

THE

COMING AND REIGN

OF

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

BY

E. H. CHATER

THIRD EDITION

1963

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PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.



THE following papers are in substance similar to addresses on the subject of our Lord's coming and reign, given by the writer at various places. They are now sent forth in print, trusting that He who delights to bless may graciously use what is of Himself in them, to the encouragement and edification of the Christian reader, and the warning and salvation of any who may be still without Christ.

January, 1880.

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THE COMING AND REIGN
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OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CAUGHT UP.

EVERY Christian lives in the hope of one day being with Christ his Saviour, of seeing the Blessed One who died for him, and of dwelling with Him in heaven for ever; but the thoughts of thousands are full of confusion as to the manner in which this is to be accomplished. I desire in this paper to show simply from the word of God that the Christian hope is the coming of the Lord; also what should be the attitude and conduct of those who look for Him, and how that hope will be realized. Then in the succeeding papers to speak of varied circumstances which God has revealed, as both attending and following upon its accomplishment.

Leaving details for a moment, I think we may *broadly* divide the thoughts of Christians on this subject as follows; namely, 1 those who believe Christ has come spiritually, 2 those who believe He comes for them at death, and those who look for His personal return. In conversing with the first, you will find that they treat the Scriptures

which refer to the coming of Christ in a spiritual way, saying that He has already come into their hearts. Surely no Christian could dispute the fact for a moment that Christ dwells in him; he would not be a Christian without it. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. viii. 9.) But the Spirit of God dwelling in the believer does not bring about any physical change as to his body; whereas, when Christ comes, there is abundant proof from Scripture that mortality at that moment will be swallowed up of life. (1 Cor. xv. 50-53; 2 Cor. v. 4.)

The second class suppose, that when a believer dies, it is then that the Lord comes for him, and so *apply* all the Scriptures relating to this truth. Now surely, again, no Christian will deny for a moment, that should he die, or fall asleep (which is a Scriptural term for the death of a believer, 1 Cor. xv. 51), that in departing this life he goes to be with Christ. The word of God is equally plain as to this: "Willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8); "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." (Phil. i. 23.) But here also the same record of events that will transpire at the coming of Christ, most clearly disproves that it has reference to our death or falling asleep. For whenever this event takes place, we know that the spirit and soul are separated from the body, and the latter goes to the grave and corruption (1 Cor. xv. 42-57); whereas we are expressly taught, in Phil. iii. 20, 21, that "we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile *body*, that it may be fashioned *like unto His glorious body*," &c.

And again, says the apostle, "We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be *clothed upon* with our house which is from heaven; if so be that *being clothed* we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: *not for that we would be unclothed*, but *clothed upon*, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 1-4.)

Suffice that which I have said, to show the fallacy of the above interpretations of the scriptures treating of the Christian's hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and let us now turn to the third class, who look for this. Here too we find, in speaking with those who own this precious truth, the greatest divergence of thought as to the details of the manner of its accomplishment, though all may agree as to the fact that it will be a personal return. We rejoice that we are in Christ, and He in us (2 Cor. v. 17; Col. i. 27); we are thankful to know that if it please the Lord to put us to sleep, we should be absent from the body, and present with Himself; but we cannot let any rob us of the third glorious truth, that Christ is coming to change us into His own likeness, and thus perfect us for ever. This is the immediate Christian hope. Our only resource, in the midst of the confusion of thought surrounding us, is to come with a childlike spirit to the Word itself, and in humble dependence on the guidance and teaching of the Holy Ghost, seek to gather the Lord's mind there revealed. "For," saith He, "my thoughts are not your

thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. lv. 8, 9.)

But before we trace from this unfailing source the teaching of God as to the coming of His beloved Son, the hope of the Christian, let us pause just for a moment and consider what a Christian is. For unless my reader can apply this title rightly to himself, this hope can be no source of comfort or joy to him, but must rather fill the heart with dread and fear. What then is a Christian? One who has bowed to God's testimony as to his guilty and lost condition as a sinner (Rom. iii. 19-23), but who has been led through grace to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God (Rom. iii. 26), who came into this world to save such. One who in believing has received the forgiveness of sins, and is justified from all things; already in the enjoyment of peace with God, a possessor of God's priceless gift, "*eternal life*." (John iii. 36.) Not one who hopes to be saved; for God describes us in our natural state, as "without Christ . . . having *no hope*, and without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 12); but one who *is saved* "by (in) hope" (Rom. viii. 24) of the glory of God. Cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, his sins are gone; the penalty of sin—death—has been borne by his blessed Substitute; judgment passed on Him in his stead, and now, united to Him who sits at God's right hand, one spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. vi. 17), he looks with joy for the moment when he shall see his Saviour face to face.

In the meanwhile, until that glorious hope is

realized, he walks down here in the world as a pilgrim and a stranger (1 Peter ii. 11) in the conscious love of God, to whom he is reconciled. He knows and calls Him "Father" (Rom. viii. 15), Who has made him His child, and cares for him in that relationship.

He knows too, for God has told him in His Word, that he is a citizen of heaven (Phil. iii. 20), that he is not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world (John xvii. 16); and is called to be a follower of that blessed One, by denying himself, and taking up his cross. (Luke ix. 23.) He discovers that he is down here in a world which has rejected, cast out, and crucified his Lord. Therefore he can have no fellowship with the world, but must testify against it. (Eph. v. 11.) This brings out the enmity of the human heart; like master, like servant, and hence he has to suffer for His name. (1 Peter ii. 21.)

How gracious then of his Lord to leave with him the sweet promise of His return, and whilst away, to give him that other Comforter, Himself also coming to him, that he might not be left comfortless, or as an orphan in this dreary scene. (John xiv. 16-18.)

The world has yet to answer for the rejection and murder of Christ; the day of vengeance of our God will surely overtake the ungodly. But the Christian, through faith in the rejected One, is delivered from it, can look up with joy and confidence into the opened heaven, and there behold his Saviour and his Lord at God's right hand, knowing that He who raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken his mortal body by (or, on account of) His Spirit that dwelleth in him. (Rom. viii. 11.)

If he looks back, he sees a condemned world, from which he has escaped; if he looks around, he sees the fearful effects of sin on all sides; if he looks forward here, nothing lies before him but a waste, barren wilderness, a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, and where he may soon miss his way if he once steps out of the path of faith (2 Peter iii. 17); if he looks in, he sees that wretched self, and the workings of the flesh; for although not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, the flesh is still in him. (Rom. viii. 8, 9; Gal. v. 16-18.) But if he turns away from the world and sin, the flesh and self, altogether, and looks by simple faith into the glory, there he beholds the One so precious to his heart, the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, the fairer than the children of men (Ps. xlv. 2); and as he gazes, the heart is filled with

The Person of the Christ
Enfolding every grace,

and he longs for the moment when he who has said, "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also," shall fulfil His parting promise. Then shall he meet his Lord, leaving every trace of mortality and sin behind him for ever, no more to go out (Rev. iii. 12), but to spend an eternity in His own blissful presence.

With Him I love, in spotless white,
In glory I shall shine;
His blissful presence my delight,
His love and glory mine.

All taint of sin shall be removed,
All evil done away;
And I shall dwell with God's Beloved,
Through God's eternal day.

My dear reader, are you one of those who know the love of Christ, and whose heart beats with love to Him in return? Is this glorious One the treasure of your soul? Have you believed on Him? Are you a Christian? Such alone can enter into these things with joy. But if you are a mere nominal professor, wake up, ere it be too late! Come as a guilty sinner to the Saviour. He will in no wise cast you out (John vi. 37); and all your soul needs you will find in Him. Come, oh, come to Him now! and peace with God shall be yours, and you with us will joy in God, and rejoice in hope of His glory. (Rom. v. 1-11.)

Having thus briefly sought to show what a Christian is, let us now dwell upon the hope that God has given him as a stay to his heart, as he passes along through this scene, that he may be encouraged and sustained as he copes with the difficulties of the way, and as an incentive to faithfulness and devotedness to his Lord. This hope is twofold. We are taught to look both for the personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ in the air *for* His saints, and also for His manifestation in power and great glory *with* His saints. These are two events, carefully distinguished the one from the other by the Spirit of God, and must in no way be confounded together. I shall seek to clearly show the difference between them from the Word. Many have mixed up the two, and therefore marred both, by making scriptures to clash which harmonize most perfectly, and misled thousands by causing them to look for things coming on the earth instead of waiting for the Lord from heaven. Hence they have helped

greatly to lower the whole tone of the Christian's walk and character.

If we turn to the Old Testament and trace through its pages, we find a repeated testimony to the sufferings and rejection of the Messiah, and His return in power to judge His enemies, take His throne, and set up His kingdom over all the earth. (Isa. liii.; xi.) It is then that He will *appear in glory* (and, as we find in Colossians iii. 4, we shall appear with Him); but not a single word about His coming *for* His people, which is so largely treated of in the New. Distinct mention of this is made by the Lord Himself, in the familiar passage in the opening of the fourteenth chapter of John's gospel, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again*, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The Lord Jesus is about to leave this scene; He is going to the cross and the glory, leaving His beloved disciples in this sinful world. He cheers and encourages their troubled and drooping hearts by telling them of His Father's house, the many mansions; and, precious thought! He Himself is going to prepare a place for them. He who was about to give Himself for them on the cross, to atone for their sins by the shedding of His own precious blood (Rev. i. 5, 6), will Himself prepare a place in virtue of His own work. And not only so, but He will *come again*, and receive them to Himself, that where He is, there they may be also. Nothing short of this will satisfy His heart; He

delights to do everything for them Himself. Blessed Lord Jesus! He does not say He will receive them into heaven, but *to Himself*. It is not the place, but the Person, His own blessed, glorious Person, that He keeps before the hearts of His disciples. Hence Scripture nowhere speaks of the believer going to heaven in so many words, but always to be with Christ, unless in the case of the dying thief, and then it is, "To-day shalt thou be *with me* in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) Perfectly true it is heaven, but what would it be without Him? He does not occupy us with a place, but with Himself.

You will remark, dear reader, in this passage, that no details are entered into by the Lord as to the accomplishing of this promise; nothing is said as to how or when He will receive them, but simply the blessed fact, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words," said Jesus, "shall never pass away." We must look further on for *details*, in the writings of the apostle Paul; but here is the sweet promise, unaccomplished still, though none the less sure. Christ, who has gone on high, *will come again*. The sceptic may laugh, the infidel may sneer, the mocker may mock on; yet, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." (Rom. iii. 4.) Jesus said, "I will come again," and come He surely will; "the scripture cannot be broken." (John x. 35.)

In Mark xiii. 33-37 we find the Lord again addressing His disciples, and telling them what their attitude and conduct should be in view of His return: "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. *For the Son of*

*man is** as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, *Watch.*"

We get three things brought out here as to the responsibility of the Lord's servants during His absence; first, authority; secondly, every man his work; and thirdly, to watch; for we know not the hour of His return. He would not have us fear man, or look to man for authority to go forth in service to Him; but in His name alone, gifted, schooled, fitted, and sent forth by Himself. Neither would He have us to be idle, or clashing one with another in our service; but He has a work for each one to do, and it is for us to know what it is, and do it. Nor would He have us to be slumbering and sleeping at our post, but thoroughly awake to all our responsibilities, watching as we wait for the return of our Lord.

The watches are now nearly passed; even has gone, the midnight or dark ages have run out, the cock-crowing has been heard, and the morning is already here. For many a year past the cry has gone forth far and wide that the Master of the house is coming, and thousands who had forgotten their Lord's exhortation have been aroused to watchfulness, and now await His return.

This was strikingly foretold by the Lord in Matthew xxv., where He likened the kingdom of

* These words are not found in the original.

heaven to ten virgins, surrounded by the circumstances of an Eastern marriage. There He presents to us those who take the place of the Lord's people during His absence, professing Christians going forth to meet Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom. Five are called wise, five foolish. All had lamps, but the wise had oil in their vessels with their lamps; the possession of oil was that which distinguished between the two. So is it in Christendom; there are those who are wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, and have the Spirit of God, so often figured by oil in Scripture, and there are those who have a lamp of profession, light but not life. Every feature of this striking picture may be easily traced in that which has occurred, or is going on, among the professors of His name. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry (made), Behold, the bridegroom (cometh); go ye out to meet Him." (*vv.* 5, 6.) Alas! not only the professor, but the possessor also, the wise as well as the foolish, all ceased to watch. The Lord's return was lost sight of, the coming of the Bridegroom forgotten, and they all slumbered and slept. But, blessed be His name, the cry went forth, "*Behold the Bridegroom.*" On all sides has there been a restlessness of spirit, a waking up to the fact that *the Lord is coming*; a vast impetus has taken place. Thousands have heard the cry, and with oil in their vessels with their lamps await His return; thousands more, foolish virgins, are running hither and thither to buy oil where it cannot be obtained. Soon, very soon, the Bridegroom, the Lord Himself, will come; and, oh, wondrous moment! "*they that were ready went*

in *with Him* to the marriage: and the door was shut."

Now mark, dear reader, "they that *were ready* went in;" not those that were getting ready, neither those who were trying to be ready, nor those who hoped to be ready, but "they that *were ready*" went in *with Him*, precious, precious Jesus, and the door was shut, shut close, shut fast, and shut for ever on all Christless professors. Christians, watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour!

Another scripture in Luke xii. 35-37 brings before us in a most precious way the attitude and conduct that should characterize those who are looking for their Lord.

"*Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning: and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them.*"

And again the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.* Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over *all that he hath.*" (vv. 42-44.)

In contrast with this—the Lord's exhortation to His servants during His absence, and the sweet and precious promises of what He will do for those who are obedient to His word, and in loving

subjection are found doing these things at His return—we have, on the other hand, a solemn warning to all who take the place of the Lord's servants, but whose hearts are far from Him.

“But and if that servant say in his heart, **My lord delayeth his coming**; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.” (*vv. 45–47.*)

And then another class is spoken of, not mentioned under the term “*servant.*” “But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.” (*v. 48.*)

How very solemn to hear, as is often the case, professing Christians saying, “The Lord will not come yet; He will not come in our day,” and to find them feasting themselves with the world in forgetfulness of Him, with such searching words before us from His own lips! “My lord delayeth his coming;” the servant professedly owning His authority, but putting off His return; living for his own selfish ends, following his own will, and having no heart for Christ. Judgment with the unbelievers must be the awful portion of all such. Another, knowing his lord's will, but doing his own, and not preparing for his lord's return. How many of this class surround us on all sides! Open Bibles in every house, the will of the Lord distinctly expressed therein, but thousands dis-

obedient and unprepared. Reader, how is it with you? * *Many stripes* shall be their portion. Others throughout this vast globe who know not the Master's will, but live in their sins, *few stripes* shall be theirs, saith the Lord. They have never had the privileges of the one who knew his lord's will, and thus a lesser punishment will be awarded by a just Judge. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (Rom. xiv. 12.)

Thus far as to the glorious fact that our Lord will come again, and what should characterize those who look for His return. Now let us turn to the epistles of Paul, and trace the revelation that God has given us as to what will take place at that glorious moment; for in his writings alone do we find it.

In 1 Thess. i. 9 we read of the effect of the preaching of the gospel to the idolaters at Thessalonica. They "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus," &c. They turned to God *from* idols (not from idols to God), henceforth to serve Him, and wait, not for death (this is never in Scripture presented to the Christian), but for God's Son from heaven, to wait for His coming again. Also in chap. ii. 19 Paul says to them, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ *at His coming?*"

Now whilst they were thus simply awaiting

* All the wicked will surely be *punished eternally* (Rev. xxi. 8; xiv. 10, 11; Matt. xxv. 46), although there are different measures of punishment *as to its severity*, as these and other passages clearly show. (Matt. x. 15; xi. 22-24; xxiii. 14.)

their Lord's return, but without intelligence as yet as to *how* He would come (for although they had been taught to wait for Him, they had not yet been instructed as to the manner of His coming), to their surprise some of their company fell asleep. The apostle writes them, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which *are asleep*, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep in [through] Jesus* will God bring with Him."

Having been taught to wait for God's Son from heaven, they were sorrowing for those who had fallen asleep, as though they had lost their hope. Paul encourages them by saying that if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, God would surely bring with Him those who had fallen asleep. If Jesus had risen, He was the first-fruits of them that slept (1 Cor. xv. 20), and God would surely raise them also, and *bring them with His Son* when He should come forth to reign at *His glorious appearing*, which we have already remarked upon in this paper as part of the Christian hope.

Hitherto the Thessalonians were ignorant of this; he would have them so no longer. But mark, dear Christian reader (for this is a most important point to apprehend in order to get a clear understanding with regard to the Lord's coming), up to this point the Thessalonians were still in darkness as to *how* they would arrive in the glory. They waited for Christ; but *how* He would come as yet they knew not. The next verses, 15-18, give us light upon the subject. Other scriptures

speak of the saints being *changed* (1 Cor. xv. 51), mortality swallowed up of life (2 Cor. v. 4); but this alone gives us the details of what will transpire when the Lord comes *for His people*. Without it we should still have been in the dark on this point, and hence the importance of giving special heed to this remarkable communication. It comes in parenthetically, and is a direct revelation as to what will transpire at that wondrous moment—a perfectly distinct thing from the glorious appearing or manifestation of the Lord Jesus with all His saints.

“For this we say unto you by the *word of the Lord*.” Mark, it is not a communication through a prophet of the Old Testament, but a revelation through Paul of the secret translation of the saints to meet the Lord. “We which *are alive, and remain* unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which *are alive and remain*, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thess. iv. 15–18.)

Blessed, comforting hope! The coming of the Lord Himself, who has all power in heaven and in earth. The rejected Jesus, who was crucified through weakness (2 Cor. xiii. 4), but conquered every foe, spoiled the grave, and sat down as Lord and Christ at the right hand of God, is soon coming to claim the trophies of His victory on Calvary, by taking His redeemed

ones home to Himself in glory. See how this glorious event will come to pass. "We which are *alive and remain*," says the apostle, including himself,* thus showing that it was his hope, as that of all Christians, "shall not prevent (or go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself" (not simply the Lord, but the word "Himself" is added, as though to enforce the identity and personality of Him who comes, and to guard against its being spiritualized away); "*this same Jesus*"—"shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." The shout is an assembling shout, a shout which is also an authoritative command. Every saint will hear it, alive or asleep. The dead in Christ will rise first. All who have fallen asleep in Him shall hear His voice, and come forth. The graveyard shall yield up of its dead; the mighty ocean also. The Lord knows where the dust of all His loved ones lies.

The fool says, "How are the dead raised up?" (1 Cor. xv. 35, 36.) The Christian replies, "With God all things are possible." (Matt. xix. 26.) Not one shall be left behind; no, not a sheep nor a lamb of the flock of God. Not one of the vast host redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, but shall hear the well-known voice of Jesus at that wondrous moment. "The dead in Christ *shall rise first*: then we which *are alive and remain* shall be caught up together with them in the

* Some few years after this the apostle, writing to Timothy, says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. iv. 6), from which it appears that it was known to him later that he himself would pass through death.

clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Again the apostle repeats the words "We which are alive and remain," including himself. Truly the Lord has not yet come, but "He that *shall come will come*" (Heb. x. 37); each moment brings us nearer to this glorious consummation of our hope. "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. i. 20.)

If Paul, when he wrote this, had not been waiting for the Lord, thinking that at any moment he might be caught up to meet Him, would he have used such language? Might he not have said, "We the dead, and *they* which are alive and remain," if he had not expected his Master's return at any moment. But this he did not say. And so throughout this wondrous hour of the administration of the grace of God, every Christian ought to have been waiting, and ought now still to be, for the coming of the Lord Himself.

Christian, your Lord may come, as you read these words; if so, in a moment you would leave this world; the dead in Christ shall rise first, and *then we*—mark *we*—which are *alive and remain* shall be *caught up* together with them; not in a whirlwind, with a chariot of fire and horses of fire like Elijah, but caught up by the invisible power of God. Enoch walked with God, and was not, for *God took him*; he "was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." (Heb. xi. 5.) So will it be with the Christian when our Lord comes, so may it be with us this very day; we which are alive and remain shall be caught up

(translated without seeing death) together with them (that is, those who are asleep, "the dead in Christ") in the clouds. They rise first, but the period of time is almost imperceptible, and *all together*, caught up in the clouds, *meet the Lord in the air*. Wondrous, glorious meeting! we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him. (1 John iii. 2.) Marvellous meeting-place, *the air*. And, precious thought, "so shall we *ever* be with the Lord." Blessed prospect, His own presence, His own company, His own likeness for ever and for ever. "Wherefore," concludes the apostle, "comfort (encourage) one another with these words." We are *not to look for death*, though we *may* fall asleep, but this is *not our hope*; comfort one another with these words, *the Lord is coming!*

How wonderfully all Scripture hangs together! Had not our blessed Lord this glorious event before Him, although the moment had not yet come for it all to be fully told out, when He uttered those memorable words to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall *never die*?"

Not only will He who is *the resurrection* raise, by His mighty power, that one who died in the faith, but at the same moment shall mortality be swallowed up of life. For He who is also *the life* shall change the living believer. He who liveth then, when Christ comes, and believeth in Him, shall *never die*. (John xi. 25, 26.) The Lord did not say, "he that believeth and liveth," but "he that *liveth* and believeth," shall *never die*, never pass through death at all.

Some have had the thought that those who are not looking for the coming of Christ may be left behind to pass through the great tribulation, which shall come upon the earth after that event. But God accredits all Christians as looking for Christ, though many sadly lack spiritual intelligence as to the accomplishment of their hope in Him. When God says, "We which are *alive and remain* shall be caught up," and "We shall not all sleep, but *we shall all* be changed," His word is a sufficient answer to such unscriptural thoughts.

The 144,000 sealed of the tribes of Israel, and the great multitude of Gentiles in Rev. vii., of whom we shall speak more later on in another paper, are a fresh company preserved of God (after the translation of the heavenly saints), for millennial blessing on the earth.

How often, too, have we heard the saying: "Oh, there's one thing certain, we shall all die," although the word of God most distinctly asserts the contrary. Enoch and Elijah were both taken away from this scene without passing through death; two others are likewise spoken of, the beast and the false prophet (Rev. xix. 20) who shall also go to hell without dying. And, as we have seen, when our Lord comes, the living believers will be changed. Scripture is often erroneously quoted to favour this wrong thought; many say, "It is appointed unto *all* men once to die," whereas God never said "*all*," but simply "it is appointed unto *men*." (Heb. ix. 27.) It is the lot of men, death having come in as the wages of sin, but there have been exceptions, and Christ having died and risen, believers are in Him a new creation, on new

ground altogether, and there will be a further exception for all saints who are alive when He comes. Death has no claim upon them; they have died with Him.

Another passage, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22), might at first sight present some difficulty; but when understood in its true import, it perfectly accords with what we have seen. All who remain in their old Adam-standing, natural men, will surely die; but Christians are in Christ, who is risen from among the dead, and are not viewed by God here, where the two headships are contrasted, as in Adam at all. All such shall be made alive.

In 1 Cor. xv. 51 we read the very opposite: "We shall *not all* sleep, but we *shall all* be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." How beautiful the harmony of God's word, when we forsake our own thoughts, and bow to His. The apostle, by the Spirit of God, speaks of it as a mystery which he shews to the saints, "We shall *not all* sleep, but we shall *all be changed*;" what could be plainer?

The Lord will take the very smallest possible space of time to accomplish this mighty act, "*a moment*," "*the twinkling of an eye*." Beloved reader, if that marvellous moment were to come now, that moment only known to the Father, that moment for which the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and all heaven wait; that moment for which every saint on earth should be waiting; would *you* be *amongst* the number caught up to meet Him, and so to be "for ever with the Lord"? The last trump will very shortly sound, and "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be

changed." The term "*the last trump*" does not mean the last that ever will sound; Scripture distinctly speaks of others in the Revelation after this. It is a military allusion; a particular call or sound, the last of a series, well-known in military circles in that day, the signal for the departure of the men. So will this trumpet-call be responded to by every saint of God; this corruptible shall put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall put on immortality (1 Cor. xv. 51-56); so beautifully agreeing with what we have seen in 1 Thess. iv. The grave shall not hold back one single saint of God; He who is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hades and of death (Rev. i. 18) will exercise His omnipotence, and all His own in earth or sea shall rise to meet Him. He was the first-fruits, "afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming." (1 Cor. xv. 23.)

The same precious truth is taught in many other scriptures; Christ is coming for His own. In Phil. iii. 20-21, speaking of the Christian, we read, "For our conversation (or our commonwealth) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

The Christian's portion is not on earth, but on high, from whence He looks for "the Lord Jesus Christ, *as Saviour*," for such is the real force of the passage. Having received the salvation of his soul (1 Peter i. 9) he waits for the *adoption*, to wit, the *redemption* of his body, *not for death and corruption*. (Rom. viii. 23.) He waits for the Lord

Jesus Christ to come forth as the Saviour, to accomplish the salvation of his body; to change it, this vile body, or body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like to the Lord's own glorious body. Mark, not a new body, but this very same one, in which we now tabernacle, *changed*.

The bodies of believers are already the members of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 15), even now the temple of the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) At that moment He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your *mortal body* by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Rom. viii. 11.) And take note again here, it is not the quickening of a corruptible body, as of those dead when Christ comes, but our *mortal body*, those who are alive and remain, who are indwelt by the Spirit of God. And this wondrous change is wrought according to the working whereby our Lord "is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

The same precious truth is connected with the remembrance of Christ in the Lord's supper; for the apostle says, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death *till He come*;" not until we go into death, but "*till He come*." (1 Cor. xi. 26.)

The question will probably arise in the minds of some who may read this paper, "*But* are we not to look for signs and events happening on the earth, as indicating the approaching coming of the Lord? Do not many scriptures teach that many things will transpire beforehand?" This mistake arises from the confusion that I have already spoken of, in the minds of many, respecting two actions quite distinct as to the times of their accomplishment. There is unquestionably much

to take place before Christ, the Son of man,* comes in power and great glory to judge and reign, but nothing of necessity before He descends into the air for His people. Much before the *glorious appearing*, but at any moment, even whilst you read these words, this latter marvellous event may happen, and all the redeemed be caught away. *After this*, and *before* the manifestation of Christ with His saints in glory, will be an interval of terrible judgments, and the hour of tribulation. (Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.)

In Rev. iii. 10, 11, the Lord, in addressing the angel of the Church of Philadelphia (which, taken in its historical order, corresponds with the present time) says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee *from* (or out of) the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Here we have a distinct and express scripture speaking of God's people being kept, not *in* or *through* the hour of temptation, but *from* or *out of* it. The manner of its accomplishment is brought out in the next verse, "Behold, I come quickly;" the word "*quickly*" being added for the first time. What more forcible language could be employed to show that the Lord Himself is on the very eve of coming, that we should be expecting Him every moment? And thus will the saints be removed from this scene in a moment, delivered from the awful judgments that shall come upon all the world.

* Whenever Scripture speaks of the coming or appearing of Christ, under the title "*Son of man*," it invariably refers to His coming to judge and reign. The words, "*wherein the Son of man cometh*," in Matt. xxv. 13, are not in the original.

The Christian, who is not of the world, will be saved out of it, being translated before the judgment, like Enoch before the flood. (Gen. v. 22-24.) Noah passes through it in the ark, and comes out of it on to the earth again, a type of other saints saved after (to whom we have already briefly referred), who pass through the judgments, and are brought into blessing on the earth, when Christ comes as King to reign. These are quite a distinct class from Christians, who wait for God's Son from heaven; they are preserved Israelites and Gentiles blessed under a fresh dealing of God, which will go on during the short interval of judgment between the rapture or catching up of the heavenly saints, and His descent with His saints to reign.

We find then, in Rev. vii., Israelites and Gentiles distinct, which clearly shows that they are not the saints of this present interval; for Christians compose the Church of God, and in the Church there is neither Jew nor Gentile. (1 Cor. xii. 13; Col. iii. 11.) Whenever you find these distinguished in blessing, you may rest assured the Church is not in question. But we shall speak more of this period further on.

I must next call your attention to another very interesting and precious distinction, made by the Spirit of God in relation to the coming of Christ. In the end of the Old Testament (Mal. iv. 2) the prophet says, "Unto you that fear my name shall *the Sun of righteousness* arise with healing in His wings," &c., when rays of light and blessing shall go out to all quarters of the earth, and He shall bring in all the glories of His millennial kingdom and everlasting righteousness. This will be at His

glorious appearing; *the day of Christ*. Whereas in the end of the book of the Revelation, the prophecy for the Church, we find Him saying, "I am *the bright and morning star*. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." The Church, the Bride, during the darkness of the night of this world (and "the night is far spent, the day is at hand"—Rom. xiii. 12), should be watching, and waiting for Jesus in this blessed character, *before* the day breaks. Blessed, blessed hope! *

Knowing that many are much perplexed as to whether the heavenly saints will be removed before the hour of tribulation, I will add further Scripture testimony to prove it, trusting it may be helpful to souls.

In Rev. ii., iii. we have seven addresses to the angels of the seven churches in Asia, which not only treat of their state at that time, but give us a succession of features which would characterize the professing Church * on earth till the close of its existence. In each address we have the words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

This is the last mention of the Church on earth. The fourth chapter opens with a new scene altogether—"a door opened *in heaven*," a throne, the throne of God, surrounded by twenty-four seats or thrones, and on them twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white, and with crowns of gold. Who could these elders possibly represent, if not the heavenly saints? They are distinguished from angels in chap. v. 11; their crowns and robes

* "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Hebrews 10:37.)

denote their kingly and priestly character, beautifully according with the burst of praise in chap. i. 5, 6; "Unto Him that loved (or loves) us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings (or a kingdom) and priests unto God," &c. The term "elder," too, would denote wisdom, and "we have the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. ii. 16.) Their posture, seated in the presence of Him who sitteth on the throne, could only be that of saints, who have perfect rest and holy boldness before Him. In Ephesians ii. 6 we are viewed, even whilst still on the earth in the body, as made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; whereas angels, with one or two exceptions, throughout Scripture, are viewed standing; they are servants, we are sons.

And then, too, the language used by the elders, both in celebrating God's glory in creation, and also in *singing* the new song of redemption, clearly shows that they are the redeemed of God. So wondrous and so blessed is the relationship we are brought into, that it is our privilege in addressing the Lord to *sing*, "*Thou art worthy*," &c. Angels *say*, "*Worthy is the Lamb*."

Now mark, here are four-and-twenty elders—a perfect, complete company, seated, clothed, crowned, and worshipping in glory, *before* a single seal of the seven-sealed book or roll of God's counsels, mysteries, and judgments is broken by the Lamb, who is viewed in the midst of the throne, and who comes and takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. Surely every saint of God that has lived on earth up till that wondrous moment will have been raised or changed to be with the Lord, before one

of the judgments of the seven-sealed book falls upon the ungodly.

Another scripture helpful to a clear apprehension of this precious truth is 2 Thess. ii. 1, where the apostle, addressing the Thessalonian saints, says, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by *the coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by *our gathering together unto Him*, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand" (Greek—the day of the Lord is present). "*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed,*" &c.

You will remark here that he clearly distinguishes between the *coming of our Lord*, when the saints shall be gathered together unto Him (caught up to meet Him in the air), and the day of the Lord; that is, His manifestation in judgment, before which latter event the man of sin, the antichrist, will be revealed. The apostle uses the Lord's personal coming for His people as a reason why they should not be shaken in mind or troubled by fixing their thoughts on this event. He warns them against deceivers, who in various ways, even by an anonymous letter purporting to come from the apostle and his companions, were seeking to mislead them, and make out that the day of the Lord had already set in, and that their hope had not been realized. In unmistakable language he tells them of their translation to meet the Lord; then the falling away or apostasy, and the revelation of the son of perdition; closing

with his downfall and judgment, introductory to the setting in of the glorious day of the Lord !

Beloved reader, take heed to this important scripture, and remember the warning of the apostle, "*Let no man deceive you by any means.*"

Again, in the last chapter of the Revelation, before closing this wonderful prophecy of things coming on the earth, and the dreadful crisis which is at hand, ushering in the kingdom; to encourage the hearts of His people in Himself, and to keep them waiting for His return, no less than three times the Lord repeats His precious promise; twice He says, "Behold, I come quickly," and the third time, in more emphatic language still, "Surely I come quickly. Amen."

The blessed response of the prophet, which ought to be echoed by every Christian heart, is, "Even so; come, Lord Jesus." Reader, is it yours ?

Soon shall we hear Him say,
 "Ye ransomed pilgrims come ;"
 Soon will He call us hence away,
 And take us to His home.

Then shall each raptured tongue
 His fullest praise proclaim ;
 And sweeter voices wake the song
 Of "Glory to the Lamb !"

“THE FIRST RESURRECTION.”

IN treating of the coming of Christ, when His living saints will be changed and caught up to meet Him in the air, we have partially glanced at the resurrection of the saints asleep through Jesus. The two acts, raising the sleeping and changing the living, taking place at the same moment, it would be difficult to treat of the latter without referring to the former. But it needs a further paper to explain the way in which the first resurrection will take place, as the fact itself is so little understood by Christians generally; by many even denied. And of those who have bowed to the testimony of God's word as to the fact, numbers have failed to grasp the full extent of this truth, or the classes of persons embraced in it.

Like the rapture of the saints, the first resurrection finds no place in revealed truth in the Old Testament; it would be impossible to gather it from its pages, as it is only treated of in the New. Theology for hundreds of years past has taught a general resurrection and a general judgment of all mankind, basing it on certain passages of Scripture, which I think in these pages I shall be enabled clearly to show have been greatly misunderstood. God's word speaks distinctly of two resurrections, and of several different judgments.

In Mark ix. 9, 10, when the Lord came down

from the mount of transfiguration, He charged His disciples "that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were *risen from the dead*. And they kept *that saying* with themselves, questioning one with another what the *rising from the dead* should mean." They knew of and believed in resurrection, but this remarkable communication from the Lord's own lips of the rising from the dead was a strange sound in their ears. Notice the force of the words; it was not simply of resurrection *out of death* that He spake, but *from* (Greek—from among) *the dead*, showing that when this wonderful event should take place, other dead ones would be left in their graves. And the resurrection of the Son of man is a sample of what will characterize the resurrection of His people.

Scripture testimony is abundant as to the fact of the resurrection of Christ. Luke, in Acts i. 3, testifies that "He shewed Himself alive after His passion, *by many infallible proofs*, being seen of the apostles forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Peter, in Acts ii. 32, declared to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." And Paul, in 1 Cor. xv., writes, "How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that *He rose again* the third day *according to the Scriptures*; and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time," &c.

Stephen also saw Him standing at the right hand of God. (Acts vii. 56.)

In John v. 28, 29, the Lord said to His disciples, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice" (speaking of Himself), "and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

This scripture, among others, has been thought strongly to favour the thought of a general and simultaneous rising of the dead; but if we carefully examine it with the context, we shall find that the reverse is the case. In verse 25 we read, "The hour is coming, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." The hour spoken of here, in which the dead in sin have heard the voice of the Son of God, has already lasted a period of more than one thousand eight hundred years, and is running on still. And surely if this first hour is thus prolonged, there is no difficulty in the second hour, which has reference to resurrection, being taken to mean a prolonged period also. And further, instead of saying that all that are in their graves shall come forth to the general resurrection, the Lord distinctly distinguishes between the good and the evil, showing that the former shall come forth unto *the resurrection of life*, the latter to the *resurrection of damnation*—the one perfectly distinct from the other.* We

* "They that have done good" does not of course mean that any are good in themselves, for "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. iii. 12); but those who, justified by faith in Christ and His finished work, walk in practical godliness as the result. (1 John iii. 7.)

shall see further on the time that will elapse between the two.

In the gospel of Luke (xiv. 13, 14), where the Lord was dining at the house of one of the chief Pharisees, He said unto him, "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; . . . for thou shalt be recompensed at *the resurrection of the just.*" This saying evidently singles out the resurrection of the just as a distinct event from that of the wicked, or unjust. Why should the Lord use such language if a resurrection of just and unjust indiscriminately were intended? And how could it be called the resurrection of *the just*, if all will be raised together to be judged?

Matt. xxvii. also makes mention of an event which took place just after the death of Christ. "The graves were opened; and *many bodies* of the saints which slept *arose*, and came out of the graves *after His resurrection*, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." As to what became of these saints afterwards we have no record, and where Scripture is silent, it is well for us to be silent too; but it demonstrates without question that a resurrection of certain saints from, or from among the dead, has already taken place. In this, like the resurrection of Christ, we have another sample of what will happen when the Lord comes.

The book of the Revelation speaks so positively and definitely as to this important truth of "*the first resurrection*," that it seems strange that any who profess to bow to the word of God could have a shadow of doubt about it. I will cite the whole passage that refers to it.

“ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. ‘*This is the first resurrection.*’ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in *the first resurrection*: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Rev. xx. 4-6.)

You will remark that in these verses the term, “*the first resurrection,*” occurs twice; and the very fact of the use of the word “first” implies “a second.” Those who have part in this resurrection are called, “*Blessed and holy.*” How could the Spirit of God use such language if the whole of mankind were intended? Nothing could be plainer than that the saints only are treated of—those who, having discovered whilst on earth their lost condition, believed the testimony of God concerning His Son, were justified, fell asleep in the faith, and come forth, blessed and holy, to the resurrection of life. The *rest of the dead*, as this scripture so plainly states, “lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”

The just, being raised at the first resurrection, reign with Christ a thousand years, the duration of His kingdom and glory, of which we shall see more in another paper; the rest of the dead—the unjust, the wicked—remain in their graves until

the close of that period, when they are raised for judgment, brought before Him who sits on the great white throne, and cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. xx. 11-15.) "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

We must now turn to some details connected with this truth, which may at first appear to present difficulties to any who have not considered them; for we are very apt to come to God's word full of our own thoughts, and thus are unprepared to receive what He has to communicate to us. Trained in tradition, we are very slow to grasp the scope of God's thoughts as to this and other truths of Scripture.

Now not only do we read of two resurrections, perfectly distinct in time, and embracing distinct classes of persons, but if we carefully weigh the passage that we have been already dwelling on in connection with others, we find that the first resurrection will not take place all at one time; that is to say, that those who have part in it are not only saints who fall asleep previous to the coming of Christ for His people, and are raised at that moment, but *also* those who pass away between that event and the commencement of His reign, the latter being raised just previous thereto.

Let me explain this more fully. We have already seen that when the Lord descends into the air for His saints *all* will be removed—the dead raised, the living changed; "they that *are Christ's* at His coming" will be raised (1 Cor. xv. 23), and those who have not fallen asleep, but are alive and remain, "shall *all* be changed." (1 Cor. xv. 51.) But after this has taken place,

and previous to Christ's coming forth to reign, a short, but most terrible period of tribulation will elapse, unparalleled for its horrors in the world's history (Matt. xxiv. 21, 22; Rev. iii. 10), during which time the beast and false prophet will be manifest and the apostasy take place, details of which we shall speak of later on.

Whilst these things are coming to pass the Spirit of God will have raised a fresh testimony of Jesus among the Jews (Christians having been caught up), and fearful persecutions will be the result. The effect of this is seen in Rev. vi. 9-11, "And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar *the souls* of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Here you will observe there are two classes of sufferers, martyrs for the truth's sake, in that day. The former are seen in the vision in the disembodied state—souls under the altar crying to the Lord for vengeance upon their enemies (a cry which would point to their Jewish character, Christians being taught to bless them which persecute, &c.), and they are told to rest until their fellow-servants and their brethren (probably Gentiles and Jews) should be killed as they. If we compare these verses with the description of

the first resurrection in Rev. xx. 4 that we have already looked at, we shall find these two classes of martyred saints are again brought forward, distinct from those raised and translated at the coming of Christ in the air. All is in the most perfect order.

First, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them."* These are the heavenly saints, corresponding with those represented by the four and twenty elders (chaps. iv., v., &c.) glorified at Christ's coming in the air, here viewed on millennial thrones, judgment given to them. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2.)

Secondly, "I saw the *souls* of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God," corresponding with the first class of martyrs of the fifth seal (Rev. vi. 9), almost the same words being used of both.

Thirdly, "And (those, Gr.) which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," corresponding with the fellow-servants and the brethren of Rev. vi. 11, for whom the other martyrs are told to wait.

Now mark, those on the throne are already in glorified bodies—seated, ready to judge; but the two classes of martyrs are still viewed in the vision in the disembodied state. "I saw *the souls*," says the prophet; but at the close of the verse we

* In Dan. vii. 9 the thrones are mentioned, but unoccupied. The correct rendering of the passage is, "I beheld till the thrones were *set up*" (not "cast down"), "and the Ancient of days did sit," &c., although it is perfectly true, as other scriptures show, that many thrones will be cast down when Christ takes the kingdom. (P's. ii. ; Isa. xxiv. 21-23.)

read, "*They lived* and reigned with Christ a thousand years." All three classes share the heavenly blessing during the millennial reign; they live and reign with Christ. (See also verse 6.) But the *rest of the dead lived not* again until the thousand years were finished. THIS IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

"Christ," then, is "the firstfruits" (1 Cor. xv. 23); and "the first resurrection" embraces not only those who are asleep when He comes for His own in the air, but also the two classes of saints martyred during the awful troubles and great tribulation that will take place between that event and His manifestation in power to reign, the whole of the saints in fact who go into death from Adam to the millennium. These future martyrs will yield up their lives, like many saints of old, that they might obtain *a better resurrection*. (Heb. xi. 35.) The rest of the dead, that is, those who die in their sins, as we have already seen, remain in the grave until the close of the millennial kingdom, the end of the world, when they shall come forth to the resurrection of judgment. (John v. 29; Rev. xx. 5.)

The twelfth chapter of Daniel, second verse, has presented a difficulty to some: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," &c. If you read carefully the *first verse* you will see that it is not a question here of *literal resurrection*, but speaking figuratively of the restoration of the Jews, the deliverance of some out of the time of trouble—great tribulation—judgment being the portion of others. Notice that the words "thy

people" occur twice. (v. 1.) This is not the only scripture where the restoration of Israel is spoken of thus. In Ezek. xxxvii. they are compared to dry bones coming to life, being brought up *out of their graves*, and placed in their own land. (vv. 1-14.) Also in Ps. lxxviii. 22: "I will bring my people again from the *depths of the sea.*"

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body. . . . So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." (1 Cor. xv. 35-44.)

With God all things are possible, and He who by His own mighty power raised from among the dead our Lord Jesus, will surely accomplish this mighty act, and raise all His own who sleep, to be with and like His Son in glory. (1 Cor. vi. 14.) It matters not by what means or where God's people fall asleep, whether their bodies shall go into the grave or the ocean's depth, "*We know*, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. v. 1.)

How blessed for the Christian, as he stands by the open tomb, and sees lowered into it a coffin

containing the corruptible remains of some dearly loved one who has fallen asleep in Christ, to be enabled to look beyond this scene of sorrow and death, and to know that the departed is "absent from the body and present with the Lord." To know too that at any moment the welcome sound of the Master's voice may be heard in the air, when every sleeping and every living saint shall be caught up, in a moment conformed to His blessed image; so to be "for ever with the Lord." 'Tis then that "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which *giveth us* the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. xv. 54-57.)

How precious to have as the object of our hearts in the glory of God that Blessed One, who could say, "I am the resurrection and the life;" who could weep as a sympathizing man at the grave of Lazarus, but who could display the mighty power of God, for He was and is the Son of God, in raising him from the dead.

A Jewish sect, called the Sadducees, in the days of Christ on earth, denied resurrection altogether. Our Lord's answer to a question put by them is well worthy of note in considering this subject. He saith unto them, "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and *the resurrection from the dead*, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the *children of*

the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead, but of *the living*: for *all live unto Him.*" (Luke xx. 34-38.)

Paul also, in writing to Timothy, warns him to "shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness: and their word will eat as doth a canker; of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus; who concerning the truth *have erred*, saying that *the resurrection is past already*; and overthrow the faith of some." (2 Tim. ii. 16-18.)

I cannot close writing on this wonderful subject without asking you, my dear reader, if death were to overtake you this day, are you ready to go? Would you be amongst those who would come forth at the first, the glorious resurrection? or are you still in your sins, still under the judgment of God? If summoned from this scene in the latter condition, your portion must be to come forth at the resurrection of judgment, and to be cast into the lake of fire. There is only one way of deliverance from such a doom, and that is by faith in the Son of God, who was judged on the cross as the sin-bearer. (2 Cor. v. 21.)

How bright the resurrection morn
 On all the saints will break!
 The Lord Himself will then return,
 His ransomed church to take.

We cannot linger o'er the tomb:
 The resurrection day
 To faith shines bright beyond its gloom,
 Christ's glory to display.

THE APOSTASY.

It has been a widely-spread and widely-received doctrine among those who profess the name of Christ, that the world is getting better, and that the preaching of the present gospel will be used of God in the conversion of the world, and the setting up of a spiritual kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men. Thousands, satisfied with a surface view of things, have accepted what their teachers have taught them, forgetting the exhortation, "Prove all things" (1 Thess. v. 21); and have never really searched the word of God for themselves.

Some who read the following statement may be at first surprised, but it is nevertheless true, there is not a single scripture, from Genesis to the Revelation, that ever hints at the thought that the world would get better during the present dispensation, but several that distinctly declare the very reverse.

It is perfectly true that the kingdom of Christ will be established throughout the world, but not in a spiritual way in the hearts of all (though doubtless great numbers of Gentiles, as well as all Israel, will then be saved—Isa. xi. 9; Heb. viii. 10-12), but in actual power and glory, all kings falling down before Him, and all nations serving Him. But this will not be brought about through

the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God, but by the display of God's power in judgment.

The object of the preaching of the gospel now is not to convert the world, but for the taking out a people for His name. (Acts xv. 14.) God is not saving people for earthly blessing, but taking out a heavenly people for heavenly blessing (1 Cor. xv. 48); not subduing the nations to the faith of Christ, but uniting a company from among Jews and Gentiles to Christ in glory, as His body and His bride, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. (1 Cor. xii.; Eph. i. 22, 23.)

When the Lord descends and His saints are caught up to meet Him in the air, the present testimony of grace, *the gospel of the glory* of Christ, as the apostle Paul expressly terms it, "*my gospel*," will cease. (Rom. ii. 16; 2 Tim. ii. 8.) Then, during the short period to which we have more than once already referred in these papers, which will elapse between the rapture of the saints and their manifestation in glory with Christ when He comes to reign, a fresh testimony will go out, and *the gospel of the kingdom** be preached as a witness to all nations, and then shall the end (*i.e.*, of the age, not world) come. (Matt. xxiv. 14.)

Now whilst God in grace at the present time is taking out a people, Christians, the world itself grows worse. Revivals of truth have taken place at various periods since Christ was crucified and

* The preaching of the kingdom of God is included in the present glad tidings, and those who now believe will be manifested in the heavenly sphere of it, when displayed. But the gospel of the kingdom here spoken of will be the testimony that the kingdom is shortly to be openly established in the hand of Christ, whose rights are now refused by the world at large.

cast out from this scene, but the world itself, the mass, wallow in sin. Professing Christendom, cloaking itself over with a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, is sinning against light, and God's long-suffering and grace.

In the epistles to Timothy we have a solemn testimony as to the closing condition of Christendom (so-called). In the first epistle, chap. iv. 1, we read, "Now *the Spirit* speaketh expressly, that in *the latter times* some shall *depart from the faith*" (not come to it), "giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils," &c. In the second epistle, chap. iii., "This know also, that in the *last days* perilous times shall come. . . . Evil men and seducers shall wax *worse and worse*" (not better and better), "deceiving, and being deceived." Chap. iv. 3, "For the *time will come* when they will *not endure sound doctrine*; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall *turn away* their ears *from the truth*, and shall be turned unto fables." From 1 John, iv. 3 we find that the *spirit of antichrist* was already in the world at that early period; and Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, reminds them that "the *mystery of iniquity* doth *already work*." (2 Thess. ii. 7.)

All these evils are at work around us at this moment; daily they gain ground, and men are led away into the vortex of error and deceit. Rationalism, ritualism, Romanism, infidelity (against which the saint is especially warned in Col. ii.) are making rapid strides. The word of God is set aside by tradition, the teaching of the fathers, and the Church, and made of none effect; often questioned, sometimes even denied. Men grow

bold in their wickedness; thousands letting slip the only safeguard, "*It is written,*" are carried away by the terrible tide, to find themselves eventually shut outside the closed door of grace, to come into the awful judgment of God. The predicted apostasy (2 Thess. ii.) fast ripens to a head. Men's *hearts, set upon* the advancement of commerce, manufactures, civilization, arts, sciences, military and naval power, and human religion, have no room for the true Christ of God. Masses are so engrossed with the affairs of this life, and deluded by Satan, that they pay no heed to the warning voice of the servants of God who faithfully proclaim His truth, and warn them to flee from the wrath to come. Men, dear reader, are siding for Christ or antichrist.

But before I go on to speak of this antichrist, who will be one of the chief features of the apostasy, it will be well, in order to simplify these things for the help of those who are not much acquainted with this part of truth, to allude briefly to the prophecy of Daniel, usually termed "*the seventy weeks,*" as it is during the last of these weeks that the apostasy takes place.

In Daniel ix. 24 we find, "Seventy weeks" (*i.e.*, weeks of years, 490 years*) "are determined upon *thy* people" (the Jews), "and upon *thy* holy city" (Jerusalem), "to finish the transgression . . . and to bring in everlasting righteousness," &c.

* "Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to close the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make expiation for iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal the vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies." (Dan. 9:24.) J.N.D. Trans.

This period in the next verses is divided into three—seven weeks, threescore and two, and one. During the seven the street and wall of Jerusalem were to be rebuilt, which took place as described in the book of Nehemiah; then at the close of the sixty-two (that is, sixty-nine altogether) we have Messiah the Prince, Christ. He came into the midst of His people. “And *after* (the) threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself,” or, as the margin gives it, and more correctly, “*shall have nothing.*” This also came to pass: instead of Messiah being received and His kingdom established, He was cut off, crucified, and had nothing down here; but God raised Him from the dead to His own right hand, and commenced a fresh administration. Sixty-nine weeks had run out,* and one week was lacking to close the chain.

What do we get next? “The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” This is exactly what happened. The Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. But mark carefully what God says: “The people of the” (or “*a,*” as it should read) “prince that shall come.” The prince here mentioned is a prince who has *not yet* appeared. The Romans being the people, it follows the prince must be a Roman prince.†

Christ being cut off *after* the sixty-ninth week, the chain of seventy weeks is broken, and the

* The prophecy says, “Seven and sixty-two weeks;” *i.e.*, sixty-nine *unto* Messiah, *after* which He was cut off. It was about half a week during which He was received of the remnant, though rejected by the nation.

† Many have thought this is the antichrist, but not so. He will be a Jewish prince (Dan. xi. 36-39); none other would be enabled to palm himself off upon the Jews. This is a distinct

whole of the wonderful hour of the calling out, of the Church of God, the administration of *the great mystery* (Eph. iii. 2-11, v. 32), comes in *before* the seventieth is completed—all the dates of Scripture having reference to the earth or the earthly people Israel, the present eighteen hundred and more years not being reckoned in the prophecy, but let in, as it were, as a heavenly parenthesis between the dealings of God in the past and in the future with His earthly people. The Church being completed, the saints will then be caught up, and the Jews, now scattered, will come into prominence again. This Roman prince, as the last verse of this ninth of Daniel teaches us, will confirm the (“*a*”) covenant with (“*the*”) many (Jews) for one week (the missing link completing the chain of seventy). Christ will appear at the close to bring in the blessing of the kingdom and everlasting righteousness.

The object of this covenant will be twofold. The Jews at this period will have gone back in great numbers to their own land by the aid of a certain maritime power (Isa. xviii.), and will seek protection at the hand of the great head in the West, the Roman prince, in order to carry on their temple-worship, and also against a powerful enemy known in prophecy as the Assyrian, or king of the north. (Isa. x.; Dan. viii. 23-25; xi. 40-45.)

personage, the head of the Roman empire, which will shortly be revived. The two will be leaders closely allied in wickedness, and are seen in the Revelation as the beast and the false prophet, the former the Roman (Rev. xix. 19, 20), the latter antichrist in his false prophet character. They are leagued together in opposition to Christ and His people, and so one in policy that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish them.

But in the midst of the seven years the prince (Roman) will break his covenant with them, and, aided by the antichrist, cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and set up an idol in the temple. This is the hour spoken of in Matt. xxiv. 15-22 of which the Lord warned the disciples: "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand :) then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains: . . . for then shall be *great tribulation*, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake" (the Jewish remnant) "those days shall be shortened." The setting up of the abomination or idol in the temple* is the signal for instant flight on the part of the God-fearing remnant of Judah at that day. On account of this act God will use the Assyrian as a desolator, as the rod of His wrath, to chastise the apostate Jews, until the judgment determined by Him shall have been poured out. (See also Dan. ix. 27; xii. 11.)

We have a further allusion to this covenant in Isaiah xxviii. 14-21: "Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. . . . And your

* Daniel xi. 21-31 refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, and has been fulfilled. It is a foreshadowing of the future.

covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it."

It is called a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell, because the Roman empire, with the head of which the covenant is made, is, in its last revived phase, energized by Satanic power, the dragon giving him his power, and his seat (or throne), and great authority. (Rev. xiii. 2.) But the unholy compact is broken; the temple of God at Jerusalem, rebuilt in unbelief, is defiled by idolatry; and the execution of the wrath of God comes upon the Jews to the uttermost. Jacob's trouble is there (the remnant shall be saved out of it—Jer. xxx. 7)—*great tribulation*. The overflowing scourge, another term for the Assyrian, passes through the land, and the Jews are trodden down by it. Jerusalem will undergo a terrible siege, and shall be taken, "the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives," &c. (Zech. xiv. 2.)

Thus far as to the leading features connected with Daniel's remarkable prophecy of the seventy weeks. Let us now look at a further description of judgments and events that will take place at this terrible crisis in the world's history, as detailed in the central chapters of the book of the Revelation.

This wonderful book, the Church's prophecy,

so little appreciated or understood by many of the children of God; so sadly neglected, notwithstanding the special blessings attached in chapters i. 3 and xxii. 7; discloses to us the great effort of the dragon, Satan, to resist the power and authority of God and the rights of His Son in this scene.

In chapters iv. and v., as we have already seen, the saints are viewed in heaven in their glorified state around the throne of God, and then the Lamb breaking the seals of the book of God's counsels, judgments, &c.

Chapter vi. commences the details of these:

Four seals. Various providential judgments.

The first—A great conqueror, overcoming without bloodshed.

The second—Peace taken from the earth, and fearful carnage.

The third—Great scarcity; famine often follows upon warfare.

The fourth—Four sore judgments upon the fourth part of the Roman earth, similar to those of Ezekiel xiv. 21, which come upon Jerusalem. *

The fifth—Vision of souls of martyrs slain for their testimony. They cry for vengeance, which shows their Jewish character, and are told to wait for others, who would also be slain during the last half-week.

The sixth—terrible convulsion of authorities

* "For thus saith the Lord God: How much more when I send My four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?" (Ezek. 14 :21.)

and powers, so that men prematurely think that the great day of the wrath of the Lamb is come.

Compare Matthew xxiv. 6-10, the *beginning of sorrows*.

Chapter vii. is a break in the dealings of God, showing His preservation of a measured number from the twelve tribes of Israel, and also of a great multitude of Gentiles through the great tribulation, for *millennial blessing on the earth*.

Chapter viii. Opening of the seventh seal; silence in heaven half-an-hour. Seven angels with seven trumpets. Christ is seen in angelic garb. First four trumpets sounded. Fearful judgments, falling chiefly on the prosperity, commerce, established power, &c., in the western part of the Roman empire, which is probably meant by the third part, mentioned several times.

Chapter ix. Fifth and sixth trumpet judgments, or first and second woe.

First. Satanic delusions on the Jews, the sealed being preserved; probably connected with anti-christ.

Second. Immense army of horsemen, from the direction of the Euphrates, overcoming and destroying Gentiles, judged on account of their idolatry and other sins. Probably the power of the Assyrian, the rod of God's wrath. (Isaiah x.) Third part of men killed. (v. 18.)

Chapter x. Jehovah, in angelic garb, intimating the near approach of the closing of the "mystery of God" (His long-suffering with men; bearing with evil in the world instead of inflicting immediate judgment, allowing the righteous to suffer

meanwhile), and the subjection of all nations to Himself.

Chapter xi. Preservation of Jewish worshippers. Two prophets, or witnesses, testifying to God's right to the earth, during the last half-week, and slain at the close by the beast.

Seventh trumpet, or third woe. Announcement of the establishment of Christ's kingdom, introduced by His personal judgment of the quick, and closing with the judgment of the dead. The day of the Lord. (*vv.* 15-18.) Verse 19 commences fresh details.

Chapter xii. Vision of the birth of a man child, Christ, who is caught up to God. War in heaven. Satan, seen as the dragon, cast out from his present sphere into the earth, having great wrath, and makes war with the faithful remnant of Jews during the last half-week.

Chapter xiii. Rise of the two beasts.

The first, the Roman empire, revived, and receiving power from the dragon for the last half-week.

The second, the antichristian beast, or the anti-christ. Direct mimicry of Christ. Exercises all the power of the first one, working deceptive miracles.

Chapter xiv. Seven visions.

First. The Jewish remnant associated with the Lamb, *first-fruits* for millennial blessing. Distinct from 144,000 of chapter vii. *There* it is out of *all* the twelve tribes; *here* only the *two*. (*vv.* 1-5.)

Second. Announcement of the everlasting gospel; *i.e.*, the message that had been declared from the first. Call to men to fear God and look for

the establishment of Christ's kingdom, and to cease from idolatry and antichrist, &c. (*vv.* 6, 7.)

Third. Announcement of the fall of Babylon; that is, the spiritual Babylon, religious corruption. (*v.* 8.)

Fourth. Threat of eternal judgment and torment on any who should worship the beast and his image, or receive his mark openly or secretly. (*vv.* 9–12.)

Fifth. Blessing on those who die in the Lord from henceforth. (*v.* 13.)

Sixth. The Son of man harvesting the earth, dividing the nations. (*vv.* 14–16.)

Seventh. Gathering of the vine of the earth, and treading of the winepress of the wrath of God. Judgment on Israel in open apostasy under antichrist, &c. (*vv.* 17–20.)

Chapter xv. Vision of seven angels with the seven last plagues, in which is filled up the wrath of God. (*v.* 1.)

Vision of martyred remnant, who have been in great tribulation, victorious and triumphant. (*vv.* 2–4.)

Preparation of the seven angels to execute the judgment.

Chapter xvi. Pouring out of the seven vials or bowls full of the wrath of God. Compare the plagues in Egypt. (*Exod.* vii.–xii.)

The first four fall upon the same objects as the first four trumpets, but not limited, like them, to the third part. Notice the repeated mention of "MEN."

The fifth. Terrible judgment on the Roman empire.

The sixth. Drying up of the river Euphrates,

and gathering of the kings of the whole habitable world by Satanic agency to Armageddon, preparatory to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

The seventh. On the air. Terrible convulsions of European civilization, &c., &c. Babylon brought to remembrance. Great hail-storm; fearful down-pour of God's wrath.

These awful judgments lead to blasphemy against God on the part of men. (vv. 9, 11, 21.)

Chapter xvii. Vision of a woman, gorgeously arrayed, sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, and upon her forehead a name written, "*Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.*" Figure of ecclesiastical corruption, Rome the centre, supported by the civil power, the beast (or head of the revived Roman empire) and ten horns (ten kings) until the hour of her judgment, and then destroyed by them. It is the false union of Church and State.

Chapter xviii. Destruction of Babylon, here viewed under the figure of a mighty city, enriched by illicit commerce with the kings and merchants, &c., of the earth, receiving judgment from God.

Chapter xix. Five visions.

First. Much people in heaven praising God for His judgment on the false and wicked religious system of the world, &c.

Second. The marriage of the Lamb. The Bride, the Lamb's wife, the Church of God. The friends called to the marriage supper, probably the Old Testament saints.

Third. Heaven opened, and the vision of Christ prepared to execute warrior-judgment upon the beast, and kings of the earth arrayed at the head

of the military power of western Europe against Him. The armies following in His train, the heavenly saints. (Chap. xvii. 14.)

Fourth. The fowls called to the great supper of God.

Fifth. Summary judgment upon the beast and the false prophet (or antichrist) who is with him; both cast alive into the lake of fire. The rest, the armies, slain.

We may note the contents of the remaining chapters of the Revelation further on, in treating of the millennium and the eternal state.

Let us now turn to the second epistle to the Thessalonians, where we have many details of the circumstances connected with the *apostasy*—a passage to which we have already referred in showing the removal of the heavenly saints.

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand” (or “*present*,” Gr.). “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a *falling away*” (or “*an apostasy*”) “first, and *that man of sin* be revealed, the son of perdition” (the antichrist); “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (2 Thess. ii. 1-4.)

The apostle beseeches the Thessalonian saints, by the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the translation to meet Him in the air, that they should in no way be disturbed or deceived by any

man, as that the day of Christ (or "the Lord," Gr.), that is, the day of judgment, had come. It appears that even an anonymous letter had been sent them to this end, purporting to come from the apostle and his fellow-servants. (v. 2.) *Before that*, they would all be gathered together unto Him, caught up to meet Him in the air; and also the apostasy would come, and that man of sin, the son of perdition, would be revealed. All those events must transpire first. The Jews must go back to their own land, rebuild the temple of God, and receive the wicked one, the false messiah, who should come in his own name (John v. 43), and whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (vv. 9, 10.)

Satan is blinding and deluding the minds and hearts of men now, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ should shine into their hearts and they should be saved. In this coming hour of trial God will be dealing judicially, and shall send "*strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*" (vv. 11, 12.) If men will not have Christ, they must have antichrist; if they will not bow to

* "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." (John 5:43.)

God's truth, delusion (or a working of error) will be sent, and they will bow to the devil's "lie."

This man of sin, having deceitfully exalted himself amongst God's earthly people, opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, and seats himself in the temple of God at Jerusalem, showing himself that he is God. This will be one of the culminating acts of wickedness perpetrated by this arch-leader of devilry on the earth; the heading-up of the awful mystery of iniquity, that will draw down the judgment of God. "Remember ye not," continues the apostle, "that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know *what* withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only *he* who now letteth (or hindereth) will let, until *he* be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." (*vv.* 5-8.)

Here we have clearly revealed the fact that there is a power which restrains the increasing flood of evil, but that at a certain moment this power will cease to withhold. The mystery of iniquity had already commenced to work in the days of the apostle, and has continued in varied phases ever since; things now get worse and worse; but there is one who restrains the bursting forth of this terrible evil. I doubt not that the One spoken of is the Spirit of God, who restrains evil both through the powers that be, which though ordained of God (Rom. xiii. 1, 2), will eventually fall under the power of Satan, and

also as a divine Person dwelling in the Church of God. This latter will cease at the rapture of the saints; the former, I judge, will probably continue a short period, *possibly* till the casting out of Satan, the great dragon, to the earth.

Losing his place on high as accuser of the brethren, opposing the intercession of Christ on their behalf, the devil will then come down, having great wrath, exercise his power on earth, energizing both the Roman empire, headed by the beast; and also the antichrist or false prophet. The restraining power being taken out of the way, and the evil no longer being held in check, Satan will bring matters to a crisis. The wicked one will be revealed, coming out in his true colours, the masterpiece of Satan, with such awful deceit, that if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived. (Matt. xxiv. 24.) They continue for a while, and then receive summary judgment at the Lord's hand. (Rev. xix. 20.)

In the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet we have a kind of Satanic anti-trinity.

The dragon gives his power, his seat (or throne), and great authority to the beast; also a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies, and power to continue (make war, marg.) forty-two months; that is, Daniel's last half-week. (Rev. xiii. 1-10.) The term "*beast*" (or wild beast) is applied both to the Roman empire, and also to the head of it, the one who wields its power. This individual corresponds with the little horn of Dan. vii. 8, 11, 20, 25, where we again read of a mouth speaking great words against the Most High. Under this terrible being there will be ten kings, at the head of ten kingdoms, within the territory of the empire,

and who will receive power as kings one hour, or at the same time with the beast. (Rev. xvii. 12.) These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast. He will be the head of Gentile apostasy in the West, a false king of kings and lord of lords.

In league with this first beast will be a second, viewed in Rev. xiii. as having two horns *like* a lamb, but speaking as a dragon. This is antichrist, the false messiah, a mimicry of the true Lamb of God, combining, in his own person, power in the land of Israel (being accepted as their prince by the mass of the Jews), the head of Jewish apostasy (Rev. xiii. 11-18), and also exercising all the power of the first beast before him. Arch-leader too of the apostasy of Christendom, he denies the Father and the Son. (1 John ii. 22.) Men in that day will be so deluded that they will worship the dragon, who gives the beast his power; also the beast, saying, "Who is like unto the beast?" &c.; and also the antichrist, who sits in the temple of God, and shows that he is God. (2 Thess. ii. 4.)

In addition to this the wicked one leads men to make *an image* to the beast; and he has "power to give life (or breath) unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." (Chap. xiii. 14-17.) Some will be so bold-faced in their wickedness that they receive the

mark in their foreheads, willingly and openly owning the beast; others who receive it in their right hand, which would be more secret, can show on whose side they are if necessary. Those who refuse the mark, &c., and will not bow down to and worship the image of the beast are prohibited from buying or selling, and must in consequence pass through terrible sufferings, many being martyred.

There will be a terrible hour of temptation, not only for Judah, but for the whole world (Rev. iii. 10), to try them that *dwell on the earth*. These latter are a special class, mentioned many times in the Revelation, termed variously in our translation "inhabiters of," or "dwellers on the earth," a class whose hearts are fully set on the earth and earthly things, to the exclusion of the claims of God.

Towards the closing hour of this awful scene that we have been tracing, the evil system that is viewed in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Revelation as a woman, and also as a city, whose name is "*Mystery, Babylon the great, mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth,*" receives the cup of judgment from God. This represents ecclesiastical corruption—Rome, the mother and centre, enriched by unholy traffic and intimacy with the worldly powers. The beast and ten horns or kings, that is, the civil power, after supporting her for a time (for she is seen riding upon the beast) at last hate her, and are the instruments in God's hand of her judgment. (Chap. xvii. 3, 16–18.) Kings, merchants, shipmasters, traders, sailors, bewail her fall. (Chap. xviii.)

In comparing chap. xvii. 1 with chap. xxi. 9 we find the prophet in the former passage invited to come and see her judgment, and he is carried in

the spirit into the wilderness; in the latter to come and see the bride, the Lamb's wife, and he is carried in the spirit to a great and high mountain. There he sees the Holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, &c.

So too, dear reader, if you would escape from the terrible vortex of religious corruption that surrounds us at the present day, and which will be part of Babylon in its last phase, you must be in spirit in the wilderness. In separation from it, in the presence of Christ, there alone can you see it in its true colours. And if you would enter into God's thoughts about the Church, and discern its distinctive heavenly character, &c., you must in spirit enter where Christ is, and accept by faith the high and exalted position which is the Christian's true portion.

The evil religious power being crushed, the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies are gathered together against the Lord, and He judges them also; the beast, and the false prophet with him, being cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. xix. 11-21.) Details of this we will reserve till we dwell on His coming in power and great glory to judge and reign.

The Assyrian who attacks Jerusalem from without, and takes it (Zech. xiv. 2), overruns with his armies the land of Israel, as well as many other countries; and after further warlike exploits, himself finally falls as he is about to attack the city *a second time*; but we shall see more of this also further on. (Isa. x. 24-34; xxix. 1-8.)

Two-thirds of the Jews are cut off in this great tribulation; but one-third, preserved by God,

are brought through the fire. (Zech. xiii. 8, 9.) Some are martyred for their testimony, and for refusing the mark of the beast, &c., and have part in the first resurrection;* one-third bear testimony, and are brought through by the power of God into millennial blessing; the remainder, the apostate, idolatrous Jews, who receive the mark, and think they are safe, are cut off in their wickedness, either by the awful invasion of the Assyrian, who is the rod of God's anger, sent by Him against the hypocritical nation (Isa. x. 5, 6), or by other summary judgments of God.

This fearful hour was referred to by the Lord when He spoke of the unclean spirit who saith, "I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." (Luke xi. 24-26.) Terrible picture of Israel's condition under antichrist.

But judgment will not be limited to the land, but go out far and wide in the earth. The Godfearing Jews who bear witness for Jesus, publishing the glad tidings of the kingdom among the nations, will be special objects of persecution wherever they are found. "Take heed," said the Lord, "to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them." (Mark xiii. 9.) The early Christians received similar treatment; but the fulfilment of this

* See page 42.

passage is yet future. So terrible will be the hatred, even in their own families, that "brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Mark xiii. 12, 13.)

Thus will be fulfilled in the most special and literal manner the words of our Lord, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." Men generally will show their persistent hatred of the name of Christ by persecuting those who publish the glad tidings of His coming kingdom and glory. But he that endures to the end, that is, to the end of the hour of tribulation, shall be saved—saved out of it for blessing in the millennial earth. (Jer. xxx. 7.) "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." (Mark xiii. 19.) "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days." (v. 20.) "This generation" (or race), said the Lord to His Jewish disciples, "shall not pass, till *all these things be fulfilled*. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matt. xxiv. 34, 35.)

How blessed for the Christian to know that he is delivered from this terrible hour! that as the Lord delivered Lot before judging Sodom, and translated Enoch before drowning the world with a flood, so will He bring His own loved ones of this present interval of grace to the glory above, before

He judges the habitable earth for its wickedness, sweeping it with the besom of destruction.

How false the security of the poor world, deluding itself, and deluded by Satan, that things are getting better! Many cry, "Peace, peace, and there is no peace." How vain to think that God's grace to a lost world will lead to its conversion! Nay; but the word of the Lord is yet to be fulfilled: "When Thy *judgments* are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. xxvi. 9.) But oh, how blessed to know that when the consumption decreed shall have had its course, it shall overflow with righteousness (Isa. x. 22), and the despised and rejected Nazarene, Jesus, the Son of God, will have His rights and title in the earth!

Could we stay where death is hovering?

Could we rest on such a shore?

No; the awful truth discovering,

We could linger there no more;

We forsake it,

Leaving all we loved before.

THE APPEARING.

HAVING looked at the first part of the Christian's hope—the Lord's return in the air for His saints—and briefly traced the things coming on the earth, when God shall punish the inhabitants of the world for their iniquity, we now come to the second part, *the glorious appearing*, or manifestation of Christ. This wonderful event, fruitful with blessing for the believer, will be an hour of woe and judgment for the poor world of that day.

Scripture teems with passages relating to our Lord's second advent, and the attendant circumstances and surroundings; when, accompanied with His heavenly saints, He shall descend to this earth, Himself manifestly and *personally* dealing with and judging His enemies, gathering "out of His kingdom all things (mar., scandals) that offend and them which do iniquity" (Matt. xiii. 41), and taking the reins of government of the world into His own hand. (Zech. vi. 13; Isa. xl. 10.)

The judgment of the quick will be a prominent feature of that day; but how precious for the Christian to know that he has been already judged in the Person of his substitute, Christ Himself. "Verily, verily," saith the Lord, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condem-

nation (or judgment); but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) Here are our Lord's own words telling us of our deliverance. Our judgment is passed; He drank the bitter cup in our stead; His precious blood, poured out on Calvary, has washed all our sins away, and thus we have the comforting testimony of John in the first epistle (chap. iv. 16, 17), "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love" (marg., love with us) made "perfect, that we may have *boldness in the day of judgment*: because *as He is*, so are we in this world."

But some will reply, "Do you mean to say that the Christian will not be judged at all? I thought we should all stand together before God to know whether heaven would be our portion or no." This arises from accepting the thoughts of men, instead of gathering all from the word of God. The Christian will *never be judged for his sins*, because they were *all borne and suffered for by Jesus on the tree*, and put away for ever. (Heb. x. 12-17.) God now expects the believer to walk in practical holiness, and have *nothing more to say to sin at all*. He is called to follow Christ, and suffer for His sake. But "if any man sin, we have an advocate with *the Father*," (the Christian is a child), "Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John ii. 1.) Again, "If we confess our sins, He is *faithful and just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)

If, however, we neglect confession to God, and *go on in sin*, as He will not condemn us with the world, *He will judge us now*, by weakness, sickness, or even putting to sleep, cutting off in His govern-

mental ways, though saving in grace. This truth is taught us in Paul's letters to the saints at Corinth, who, though real Christians, were allowing sin unjudged. "*For this cause,*" says the apostle by the Spirit, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are *chastened of the Lord*, that we should *not be condemned with the world.*" (1 Cor. xi.)

It is perfectly true that we "*must all appear* before the judgment-seat of Christ; that *every one* may *receive* the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) This is a broad statement as to the fact; but other scriptures clearly show that the time and circumstances in which the Christian will appear there, are entirely different from those in which the ungodly will be judged.

The ungodly, whether quick or dead, will be arraigned to be *judged* according to their works—the former at the commencement, the latter at the close of the reign of Christ—and punished for their iniquity. *The saints are already justified* from all things, but will be *manifested* in the Presence of Christ in bodies changed and fashioned like unto His own glorious body. We shall not, then, stand before Him like the wicked, as guilty culprits before a stern and inexorable judge, but *as justified persons* to give account of ourselves (Rom. xiv. 12), and to have our *works* thoroughly tested, as the following scripture shows.

"Every man's *work* shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's

work of what sort it is. If any man's *work* abide which he hath built thereupon" (*i.e.*, on Jesus Christ, the only foundation), "he shall *receive a reward*. If any man's *work* shall be burned, he shall *suffer loss*: but he *himself shall be saved*; yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. iii. 10-17.) "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Rom. xiv. 12.) This manifestation will probably take place immediately upon our being caught up to meet Him.

Being *like Him* at that wondrous moment, *we shall see all our works in the same light as He sees them.* And how blessed at that day for those who have built good material, built according to the word of God, to receive a reward from our gracious Saviour and Lord! to hear the "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" and to have praise of God. (1 Cor. iv. 5.) As to our sins, of them He has said already, "Thy sins and thine iniquities I will remember no more." "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord *will not impute sin.*" (Rom. iv. 8.)

During the short interval when the apostasy will ripen, and the beast and the false prophet are in power on the earth, the heavenly saints are viewed in the Revelation as twenty-four elders surrounding the throne of God in heaven. Just at the close of that period, following upon the downfall of Babylon on the earth, we have the description of the marriage of the Lamb in the glory of God. This is the consummation of the joy of the Church of the living God; when, united as the Bride to Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, she becomes the Lamb's wife, and all heaven will be jubilant with joy. (Rev. xix. 6-9.) "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in

fine linen, clean and white (marg., bright): for the fine linen is the righteousness (or righteousnesses) of saints." (Rev. xix. 8.) From this we learn that the bridal robe of the Church, on the day of the espousals of the Lamb, is the righteousnesses of the saints, wrought by them in the power of the Holy Ghost, whilst living on the earth, then woven together as one beautiful garment, to adorn her when Christ shall present her to Himself, glorious, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. v. 27.)

Then, the heaven being opened, Christ will come forth in power to judge and make war, and take the kingdom. He is seen in the vision on a white horse (symbolic of conquering power), and is variously called, Faithful and True, The Word of God, King of kings and Lord of lords; also having a name written that no man knew but He Himself. His clothing is a vesture dipped in blood—figurative of the blood of His enemies about to be shed for their wickedness in opposing Him. Following Him are seen the armies which are in heaven on white horses, like unto their Leader, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. These are the saints here, not angels, as some have thought. For if we turn to chap. xvii. 14, we are told that those "that are with Him are *called*, and chosen, and faithful;" and angels are never spoken of as called, though it is perfectly true that angels will *also* accompany Him at His revelation from heaven. (2 Thess. i. 7.)

An angel standing in the sun cries with a loud voice to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God" (or the great supper

of God) to eat the flesh of the mighty of the earth, &c. *The hour of His judgment is come.* The beast and the kings of the earth and their armies are gathered together to make war against the Lord and His army. And the beast is taken, the great leader of Western Europe, and with him the false prophet (antichrist), which wrought miracles before him (comp. 2 Thess. ii. 8, 9; Rev. xiii. 11-14), and both are cast *alive* into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, and the rest are slain. Thus suddenly the Lord will judge the leaders of the apostasy, and the boasted military power of the great nations of the West is destroyed. Europe goes on arming; immense standing armies are the order of the day. Men little think what Satan is leading them on to. Nation fights against nation, until the beast comes to the forefront, when the ten kings, who have one mind, give their power and strength to him. (Rev. xvii. 13.) He leads one great league against the Christ of God, when they receive the cup of judgment at His hand, and all the fowls are filled with their flesh.

We have several other descriptions in the Word beside this of the Lord's coming in judgment upon His enemies, *not only upon those of the West, but also many others.* He doth both judge and make war. (Rev. xix. 11.) Having come in warrior judgment upon the Western Powers directly opposed to *Him*, He then summarily deals with those *to the north and east* of the pleasant land, Palestine. (Rev. xix. 19-21; Zech. xiv. 3, 12-15.) "For," saith the Lord, "my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine

indignation, even all my fierce anger: for *all the earth* shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." (Zeph. iii. 8.) "Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth," &c. (Jer. xxv. 32, 33.)

In Jude 14 we find a prophecy of Enoch, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment *upon all*, and to convince *all* that are ungodly among them of *all* their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of *all* their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

In 2 Thess. i. 7-10 ". . . the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power," &c.

"Behold," again saith the Lord, "I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, **when** they shall be in the siege both against Judah, **and** against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem *a burdensome stone for all people*: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though *all the people of the earth* be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, *I* will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness; and *I* will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness," &c. (Zech. xii. 2-4.)

In Isa. ii. 12-21 : "For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up ; and he shall be brought low. . . . And the idols He shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, *for fear of the Lord*, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they make *each one for himself* to worship, to the moles and to the bats ; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, *for fear of the Lord*, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to *shake terribly the earth.*"

In Isa. xiii. : "I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people ; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together : the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the *Lord*, and the weapons of His indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye ; for the day of the Lord is at hand ; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty," &c. . . . "And *I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity,*" &c. (vv. 3-11.)

"Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with *all flesh* : and the slain of the Lord shall be many." (Isa. lxvi. 15, 16.)

After the judgment of the Western Powers under the beast, the terrible foe of the Jews, the king of the North, "*The Assyrian*," will be smitten by the Lord. Used by God as the rod of His wrath to chastise the apostate Jews, when they bow to the idol and the beast, he exalts himself against God, and is then himself judged. (Isa. x. 5-12.) He comes as a destroying storm upon the land (Isa. xxviii. 2), attacks antichrist in Jerusalem, at the head of a powerful army, takes the city, and overthrows many countries.* (Dan. xi. 40, 41.) The king of the South (Egypt) pushing at antichrist, the wilful king, at the same time (v. 40) is also conquered by him (the Assyrian); but tidings out of the east and out of the north troubling him, he returns with great fury to destroy and utterly make away many of the Jews—plants the tabernacles of his palace between the seas close to Jerusalem, and is then smitten by the Lord. (Dan. xi. 41, 45.)

A graphic description of his last march to Jerusalem is given in Isa. x., where he is seen to shake his hand against the city; but just as he thinks to possess it a second time, "Behold," saith the prophet, "*the Lord, the Lord of hosts*, shall lop the bough with terror." A striking type of the Assyrian's fall is seen in the destruction by the angel of the Lord of the mighty army of Sennacherib. (Isa. xxxvii. 36.)

This closes the judgments of God on Israel and the nations; the Deliverer, the Lord, comes out of Zion, and delivers His faithful remnant. (Rom. xi. 26.) "Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts,

* He has also many ships; showing that he has maritime as well as military power. (Dan. xi. 40.)

O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For *yet a very little while*, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger *in their destruction.*" (Isa. x. 24, 25.) "The consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness." (v. 22.) The eleventh and twelfth chapters teem with millennial blessing.

Another very distinct scripture (Micah v. 5, 6) has reference to this same period. After speaking of *One* who shall come forth from Bethlehem to be ruler in Israel (v. 2) the prophet continues, "And *this man shall be the peace*, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men." (Marg., princes of men.) "And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: *thus shall He deliver us from the Assyrian*, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders. And *the remnant of Jacob* shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord," &c.

Thus far we have been looking chiefly at judgments connected with the Lord's second advent, and I might cite numerous other passages, for the prophecies, as well as other scriptures, are full of the details of these events. Let us now notice two or three which show how suddenly and unexpectedly, but surely, men will be overtaken in their sins when the Lord comes.

We have already seen that the world is getting worse and worse, and that open apostasy will be

the climax, drawing down God's judgment. In Matt. xxiv. the Lord told His disciples that, "*As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.* For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." The Jews are represented by the "carcase," a corrupt people; the nations, like eagles, will gather together to feed upon them, and enrich themselves with the spoil of this people, when suddenly, as a flash of lightning, the Son of man will come in judgment upon them.

"*Immediately after the tribulation of those days*" (i.e., the last half-week) "*shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man, in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.*" (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30.)

This same truth is taught in Rev. i.: "*Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.*"

And again in Zech. xii. 10-14: "*I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him,*" &c., &c.

In Zech. xiv. 3 we are further told of the Lord

going forth to fight against the nations that have fought against His people and land. "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah." (Zech. xiv. 4, 5.)

The remnant of Judah, witnesses for Christ in the midst of the terrible scenes of the last days, holding, as it were, their life in their hand, being hardly pressed, and in great straits, are miraculously delivered by the sudden manifestation of Christ; His feet stand on the mount of Olives, which splits asunder, and a very great valley affords them a means of escape from their enemies.

"And," continues the prophet, "the Lord my God shall come, and *all the saints with Thee*. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day, which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." (*vv.* 5-7.) Then, after a description of millennial blessing, in verse 12, we get, "This shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their

eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, *as this plague.*" (vv. 12-15.)

In the Lord's wonderful discourse in Matt. xxiv. and xxv. we have a remarkable description of the state of men at that day from His own lips: "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and *knew not* until the flood came, and *took them all away*; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left." (vv. 37-41.)

As in the days of Noah, men will be living for themselves and their own selfish ends, little thinking of the awful judgment that shall suddenly overtake them. They "*knew not* until the flood came, and *took them all away*;" none escaped but Noah and his family, who were left in the ark. When the Son of man comes, one

shall be *taken away in judgment*, and another left in mercy, to be brought into millennial blessing, which is exactly opposite to that which will occur when the Lord comes *for* His people, for at that moment the saints will be taken (caught up) to heaven, and the world left for judgment.

“Take heed to yourselves,” saith the Lord to His people, “lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you *unawares*. For *as a snare* shall it come *on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth*.” (Luke xxi. 34, 35.)

With this terrible hour before Him, rapidly approaching, God, who is not willing that any should perish, “*now commandeth all men everywhere to repent*: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world (the habitable earth) in righteousness, *by that man* whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.” (Acts xvii. 30, 31.)

“The Father judgeth no man, but hath *committed all judgment* unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. . . . And hath given Him *authority to execute judgment* also, because He is the Son of man.” (John v. 22–27.)

But how blessed to know that He is swift in mercy, slow to judgment; that judgment is *His strange work*. (Isa. xxviii. 21.) “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is *long-suffering to us-ward*, *not willing that any should perish*, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord

will come as a thief in the night," &c. (2 Peter iii. 9, 10.)

Were it not for His long-suffering, we who believe, and are now the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26), would never have been brought into this wondrous blessing; but having repented, we are now delivered from the judgment, and are not in darkness that that day should overtake us as a thief, but are all the children of light and the children of the day. (1 Thess. v. 4, 5.) The Christian can look with joy for the coming of His Lord to receive him to Himself, and for the day when he shall be manifested with Him. "Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, *shall appear*, then shall ye also *appear with Him in glory.*" (Col. iii. 3, 4.)

"Beloved," says the apostle John, "*now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when *He shall appear*, we shall be *like Him*; for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.)

Paul could anticipate that glorious moment, and say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me *at that day*: and not to me only, but unto all them also that *love His appearing.*" (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.) He encourages too the hearts of the saints at Thessalonica, saying, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even

our Father, at the *coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.*" (1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.)

And again, the Spirit of God brings it before the hearts of His people in a most precious and practical way in the epistle to Titus (chap. ii. 11-14.) I will quote the whole passage: "*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing*" (or the appearing of the glory) "*of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"

The day of the poor world's judgment will be the day of our manifest exaltation with Christ in glory; instead of our being judged, we shall come with Him to reign and judge. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12); and "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2.)

We have already noted that angels, as well as saints, will accompany the Lord at His appearing. This is clearly shown in Matt. xxv. 31, a scripture to which we must now refer, as showing the dealings of the Son of man with the nations at His advent.

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and *all the holy angels with Him*, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered *all nations*: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," &c.

This is often taken to be a description of the last judgment; but if you carefully read the whole passage you will find that it is a totally different scene altogether. Many have been misled by the heading of the chapter, or the note at the top of the page in many Bibles, in which it is so termed; but these have only been put in by man, and often very erroneously, especially so here. It is the separation of nations, introductory to the millennial reign of Christ, and a thousand years before the judgment of the dead at the great white throne.

When the Son of man shall come in His glory (or "shall have come" is the full force of the passage), He sits on His throne of glory, and all nations (mark the words, *all nations*), not the dead, but *the living*, the *quick*, shall be gathered before Him, who is Judge both of quick and dead. (2 Tim. iv. 1.) Having judged the military power of the West under the beast, and with him the false prophet at His revelation, He next sits upon His throne, and exercises discriminating judgment among the nations, preparatory to the establishment of His kingdom throughout the earth. They are dealt with according to the way that they have treated His brethren (not the Church, who will have already gone from this scene, but the *King's* brethren, Jews), who will preach the gospel of the kingdom as a witness to all nations during the time of antichrist's power. The righteous, separated on His right hand, are invited into the kingdom; that is, earthly blessing in the millennium. The goats hear the awful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Many features in this description most widely differ from that of the judgment of the dead. For instance, the scripture, in speaking of "nations," refers to those who are alive, not to those who are dead. In the scene before us we find distinctly three classes—"the brethren, the sheep, and the goats"—the first not judged at all, the second invited into blessing, the third sentenced; whereas in Rev. xx. 12 we find only one class, "the dead," and *all* are sentenced to eternal judgment.

In Matthew the Son of man comes with angels, and sits on His throne of glory; in Revelation there is no coming, no mention of angels, but of a great white throne. Here it is a judgment by the King on the earth; there the earth and the heaven flee away before the judgment. Here no books are mentioned; there books are opened, and the book of life. Here the goats are commanded to depart into everlasting fire, *prepared for* the devil and his angels; there the devil is in the lake of fire before the wicked dead are cast there. (v. 10.) One is distinctly the Son of man as King dealing with the living nations prior to the establishment of His power and glory in the earth; the other the judgment of the wicked dead after the close of the earth's jubilee.

If we come to the word of God with the preconceived and widely-accepted thought that there is only one resurrection and one general judgment, we must confound things which widely differ, rob Christ of that which is for His glory, and our own souls of rich blessing. God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and our ways are not God's ways; but as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His thoughts higher than our

thoughts, and His ways than our ways. (Isa. lv. 8, 9.)

Before closing the subject of the Lord's appearing, I would call your attention to one more scripture out of the many that treat of it in the Old Testament. In Joel iii. we have a graphic description of events connected with the manifestation of Christ in power and judgment on the nations, the deliverance of Israel, and the blessing of the kingdom.

"*Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.*" (Notice, this is exactly the reverse of Isa. ii. 4, which will be fulfilled after this.) "Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither *cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord.* Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat" (which is close to Jerusalem on the north-east): "for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for *their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes* in the valley of decision" (marg., concision, or threshing): "for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." (Compare Matt. xxiv. 29.) "*The Lord* also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake" (compare Heb. xii. 26-29); "but *the Lord* will be the hope"

(marg., place of repair, or harbour) "of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel," &c. The close of this remarkable chapter gives particulars of the blessing, &c., of the kingdom, of which we shall speak in our paper on the millennium.

Beloved reader, with this fearful judgment looming nearer and nearer for this ungodly world, I cannot refrain from once more appealing to you, and beseeching you, if still unsaved, to flee from the wrath to come. "*The day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come*" (Joel i. 15), but the day of grace has not yet passed; soon, very soon, the door of mercy for you will be closed; oh, enter, enter now! God has given His Son, His only Son, His well-beloved; that Blessed One has died and risen again; God is glorified in Him; and now "by Him, *all that believe are justified* from all things." (Acts xiii. 39.) Do you believe?

Lo! 't is the heavenly army,
 The Lord of hosts attending;
 'T is He, the Lamb, the great *I am*,
 With all His saints descending.
 To you, ye kings and nations,
 Ye foes of Christ, assembling;
 The hosts of light, prepared for fight,
 Come with the cup of trembling.

Joy to His ancient people!
 Your bonds He comes to sever—
 And now, 't is done! The Lord hath won,
 And ye are free for ever—
 Joy to the ransomed nations!
 The foe, the ravening lion,
 Is bound in chains while Jesus reigns
 King of the earth in Zion.

THE MILLENNIUM.

THE millennium, or the thousand years, is the period in the future of this world's history, when the Son of man, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall take into His own hands the rule and government of this world. The thousand years are mentioned no less than six times in the first seven verses of the twentieth chapter of Revelation, and doubtless are to be taken in their literal import. The Scriptures teem with descriptions of the blessings and glory to be enjoyed by this now groaning creation in that coming day. Peter, in addressing the Jews in Acts iii. 20-26, speaks of the sending of Jesus Christ, "whom the heaven must receive until the times of *restitution of all things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. . . . Yea, and *all the prophets* from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of *these days*." The Lord referred to the same period, when He said to His twelve disciples, "That ye which have followed me, *in the regeneration*, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. xix. 28.)

The despised and rejected Jesus of Nazareth has been cast out and crucified here, but "God also

hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at *the name of Jesus* every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord*, to the glory of God the Father." (Philip. ii. 9-11.) All who bow receive the priceless gift—*eternal life*; are called to suffer with the rejected One now, and will reign with Him by-and-by; those who refuse will surely come into judgment. But there is a moment coming when "*every knee shall bow*" (Isa. xlv. 23), when "all kings shall fall down before Him: and all nations shall serve Him." (Ps. lxxii. 11.) "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one." (Zech. xiv. 9.)

What joy for the heart of the Christian to know that the Blessed One in whom he has trusted, the One whom he has not seen, but yet loves (1 Peter i. 8), whose rights in this scene have been usurped by Satan, the prince of this world, will shortly have all things manifestly under His sway. Then "the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. *The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*" (Isa. ix. 6, 7.)

There are several different terms employed in the Scriptures in reference to the kingdom; we

get, the kingdom of heaven; the kingdom of God; the kingdom of the Father; the kingdom of the Son of man; the kingdom of His dear Son; and the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The kingdom of heaven, or of the heavens, points to the rule of the heavens owned on earth; it is only found in the gospel of Matthew. Both John the Baptist and the Lord spoke of it as *at hand*, not come. It commenced at the ascension of Christ, when the King, rejected from the earth, took His place in heaven.* During the present interval it takes a secret form not perceived by nature. In Matthew xiii. we get the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, showing the character of things here during His rejection. All who profess to bow to His name are in the kingdom. But when He is manifested in power and glory, He will gather out of His kingdom, by the instrumentality of His angels, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity (Matt. xiii. 41), and establish it openly with rich and abundant blessing for a thousand years.

The kingdom of God has a wider bearing. John the Baptist being imprisoned, Jesus came preaching, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is *at hand*," &c. (Mark i. 14, 15.) But He also said, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God *is come unto you*." (Matt. xii. 28.) And again, "when He was demanded of the Pharisees,

* It is thought by some that it began during the close of the Lord's ministry on earth, when the kingdom in power being formally rejected by the people, the Son of man went forth sowing good seed.

when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation" (marg., with outward show): "neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is *within you*" (marg., *among you*). (Luke xvii. 20, 21.)

The new birth is necessary both to *see* and *enter* the kingdom of God. (John iii. 3, 5.) All who received Christ by faith were born of God, and so also now (1 John v. 1), and are in the kingdom of God. In another aspect, however, it embraces all who profess the name of Christ: this is what it is *outwardly*, as seen by men (Luke xiii. 18-21); the rule or authority of God owned or bowed to. It has a *moral significance*, as Rom. xiv. 17, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy *in the Holy Ghost*." It was connected with the presence of Christ when on earth, but with the presence of the Holy Ghost after He had left this world.

The kingdom of God is likened, in Luke xiii. 18-21, to similar things as the kingdom of heaven in Matt. xiii., and includes the same period, though commencing a little earlier. Although that which is said of the kingdom of heaven is also said of the kingdom of God, that which is spoken of the latter in many passages could not be said of the former. At the close of the thousand years' reign of Christ, He having given up the kingdom to the Father, God is all in all.

The kingdom of the Father designates the heavenly sphere of the kingdom when displayed. The righteous shall shine forth as *the sun* in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. xiii. 43); the sun shines in the heavens.

The kingdom of the Son of man refers to the earthly sphere of the millennial kingdom; the Son of man ruling from the river to the ends of the earth. (Ps. lxxii. 8; Matt. xiii. 41.)

The kingdom of His dear Son (or the Son of His love) is where the Christian is already brought. Delivered from the power of darkness, he is translated into His kingdom—no longer led captive by Satan in the darkness of nature, but under the rule of the Lord.

The everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ points out the continuance of the kingdom of Christ till the end of all things, in contrast with the overturning of all earthly kingdoms and powers.

In Luke ix. 27 the Lord said to His disciples, "I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." This was fulfilled on the mount of transfiguration, when Moses and Elias, types of the raised and changed saints, *appeared in glory*, talking with Jesus, the Jewish disciples being on the mountain beholding them. It is a sample of the kingdom in display, when the heavenly saints shall appear with Christ in glory, and Israel shall be at the head of the nations on the earth.

To turn back now to the second Psalm, we find the gathering together of the kings and rulers of the earth against the Lord, and against His anointed; "Yet," saith the Lord, "have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Judgment, as we have seen in our last paper, falls upon the powers of this world. Christ takes the kingdom, and the *remnant of Judah* are delivered; for "it

shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off, and die; but *the third* shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." (Zech. xiii. 8, 9.)

Following upon this we get the restoration of *the ten tribes of Israel*, now scattered and lost among the nations. The fulness of the Gentiles being come in, the Lord begins now to bless in a special way, according to His many promises, His earthly people Israel. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Rom. xi. 29.)

Many deny the truth of the restoration and blessing of God's ancient people, and spiritualize and explain away the numerous scriptures which refer to it, applying them often to the present blessing of the Church of God. Such would do well to ponder the eleventh chapter of Romans, from the twenty-fifth verse. "I would not, brethren," writes the apostle to God's saints at Rome, "that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, *lest ye should be wise in your own conceits*; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And *so all Israel shall be saved*: as it is written, *There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer*, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob," &c. For "thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord." (Jer. xxxi. 37.)

Again, "He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together His elect (Israel) from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. xxiv. 31.)

Great numbers of Jews having returned to their land by the aid of a certain maritime power (Isa. xviii.), come into great tribulation; one-third who witness for Christ in this time of Jacob's trouble (Zech. xiii. 9) are saved out of it; others are martyred; the rest judged; then the ten tribes are gathered back (the rebellious being purged out) and united with the two, as one nation, under Christ.

Ezekiel, in chap. xx. 34, speaks thus of this event: "And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. . . . And I will *purge out from among you the rebels*, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

Jeremiah, in chap. xxxi. 8-10, says: "Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. . . . Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that

scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock."

Isaiah xlix. 20-23 is a most touching description of the union of the tribes after the Redeemer has come out of Zion. "The children which thou shalt have, *after thou hast lost the other*, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, *Who hath begotten me these*, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and *who hath brought up these?* Behold, I was left alone; *these, where had they been?* Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers," &c.

Then again, in the well-known passage, Ezek. xxxvii., the vision of the valley of dry bones, we are distinctly told, in verse 11, "these bones are *the whole house of Israel.*" They are viewed in the vision as in their graves—the present state of the tribes scattered and lost among the nations; but the Lord God says, "I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel," &c. (vv. 12-14.) "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be

divided into two kingdoms any more at all
And David my servant shall be king over them.”
(Ezek. xxxvii. 21-24.)

I might cite many more scriptures; but these will suffice to show simply the fact of that which God will shortly do for His earthly people. The prophets speak so plainly in the above passages, that comment upon them is almost superfluous, as I do not aim at giving the reader much more than an outline sketch.

The Deliverer being come out of Zion, Israel saved, “they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”
(Jer. xxxi. 34.)

Following upon the establishment of Israel in the land, and their recognition of Jesus, the One whom they pierced, as the Messiah, their King, we find a terrible invasion of their country takes place by the powers of the North. Many have had the thought that immediately upon the manifestation of Christ in glory, the reign of peace and blessing will set in in all its fulness; but this is not so. A terrible destruction of enemies takes place even after, though probably very shortly after, Christ has appeared. A detailed account of this scene is given us in Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix., and it is thought by many very possibly to be identical with the last blow of the Assyrian, when he falls by divine judgment, which we have already glanced at.

Israel being gathered in their land with great

wealth, the cupidity of a mighty power in the North is excited. The Western powers being destroyed, he thinks that his time is now come to possess the long-coveted land, and also the riches stored there. He is called in the prophecy "Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal;" but the correct rendering of the original is "Prince of *Rosh*, Meshech, and Tubal," and refers to the great Russian empire. He comes down on the land with a mighty army of his own, and accompanied by* Persia, Ethiopia (Asiatic Ethiopia probably, territory by the Persian Gulf), Libya (or Phut by the Euphrates), Gomer, and all his bands (part of Asia Minor, &c.), and Togarmah (Armenia), and *many peoples* besides.

Israel will be dwelling safely without walls, bars, or gates when he comes down to take a spoil, and to take a prey. (*vv.* 11, 12.) The fury of the Lord God comes up in His face (*v.* 18), and He says, "I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains: 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 people that are with him, *an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.*" (*vv.* 21, 22.) The ravenous birds, and the beasts of the field, devour the vast host smitten by the judgment of God, and for seven years the children of Israel shall go forth and burn the implements

* These include some of the very territories over which the Assyrian, or king of the North, will have sway. He is described in Daniel viii. 24 as mighty; but not by his own power. His strength lies probably in being allied with and backed by Russia. (Compare also Daniel xi. 43.)

of war, and take seven months to bury their bones, &c. (Chap. xxxix.)

Thus close the awful judgments upon Israel and the nations, which God has foretold shall accompany the second advent of the Son of man, and the establishment of His kingdom in the earth. The fortieth chapter to the close of Ezekiel gives a description of the millennial temple, the redivision of the land amongst the tribes, &c.

This brings us to the full millennial blessing. At the present time the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain; but in that day it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty (or liberty of the glory) of the children of God. (Rom. viii. 20, 21.) The dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, will be bound in the bottomless pit (or the abyss) for the thousand years, by an angel that shall come down from heaven (Rev. xx. 3), and no longer be enabled to make this world the sphere of his wiles and delusions, leading men captive in their sins.

The Lord Jesus Christ will reign with His heavenly saints over the earth.

In Rev. xxi. 9 we get a most magnificent description, in figurative language, of the glory of the Church during this period. She is spoken of as "the Bride, the Lamb's wife," but viewed as a beautiful city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, and having the glory of God. All manner of precious stones, pearls, and gold, the most valuable objects in the eyes of men, are used to convey its glory to our minds; the wall, denoting security and salvation, being a prominent

feature. It contains no temple; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. Neither does it need the sun or moon; they are eclipsed by the glory of God, and the Lamb is the light (or lamp) thereof. The earth is radiant with its glory, the nations walking in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into (to) it. And the gates are always open; there is no night there. The glory and honour of the nations shall also be brought into (to) it. All evil is for ever excluded, and only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life enter its glorious precincts.

A heavenly river of water of life, clear as crystal, shall flow out from the throne of God and of the Lamb. The tree of life, with twelve kinds of fruits, yielding monthly, and leaves for the healing of the nations, will be found there also. (Rev. xxii. 1; 2.)

His servants shall serve Him, shall see His face—blessed, blessed portion!—and His name shall be in their foreheads, and they shall reign to the age of ages (Rev. xxii. 3-5); they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.

In this coming day of glory and blessing, Israel, who are now scattered, but will then, as we have seen, have been gathered back to their own land, will have the first place among the nations, and *Jerusalem* become the *metropolis of the whole earth*.

One of the first acts of the reign of Christ will be the erection of *a magnificent temple*: "Behold the man whose name is *The Branch*; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the

temple of the LORD [or Jehovah]: even He shall build the temple of the LORD;* and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne." (Zech. vi. 12, 13.) From the fortieth to the forty-second chapter of Ezekiel we have a full description of this glorious building, and its measurements, &c., and it shall be "called an house of prayer for all people." (Isa. lvi. 7.)

One remarkable feature connected with this will be the restoration of the Jewish sacrifices and worship by the ordinance of God. A number of details are given in the forty-fifth and forty-sixth chapters of Ezekiel, and both the burnt, meat, drink, sin, and peace offerings expressly mentioned. And "in those days . . . David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and *to do sacrifice continually.*" (Jer. xxxiii. 16-18.) "And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing *burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incense,* and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the Lord." (Jer. xvii. 26.) "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him . . . *their burnt-offerings and*

* The reader will perceive by this scripture, that this is not the same building as the one in which the man of sin will seat himself. This must necessarily have been built before this, and will probably be destroyed, possibly by the Assyrian. (2 Thess. ii. 4.; Rev. xi. 1, 2; Ps. lxxiv. 7, 8.)

their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar." (Isa. lvi. 6, 7.)

These in *no way deny or detract from the one perfect offering* of the Lamb of God, and the infinite value of His precious blood, which cleanseth us from all sin (Heb. x. 10-14; 1 John i. 7), but will point back to that offering as those of old pointed forwards. Men, biased by system, early teaching, and so on, are often slow to accept the truth of this; but there it is in the word of God, and what the Lord has spoken He will surely perform.

There will not be any *ark*, as in the temple of old; for the prophet Jeremiah tells us, in chap. iii. 16, 17, that "in those days, saith the Lord, they shall *say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord*; neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more." (Marg., be magnified.) "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," &c.

"In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that *God is with you.*" (Zech. viii. 23.) Idolatry, which will have been forced upon the nation (and readily accepted by the mass), and also throughout the domain of the beast, will be utterly abolished by the Lord when He comes in judgment. For "in that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself

to worship, to the moles, and to the bats," &c. (Isa. ii. 12-22.)

The shekinah glory, the glory of the God of Israel, will come from the way of the east, where it was last seen when retreating from the earth, after the captivity of Judah. (Ezek. xi. 22, 23.) It will then fill the house or temple (Ezek. xliii. 1-5), which is called "the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever." (v. 7.) "The Lord is great in Zion; and He is high above all the people. Let them praise Thy great and terrible name; for it is holy. The king's strength also loveth judgment; Thou dost establish equity, Thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and *worship at His footstool*; for He is holy." (Psalm xcix. 2-5.)

There will also be a prince at the head of the house of Israel, mentioned many times from Ezek. xliv. to xlv. He must in no way be confounded with the Lord, as he is the prince of Israel, ruling as His vicegerent in the land, and offering sacrifices in connection with the temple worship; whereas Christ will reign with His saints over the earth.

The land, Israel's ancient inheritance, now almost a wilderness, and under the dominion of the Gentiles, will then be redivided after a new order, each tribe having its measured portion, and a holy oblation foursquare in the centre, divided among the priests and the Levites,* and part for the city and suburbs. On either side of this, the residue will be for the prince. (Ezek. xlviii.; xlv. 7.)

* Read Ezek. xliv. 6-31, and xlviii. 10-14, for details concerning the priests and Levites.

Then as to the city of Jerusalem itself in that day, its glory and magnificence, as described in the prophets and the Psalms, will far surpass anything that the world has ever seen, much as men boast of the wonders they have wrought. Neither the ancient cities of Nineveh and Babylon, with all their glories, nor the modern cities of London and Paris, bear any comparison.

From Zech. xiv. 10 we find that "all the land shall be turned as a plain, from Geba (north) to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem: and it (*i.e.*, the city) shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place." The mount of Olives is described as cleaving asunder when touched by the feet of the Lord at His appearing. Important physical changes will take place, thus affording a most magnificent plateau for the enlargement of the city during His reign.

Well may the Psalmist sing, "*Beautiful for situation*, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the *city of the great King*." (Ps. xlviii. 2.) And again, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, *consider her palaces*; that ye may tell it to the generation following." (Ps. xlviii. 12, 13.) And again, "Out of Zion, *the perfection of beauty*, God hath shined." (Ps. l. 2.) "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah." (Ps. lxxxvii. 3.) "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city." (Isa. lii. 1.) "Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." (Isa. lx. 18.) "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And

the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a *new name*, which *the mouth of the Lord shall name*. Thou shalt also be a *crown of glory* in the hand of the Lord, and a *royal diadem* in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken: neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called *Hephzi-bah* (*i.e.*, my delight is in her), and thy land *Beulah* (*i.e.*, married): for *the Lord delighteth in thee*, and thy land shall be married." (Isa. lxii. 1-4.)

"They shall call thee, *The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.*" (Isa. lx. 14.)

These are a few of the many passages indicating the unprecedented glory and splendour of the city of the Lord of hosts, in the day of Israel's blessing, and the earth's jubilee. But this is not all; for not only will it be a praise in the earth for its beauty, but the centre of government and blessing for the earth under the Lord's righteous rule. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for *out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*" (Isa. ii. 2, 3.) "Because of Thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto Thee." (Ps. lxxviii. 29.) "Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." (Ps. lxxii. 11.) It is *then* that the government shall be upon His shoulder,

and He shall reign as the true Solomon, the Prince of Peace, from the river to the ends of the earth. (Isa. ix. 6, 7.)

“He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, *neither shall they learn war any more.*” (Isa. ii. 4; Ps. xlvi. 9; lxxviii. 30; Micah iv. 3.) The mighty God shall judge the earth, and *break war out of it.* Instead of nation arming and warring against nation as now, peace shall flow as a river; a king shall reign in righteousness, “the Prince of Peace,” and princes with Him shall rule in judgment. (Isa. xxxii. 1.)

Another very interesting feature of that day is worthy of our notice, and that is, *a miraculous river*, mentioned several times in the Scriptures. Zechariah xiv. 8 speaks of it thus: “And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be.” The former sea refers to the Dead Sea, the hinder to the Mediterranean; the flowing of the river, you will observe, is in no way affected by the change of seasons. Further details are given in Ezekiel, and we find there that these waters issue out from under the threshold of the house, or temple, eastward, go down into the desert, and “go into the sea (Dead), which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.”

At the present time, as is well known, this sea is of such a saline character, that fish cannot live in it; it is often called the Salt Sea for this reason.

But the effect of the flowing of the miraculous living waters into it will be, that its present condition will be changed, its waters being healed. "And," says the prophet Ezekiel, "it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be *a very great multitude of fish*, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-ge-di even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." (Ezek. xlvii. 1-12.)

Joel iii. 18 also speaks of this remarkable river, ". . . a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim." Psalm xlvi. 4; "There is *a river*, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." Psalm lxxv. 9: "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with *the river of God*, which is full of water." Zechariah ix. 10, and Psalm lxxii. 8, probably both refer to the same: "He shall have dominion also from sea

to sea, and from *the river* unto the ends of the earth."

On the other hand, God has decreed the utter destruction of well-known waters, which are now flowing, and also the temporary drying up of certain rivers. "The Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea," that is, of the Red Sea, which skirts the eastern coast of Egypt, and through which He has already once made a miraculous passage, when He delivered Israel out of Egypt of old; "and with His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over *the river*, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod" (marg., in shoes). "And there shall be *an highway** for the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." (Isa. xi. 15, 16.)

The river would be the Nile, which at the commencement of the reign of Christ will be smitten in its seven streams, that a way into the land may be opened for a remnant of His beloved people.

These facts are repeated in other passages. In the burden of Egypt (Isaiah xix.) we are told that the waters shall fail from *the sea* and *the river* shall be wasted and dried up. Again, in Zechariah x. 11, "He shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in *the sea*, and all the deeps of *the river* shall dry up; and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away." Also Isaiah l. 2, ". . . Behold, at my rebuke I dry up *the*

* See also for "the highway" Isaiah xix. 23; xxxv. 8; xl. 3; lxii. 10.

sea, I make *the rivers* a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst."

Besides this, the great river Euphrates (once turned from its course at the destruction of Babylon) will also have its waters dried up, that the way of the kings of (or "from") the east might be prepared. This event takes place under the sixth vial (or bowl) just previous to the end of the future crisis, introductory to the millennium.

But although God's judgments will fall both on Egypt and Assyria, old enemies of His beloved people, yet will He remember mercy. "And the Lord shall smite Egypt; He shall smite *and heal it*: and they shall return even to the Lord, and He shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be *a highway* out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even 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. 22-25.)

What a glorious day will this be for this earth! And both man and beast will participate in the deliverance. "The eyes of the *blind* shall be opened, and the ears of the *deaf* shall be unstopped. Then shall the *lame* man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the *dumb* sing." (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.) "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and *everlasting joy* upon their

heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and *sorrow and sighing* shall flee away." (Isa. xxxv. 10.)

Instead of the present short span of life spoken of by the psalmist, threescore years and ten, and fourscore with labour and sorrow (Ps. xc. 10), in that day men's lives will be greatly prolonged. Of old, men lived to a far greater age than now; but even Methuselah, the longest-lived of all, did not reach to a thousand years; but, in the coming day of millennial blessing, the Lord says, "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence (thenceforth) *an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days*: for the *child* shall die *an hundred years old*; but the *sinner*, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as *the days of a tree* are the days of my people, and mine elect shall *long enjoy* the work of their hands," &c.* (Isa. lxxv. 19-22.) An infant of days will not be heard of then; but if a person dies at the age of one hundred years, he is only reckoned as a child, and then his death is on account of sin, when Christ is reigning in righteousness, and he is cut off and accursed. The old

* The following is a translation from the Septuagint version, by Sir C. Brenton, of part of this passage: "Neither shall there be any more a child that dies untimely, or an old man who shall not complete his time: for the youth shall be a hundred years old, and the sinner who dies at a hundred years, shall also be accursed . . . for as the days of the tree of life shall be the days of my people."

men will fill their days; that is, live out a thousand years. The days of the Lord's people are compared to the days of a tree, and we know that some trees live to an immense age.

There is another striking allusion to the longevity of men in Zechariah viii. 4: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, There shall yet *old men* and *old women* dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and *every man* with his staff in his hand *for very age*" (marg., multitude of days). "And the streets of the city shall be *full of boys and girls* playing in the streets thereof."

So great and wondrous will be the blessing of God's people, city and land, that the nations and peoples from all parts of the globe will be attracted to God's earthly centre. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that *God is with you.*" (Zech. viii. 20-23.)

Many have had the thought that Satan being bound at this period, the curse taken off the earth, and such wondrous blessing flowing out, that death, the wages of sin, will be done away with; but this is not the case. It is an error often

arising from two causes; one from linking all sin with Satan, and forgetting that there is sin in men as well; and the other, referring the scriptures which speak of *all Israel* knowing the Lord, from the least to the greatest, at the commencement of the millennium, to man generally throughout the whole period.

It is clear from Scripture that men will commit sin during the reign of Christ, and also suffer the penalty—death. For instance, “The child shall *die* an hundred years old; but the *sinner*, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed.” (Isa. lxxv. 20.) And this, you will remark, in a prophecy relating to Jewish blessing.

How terrible is the fall of man! However favourable the circumstances in which he is placed, he utterly breaks down. In innocence he disobeyed God; left to his will unrestrained, the earth was filled with violence; later on he broke the law of God, slew His prophets, murdered His beloved Son. *Grace* now reigns through righteousness, and man sins openly with a high hand. Christ will shortly *reign in righteousness*, but sin will manifest itself notwithstanding, though swiftly and surely to be judged. The millennium must run its course, the whole scene be dissolved, before sin will be taken from the earth altogether. Then death and hades being cast into the lake of fire, in the eternal state *righteousness will dwell*.

Psalm lxxii. 11 teaches that “all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.” Yet, if we carefully examine other psalms, we find that there are no less than three distinct passages where, in the marginal reading, we find that the submission of some of the nations is

only feigned after all, through fear of the power and might of the King of kings. (See Ps. lxvi. 3 ; xviii. 44 ; lxxxi. 15, marg.) This is further confirmed in Zech. xiv. 16 : " And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be *no rain*. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

This scripture speaks plainly of threatened judgments on nations that refuse to bow to the authority of the one King over all the earth, and is a remarkable instance of the perfect accuracy of God's word. Egypt is singled out from the other nations, and threatened with a plague, should they be insubject. The withholding of rain, which would cause a terrible famine, would be no punishment to her ;* for it is a well-known fact, as mentioned in the passage itself, that a great part of Egypt *has no rain* now. Crops are obtained by the careful use of the water of the mighty river Nile, which at certain seasons overflows its banks. Thus upon Egypt the Lord threatens a plague.

* Some might have a difficulty as to this, in comparing it with what I have said about the drying up of the Nile ; but Isa. xix. 22 shows us that the Lord will both *smite and heal*.

Another striking and incontestable proof of the unconverted, sinful state of great masses of Gentiles in the millennium, is the fact, that when Satan is loosed out of the abyss at the close of the thousand years, he makes a last effort to overthrow the kingdom of Christ; goes out "to *deceive the nations* which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the *number of whom* is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." (Rev. xx. 7-9.) Gog and Magog are here used as symbolical terms of the great mass of nations who will then be led by Satan against the Lord's people of that day, and must *in no way* be confounded with Gog, the land of Magog, &c. (Ezek. xxxviii. 1-3); the one is a gathering at the close, the other at the commencement of the reign of Christ. They come up on *the breadth of the earth*, on all parts of it, and compass the camp of the saints about, wherever they may be, far and wide, and also the beloved city, that is, Jerusalem, seeking their destruction. God suddenly pours out fierce and unsparing judgment; fire will come down and devour them. Their deceitful leader, who will have been bound the thousand years in the bottomless pit, or abyss, is then cast into the place of eternal torment, the lake of fire and brimstone, where already the two great leaders of the apostasy, the beast and false prophet, have been suffering during the same period. All these, as the scripture plainly declares, shall be *tormented day and night for ever and ever.* (v. 10.)

Then, as regards the brute creation, we find that the present enmity existing between different animals will cease, and that instead of preying one upon the other they will dwell together in peace and harmlessness: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' [adder's] den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi.)

This interesting fact has often, like many other prophetic scriptures, been spiritualized away, and widely distorted from its evident literal meaning. And this is not the only passage which speaks of it, but similar language is used in Isa. lxxv. 25: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." The sole exception to the general blessing mentioned here, is another instance worthy of note, as showing the perfect harmony of every statement of the word of God—"Dust shall be the serpent's meat." In pronouncing the curse upon the serpent in Genesis iii., God said, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life;" so that its condition will remain the same to the end. And "I . . . will

cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land ; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods." (Ezek. xxxiv. 25.)

The curse pronounced upon the earth by the Lord God consequent upon the fall of man (Gen. iii. 17) will then be removed ; for the Revelation tells us "there shall be *no more curse*" (Rev. xxii. 3.) Thorns and briars shall no longer be brought forth as now ; but "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree," which are both evergreens (Isa. lv. 13), "and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall *blossom abundantly*, and rejoice even with joy and singing." (Isa. xxxv. 1, 2.) "I will open," too, saith the Lord, "rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys : I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree ; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together." (Isa. xli. 18, 19.)

The earth will then be so wondrously fertile and productive, that the labour necessary to procure a crop in that day will be nothing to be compared to the present toil ; for "the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed ; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." (Amos ix. 13.) A beauteous strain is found in the sixty-fifth Psalm, showing how richly God will then bless the earth, and how, consequently, it will teem with plenty : "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it : Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water : Thou pre-

parest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly ; Thou settlest the furrows thereof : Thou makest it soft with showers ; Thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness ; and Thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness : and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks ; the valleys also are covered with corn : they shout for joy, they also sing." (Ps. lxxv.) And "there shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains ; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." (Ps. lxxii.)

The seasons themselves will not change ; for the Lord said after the flood, "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

The heavens and the earth will be brought into blessed connection during this marvellous epoch, the dispensation of the fulness of times, when all things shall be gathered together in one in Christ (Eph. i. 10), and all things reconciled ; (mark, things, not *all* persons.) (Col. i. 20.) "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth ; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil ; and they shall hear Jezreel." (Hosca ii. 21, 22.)

The thousand years having expired, then cometh the end, when Christ "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all

enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that *God may be all in all.*" (1 Cor. xv. 24-28.)

Hark ! the sound of jubilee,
 Loud as mighty thunders' roar,
 Or the fulness of the sea
 When it breaks upon the shore !
 Hallelujah ! for the Lord
 God omnipotent shall reign :
 Hallelujah ! let the word
 Echo round the earth and main !

Hallelujah !—hark ! the sound
 From the depth unto the skies,
 Wakes above, beneath, around,
 All creation's harmonies !
 See, Jehovah's banner furled,
 Sheathed His sword : He speaks—'t is done ;
 And the kingdoms of the world
 Are the kingdoms of the Son !

THE ETERNAL STATE.

WE closed in our last paper with the giving up of the kingdom to God, even the Father, by Christ, the Son. This brings us to the end of time, and the dissolution of the present condition of the heavens and the earth. For "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. . . . Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter iii. 10, 13.)

Another allusion is made to the present heaven and earth in Rev. xx. 11. The prophet John sees "a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Then, and not till then, *the dead*, that is, all who have died out of Christ, impenitent, unbelieving, throughout the whole course of time, small and great, stand before God (or "the throne," lit.), and are judged according to their works; a perfectly distinct act of judgment from that of the quick in Matt. xxv. as we have seen. Only the wicked dead stand here; the saints have already enjoyed a thousand years of bliss with Christ. Books were opened, probably the records of their

works.* Another, the book of life, is opened also, but only to show that there their names are not. None can escape this awful tribunal who have died in their sins: the sea, death, hades, all give up their dead; and they were judged *every man according to their works*. Death and hades, no longer needed, were first cast into the lake of fire; and then, when time exists no longer, their eternal doom is sealed. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This is the second death.

God is light, as well as love. "The high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," cannot lower the claims of His holiness. "He will by no means clear the guilty," is the declaration of the Old Testament. In the New we have brought out the wondrous truths of redemption and salvation, wrought by the gift of His only-begotten Son, to die, the guiltless for the guilty. The justice of God took its course, and its stroke fell upon the Holy and the Just One on the cross at Calvary. (2 Cor. v. 21.) And God has shown His estimate of the perfect sacrifice, in that He has raised Him from the dead, and now declares His righteousness in proclaiming a free pardon to all, and in justifying every one that believeth. (Rom. iii. 25, 26.)

All who reject or neglect the wondrous provision of His grace, will surely reap the conse-

* Some have thought that one of the books would be the Bible. We are not told what the books contain. The Lord said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John xii. 48.)

quences of their folly in eternal misery in the lake of fire. The strongest language is employed in the word of God to express the awfulness and eternal duration of the punishment of the wicked. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but *the wrath of God abideth on him.*" (John iii. 36.) The rich man in hell, crying that he is *tormented in this flame*, finds no relief to his misery, not even a drop of water, but *a great gulf fixed* between himself and the place of mercy and blessing (Luke xvi. 19-31), and no possible means of crossing it. There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. xiii. 42; xxii. 13.)

Eternal fire (Jude 7); their worm that never dies (Mark ix. 44); fire not quenched (Mark ix. 48); everlasting contempt (Dan. xii. 2); everlasting punishment (Matt. xxv. 46); everlasting destruction (2 Thess. i. 9); damned (2 Thess. ii. 12); blackness of darkness for ever (Jude 13); perdition (2 Peter iii. 7); swift destruction (2 Peter ii. 1); utterly perish (2 Peter ii. 12); no forgiveness (Matt. xii. 31, 32); and such-like terms, are surely enough to convince every honest soul of the eternal and awful character of the judgment of the ungodly. The words "perish" and "destruction" are often distorted from their obvious meaning to support the speculations and theories of rationalists, sceptics, and others, and made to mean "annihilation," whereas there is no hint of such a thing in the word of God. These very words are constantly used by us to mean otherwise. If we speak of being *perished* with cold, or of some furniture being "*destroyed*," do we mean that either we or the furniture are put out of existence? If death is ceasing to exist,

how will men weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth?

"The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 18.)

God at the first breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became *a living soul*. His life came from God, and he must spend an eternal existence in joy with Christ, or utter misery and wretchedness and anguish in hell. Revelation xiv. 9-11 speaks of ungodly ones, the smoke of whose torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night. And these same words "for ever and ever," or "to the age of ages," are used to denote the eternal existence of the One upon the throne in Revelation iv. 9. (See also 1 Tim. i. 17; Rev. xx. 10.)

Satan is sowing the world broadcast with his lie, that punishment is not eternal, and thousands are led away by this deceiver of the whole world. My reader, I warn you against it; it undermines the atonement, makes the word of God a lie, and gives a license to man's sins and wickedness. Far wiser is it to bow to and believe His word; then, as a possessor of "eternal life," the gift of God, go and tell out the glad tidings of salvation, pointing sinners to Christ and His precious blood, which alone can deliver from this awful doom.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but *are not able to kill the soul*: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy *both soul and body* in hell." (Matt. x. 28.)

Following upon the judgment of the dead at the great white throne, in the first nine verses of

Revelation xxi.* we get the fullest revelation that God has given us concerning that wonderful condition of things that shall succeed dispensations of time, "the eternal state."

You will remark that in verse 1 the prophet sees a new heaven and a new earth, but nothing is said about their being then created. Now in Isaiah lxxv. 17 we do find the Lord saying, "Behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth," &c.; but here it evidently has reference to the millennial period. This is clearly shown by the context, for the same word is used of Jerusalem, "Behold, I *create* Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (v. 18), and then follows an ample description of millennial blessing, to the close of the chapter. So entirely different will be the state of things at that day, that God speaks of it as created anew. But in the eternal state there will be a new heavens and a new earth; not a fresh creation, but probably the materials and elements of the old remodelled after dissolution.

Of the present globe we find it recorded in Genesis i. that darkness was upon the face of *the deep*, and that God afterwards caused the dry land to appear. And we know that even then the greater part of it was left submerged by the ocean to this day; but in the eternal condition there shall be no more sea. The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest (Isa. lvii. 20); and restlessness and wickedness have characterized the whole history of man on the earth; but on

* From verse 10 to chapter xxii. 5 we have the description of the glory of the Church and the earth during the millennium, to which we have already referred. In the millennial description we get "God" and "the Lamb," but in the eternal, "God."

the globe, where sea is not, all will be stable, fixed and eternal, and righteousness shall dwell.

The Church of the living God is again brought before us in verse 2. Her thousand years of glory during the reign of Christ will have run out, but still she is seen in her distinctive glory to the age of ages. The holy city, *New Jerusalem*, is seen by the prophet coming down from God out of heaven, with all the freshness, beauty, and glory of the day of her espousals, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." A great voice out of heaven pronounces her glorious character and destiny in relation to this new and eternal scene. As the tabernacle or dwelling-place of God she is *with men*, showing a wonderful connection between heaven and earth in that scene of eternal glory and joy, and also that God has destined that men should live on that new globe. We have nothing told us as to who the men are; but as the wicked on the millennial earth are devoured by fire (xx. 9), and no mention is made of what becomes of the righteous, the probability is that the men here mentioned may be the millennial saints preserved for this wondrous portion by the power of God.

In Eden, when man was in innocence, the Lord God visited him; both His glory, and also the man Christ Jesus, the Son of God, have dwelt among men since; now the Holy Ghost dwells in men, the saints, and in the Church, which is the temple of God; in the coming kingdom, the glory will again dwell in the midst of God's people; but in the eternal state, the Church will be the dwelling-place of God Himself, and be with men, and that for ever and for ever.

“And He will dwell with them, and they *shall* be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” (Rev. xxi. 3.) “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Every trace of sin, and all its terrible effects, will have gone for ever. God Himself will comfort all, and bless with an eternal blessing. Righteousness will no longer only *reign* as in the kingdom of Christ, but *dwell* throughout the whole scene.

“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I *make* (not create) *all* things *new*. And He said unto me (John) Write; for these words are *true and faithful*. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” (vv. 5, 6.)

The sceptic and the infidel may doubt and deny, but God has pledged His immutable word—“God, that *cannot lie*.” (Titus i. 2.) What He has promised, He is able also to perform; for with Him all things are possible; and “these words are *true and faithful*.” Wondrous pledge of His love to cheer and encourage the hearts of His own.

And then, before closing this short but marvellous revelation of a glorious eternity, we have three classes of persons brought before us in view thereof.

First, His thoughts go out to the poor thirsty sinner with the precious message, “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Not now merely the living streams, but let the thirsty sinner be who he may, God is ready to satisfy that soul-thirst from the

fountain-head of blessing itself, and that freely. No money, no works, no religiousness of man, could purchase that priceless boon, but freely will God give of it to any and every thirsty one.

Secondly, He turns to His own loved ones, tried and tempted, harassed and perplexed, it may be, by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and cheers the drooping heart, the weary spirit, with the soul-stirring words of comfort, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Faint one, think on this precious promise; shrink not from following your blessed Master. God would have you to be an overcomer; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be. To-day may be your last here. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

Lastly, in one sad catalogue, He classes the ungodly, "But the fearful,* and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." The eternal judgment of the wicked is as sure as the eternal glory of the Church; "the Scripture cannot be broken." (John x. 35.)

"O 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 who hath known the mind of the Lord? or

* The fearful—first on the list—would denote those who through fear of the consequences shrink back from the confession of Christ as their Saviour, never decide, and die unconverted in their sins.

who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33-36.)

Rest of the saints above
Jerusalem of God,
Who in thy palaces of love,
Thy golden streets, have trod?

To me thy joy to tell,
Those courts secure from ill,
Where *God Himself* vouchsafes to dwell,
And every bosom fill.

Who shall to me that joy
Of saint-thronged courts declare,
Tell of that constant sweet employ
My spirit longs to share?

That rest secure from ill,
No cloud of grief e'er stains,
Unfailing praise each heart doth fill.
And *love eternal* reigns.
