalypse) are the representative heads of all caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17), symbolising the general body of the redeemed. They are last mentioned in Rev. xix. 4. Then for the first time after the rapture the Church comes into view, while the honoured guests or "friends of the Bridegroom" take their allotted place at the festive board and join in the general rejoicing.

The Fall and Doom of Satan.

The moral cause of Satan's fall was *pride* (1 Tim. iii. 6). Probably he was the most beautiful of all created beings, full of wisdom, perfect in his ways, his creation a cause of joy, great in power and grandeur, other creatures basking under his protecting care. He had a special place assigned him in relation to God's Throne. But after all that can be said of him, he was but a *creature*—before the throne of the Eternal was his place, *not* upon it, for thereon no creature, however exalted sits. The throne of God and of the Lamb is necessarily exclusive of all others.

Satan is ever a destroyer and corrupter of all that God has set up. He ruined the primeval earth (Gen. i. 2), and at a subsequent period our progenitors (Gen. iii). His fall must

have preceded the setting up of the present heaven and earth. His punishment is one commensurate with his awful guilt.

We learn a good deal about Satan in that remarkable chapter, Ezekiel xxviii. The chapter is divided into four parts—(1) The pride, riches, wisdom, and utter ruin of the *prince* of Tyrus occupies the first ten verses. (2) The *king* of Tyrus is described in a series of weighty sentences, which it is *impossible* to apply in their literality to any mere human being. The terms employed can only set forth a celestial being; one endowed in a remarkable degree at his creation with greatness, grandeur, wisdom, beauty, and perfectness. The actual king of Tyre was a sinful man, as all others born into this world (Ps. li. 5; Rom. v. 12), but in his pride, riches, and greatness as king, as also in the utter ruin and degradation of himself and of his famous city, he stands out as a type of Satan before and in his fall; this portion of the chapter covers verses 11-19. (3) Zidon next comes upon the scene of prophetic dealing, verses 20-23. (4) Then Israel is remembered for blessing. It is Jehovah God who rises up for the deliverance of His people. The last two verses of the chapter are peculiarly rich in millennial promise. This fourth section of the chapter is comprised within the last three verses. The power; malignant influence, and ceaseless activity of Satan is one of the most solemn facts recorded in the Scriptures. Every saint and sinner is more or less dominated by him. He is the foe of all that is good. Satan's expulsion from heaven is effected in or about the middle of Daniel's future week of seven years (Rev. xii. 7-13). His confinement in the abyss is for the term of the millennial reign—a 1000 years (Rev. xx. 1-3). The two events are contemporary—*i.e.*, the *reign* of Christ and the *imprisonment* of Satan. His eternal banishment to the lake of fire—not to reign as king (*Milton*) but to exist as the most abject, degraded, and miserable of lost beings—closes the history of Satan (Rev. xx. 10). Truly a marvellous one!

The race at large, and every intelligent person on earth has more or less to do with Satan (Eph. ii. 3; 2 Cor. iv. 4). For Christians he is a conquered foe (Heb. ii. 14-15; Rom. xvi. 20), yet so long as they are in the body they are exposed to his wiles and temptations (Eph. vi. 11-16).

Egypt and the Great Pyramid.

It has not yet been ascertained with certainty whether the Nile or the Euphrates was the earliest seat of civilisation and empire. Both Egypt and Chaldea were colonised after the dispersion at Babel and confusion of tongues, nearly 2500 years before Christ. The regions about the Euphrates and the Tigris were certainly more accessible and nearer the scene of the dispersion than the Nile. In that important chapter, *Genesis x.*, which gives authoritative information upon the origin of nations and kingdoms, we learn by *whom*, and about the time *when*, the kingdoms of Assyria and Egypt were founded.

“The early history of Egypt is older by centuries than that of any other nation with which we are acquainted. The situation of Egypt on the surface of the globe is in the driest parallels of latitude all round the earth and in both hemispheres. To the eastward and westward of Egypt, and for nearly 3000 miles in each direction, it is closely hemmed in by sandy deserts, through which the river Nile forces its way all but due northward and southward. The periodical overflow of this river, consequent upon the tropical rains, has in the course of ages reclaimed from the desert on each bank a thin strip of land of extreme fertility, seldom exceeding half a mile in breadth on each side, and nowhere reaching further than eight or ten miles on both sides.”

Egypt has been termed “the sunniest land on earth.” The atmosphere is remarkably fine. Snow never falls, and rain is of rare occurrence. The narrow valley of the Nile is composed of mountains of rock and stone of every tint and hue, and which never perish. These granite and other rocks furnished the inhabitants of ancient Egypt with an inexhaustible store of hardest and the most enduring material, for the construction of those magnificent buildings and monuments which are yet the admiration of the world, and which leave the architects and builders of the 20th century in astonishment at their construction and grandeur. We may here call attention to a curious circumstance, that in the tombs and papyrus inscriptions, the “*blessed west*” and “*filthy east*” are so spoken of, whereas in the sacred books of the Burmahs the order is reversed. With them it is the “*filthy west*” and “*blessed east.*” The respective positions of Egypt and India, as geographically situated west and east

from the scene of the dispersion, account for the difference. From the Euphrates to Egypt the descendants of Ham journeyed west, while, of course, to occupy India, Burmah, etc., the colonists would proceed eastward.

Throughout the land of Egypt—and it covers an area of about 178,000 square miles—the monuments, temples, pillars, public buildings, and even the mummy cases and cloths in which they embalmed their dead, are covered over with hieroglyphics, figures of animals, exploits of their great men, and the mighty deeds of their kings and gods ; yea, even the most trivial objects and incidents of life are represented. If ancient Egypt meant by all this to perpetuate her name and history, to procure for herself an eternal remembrance on the earth, she has most certainly succeeded, and possibly beyond her most sanguine expectations.

The two principal cities of Egypt are *Cairo* and *Alexandria*. The former is the capital of the country, and was founded by the Arabs A.D. 970. *Alexandria*, so called from Alexander the Great, who founded it B.C. 332, was formerly the chief city of Egypt, and the proud capital of the east. Its walls were six miles in compass. Here was contained the most famous library of the ancient world, consisting of about 700,000 volumes, and which was destroyed by the Turks in 642 A.D. Here, too, the Jews found a refuge and protection from the Syrian oppressors of their nation. Here, also, the Septuagint or Greek version of the Old Testament—the most ancient translation—was executed nearly 300 years before Christ, and which was the Old Testament in common use in Palestine in the time of our Lord, and for the first three centuries of the Christian era. Cæsar, 47 years before Christ, destroyed the magnificent library and MSS. of the learned Ptolemies. Alexandria is not only the second populous city in Egypt, but it is really the commercial capital of the kingdom. It is an important centre for the commerce of the eastern and western worlds.

We do not need to prophesy. With the Word of God in our hands we have only to learn what the Hebrew prophets have penned by inspiration of God. Egypt's future in her conflicts with the revived Syrian or Northern Russian power—her relation to the Jews restored and gathered to Palestine—the civil commotions and intestine wars—fraternal quarrels—the complete

destruction of her commerce—the tyranny and cruel oppression of her sovereign ruler—the drying up of her famous river the Nile, with its brooks and reservoirs—the destruction of the Suez Canal, which the combined forces of England and France will not be able to prevent—the misery and famine which will fill the land—her spirit broken—her strength crushed—her wisdom confounded—her princes dismayed—the deception and lying of her nobles and counsellors—the powerlessness of the western kingdoms (Great Britain amongst them) to protect the Egyptians from the inroads and ravages of the Assyrian or king of the north (practically *Russia*)—the erection of a public altar to Jehovah in midst of the land, which from its geographical situation must be the Great Pyramid, according to authorities—the cry of the oppressed Egyptians—the mercy of Jehovah in their deliverance—salvation and help granted them—the hand of Jehovah in judgment upon the land and people withdrawn—Egypt healed by the Divine hand that smote it—the people brought into Divine favour—the ancient and future enmity between Egypt and Assyria removed—a highway of peace and safety through Palestine from Chaldea to the land of Ham—the full blessing of the Egyptians and their millennial association with Israel—these and numerous particulars are specified in the books of Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel. Read especially chapter xix. of *Isaiah*, and chapter xi. of *Daniel*.

Egypt has been a land of wonders in the past; it will be a land of wonders in the future. If in Judea the *heart* of God has been disclosed, in Egypt the *arm* of Jehovah has been bared. It is a land, beyond all others, which has witnessed the most illustrious displays of Divine power.

Egypt protected and sheltered the infant Jesus (Matt. ii. 12-15), and that service, unknown at the time, will never be forgotten, but remembered by God in rich blessing. God never forgets the least service done to His beloved Son. The Egyptians are to be the people of Jehovah, and the land healed and blest (Isa. xix.). Egypt is yet destined to play her part in the near future struggle, and to become the platform of some of the most marked and decisive events rapidly approaching (Isa. xix.).

THE GREAT PYRAMID.

There are three immense Pyramids, besides six smaller ones. The largest of the three was built by *Cheops*, the second was erected by his brother *Cephrenes*, and the third by *Menchres*, nephew of *Cheops*. The six smaller ones are believed to have been built to perpetuate the name and memory and to serve as royal sepulchres for the members of *Cheops'* family. These stupendous structures are not covered with inscriptions, but in the three large Pyramids a single name has been found in each, which has tended to confirm the names of the builders as given by Herodotus. The generally received opinion is that these grand and massive monuments were erected to receive and preserve the bodies of their royal builders from decay and corruption, so much dreaded by Egyptians. Bunsen writes eloquently upon the fact that the bodies of *Cheops* and *Cephrenes*, who for about 60 years daily tormented hundred of thousands, have been torn from their sepulchres ; while *Menchres*, who put an end to the inhuman oppression of the people, and whose name and good deeds were for many centuries preserved in the affections of his subjects, and were also embodied in poetry and story, now rests in the British Museum. The sacrilegious hands of perhaps some plundering Arab or native Egyptian, who ascended the Pyramid and broke open the coffin, left the body of the king undisturbed, and now he rests in the capital of the British dominions—in that treasure house of art, curiosity, and antiquity, *the British Museum*. Belzoni, an Italian, the African traveller, entered the second Pyramid in the year 1817.

The Great Pyramid is by far the most ancient, the most massive, and the most intellectually designed of any monument ever erected by human hands. It is more than 4000 years old. Its erection occupied a period of 30 years, and the labours of 100,000 men, and, like the other Pyramids, it faces the cardinal points. This stupendous monument of Egyptian pride, wisdom, and greatness, regarded as one of the wonders of the ancient world, was designed and built on the most exact astronomical, mathematical, and scientific principles. Some investigators of the Pyramid, as the late Professor Piazzi Smyth, Astronomer-Royal of Scotland, maintain that it was expressly designed as a means of moral and scientific teaching to the race at large, that it corrects the differing *metrologies* of the nations, and

conclusively settles the much-disputed question of Biblical chronology. Dr. Mackay, in his interesting book *Facts and Dates*—from which we have gleaned some of our Pyramidal information—inform us that the architect of this Pyramid knew the mean distance of the sun from the earth with an exactitude to which modern science never approached till within the last few years. This astronomical discovery was thus arrived at: The original height of the Great Pyramid was 48,625 feet, this multiplied by 1,000,000,000 gives a result of 48,625,000,000 feet, or 92,093,000 miles for the mean distance of the sun. This might be regarded as a mere coincidence, but W. Petrie, of London, in addressing the Royal Society of Edinburgh, has shown that this most ancient and architectural of monuments supplies abundant evidence, that this and other astronomical facts were intended in the original structure of the Pyramid. It is also supposed to fix the date of the deluge, the duration of this church or parenthetic period, and the time of the Lord's Second Advent. Here we are off the certain ground of divine and written revelation, and dare not follow nor accept these speculative theories. We think it very probable, however, that this stupendous monument of human industry, which attests the skill, wisdom, and mechanical power of the sons of Ham, is referred to by the Hebrew prophet *Isaiah* (chap. xix.) as the "Altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of Hosts in the land of Egypt;" and while no doubt striking scientific results have been arrived at from a careful investigation of the giant erection, yet we exceedingly dread speculation and fancies, especially in all that touches Divine revelation. Many of the statements of late, which have appeared in religious periodicals, regarding the Great Pyramid, we can only regard as extremely hurtful to the soul, and as tending to sap the heart's deep conviction in the verbal inspiration and absolute authority of the Word of God.

The Pyramid is built of huge blocks of limestone, and on a rock elevated above the valley of the Nile a height of about 150 feet. The present height of the Pyramid is about 474 feet, but its original height was 486 feet. It covers about 13 acres of ground, and is about 730 feet square. There is a square platform on the summit of 32 feet, consisting of nine stones,

each of which might weigh a ton ; yet these stones are much inferior in size to many used in the construction of the building. The surface was originally smooth, polished, and carefully cemented, and for many ages and centuries the building remained a sealed secret from the gaze of man. The curiosity and cupidity of the Arabs were at last thoroughly roused, and after much labour a forcible entrance into the interior was effected. But let us begin the ascent before we explore the interior. The thickness of the stones, which are arranged as terraces, are from two to four feet, and thus nearly breast high. But while the ascent is laborious there is not much danger, as the breadth of each terrace is equal to the height of the step you have just taken. Thus the whole surface presents a series of great steps ; the height and breadth of each terrace or tier of stones being exactly proportioned.

The internal mass of this building is not a vast collection of refuse or rubbish, but consists of huge blocks of limestone and granite most carefully cut, and fitted together with the most remarkable precision. The empty coffer which is contained in the king's chamber is of the hardest granite, and hence not intended, in the judgment of certain recent investigators, to hold the dead body of *Cheops*, but from its exact size, capacity, and measurement, was designed as a standard of measure for mankind in general. There are many interesting statements made as to the form and size of the Pyramid, which are also exhibited in, of course, lineal proportions in the size of the coffer. It is a singular circumstance, too, that the 25th course or tier of stone is the level of the Queen's Chamber, while the 50th course is also the exact level of the King's Chamber. Facts of a highly interesting character might be mentioned bearing upon the peculiar construction of this singular monument. How and by what means stones of tons' weight were lifted up and made to fit each other like a glove, display an amount of mechanical skill utterly unknown to the builders of the 20th century.

The Millennium : Its Celestial Sphere and Heavenly Character.

The millennium, or Kingdom-reign of 1000 years, is God's publicly expressed delight in Christ—God's answer to the thirty and three years' life of suffering and reproach borne by the Blessed One. In it we witness the grand display of God's purposes and counsels respecting Christ and the Church, as also His thoughts respecting the earth. In Christ's day of humiliation the world knew Him not; it treated with cold neglect its Creator and Benefactor (John i. 10). He came unto His own (*things*)—His crown, His kingdom, His Judaic and earthly glories—but His own (*people*) proudly rejected Him—Messiah was cut off and had nothing, *i.e.*, that for which He came (Dan. ix. 26, see margin). The world knew not its Creator. Israel rejected her Messiah. Israel knew not the time of her gracious visitation. But God in blessing reverts to His own purpose, that cannot fail of accomplishment. The sovereignty of God and not the state of the creature is the sure and stable ground of Divine dealing.

In gathering up from the Word of God certain features of the heavenly glories of the Kingdom may the heart of the reader be more occupied with the *One* who suffered, and Who will reign, than even with the results of His suffering life and atoning death in present grace and future glory. His love is deeper, infinitely so, than even the demonstration of that love in the brightest millennial scenes. Coming glories may fix the eye and leave one entranced, but *Himself*, as the bright and morning star, is the prime object of the heart's deep longings to those who have found their all in Jesus.

The millennium will have its two distinct spheres of blessing—the one *above*, the other *on* the earth—spoken of respectively as the Kingdom of the *Father* and the Kingdom of the *Son* (Matt. xiii. 41-43). There is and ever shall be a heavenly people and an earthly people. All who share in the blessedness of the "first resurrection"—the righteous dead from Adam—will reign with Christ over the earth, while the Jews and nations shall form subjects of the kingdom. "Jesus *our* King," and "Jesus King of the Church," are neither Scriptural in thought or word. Instead of being *subjects* of Christ's

everlasting kingdom, the very reverse position is that which grace has given to us. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" And, adds the apostle, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3)—a truth almost entirely forgotten by the Church. "If we suffer we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12), says the same apostle. Constituted "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. i. 6) is the statement of another. Jesus risen is "Head over all things"; over all the works of God's hands—God manifestly excepted (1 Cor. xv. 27)—as also the Church (Eph. i. 22, 23). But is it not said in the martyrs' song, "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints"? (Rev. xv. 3). It is well known, however, and the margin in most Bibles gives the true sense of the passage to be "Thou King of nations." He is also "King of the Jews" and "King over all the earth." The special place of the Church, as the vessel for the display of the glory of God, and as the Lamb's bride and wife, is very fully unfolded from Rev. xxi. 9—xxii. 5, and in symbols borrowed from creation and Judaism. There is a correspondence between the terms used in setting forth Jews alone on earth, and those to describe Jerusalem on *high*, with this marked difference, that in the latter case, they are figures merely, yet figures of real and substantial truths. The true union of Church and State also awaits the coming days of glory; exhibited in perfection in the close connection between the heavenly city and the earthly one.

THE BRIDE.

Rev. xxi. 9—xxii. 5 describes *not* a literal city, but the bride, the Lamb's wife (verse 9). The harlot is spoken of as a city (xvii., xviii.), so also the bride. The literal Jerusalem on earth is the subject of Isa. lx.; but that to which the Apocalyptic seer calls our attention is the Church of the New Testament in governmental splendour—in relation to the millennial earth—the true union of church and state.

FEATURES.

Here are some of the many interesting features of the glorified bride;—Her state is *holy*, her home is *heaven*, and her source is *God Himself* (verse 10). She is enriched with the glory of God—our present hope (verse 11; also Rom. v. 2).

HER LIGHT.

Her light, or shining, is as jasper—symbol of the glory of God (Rev. iv. 3). God covers the city with His glory. The wall is built of jasper (verse 18), and forms the first foundation (verse 19); that is, the glory of God is the light, security, and foundation of the heavenly city.

THE WALL.

“The wall, great and high,” denotes strength and security; everything unsuited to the glory of God can find no admittance to that holy place. All within are safe and divinely guarded.

GATES AND ANGELS.

“Twelve gates and twelve angels.” The gate was the place of judgment. The rule and administration of the world to come is not committed to angels, but to man (Heb. ii. 5). We shall judge the world (1 Cor. vi. 2), and the twelve apostles from their place on high will specially govern Israel (Matt. xix. 28), hence the names of the twelve tribes are written on the gates. Angels never rise above the position of *servants*; we are *children* and *sons*. Angels wait at the gates *to obey*.

FOUNDATIONS.

The twelve foundations of the city had in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The apostles have a distinctive place in the Church (Eph. ii. 20), besides being in special relation to Israel. The twelve foundation-stones are unequalled for size, strength, and splendour. Severally they set forth some distinctive feature of the glory of God, while combined they present God Himself in the moral glory of His being and nature, the church's *one* foundation of incomparable strength and grandeur.

MEASURED.

The city, gates, and wall are divinely measured, and a perfect square is the result. A line of flax to measure the earthly city (Ezek. xl.); a *golden reed*—divine righteousness—is the only and adequate rule to measure the Church in glory. The result is “*the stature of the fulness of Christ*” (Eph. iv. 13).

THE WALL MEASURED.

The wall is specially measured, but by the same rule, and instead of the "equal" and amazing size of the city, the wall is but 144 cubits; the former measurement expresses the Church's perfection in the glory *according to God*; the latter, the Church's perfection in glory *according to men and angels*.

BUILDING OF THE WALL.

The building of the wall was of jasper, that is, the glory of God will be our defence and security, while the city itself was pure gold, like clear glass; as to the gold, we are made the righteousness of God in Him even *now* (2 Cor. v. 21); *then* it will be displayed—the purity will be transparent.

GATES OF PEARL.

The gates were pearls; every gate was of *one* pearl. The gates are set in a right worthy setting, even in the wall of glory—the pearl in the jasper. Israel, angels, and men will then learn as they look upon the gates of pearl that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for *it*—the one pearl of priceless value to Him (Matt. xiii. 46).

STREET OF THE CITY.

The golden and transparent street of the city tells us that the walks of the wilderness are over. The *sand* of the desert exchanged for the *gold* street of the golden city. No more defilement; no more feet-washing. We shall walk on that which cannot possibly defile or be defiled (compare with 2 Cor. vi. 16). Street, not streets.

NO TEMPLE.

"No temple therein." There will be no "holy" and "most holy"; no curtains and veils; no temple with its confining the glory of God to a favoured few. All shall see Him alike. The feeblest believer shall see Jesus equally with Paul. "We see Jesus" says the apostle (Heb. ii. 9). "We see Jesus" is the language of "I saw no temple therein." God and the Lamb make themselves known equally to all in the city of gold.

NO CREATED LIGHT.

The city needs no created light as the "sun," nor borrowed light as the "moon," nor artificial light as the "candle," for the uncreated glory of God is its light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The city is one blaze of glorious light.

THE NATIONS.

The nations shall walk in its light; what we ought to be *now*—the light of the world (Matt. v. 14-26)—that we shall be *then*. The Lamb shall light the city *within*; we shall reflect the light *without*.

HOMAGE.

The kings and nations shall yield their homage, and pour their treasures at our feet (compare verses 24-26 with chap. iii. 9). The seat too of universal government is the glorified city.

GATES EVER OPEN.

It is not "the gates ajar," but they "shall not be shut at all by day." Absolute security; the open gates tell the certainty of perfect rest and quiet; but will they not be closed as the shades of evening draw their curtains over the face of creation? No, no; "for there shall be *no night there*." Blessed and everlasting day that knows no evening! "No night there," twice repeated. No night with its weird shadows—no night with its fears and terrors. No night with its troubled dreams. No night with its darkness and hidden dangers. All is light, all is day, all everlasting sunshine.

NO DEFILEMENT.

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." It is the home of the holy and glorified; no plea nor title of any sort will admit save those washed in blood and whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life.

THE THRONE.

The throne of God and the throne of the Lamb—but it is *one* throne—majesty and meekness combined—maintain the blessing for ever; grace through righteousness then as now (Rom. v.).

RIVER OF LIFE.

The river of life will flow uninterruptedly; now the waters should flow freely from us (John vii. 38). Alas! that its course should be so often checked and hindered by the working of flesh.

TREE OF LIFE.

Not only does the river of life refresh and gladden, but the tree of life, with its varied and abundant supply of fruit, affords eternal nourishment, while its "leaves" will be the witness of grace to the millennial nations.

NO CURSE.

"No more curse." What then? The throne of God and of the Lamb combined shall be in it, upholding the glory and sustaining the blessedness, while "His servants shall serve Him" unceasingly. We serve Him in weakness and imperfection *now*; then we shall serve Him in strength, perfectly, and *for ever*.

HIS FACE.

We "shall see His face"; *that* is a blessing beyond harp, or crown, or robe, or glory. The best wine is here poured out. We *shall* see the face of Him who died, and His name shall be on our foreheads. Like Rebecca of old when she lifted up her eyes at the close of her wilderness travel, and beheld Isaac, she veiled her face that she might shine in *his* likeness; so in that day His name on our foreheads will be the public bearing of His likeness, morally (1 Jn. iii. 2) and *corporally* (Phil. iii. 21).

THE REIGN.

They "shall reign for ever and ever." The millennium and eternity are here embraced. Both our service and reign are eternal, and our joys as well. Thus closes this truly marvellous and magnificent description of the Church in the glory, with a statement that reaches far beyond the millennial age. In the eternity of God the Church reigns in a glory that shall never sink—never go down.

The Eternal State.—Rev. xxi. 1-8.

Post-millennial, or eternal times and events are more fully described in the first eight verses of this chapter than in any other portion of the inspired Word. In the previous chapter we have disclosed the closing up of human history on earth. The wicked dead are raised, which is the *last* event in time—then follows the *first* recorded act of eternity—their judgment. What succeeds is a new vision, in which are unfolded some of the main characteristics of the grand eternal state. The eternal state, or God's rest (Heb. iii. ; iv.), is the result, the force or energy of what God is in His own nature as light and love. Perfection is only reached when righteousness *dwells*—when the work of repression is over ; in the kingdom of a thousand years it *reigns*. The eternal state is the grand and divine consummation ; *that* is the summit of holy desire, *that* the goal of hope in its fullest sense.

The first eight verses of the chapter form the natural and fitting conclusion, not only to chapter xx., but to the section as a whole, which groups some of the most interesting events connected with man's future and final destiny (xix. ; xxi. 1-8). The direct references to the eternal state are but few in number—the principal passages being 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28 ; Eph. iii. 21 ; 2 Peter iii. 13. The term "His rest" (Heb. iii. and iv.) in its fullest application refers to the eternal state.

NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH.

"I saw a new heaven and a new earth." Both are made new, and adapted for the vast moral and physical changes which the eternal state necessitates. "The "new heaven" is the home of raised and changed saints ; the "new earth" is to form the habitation of those who during the millennial reign were alive on the earth. Thus even in eternity the distinction is preserved between the heavenly and earthly peoples of God. However close the connection between the two, yet they can never be merged in one (Eph. iii. 15, R.V.).

The "new heaven" in our text must not be confounded with the Heaven of heavens, the dwelling of God. This latter ever subsists in moral and physical perfection and necessarily undergoes no change.

All is new, not a created scene, but one made physically new. All is according to God in His nature. All is fixed. No economic changes now. We are introduced into God's everlasting rest, into God's unchanging state—one of absolute perfection. Time-distinctions, geographical boundaries, and limitations as at present, entirely disappear in the grand eternal state, which, whether in heaven or earth displays the energy of God Himself—God as Divine. The "new heaven" and "new earth," the respective spheres of all the saved shall be brought into blessed harmony with what God is. This is the state referred to by Isaiah lxvi. 22, and Peter, second epistle iii. 13. A state in which righteousness shall *dwell* not *reign* as in millennial times. Neither enemy nor evil shall invade either of the spheres where the redeemed shall dwell. Everyone and everything shall re-echo the glad refrain, God is light, and God is love.

"For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away." The undoubted reference is to the statement in the previous chapter. "From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away" (verse 11). This dissolution not annihilation is effected by fire (2 Peter iii. 10). Scripture is silent as to any future act of creating material in a literal sense, and is equally silent on what some foolishly contend for, namely, annihilation or total extinction of being. Scripture knows nothing of such a baseless theory. Not an atom of matter, not a blade of grass, and surely not a sentient being in the wide universe is doomed to extinction. Our planet will be put in the crucible, altered, changed, and made new, and abide for ever. There being no sin, there can be no corruption. The new earth is eternal. The terms, "*first* heaven" and "*first* earth," are in contrast to the "*new* heaven" and "*new* earth."

NO MORE SEA.

The continuity of the earth, the same in substance, after the deluge, and after its destruction by fire seems evident. It exists but as re-made. "No more sea." This great, restless, destructive, and separating element of nature shall cease to exist. The sea now essential to animal and vegetable life on earth is not needed in God's eternity. He is not only the source of life as He ever was and is, but is the direct sustainer

of it in eternity. The sea exists in the millennial age. That age has its nations, seas, and rivers. Nations as such can have no place in the eternal state, for they are the fruit of governmental judgment (Gen. xi. 1-9). Then in the great change which Scripture refers to as "The Regeneration" (Matt. xix. 28), commonly spoken of as the millennium, we read of the dead sea, or east sea (Ezek. xlvii.). The great sea, or the Mediterranean, is also referred to in that same interesting millennial chapter; see also Zech. xiv. 8; Ps. lxxii. 8; Joel iii. 18, etc. In the eternal state these no longer exist. Here we have *God* and *men*, and an earth without sea. The conditions of life are so different in the everlasting state, that time-conditions of life and happiness are no longer needed. No sea in the new and eternal earth gives, of course, an immensely extended land surface—far exceeding that which presently exists. The countless hosts of saved Jews and Gentiles on earth during the thousand years' reign, shall then people the new earth, but not, we apprehend, in any distinctive or national sense, but simply as *men*, each and all in direct relation to God.

The "new heaven" and "new earth" beheld by the Seer are not described. Their configuration, size, and appearance we can say nothing of. Their adaptation for eternal use, without change, decay, or death, can surely be predicated, but that is all. But without doubt they will be regions of everlasting bloom and beauty.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

But now a new sight greets the eye of the Seer. He not only beholds the physical platforms on which the glories of eternity are to be displayed, but, "I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem." The term "*holy city*" occurs three times in the Apocalypse: see xi. 2; xxi. 2; xxii. 19. The first of these references, however, is to the literal Jerusalem in the coming crisis; the other two point to the holy character of the glorified Church. The "*beloved city*" (xx. 9) is a descriptive epithet of millennial Jerusalem—the actual city of that name. The Church—the bride and wife of the Lamb—is holy in character and ways, whether during the reign (verse 10) or in the eternal state (verse 2).

But the Church is also termed "new Jerusalem" (see also

iii. 12). There are three Jerusalems—the heavenly (Heb. xii. 22), the earthly (Rev. xi. 2), and the mystical (xxi. 2, 10). The epithet “*new Jerusalem*” is in contrast to the old and literal city which has played such an important part in the world’s history. The term *new* is used three times—*new heaven*, *new earth*, *new Jerusalem*. If the Jewish people as such, are in the eternal state merged with Gentiles in the simple appellation *men*, then the earthly city, Jerusalem, as a distinctive seat and centre of government will have passed away. Cities and nations are connected with time, not with eternity, and as such have no place in God’s everlasting ages of unbroken rest and blessedness, in which the redeemed have their part. The two descriptive terms, “*holy city*” and “*new Jerusalem*,” are both used to set forth the Church as she enters on her eternal state of blessedness—one more deep and unchanging than even the millennial condition, in which she shares in glory the rights and dignities of the Lamb. That which succeeds the public reign of the thousand years has a character peculiar to itself; in it God is all and all.

COMING DOWN.

“*Coming down from God out of heaven.*” This is verbally repeated in verse 10. Heaven is the proper home of the Church, and God the source of her being and happiness. It is not said the new Jerusalem “*comes down from heaven*,” but *out* of it. She has been dwelling in it; knows it well and intimately, having been there for 1000 years, and is perfectly at home in the very dwelling place of God. The Church comes “*out*” of it in the love and glory of where God dwells. It is a marvellous statement. The “*coming down*” in verse two is a thousand years after the “*coming down*” of verse ten. The former is in eternity; the latter is at the commencement of the millennial age. In the former the Church comes down *to* the eternal earth; in the latter she rests *over* the millennial earth. (Isa. iv. 5, 6.)

THE BRIDE PREPARED AND ADORNED.

“*Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*” The bride is prepared in heaven ere her public manifestation in the kingdom (verse 9), or in her descent to the earth (verse 3). The marriage was celebrated in heaven a thousand years before the sight of her here. The fact is stated in xix. 7, 8, to which our

text clearly refers. *There* she had been adorned in robes of spotless white, *here* she is witnessed still in her bridal attire and coronation robes. A thousand years of love, of blessedness, and companionship with her Husband and Lover are but brief. She is eternally united to Him Who died for her, and is now about to enter on a yet deeper character of blessedness in the unchanging rest and joys of eternity. She is regarded as yet wearing her bridal robes; no soil or spot, nothing to mar their lustre, and no change in her bridal affections. The term *husband* tells of established relationship, of satisfied affection. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom" (John iii. 29). The marriage takes place in heaven before the warrior king, and His conquering armies issue forth (xix. 7); then we have the binding of, and confinement of Satan, and the reign of Christ for a thousand years—contemporary events. At the close of the millennial era the last satanic outburst is witnessed, followed by the resurrection of, and judgment of the wicked; then the eternal state is entered upon *after the thousand years*, in which the bride is still seen in her bridal robes and beauty (xxi. 2). Then in verse 9 the description is *retrogressive*, and shows the bride—the glorified Church during the 1000 years' reign. She is witnessed before the reign (xix. 7), *after* the reign (xxi. 2), *during* the reign (xxi. 9).

A DISTINCTION.

We have to distinguish between the *new* Jerusalem of the Apocalypse, which is the glorified Church, and the *heavenly* Jerusalem spoken of by Paul (Heb. xii. 22)—the residence of the heavenly saints—of all the partakers of the heavenly calling. This latter does not refer to people, but is the city of the living God, an actual one, the location of *all* the heavenly saints. It is the same that is referred to in the previous chapter, for which saints and patriarchs looked (verses 10, 16)—a material city, built and prepared by God Himself, grand and vast beyond all telling. The city of Paul is a material one; the city of John is a mystical one.

THE TABERNACLE OF GOD.

"Behold," attention is called to the amazing fact, "the tabernacle of God [is] with men." God walked in Eden and talked to Adam, He appeared to the Patriarchs of Israel, He dwelt in darkness in the unseen and innermost part of the

tabernacle of old, God was in Christ in the days of His flesh, He dwells in the Church by His Spirit, but the actual dwelling of God with His creatures redeemed and on earth awaits the fixed and holy eternal state. This unspeakable blessing surpasses far that of the millennial reign. In vii. 15 we read, "He that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle *over* them." But how different the preposition here used, "He shall tabernacle *with* them!" The tabernacle is the Church, the bride, the new Jerusalem. The Church the tabernacle comes down from "heaven"—the natural home of the saints—but God Himself descends with them, taking His place in their midst and tabernacles with men. Why is the word *tabernacle* and not *temple* used in this connection? We would naturally have considered that the latter term would have been the fitting one, as the tabernacle of old was set up in the wilderness and was associated with the journeys, trials, and testings of the people. The tabernacle was the expression of a *temporary* state of things, whereas the more solid structure of stone, the temple was a *permanent* building set up in the land. The tabernacle was a moveable structure, the temple was a fixed one. We gather, therefore, that the tabernacle of God with men, intimates that the Church does not settle permanently on the new earth, but moves to and fro, visiting other parts of the universe.

"He shall tabernacle with them." This emphatic statement is an advance on the previous one. *There* we read, "The tabernacle of God is with men"; *now*, "He shall tabernacle with them." In the one case it is the tabernacle, in the other it is Himself. What an amazing truth that God, the very God, the maker and sustainer of heaven and earth, shall actually and really dwell with men on earth. This is no figure of speech, but a coming grand reality.

"They shall be His people," that is, God shall appropriate the eternal dwellers on the earth for Himself. Israel of old was Jehovah's people. Now the appellation here, "His people" assumes a breadth and depth of blessing utterly unknown in old Testament times.

"And God Himself shall be with them, their God." In this marvellous declaration, God so to speak, comes out of His tabernacle and personally is with His people—*God Himself!*

Here there is no mention of anything, tabernacle or aught else, intervening between God and His people. He is "with them," apart from any covering or external medium of communication. Then is fulfilled the words of the Lord, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8). May we not, too, give an enlarged scope to the words of the apostle quoted from the old Testament, "God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. vi. 16). The topmost stone of blessing is reached in the closing words of this marvellous paragraph. "Their God." Could anything be higher? Could any character of blessing be conceived morally superior to what is here stated? God in the greatness, glory, and moral excellence of His being! God in His own infinitude is for His people then on earth! All is wrapped up in the grand creatorial name beyond the keenest research of a finite mind to grasp or fathom. The source—absolute and independent of all craved for by heart and mind—is treasured up in God. What He *is* and *has* is the assured and everlasting portion of men, of all men then on the earth. The Lamb is not once named, nor is any economic or other change intimated. It is God, His tabernacle, and men. God all in all, and for ever more. His life-time the duration of the existence of the "new heaven" and "new earth"; the life of God Himself the measure of the life, blessedness, and rest of the inhabitants of these eternal regions. We sum up:—(1) God's tabernacle with men; (2) He tabernacles with them; (3) They are His people; (4) God Himself with them; (5) God—their God. In the eternal state all is fixed on a permanent basis, but measures and distinct characters of blessing there are, for even then all vessels are not of the same capacity, while all shall be filled. In these five statements we have gradation of blessing, rising up to God Himself.

NO MORE SORROW.

It is only in the eternal state that the effects of sin—physical and moral—are completely removed. The millennial era is not a perfect condition, and hence even under the beneficent sway of the Lord tears will be shed on earth. The words, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," are verbally repeated in vii. 17. *There*, however, it is a millennial scene; *here* it is in the everlasting state. The wiping away of tears is

not an action ascribed to the Lamb, either here or in the earlier scene. God does this. If He wipes away every tear, He necessarily removes every cause and occasion of sorrow. The tear-drop will never again glisten in the eye. The eye is said to be "the fountain of sorrow," but God shall wipe it dry.

Death, too, shall cease, for "there shall be no more death." The physical dead of the madly rebellious gathered under Satan, covered the old earth at least in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and the eternal inhabitants of the new earth had witnessed the awful sight (xx. 7-9). But death on earth exists no more.

"Nor sorrow or grief," the same word as in xviii. 15, "wailing" or mourning, the outward expression of the heart's deep sorrow. "Nor crying," the voice of hopeless misery (Isa. lxxv. 19). "Nor pain or distress," no internal trouble or weariness, no pain from without or within. All the things which together make up a volume of human misery exist no more, nor that which caused them—*sin*. All have passed away. "The former things," of which those mentioned are part, "have passed away"—*never to return*.

GOD ON HIS THRONE SPEAKS.

"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." It is remarkable how often God by name or pronoun is referred to, as the *source* of all blessing and action in the everlasting state. The Lamb is there as the Husband and eternal Companion of the Church, but as such He does not here appear. The Kingdom has been delivered up to God, not that Christ ever ceases to reign, nor that He ever ceases to be man, but the reign of righteousness in putting down all opposing authority and rule having been accomplished, we witness new triumphs of another character. God in the energy of His nature produces a scene according to what *He is*. It is not a question of subduing foes, but of God delighting Himself in forming a people and things according to Himself. God Himself is the actor in this scene of intense and thrilling interest.

- The sinner on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." God on the throne of omnipotence, of absolute sovereignty declares His will—all things new. The old order of things is not improved, nor in any wise imported into the eternal state, *that* condition demands a state of things in

keeping with it, and God is the measure and source of the whole eternal state, whether of persons or things. Nothing short of what becomes God can appear in the unchanging state, hence, "*I make all things new.*" In this sentence is fixed the character of the eternal state. Grand words surely and worth recording! God, too, authenticates His own magnificent declaration by adding, "for these words are true and faithful." He demands our attention and claims our hearty and unqualified assent." Behold, *I make all things new.* "Write, for these words are true and faithful." This is not promise, but the divine assertion of that which is fact, when the moment comes for its realization.

I AM.

"I am Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, followed by the explanatory phrase, "the beginning and the end" intimate that all testimony on earth had its origin in God, as its end is His glory. God is the beginning and end of all. Creation, providence, promise, history, prediction, prophecy, testimony, love, and grace have each and all their source in Him and in Him their end. Nothing really on the divine side ends in failure. God is seen to triumph at the end. The administration of these things on earth shew, as was the divine intention, the weakness and imperfection of the creature; but that in no wise hinders or thwarts the ultimate purpose of God. The manifestation of Himself in moral glory—is the *end*.

I WILL.

"I will give." This is present not future. Neither hunger nor thirst shall be felt in the "new heaven" and "new earth." The "splendid array of negatives" (verse 4), forbid the thought of thirsty ones in the eternal state, save those in the lake of fire. The heart of God overflows in pity and tenderness towards the needy and unsatisfied sons and daughters of men. The "fountain," the source of life itself, is promised to the thirsty. It is God's gift and freely given as are all His gifts (Isa. lv. 1).

THE GRAND PROMISE.

Then we have a word of wondrous cheer and strength to the tired and weary disciple, "faint yet pursuing." The promises

to the overcomer in the early part of the book (chaps. ii. and iii.), respect special circumstances, and are in view of special rewards. But here the encouragement to persevere to the end in the general battle of life is more ample, as the rewards are more full than those mentioned in the early portion of our book of prophecy and vision. "He that overcometh shall inherit these things"—those eternal things just named. But there is even yet a deeper and richer blessing in store for the overcomer—one of a personal kind—"I will be his God." He gives *Himself* to the conqueror over life's sins and sorrows. In our judgment this truly remarkable statement even outstrips the triumphant words of Paul: "The Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). Every statement of Scripture is perfect in its place, but there are some of profounder depth than others, and that in our text is one such. But the tale of grace is not exhausted, for we read, "He shall be My son." Sonship, therefore, is an eternal relationship. The overcomer has God, and God has the overcomer as son. Press on wearied disciple, the end is near. The promises are full and enough to tide you over every trial and every difficulty.

SINNERS IN THE LAKE OF FIRE.

"But the fearful, (or cowardly) and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." God here as in the previous utterances is the speaker. As another has said, "We ought to notice how much of these eight verses is made up of direct utterances of our God." In the previous declarations, God as *love* speaks, but in the final statement of eternity He speaks as *light*. God never forgoes His character as Judge of evil. The lake of fire is an actual and eternal place of punishment. In what part of the universe it is situated we know not. The current denial of eternal punishment finds no support, but absolute condemnation in the solemn passage before us. The eighth verse is as distinctly eternal as the first or second. We can introduce no measurements nor limitations within these eight verses. In them is embraced God's eternity and man's eternity, whether in heaven, earth, or the lake of fire. There are eight classes of sinners specified:—(1) The *fearful* or *cowardly* refer to those who are

afraid to confess Christ, or identify themselves with the Gospel; (2) *Unbelievers*—the most numerous class of any and one found amongst all classes and ranks of men; (3) The *abominable* should be understood here in its widest sense as denoting all that is morally, religiously, and physically filthy (xvii. 4-5, xxi. 27, Titus i. 16); (4) *Murderers* as a class are greatly on the increase. It is a solemn thing to meddle with that which peculiarly belongs to God—human life; (5) *Whoremongers* point to a sin which is awfully prevalent. The ruin of female virtue is regarded lightly, and whoremongers are received into society in the knowledge of the fact, while the poor victims are outcasts from respectability, but God here reverses the judgment of man, and whoremongers shall be consigned by the God of righteousness to the lake of fire; (6) *Sorcerers* are those who profess intercourse with spirits. Death was the appointed penalty under the law for those who practised spiritualism in those days (Deut. xviii, 10-12). The lake of fire is God's appointed doom for all who practise witchcraft, spiritualism, devil worship, and other forms of sorcery; (7) *Idolaters*—all worshippers of other gods. The countless millions of heathen in the past, in the present, and notably in the future are—where God has been given up and idols turned to—given over to eternal judgment; (8) All liars of every degree, kind, and character have their avenging answer in that eternal abode of misery where all and everything contrary to the character of God are consigned.

The "lake" *burneth*. Its fire is never exhausted. "Fire and brimstone" symbolise torment and agony of a fearful character (Isa. xxx. 33). The expression "the lake of fire" occurs five times in the Apocalypse. It is remarkable that when the devil and the awful sinners mentioned in our text are in question that "fire and brimstone" are added. "Which is the second death." The first death is the separation of soul and body but not cessation of existence, nor unconsciousness as many dream. Luke xvi. 19-31, is not said to be a parable, and Rev. vi. 9-11, shews consciousness and activity of spirit in the separate state. The lake of fire in its never-ending agony is the second death. There are three lists of sinners which it would be profitable to compare, 1 Cor. vi. 9-10; Rev. xxi. 8; xxii. 15. In the third list the last five named answer to the last five in the passage we have been considering.

The last notice of eternity is the never ceasing wail of anguish in the lake of fire.

The Millennial Kingdom and Reign.

The Personal reign of the Lord over the earth and the heavens is a grand, a magnificent outlook. The saints of Old and New Testament times share in the glorious reign, and have their part in the riches, wealth, and splendour of the vast dominion of our Lord. The Church is the nearest and dearest to Christ now and evermore, and occupies a very special place in His reign and glory.

The coming Kingdom, great and glorious, is in its conception, administration, and extent, absolutely without a parallel in history. The Kingdom shall display the perfection of human government. It is the goal of hope. The Hebrew prophets descant of it in glowing terms. The glories and grandeurs of Messiah's Kingdom occupies more than a third of the Old Testament. Creation groans, but in hope as the glad story of His coming and reign thrills its very soul. Herein is a study of profound interest. Herein lies a field of research open to all. The coming Kingdom as a subject is only equalled by the story of the cross itself. To this latter we gladly yield the palm, and bow in lowliest homage to its surpassing greatness. But the meditorial Kingdom of our Lord and of His saints, unlimited in extent—circumscribed only by the bounds of creation—righteous and beneficent in its character, more enduring than sun and moon, and stable as the throne of the Eternal, is a theme which should engross the attention of all, especially as the effect of vision and prophecy is *about* to be realised. Speculations as to time or manner of accomplishment, dreams and fancies, imagination and guess-work, and all word painting, and conjectural work of every sort, must be sternly checked and effectually kept under control. *God's* description of the coming Kingdom is circumstantially told in the pages of the prophets, and these testimonies unfold a marvellous story. All needful to know has been revealed, but how limited is *our* range-of-vision. Apply the telescope of faith to the prophetic future as it culminates in the glories of the Kingdom, and its comprehensiveness and vastness shall surprise you. Use the microscope to the thousand details which lie scattered like gold dust through both Testaments, and the result will astonish you. The comprehensiveness of Isaiah, and the literal details in Zechariah may be instanced as examples of telescopic and microscopic

examination of the coming prophetic situation. The morning without clouds is about to break, the glories of the millennial Kingdom are even now gilding our sky, the rainbow of prophetic promise gleams with light. He is coming, and O how soon our hopes may be lost in full and happy accomplishment.

CHRIST'S PUBLIC MANIFESTATION IN GLORY.

He comes a second time. Jesus who lived, loved, died, and rose, is personally coming to reign (Acts i. 11). He comes in the sight of all, and amidst the wailings of many (Rev. i. 7). It will be a grand triumphal entry into the scene wrested from the grasp of Satan (Rev. xix. 11-16). His heavenly saints and all the angelic host take their part in the grand procession (Jude 14; Col. iii. 4; Matt. xxv. 31; Heb. i. 6). Unexpectedly, suddenly, He sweeps down upon a mad and rebellious world in irresistible might. It will be a night of awful surprise to the guilty world then wrapped in sleep and moral darkness (1 Thess. v. 2-4; 2 Pet. ii. 10; Dan. ii. 34, 44, 45). He cometh with ariel clouds (Rev. i. 7), these attest His Divine majesty and mission to this world. Again, the clouds of heaven form His chariot, and His royal seat the right hand of power (Matt. xxvi. 64, R.V.). Yet once more we read, "then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke xxi. 27). His actual, personal presence is thus intimated. His victorious coming, His assured triumphs and victories are attested by the white horse which bears Him to the scene of His conquests (Rev. xix. 11).

THE BINDING AND IMPRISONMENT OF SATAN.

After the expulsion of Satan and his angels from heaven (Rev. xii.)—rejoiced in and celebrated by the dwellers there—he rules the apostate world—civic, social, and religious—for three years and a half, turning the lands of Christendom, and Judea especially into a pandemonium. But when Gentile power in blasphemy and cruelty has risen to its height, and Church corruption has sunk to its utmost depths of degradation, the Lord Himself appears on the scene. The confederated powers of evil are crushed and ground to powder (Dan. ii. 35, 44; Rev. xix. 15-21). The two great personal leaders are cast without trial into the eternal abode of misery, and Satan

the unseen, yet the real chief of the vast, congregated hosts of evil, is bound and cast into the abyss, or bottomless pit, for 1000 years (Rev. xx. 1, 2). Thus during the whole period of the Lord's reign (verse 4) the gladsome earth is freed from the presence, the wiles, temptations, darts, and roar of the great enemy of God and man. What a relief to the wearied sons of men! Thus the coming Kingdom is characterised (1) by Christ's Personal reign, and (2) Satan's confinement in the abyss—both the reign and the imprisonment lasting 1000 years.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM AND REIGN.

- ITS DURATION in its meditorial character—1000 years—Rev. xx. 4. But the Lord's reign embraces eternity as well as the 1000 years.
- ITS EXTENT: the heavens and the earth. Ps. viii. ; Eph. i. 10; Dan. vii.
- ITS RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER. Ps. lxxii. and xlv. ; Isa. xxxii. 15-20; Prov. viii. 15.
- ITS BENEFICENT CHARACTER. Zech. vi. 12, 13; Ps. lxxii. 12-14.
- ITS KING AND ASSOCIATED HEIRS. 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. xx. 6. These latter comprise all the dead in Christ raised and the living changed.
- ITS TWO GREAT DEPARTMENTS: Kingdom of the *Son* and Kingdom of the *Father*. Matt. xiii. 41, 43. The sphere of the former is *earth*, the latter the *heavens*.
- ITS HEAVENLY SEAT OF GOVERNMENT is the glorified Church in the heavens. Isa. iv. 5, 6; Rev. xxi. 9—xxii. 5.
- ITS EARTHLY SEAT OF GOVERNMENT is the spacious, new-built, and beautifully-adorned Jerusalem. Isa. lx. ; Ps. xlvi. 2, 3; Micah iv. ; Zech. viii. ; Isa. ii. 3.
- ITS JUDGMENTS AT THE COMMENCEMENT on the western powers, Rev. xix. ; on Edom and the heathen gathered there Obadiah ; Isa. lxiii. ; on Gog and his allies, Zech. xiv. ; Ezek. xxxix. ; Ps. lxxxiii.

ITS JUDGMENT AT THE CLOSE on the multitudinous hosts gathered under the personal leadership of Satan, Rev. xx. 7-9.

NO TEARS shed by the earthly saints, Rev. vii. 17; none by the heavenly saints, Rev. xxi. 4. The action of wiping them away is ascribed to God.

ITS THRONES. Dan. vii.; Rev. xx.; Matt. xix. 28. The thrones of the heavenly company in Rev. iv. are occupied prior to the reign.

ITS CROWNS. The woman (Israel) has *twelve* crowns Rev. xii.; the Beast has *ten* crowns, Rev. xiii. Christ is diademed, Rev. xix. 12, R.V.; we are crowned James i. 12; Rev. xi. 10; Isa. lxii. 3.

ITS ROBES. For the glorified Church, see Rev. xix. 8; the saved Gentiles on earth, see Rev. vii. 9, 13, 14; for Israel, see Isa. lxi. 10.

ITS PALMS of victory in the hands of the saved Gentiles on earth, Rev. vii. 9. This is not said of the heavenly saints.

ITS HARPS. Harps, vials, and song are associated with the heavenly saints, Rev. v. 8, 9; harp accompanied with song by the martyred in heaven, Rev. xv. 2, 3.

ITS SONGS. Isa. xii., xxvi., xxxv.; Ps. clvi.,-cl.; Rev. v. The song of the martyred remnant of Judah is recorded in Rev. xv.

NO WAR. Isa. ii. 4; Micah iv. 3; Hosea ii. 18.

NO DEATH in the eternal state of blessedness, Rev. xxi. 4; death itself destroyed, Rev. xx. 14; no death amongst the saved in heaven and earth, Isa. xxv. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 26.

NO IDOLATRY. Isa. ii. 18; Zech. xiv. 9; Mal. i. 11.

NO SORROW on high, Rev. xxi.-xxii. 5; no sorrow amongst the saved in earth, Rev. vii. 9-17; no sorrow amongst saved Israel, Isa. xiv. 3; li. 11.

NO POVERTY. Ps. cxxxii. 15; Isa. lxxv. 21-23; Ps. lxxii.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD UNIVERSAL. Isa. xi. 9; Ps. xxii. 27; Mal. i. 11; Hab. ii. 14; Isa. lxvi. 18, 19; Num. xiv. 21.

- THE ANIMAL CREATION freed from the curse, save the serpent. Isa. xi. 6, 9; lxxv. 25; Rom. viii. 19-22.
- THE WIDOW, FATHERLESS, ORPHAN, PRISONER, AND ALL IN NEED. Ps. lxxii. 2, 4, 12-14; Isa. xlix. 10-12.
- THE DEAD SEA will be healed and teem with fish; on its banks trees and fruit in great variety—never fading—shall flourish. Zech. xiv. 8; Ezek. xlvi.
- THE EUPHRATES is the eastern boundary of Palestine, Gen. xv. 18; its waters are to be dried up to facilitate military measures, Rev. xvi. 12.
- THE MEDITERRANEAN, or "hinder sea," Zech. xiv. 8; or "great sea," Ezek. xlvi. 10. The river of God flows into the Great Sea and the Dead Sea, healing and fertilising.
- THE RED SEA. Its tongue to be utterly destroyed, and the streams of the Nile as well, Isa. xi. 15. This will open up a free and dry passage for Israel.
- THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD not by missionary enterprise. *How?* see Joel ii. 28-32; *by whom?* Ps. lxxvii. 1, 2; Isa. lxvi. 19-23.
- THE EARTH'S FERTILITY. The predictions concerning the earth's fruitfulness are exceedingly rich, full, and precise. Ps. lxxii.; Amos ix. 13; Ps. lxxv. 9-13; Isa. xxxv.
- THE CONVERSION OF ALL ISRAEL. All Israel shall be saved, Rom. xi. 26; Heb. viii. 8-13. Israel's seed to the end of time saved also, Isa. lix. 20, 21.
- THE NATIONAL RESTORATION OF ALL ISRAEL. Judah restored in unbelief, Isa. xviii.; the whole nation restored, Zeph. iii. 19, 20; restoration of the ten tribes, Ezek. xx.
- THE PRE-EMINENT PLACE OF ISRAEL: Head of the nations, Deut. xxviii. 13; Isa. ii. 2-4; Gen. xxii. 17; Zech. viii. 20-23; xiv. 16-19; Jer. iii. 17; Isa. lx.
- THE SETTLEMENT OF ALL ISRAEL: securely established in the land for ever. Ezek. xxxvii. 25; xlvi. 1; Jer. xxiv. 6; Amos ix. 15.

- THE SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL BLESSING OF ALL ISRAEL:** saved from their sins, and blessed with the fulness of earthly blessing. Matt. i. 21; Ezek. xxxiv. 25-27; Hos. ii. 21-23.
- THE UNITY OF ALL ISRAEL** secured for ever. Ezek. xx. 40; Jer. iii. 18; Ezek. xxxvii. 22-24; Jer. l. 4, 5; Zech. x. 6.
- THE WEALTH OF ALL ISRAEL.** Zech. xiv. 14; Isa. lx. 5, 6, 9-11, 16, 17; Isa. lxi. 4-6; Ezek. xxxviii. 11-13; xxxix. 10.
- THE GREATLY INCREASED POPULATION OF PALESTINE.** Ezek. xxxvi. 37, 38; Gen. xxii. 17; Isa. xxvii. 6; Jer. xxiii. 3; xxx. 18-20.
- THE THREE LEADING POWERS** are Israel, Egypt, and Assyria, Isa. xix. 24-25; Israel chief of all, Isa. xi. 10.
- THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM** is the city of the living God, Heb. xii. 22; an actual city built and adorned by God in the heavens, Heb. xi. 16.
- THE NEW JERUSALEM** is the bride and wife of the Lamb, Rev. xxi. 2. "New" in the eternal state; "holy" in governmental splendour, Rev. xxi. 10.
- THE EARTHLY JERUSALEM** is grandly described in Isa. lx. A magnificent city built between the respective locations of Judah and Benjamin, Ezek. xlvi. 8-22.
- THE SIZE OF PALESTINE** from west to east, from the Nile to the Euphrates, Gen. xv. 18; also from north to south, Ezek. xlvi. 13-19; see also xlvi.
- THE FEET OF THE LORD ON MOUNT OLIVET** on behalf of His earthly people, and amidst the throes and convulsions of nature, Zech. xiv. 4.
- JERUSALEM: ENLARGED AND BEAUTIFIED,** the joy of the whole earth, Ps. xlvi. 1-3; the throne of the LORD, Jer. iii. 17.
- JERUSALEM: ITS GATES.** Has twelve gates, Ezek. xlvi. 31-34; open continually, Isa. lx. 11; see also Isa. xxvi. 2; liv. 12.
- JERUSALEM: ITS NEW NAME.** Jehovah Shammah—"the Lord is there," Ezek. xlvi. 35; see also Isa. lx. 14.

- JERUSALEM: THE CENTRE OF LAW AND WORSHIP.** Micah iv. 1, 2 ; Isa. lvi. 6, 7 ; Zech. viii. 20-23.
- JERUSALEM: ITS INHABITANTS** all holy and righteous. Zech. xiii. 1, 9 ; xiv. 20, 21 ; Isa. iv. 3 ; Obad. 17 ; Isa. i. 26, 27.
- JERUSALEM: ITS PRINCE** a lineal descendant of David. Ezek. xlv. xlv. His reign a combination of kingly-glory and priestly-grace.
- JERUSALEM: METROPOLIS OF THE EARTH.** Isa. lxii. 6, 7 ; Ezek. v. 5 ; Jer. iii. 17.
- JERUSALEM: ITS OLD MEN AND WOMEN** dwell in its streets. Zech. viii. 4.
- JERUSALEM: ITS BOYS AND GIRLS** playing in the streets. Zech. viii. 5.
- JERUSALEM: SEAT OF THE DIVINE GLORY** on earth. Its *throne* and *temple* the glorious centres. Isa. iv. 5, 6 ; Zech. viii. 3 ; Haggai ii. 7-9.
- JERUSALEM: NATIONS GO UP TO IT YEARLY.** Zech. xiv. 16 ; Isa. lvi. 7 ; lx. 11-14.
- JERUSALEM: SAFELY INHABITED.** Zech. ii. 4, 5 ; xiv. 11.
- THE TEMPLE A HOUSE OF PRAYER.** There are five material temples spoken of in the Word. The fifth or millennial temple is a house of prayer for all peoples. Isa. lvi. 7.
- THE TEMPLE: ITS PRIESTS.** The Aaronic priesthood re-established in the family of Zadok. Ezek. xlv. 15-31.
- THE TEMPLE: ITS SIZE.** Is one of vast dimensions with numerous gates, courts, and chambers. Ezek. xl.-xlv.
- THE TEMPLE: ITS SACRIFICES.** Certain commemorative sacrifices are offered. The evening sacrifice, Pentecost, etc., are omitted. Ezek. xlv.-xlvi.
- THE TEMPLE: ENTERED BY CHRIST** through its eastern gate, then to be shut. Ezek. xliii. 1-6 ; xlv. 4. This gate for the exclusive use of the prince. Ezek. xlvi. 1, 2.
- THE SETTLEMENT OF THE TRIBES** in parallel bands across the face of the country from east to west, commencing north. Ezek. xlviii.

THE OBLATION or specially holy part of the land reserved for the Lord and the temple, between the portions assigned to Judah and Benjamin. Ezek. xlvi. 8-22; xlv. 1-8; xlvii. 13-23

THE RIVER OF GOD issues from under the temple, then parts and flows east and west, enriching and fertilising the whole earth. Ps. lxxv. 9, 10; Zech. xiv. 8; Ezek. xlvii. 1.

THE WIFE OF JEHOVAH is Israel, divorced as a wife, but to be re-instated in Jehovah's favour and grace. Isa. l. 1; Hosea ii. 14-16.

THE BRIDE OF THE LAMB is the Church of the New Testament. 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 25-32; Rev. xix. 7.

THE QUEEN in gold of Ophir is *Jerusalem*; the daughter is the *people*; the virgins refer to the *cities* of Judah; the King is *Christ*. Ps. xlv.

The Ages; or, From Eternity to Eternity.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." To this beginning neither science nor Scripture can assign a date. In the unknown and remote ages prior to human history *God created*. *How* and *when* are not revealed. *Matter* is not eternal, for God is its Creator. The antiquity of the earth is an admitted fact, but its age is utterly beyond human research. There we leave it. That great chronological chapter, Gen. v. is the family register of the race for sixteen centuries and a half—from Adam to Noah. But all the computations of time therein enumerated, refer to the age of *persons*, and not to the creation of *matter*.

Nor are we informed by *what* means the earth was reduced to ruin and desolation, or *how* long it lay in its huge watery tomb. It was a long dark night to which no date or period can be assigned, and during which no doubt, vast geological changes took place. Life in many and varied forms filled the primeval earth, but no trace of man can be found in these bygone ages. Responsible life commenced with Adam. The

first thirty-nine words of the Bible, unfold certain foundation truths which form a crushing reply to atheistic science. We regard the days of creating and making as six literal days of twenty-four hours each: see Exod. xx. 11. The vast periods demanded for the formation of the various geological strata, can readily be granted in the utterly unknown and immeasurable ages comprised in the statements within the first two verses of Genesis.

The Bible does not profess to give the history of the creation prior to the introduction of man. Let the stones and rocks tell that story. The Bible records the history of the race. The past, the present, and the future are disclosed. The pen of the historian can narrate facts, chronicle events, but there are innumerable gaps which cannot be filled up; there are histories of nations and of persons which are yet a puzzle, and numerous events demanding light, to which no answer can be given. But the Bible not only unfolds the remote past (the first sixteen centuries of the world's history) as to which—apart from Revelation—all is the merest conjecture, but draws aside the curtain of the future and discloses eternity, with portions of the race in heaven and the lake of fire, and also accounts for those eternal abodes. The principles and motives which have ever governed men in all ages, and shall to the end of time, are also laid bare in this wondrous volume of Divine Revelation.

Efforts to present a correspondence between the six literal days in which the heavens and earth were made, and the 6000 years of human history, have not proved a success. We dread speculation in the region of the Divine.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE AGES.

1. ADAM.—*Innocence* or *sinlessness* (Gen. ii.). The period of innocence was brief; its main features are described within the compass of eighteen verses (Gen. ii. 8-25). In a sinless state and in a specially prepared garden, Adam and Eve stood alone (Gen. ii. 8). The garden was stocked with fruit and flower—a rich display of the creative goodness of the Creator. The state (*innocence*) and place (*the garden*) being forfeited by sin, there could be no return to either (Gen. iii. 24). Human nature is witnessed in three states or conditions:—(1) *Holy* in Christ

(Luke i. 35); (2) *Innocent* in Adam (Gen. ii 17); (3) *Sinful* in us (Ps. li.). Outside the garden and its walks and beauties, and in sin with its terrible governmental consequences, the race commenced its sorrowful history (Gen. iv. 1; Ps. li. 5). For believers God gives holiness instead of innocence, and the paradise of God instead of Eden. We are gainers by the Fall.

2. CAIN.—*Conscience or lawlessness* (Gen. iii). From the Fall till the Flood—a dreary period of 1656 years—lawlessness and sin prevailed. Unbridled self-will was everywhere rampant, and the moral corruption universal. God left the race without promise to cheer or law to restrain—left to the freedom of their own will, already distorted and twisted by sin. Man, however, had been supplied with conscience—God's inward, warning monitor. During the last 120 years of this dark and darkening period, God interposed with a combined testimony, through Noah, of salvation and judgment (Gen. vi., vii.; Heb. xi. 7; 1 Peter iii. 20). We have absolutely no records in book or monument of this first and eventful period of human history. We are alone indebted for the knowledge we possess to the first eight chapters of the Bible.

3. NOAH.—*Civil Government* (Gen. ix.). Magisterial authority and the fundamental principles of civil government for man as such, were instituted and revealed to Noah after the Flood; these principles remain to-day in all their force. All governments and powers are responsible to God for the due maintenance of law and authority in their respective spheres. Capital punishment was by no means a Jewish law, but formed part of the Noachic Covenant, and has never been abrogated. The token of the Covenant was the rainbow—God's sign hung out in the heavens: see Rev. iv. 3: x. 1. 'The rainbow was for the sight of God and man (Gen. ix. 12-17), and a perpetual reminder of the mercy and goodness of the Creator. Noah was the first magistrate. His high office was disgraced by his sinful conduct (Gen. ix. 21). He fell into the very crimes which it was his duty as a magistrate to repress and punish. God in governmental dealing with man at large, in judgment and in blessing, is the great characteristic of this period. This fresh beginning was founded on sacrifice—which had been largely forgotten—an important point to note (Gen. viii. 20, 21).

4. **ABRAM.**—*Promise and Testimony* (Gen. xii.; Rom. xi.). Owing to the universality of idolatry (Joshua xxiv. 2), Abram, himself an idolator, was called "out" (Gen. xii. 1) to head a new race (Rom. iv.); to commence anew a public testimony for God (Rom. xi.), and to become the source and channel of blessing to the world (Gen. xii. 2, 3), God thus morally judging the guilty scene. "Now to Abraham *and* his seed were the promises made" (Gal. iii. 16); to the former in Gen. xii., to the latter in Gen. xxii. Believers in all ages are "Abraham's seed" Gal. iii. 29). Abram is at once the father of the Jews and the father of believers—a double headship. Thus, the first one termed a Hebrew is Abram (Gen. xiv. 13), and the first historical mention of faith is of Abram (xv. 6). The history of God's *public* testimony on earth commenced with Abram. The olive tree exists, and so long as it does, the apostacy or the general abandonment of Christianity cannot take place. The public profession of the truth had its rise in Abram.

5. **MOSES.**—*The Law* (Exod. xix.). The law was given by Moses as a test and trial of mankind, and its history and effects as exhibited in Israel have been faithfully chronicled for instruction in all ages. The first set of tables was law, pure and simple, and which Moses in the intelligence of faith, broke in pieces, so that the law as written in the first tables of stone was never really promulgated in the midst of the camps of Israel (Exod. xxxii. 19). It was the second set of stones in which were written the law, but added to it the name of the Lord as merciful and gracious—combined law and grace—which proved a ministry of death and condemnation to Israel (2 Cor. iii.), as it does also to every individual soul spiritually quickened, but yet undelivered from the thralldom or dominion of sin, from not knowing that as Christians we are dead to sin (Rom. vi.) and dead to the law (vii.). The law as a covenant between Jehovah and Israel, existed from Moses to Christ (Gal. iii. 24)—an interesting period of about fifteen centuries. "The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ," *i.e.*, till He came, (Gal. iii. 24). The law is not dead, as some have foolishly affirmed, but Christians are dead to *it*.

6. **JOSHUA.**—*The Theocracy* (The book of Judges). During the period of the Judges—about 450 years (Acts xiii. 20)—Israel

was governed by Jehovah, but instrumentally by successive Judges—sixteen in all—raised up in various parts of the country. This dark period in Israel's history, brings into relief some fine instances of individual faith in God and traits of noble character; the sovereign grace of God to His failed and ever-failing people is also conspicuously displayed on the dark background of Israel's unbelief. The history closes with the exploits and death of Samson (chap. xvi.), hence the last five chapters form a dark episode in the history of Israel, and historically precede the raising up of the Judges. It was the terrible condition of Israel, as depicted in these chapters, which necessitated the raising up of the Judges. The times of the Judges have their counterpart in the history of the professing Church. Revivals, so termed, answering to the different reformations under the successive rulers raised up by God in His sovereign grace in answer to the cries and tears of His people.

7. DAVID.—*The Monarchy* (The books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, six in all). A new and important era in Israel's history dates from her rejection of the theocracy, *i.e.*, of Jehovah, Israel's King and Legislator, and her publicly expressed determination to have a king like the nations (1 Sam. viii.). The monarchy—from Saul to Zedekiah, first and last kings—existed for nearly 500 years. Not Saul, however, the people's choice, but David was Jehovah's chosen king (Psalm lxxxix.). David figures Christ; Saul the Antichrist. If Abram was the root of *promise*, David was that of *royalty* (Matt. i. 1). A lineal descendant will sit on the throne of Judah in millennial times—the vicegerent of Christ (Ezek. xlv.). David was born in Bethlehem—the birthplace of our Lord—about 1000 years before Christ. He began his reign when 30 years old (2 Sam. v. 4), the time when the Lord began His public ministry.

8. DANIEL.—*The Captivity* (The books of Daniel and Ezekiel). Ephraim, or the ten tribes, after existing as a separate kingdom for about 260 years, under nineteen kings, was destroyed by the Assyrian power (2 Kings xvii.). Judah as a distinct monarchy existed for about 390 years, under the sway of twenty sovereigns, and was destroyed by the Chaldeans in the year 588 B.C. (2 Kings xxv.). The times of the Gentiles date from the transference of royal government from the Jew to the

Gentile (Dan. ii.). The captivity of Judah lasted seventy years (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21). Remnants of the Judean part of the nation—perhaps about 60,000 in all—returned, and to the descendants of that remnant Christ came and presented Himself as the promised Messiah. The story of His rejection is the history of the Gospels. Babylon, not Jerusalem; the Gentile, not the Jew, then became the centre of the world's government (Dan. ii. ; Luke xxi. 24).

9. CHRIST CRUCIFIED.—*Grace* (The Acts and the Epistles). Israel is the subject of *prophecy* and of special government. The Church is the subject of distinct *revelation* and of grace. From the judicial rejection of Israel (Acts xxviii. 25-27) and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem several years later (70 A.D.), till she once again occupies *the* place in history, the interesting interval between of about 2000 years, has as its grand characteristic, THE REVELATION OF GOD IN GRACE TO SINNERS, and THE UNIQUE PLACE AND DESTINY OF THE CHURCH AS THE BODY AND BRIDE OF CHRIST (John iii. ; Eph. iii.). The Church of the New Testament is the bride and destined wife of the Lamb (2 Cor. xi. 2 ; Eph. v. 31, 32 ; Rev. xix. 7). Israel, the divorced wife of Jehovah, is to be reinstated in Jehovah's favour. A divorced wife cannot be a bride. The crucifixion of the Lord is the grandest counsel of eternity, and by far the greatest fact in human history.

10. SATAN.—*Judicial Judgment* (Rev. vi.-xix.). After the translation of the saints to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17), which closes up this parenthetical period of grace, the 70th week or seven literal years of Daniel's celebrated prophecy (Dan. ix. 27) runs its course, during which, in the latter half especially, Satan plays his terrible rôle. The characteristic feature will be the infliction of successive judgments upon apostate Judah, apostate Christendom, and Western Europe, which are mainly noted in the prophetic part of the Revelation (chaps. vi.-xix.). The prophets from Isaiah to Malachi must be searched for the part which Israel and her political foes play in the coming crisis.

11. CHRIST GLORIFIED.—*Glory* (Rev. xx. ; xxi. 9 ; xxii. 5). The personal reign of Christ for 1000 years (xx. 1-6) will be a

magnificent era in the history of the world. It will be a reign of righteousness. The Kingdom will be universal in extent, enduring as the heavenly bodies, and righteous in character. It will be a grand time for man, Israel especially, and creation. The heavenly saints are associated with Him in His glorious reign. He and we reign in one glory for ever and for ever. The Lord will throw the skirts of His glory over the scene of agony, the universal groan will be hushed, the general wail of misery cease, and one loud, long, universal anthem sung by the Redeemed Creation of Him and to Him (Rev. v.; Psalms cxlvi.-cl).

The millennial state of things on the earth is described in the books of the prophets (Isa. to Mal.).

12. GOD.—*God's Eternal Rest* in which we share (Rev. xxi. 1-8; 1 Cor. xv. 28; 2 Peter iii. 13). We have at last reached perfection. The everlasting ages are not the fruit of eternal counsel as the millennium is, but the result rather of what God is as *light* (1 John i. 5) and as *love* (1 John iv. 16). O! the deep and unfathomable blessedness of entering into God's rest (Heb. iv.), when perfection is stamped on every creature and on every thing—the lake of fire and its eternal inhabitants excepted (Rev. xxi. 8). The description of the eternal state is stated in both negative and positive terms. What will it be to be there? Everything and everyone in the new-made heaven and earth of eternity, shall echo the glad refrain, God is *light* and God is *love*. The brightest and gladsome of all is the Church, the eternal companion of Christ. No night, no tears, no death, no sorrow, no shadow. O for the flower that never fades, for the gold that never dims, for the unbroken calm of these eternal regions.

“Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! . . . For of Him and through Him, and to Him are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen. (Rom. xi. 33-36).

OH, CAN WE BE FORGETFUL, LORD ?

TUNE: *Ye Banks and Braes.*

—:O:—

Oh, can we be forgetful, Lord,
 That Thou hast promised to return ?
 Forgetful of Thy parting word,
 As o'er Thine own Thy heart did yearn ?
 Within Thy Father's house are now,
 As then, those "many mansions" fair ;
 And "I will come again," saidst Thou,
 "I will Myself receive you there."

Oh, Lord, we shall be like Thee then,
 For we shall see Thee as Thou art ;
 Thou, fairer than the sons of men,
 Whose perfect love hath won our heart.
 Thy brow, once rudely wreathed with thorn,
 With circling glories shall be crowned ;
 It is Thine absence here we mourn,
 There all Thy presence-joys are found.

"Come quickly, blessed Saviour, come !"
 With one accord we cry to Thee ;
 Long have we hoped that Thy return
 Would bid the night of darkness flee.
 The shadows still are o'er the vale
 Where Thy belov'd ones watch and weep,
 And till the morn's first blush we hail,
 Untiring vigil would we keep.

Lord, as we muse the torches burn,
 Thyself, Thyself, we long to see ;
 For Thee our hearts responsive yearn,
 Our wistful eyes are unto Thee.
 Oh, open Thou again the skies !
 Oh, leave for us again the throne !
 Oh, Well-Beloved, once more arise !
 Come ! to Thyself receive Thine own !
