

EVIL IN THE WORLD

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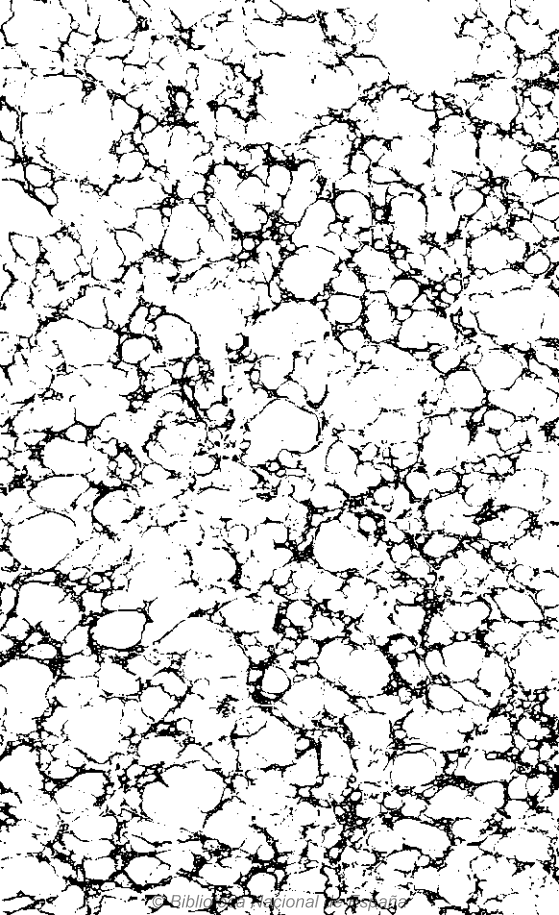
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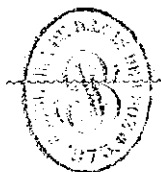






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EVIL IN THE WORLD,  
AND  
SORROW IN THE CHURCH,  
UNTIL  
THE COMING OF CHRIST.



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## EVIL IN THE WORLD, &c.

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ALL persons of a reflecting mind must allow that error has been perpetuated in the Church through the medium of education and other circumstances; doctrines and theories of men having obtained, as though they were the commandments of the Lord. Accordingly, we find an admixture of truth and error abounding everywhere. So much has been taken on trust, and so few have judged it necessary to "*try all things*," that probabilities constantly pass for realities; and pride and arrogance are charged on those who would judge for themselves, or conscientiously differ from the learned, or popular divines. There is a "*vox populi*," and a certain fashion, which govern as much the professing Church as the circles of the world.

There was a time when neither colleges nor lucrative situations, nor yet worldly patronage, were deemed necessary for the service of the sanctuary. Poor fishermen and tent-makers, in the power of the Spirit, evangelized and swayed the Churches. The rule and ministry which now prevail

savour more of the pride and glory of the flesh than of the truth and energy of the Spirit of God. The adornings of human wisdom, carnal music, fine buildings, and earthly power and pretension, occupy a place never given to them in the New Testament. Of the apostles it was remarked that they were unlearned and ignorant men; but it was observed also that they had been with Jesus: how frequently might the opposite be remarked in the present state of apostacy! One heart, and one mind—(the unity of the Spirit)—characterized the Church at Pentecost; the world and mere professors were kept outside; God was too near for either; “Of the rest durst no man join; but believers were the more added;” both these classes may now be found lodged in the very heart of what is called the Church. And yet we are told that things are doing so well and prospects are so bright, that a Millennium may shortly be expected out of this supposed prosperous state. If divisions without limit—sectarianism close and narrow, with pride and worldliness, are happy omens; then are we on the very eve of this imaginary Millennium. From this ever-flowing fountain of discord, heresy, and division, we are told that healing streams are flowing forth which ere long will fructify and evangelize the whole world. A new thing is come to pass; a religious Babel is to produce a temple of order and beauty.

Non-acquaintance with the word of God, and with the truth of present circumstances, or a blind-folded and willing ignorance, may credit such a statement; but I believe that a better knowledge of the Scriptures of truth would show it to be a strong delusion. There is this striking inconsistency in many who are cherishing these views: the propriety of prophetic enquiry is denied by them, yet statements are boldly made, which cannot otherwise be ascertained. Some are so sunk in the depths of selfishness, that *salvation* appears to them to be the only consideration. Prophecy to such is an unnecessary work of the Spirit of God. If they get to Heaven, every question for them is settled; they have no desire to know the things that are revealed, "and the things which are freely given;" nor yet the purposes of God for the glorifying of His Son, His people, and His creation, through Him. The evils which result from the delusive hopes (as I verily believe them to be,) which are thus held forth, are more than can be calculated. Instead of the Church being roused from its lethargy by the cry of "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," it is led to think that it is not sleeping at all, and that the Bridegroom is not approaching. Instead of the professing Church being warned by the awful similitudes under which its declension is prophetically described, such as the parable of the wheat and tares, and

the plain statement of the mystery of iniquity, which was to continue in full and increasing force, till it is destroyed by the personal appearing of the Lord in "flaming fire" and in "vengeance;" instead of being thus warned of approaching judgment, it is continually putting itself up with the prospect of millennial blessing on earth, introduced by its own efforts: often too this hope is held out as the attraction and stimulus to service—rather than the personal glory of the Lord and the heavenly inheritance; and thus the Church is led to glory in the work of its own hands—making much of all its service, as though it was just about to accomplish its work of bringing in its imaginary spiritual Millennium. But a little closer inspection serves to shew that this is all a vision of its own creation. Instead of the world being plainly told of the iniquity which is to close its history at the end of the present age—when all its powers, civil and ecclesiastical, shall be confederated together against the Lord and His Christ—and of their judgment, and the Lord's glory and kingdom which shall ensue, it is told to listen to the delusive tale of "peace, peace," and not of the "sudden destruction" which is at hand.

The Scriptures are as plain as the sun that shines, (if men will only attend to them) as to the continuance and growth of the evil and apostacy (which even set

in, in the days of the apostles) until the second coming of our Lord and Saviour, without any intermediate or different state of things. His return is the only anchor of hope—the only desired and assured haven of rest and peace for all the disorder and misrule in Church and State, at home and abroad. The suppression of evil—the time when the saints will be avenged of their adversaries—the glorification of their bodies—the meeting with their departed, and all their brethren—their manifestation in glory—the Jews' return and happy resettlement in their native land—creation delivered from its present bondage and corruption, consequent on the fall of man—I say, all these long desired and ever to be wished for events await the return of Him who is the Redeemer, the heir of all things.

Till then the Church is in sorrow—coming up through the wilderness—tempted and denied—persecuted like its Master—Satan reigns as God of the world (or of this age, Gr.) prince of the power of the air, the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience. But then he will be expelled from heaven, laid hold of on earth, and chained in the pit. Satan will be absent; Jesus will be present. This is indeed God's Millennium.

*When* these things shall be, I know not; but of this I feel assured, that present prospects should be to us the forebodings,

not of what the skilful hand of man will cause to end in blessing, but of what he will turn to evil. We may indeed reach the hour of midnight, and find things involved in thickest darkness; but it is our privilege to look beyond it all, and see "the rising of the Sun of Righteousness," by whom the darkness shall be dispelled which now overspreads the earth, which may grow thicker and thicker, until His glory becomes the happy substitute.

My object is not to enter upon the details connected with the second coming and reign of our Lord, but to shew from scripture testimony the *continuance of evil, through this present day of grace, up to that period*—that the end will be the darkest hour—that this will call for the coming of Jesus, and the judgments of God—and that, after that will be the reign of righteousness.

The Lord in His parable of the "sower," (Matt. xiii.) nowhere asserts that the word sown would produce universal blessing or reception. I read of the seed which fell on a small part only coming to perfection: thus we learn that, during the period to which this parable has an application, the seed sown on *three* parts produced no fruit; those parts comprised under the description of stony ground hearers—wayside—and those who receive among briers and thorns—which are, according to our Lord's teaching, the largest portion. In other

words, we see that an election only believe, or are taken out. And in like manner, the Lord describes the moral character of this age by the figure of two roads, the one the broad road, which leadeth to destruction, along which the *many* go; and the other the narrow road to eternal life, which but *few* find. In the next parable (Matt. xiii.) we find Satan becomes a sower also: "But while men slept, his enemy sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." The question the servants put was, Should they go and gather them up? but he (the householder) said, "Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together to the harvest, and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." In verse 40 we have the Lord's interpretation: "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world" (or age, Gr.) This parable, with our Lord's interpretation, settles, in great measure, the whole question. Tares remain in the field, that is, the world, to the end of this age; they are not converted through the gospel, nor brought into millennial blessing, but gathered and burnt at the harvest: "Then shall the righteous shine forth:" for at that time Jesus will come. We are told in Col. iii. 4, "When he shall appear,

then we shall appear with Him in glory." I remark further, that the things which offend are taken away, not as spiritual millenarians teach, by the preaching of the gospel, but by judgment: "And shall cast them (the things that offend) into a furnace of fire," verse 42.

It is generally admitted that the "whore of Babylon" mentioned in Rev. xvii. refers to the corrupt church, or a portion of it. What is her end? precisely the same as the tares; not peace, but judgment (verse 16:) "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." Are we then to expect peace and prosperity at the termination of this tremendous apostacy? We read further, that these kings who do this work of judgment under the will of the Lord, give their kingdom to the beast, verse 17. We find apostacy further spoken of in Revelation. It is needless to define which is the ecclesiastical, and which the civil; but this may be plainly shewn, that whatever the symbols represent, the end is seen to be more evil than the beginning, and judgment is alike the end of all. All things which offend and do iniquity are thus, as taught by our Lord (in the parable before referred to,) taken out of his kingdom.

In the 13th chapter of Revelation we get, from verse 1—10, the description of



the beast; his persecutions and blasphemies are there detailed. Afterwards we get a description of another beast called the false prophet, ch. xvi. 13: This second beast serves as a helper to the first in all his iniquities. In the 13th we see him persecuting the saints, and causing all to receive the mark of the beast; power in fact is given him (the first beast) over all kindreds, tongues, and nations. We learn also, verse 8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb;" all, both small and great, rich and poor, bond and free, receive his mark. Here we find a *trinity* in unity of iniquity, coming out at the end of this age after Satan had been cast out of the heavens, which is spoken of in the previous chapter. The 14th and 15th also speaks of judgments, seven vials, &c. In the 16th we find three spirits going forth. Is it to establish conversion, and bring in righteousness? Nay: "They are spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." In the 17th we find the ten kings making war with the Lamb; the 18th shews the judgment on Babylon; in the 19th we get the supper of the Great God—a conflict which denotes dreadful judgment: and after, the beast and false prophet are both cast alive into a lake of fire, and Satan chained in the pit.

Then comes the blessed result, the reign of Christ with His saints for 1000 years, Rev. xx.

What else do the seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, import, but judgment after judgment? Even this does not lead men to repent: "Neither repented they of their murders, sorceries, fornications, or thefts," see chap. ix. 21.

We do find the end of these judgments will issue in blessing to those who are left, after the day of vengeance is over.

In Isaiah lxi. 2, we have two periods spoken of—the acceptable year, and the day of vengeance. Jesus proclaims both; the first He has done in person, see Luke iv. It is in this period we now are, see 2 Cor. vi. The day of vengeance is the next period, and is not yet, but awaits His personal coming. The revelation speaks of the judicial events of this day, see also Isa. lxii. A third period is the thousand years which we find in Rev. xx. If these three periods are kept in view, much light will be thrown on prophecy. The reign and glory of Christ, as Lord of all, is always referred to as that which immediately succeeds these judgments, or the day of vengeance. When the six seals of judgment are opened, we find (Rev. vii. 9 to the end) a redeemed host saying with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Indeed the blessings of the re-

deemed referred to in this chapter, are in connection with the reign of Christ, and are mentioned after judgment on iniquity had done its work. In the 11th chapter the same truth is maintained. When the seven trumpets sound, which are all connected with judgment, the following results take place, stated in verses 15—17: "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats fell upon their faces and worshipped God; saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned." This is in fact Christ's millennial glory. The former (chap. vii.) was the portion of the redeemed more particularly. Now He *takes* His great power and reigns. *And not till then do the kingdoms of this world become His.* Now they are so in *title*; then they will be so in *possession and rule*.

On Satan's being cast down, in the next chapter, a loud voice says in heaven, "Now *is come* salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ, *for the accuser of our brethren is cast down,*" xix. 1—6. After the judgment of the great whore, we have a great voice of

much people in heaven, saying, "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God, for true and righteous are His judgments, *for He hath judged the great whore.*"

We have shewn before that the result of the beast, false prophet, and Satan being judged, was the bringing in of the millennial reign; and on the tares being burnt the righteous shine forth. Thus in Revelation we see that the different forms which iniquity assumes will be at their height at the coming of Christ, *and that judgment will be the end of them all at His appearing.* If this be so, the hypothesis of things mending or of a spiritual millennium growing out of present things, is plainly disproved.

But if any, inattentive to the blessing held out in the beginning of the book of Revelation, "to those who read and hear the words of that book," should hesitate to allow its testimony to have its proper weight, from its supposed obscurity, let us turn to some other portions of the word of God, which are not written in symbolical language, and therefore more easily understood.

We have in 2 Thess. ii. a picture given of the course of this age. We there see, that if any alteration in the state of things takes place, it is not for the better, but for the worse. The mystery of iniquity (says the apostle) "*doth already work.*" This was to make way *for the man of sin*, which

seems to be the same as the beast spoken of in Rev. xiii. Fearfully descriptive is the iniquity there described—"All power, 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. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Most important, on the points we are now considering, is the apostle's teaching here—

1st, "Iniquity waxes worse and worse." "*The mystery*" began to work in his day; and this we find succeeded not by a better but by a worse state of things, even the "man of sin," in whom will be a full heaping up of iniquity; and he is destroyed by the Lord at His coming—"whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming," or presence (*parousia*).

2d, Those who did not receive the love of the truth shall be damned, and overtaken in this delusion, as a judgment from God, and not, as some imagine, converted to the truth.\*

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\* If the two Epistles to the Thessalonians be examined with reference to this subject and the coming of our Lord, it will be found to pervade them throughout. It is spoken of in the

The gross and worldly character of this age is further shewn by our Lord in Matt. xxiv. He compares the days of Noah to this time, and the coming in of the flood to His own coming—"So shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Did things mend under Noah? his testimony was bold and faithful. The new world was brought in by judgment—so will the world to come. Faithful men may go forth into the field as did Noah, but the tares will continue still. They may cry aloud against sin and worldliness, but, as in the days of Noah, men will pursue their heedless and ungodly path, till sudden destruction (as before shewn) overtakes them; and such was Paul's expectation, for he had the mind of his Master in these things. He never ceased to warn men of them.

Look at his last and warning address to

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first epistle, ch. i. 9, 10; ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 13, 19; v. 1—7, 23. In the whole of these passages the Lord's personal coming is spoken of as the hope of the church. In the second epistle the subject is resumed: in ch. i. 7—12 it is spoken of as the time at which the church shall have rest (verse 7), and her enemies "vengeance" (verse 8); and in ch. ii. 1—10 they were told, that until that time they were not to look for rest, but only the abounding of iniquity. To say that it is not the same *coming* throughout that is spoken of, is surely trifling with the word of God, and bending it to make it suit some system of our own.

the church at Ephesus, Acts xx. He foreboded dark things, 'tis true, but it was needful—"For I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." He advises Timothy of the apostacy, that he might warn others.—1 Tim. iv. 16, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ." Read this and the third chapter of his second epistle—"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

On this head we find other apostles writing: see 2 Pet. ii. 1, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." This chapter throughout speaks of apostacies one after another, and holds forth no other hope for such but judgment; for if God spared not the angels that sinned," the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. These judgments are types or "examples (ver. 6) unto those that after should live ungodly" of the judgments which await apostacy, and not of millennial blessedness. He also speaks of scoffers (chap.

iii.) denying the promise of His coming. John declares that in his day there were many antichrists, as well as *the* antichrist which was to come. If evil was not kept out in the days of the apostles, and at other glorious epochs, but waxed worse and worse, how much less are we to expect the suppression of evil now through the feeble efforts of the men of these days.

I think it has now been plainly shewn that the end of future and present apostacies, whether civil or ecclesiastical, will be only judgment, (and this is in keeping with all former apostacies)—that the moral character of this age is only evil—"the course of this world"—that nothing short of judgment will cleanse the kingdom and make way for the reign of Christ, and that the Saviour will reach His throne and kingdom as David did, through the path of judgment—that He will meet His foes in personal conflict at their highest strength, and set them aside for ever by His WORD, "the sword which proceedeth out of His mouth."

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I would now shortly look at Scripture testimony:—

1st, In reference to the *internal* condition of the Church, from the days of the apostle to the coming of Christ; and—

2d, In reference to the sorrow and trial from without which it was to have till then,



during its pilgrimage, both of them being intimately connected with the former subject.

The seven churches present a sad picture of failure and apostacy. The hope which the Lord held forth to those who would overcome was, to sit on his throne, (that is, millennial, see chap. xx. 4,) even as he was set down on the Father's, chap. iii. 21. The parable of the ten virgins exhibits all as sleeping till the cry of the bridegroom's approach awakens them, ("men slept, the enemy sowed tares.") "The form of godliness without the power!" "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." I would only add, that while direct statements are made as to the growth, and termination by judgment, of the apostacy, we find no intimation of a restoration of the dispensation at all. Such an idea is contrary to all analogy. God has ever brought in a new one, after the failure of the previous one has been made manifest. His plan is not to sew a new piece on an old garment.

The virgins fell asleep (Matt. xxv.), and the unfaithful servant ate and drank with the drunken, when they lost the sense of their Lord's return, Mat. xxiv. 48. In this we see the practical value of the doctrine.

Such being the state of things in the world, and in the professing church, sorrow and trial can only fill the hearts of the Lord's people. The Lord presented nothing

else before His disciples: sorrow and humiliation was to be their portion during His personal absence. In the ordinance of His Supper we are plainly taught this. It is His death we are there called upon to shew forth—and that until He should come,—“For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s *death until He come*,” 1 Cor. xi. 26. When He appears, the church appears with its Lord in *glory*. Till then it is His death, and not His glory, we are to commemorate. We are to bear about in the body the *dying* of the Lord Jesus, 2 Cor. iv. 10.

The Bridegroom being removed, the children of the bridechamber must fast, but only until His return. Thus we can understand why the saints are called upon not to be conformed to the world, (Rom. xii. 2;) why they have been delivered out of it, (Gal. i. 4;) why they are not to love the things that are in it. 1 John ii. 15. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” John xvi. 33. If it be asked, how long was such a state of things to last, the answer is, until the new dispensation, which the Lord Himself shall at His return bring in, as has already been shewn. In John xiv., the Lord comforts His sorrowing disciples with the promise of His return, and “If I go and prepare a place for you, *I will come again* and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” How strikingly illustrative of all this are the

Lord's words in chap. xvi., from verse 19 to the end—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful." Why this sorrow? Jesus was to be absent. Why the world's joy? Just for the same reason. How long was the church to have sorrow? Our Lord's words tell: "And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again." This will terminate the Church's sorrow and the world's joy, as I have before shewn. If we suffer with Him, (this being our path now,) we shall also reign with Him. 2 Tim. ii. 12. The latter clause is plainly future. This view also appears in Rom. viii. 17: "If so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified *together*." This present time, mentioned in the succeeding verse, can only refer to this dispensation of things; for I reckon that the sufferings of *this present time* are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Indeed, the Church's trial through suffering has an important practical use in reference to the succeeding (I would say millennial) dispensation, see 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. If it be true that the Church is to reign with Christ, and to be glorified together, I cannot see how the reign can take place before the completion of the church, which is now but in progress; nor yet how suffering and reigning can be said to exist together. Even all creation,

which is now groaning, waits for the *manifestation* of the sons of God, Rom. viii. 19. Paul sought to know Jesus in the power of His resurrection and in *the fellowship of His sufferings*. The Church's fellowship being now connected with Christ more especially in suffering, and not yet in glory, our bodies must be changed before either our groans or sorrows end. Therefore must Jesus come for this purpose, see Rom. viii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 1; xv. 52; Phil. iii. 20.

Without referring to many scriptures, I see throughout all the epistles, the Revelation, and indeed I may say throughout all the Scriptures, the coming of Jesus to be the hope set before the Church. Now the saints are partakers of His suffering, but then of His glory: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice inasmuch as *ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy*, 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13. See also chap. i. 6, 7; ii. 21—23; iii. 14—18.

I have pointed out from the New Testament that judgment awaits the existing state of things, and not blessing, but afterwards will be the glorious reign of the Messiah. This is abundantly shewn forth in the Old Testament Scriptures. We have the beast in chap. vii. of Daniel given to

the burning flame. Afterwards we read there was given him (the Son of man, by the Ancient of days) dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. The saints of the Most High afterwards take the kingdom conjointly with the Lord, verse 18.

Joel iii. 1-3, 16-18. It is evident this prophecy is unfulfilled, and can only have its fulfilment at the time of Israel's final and complete restoration.

Zech. i. 18-21. The horns have scattered Jerusalem, but the work of the four carpenters is not yet. Jerusalem lies trodden down during the time of the Gentiles. These carpenters shall fray and cast out the horns of the Gentiles, and Israel shall have the dominion. "For the nation and kingdom which will not serve thee (Israel) shall perish." Isa. lx. 12.

Isaiah lxiii. presents the day of vengeance, the year of the Lord's Jewish redeemed being come, (see verse 7 to end;) and thus we find the Lord stained with the blood of their enemies, see Zech. xii. and xiv.

The 24th Isaiah is a conclusive chapter on this subject. The whole chapter exhibits nothing but judgment on its objects. Then we have the Lord reigning in Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously.

There are two passages in popular use, as having reference to the millennial state,

the first in Isaiah xi. 9: "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." It will be clearly seen that the previous chapters import awful and final judgment on all the enemies of Judah, and this one speaks of the reign of Christ, and concludes with likening the latter day of Israel's return to their former exodus out of Egypt. Without dwelling further on these important verses, I would only say that it would be impossible, without excessive straining, to shew that the things referred to will be brought to pass by missionary and other labours. Israel's former exodus was in connexion with awful judgments on the Egyptians, who would hold them in bondage. The gospel was not the means of their deliverance as far as their enemies were concerned. Mic. vii. 15.

The second common millennial passage is in Hab. ii. 14: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." It is quite evident that this prophecy connects itself with the second coming of Christ.

We have these words in verses 3 and 4: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come; it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." The vision is called *it*. In Heb.

x. 37, 38, in applying this Scripture to Christ, the Spirit says *he*, and uses it as an unfulfilled Scripture when it says, "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

Without entering into the details of the prophet's vision, I would only say, it speaks throughout of awful but unfulfilled judgments, which are previous to the time when it will be true "that the earth is full of the glory of the Lord." A measure of fulfilment as to some of the judgments, may have taken place, but certainly the prophecy or the vision, as I have remarked, is not exhausted; for he that shall come is yet to come.

The 66th of Isaiah may be also referred to as plainly teaching the Lord's judgments on the adversaries of Israel. Before their restoration, in verses 14, 15, 16, it is said, "And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb; and the hand of the Lord shall be known towards His servants, and His indignation towards His enemies. For 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." Here I conclude. Were I to pursue the inquiry further, and thus enter upon other scriptures, I should find myself carried

into every part; so largely are these things borne out in the prophetic word.

It is strange, then, to hear persons who profess to be Bible readers teaching that the Gospel will of itself, under the Lord's blessing, establish what the strong arm of His judgments only will do. That the gospel shall go into all parts in the end of this age, I admit; but only for a witness. And it is nowhere said that a Millennium will be the result. I ask for one passage that asserts it.

That the Lord will *call out* His people from time to time is altogether true; but this dispensation is no more than an election, a calling out from among the Gentiles; and farther, as regards those so called out, it is but afflictive till the Lord's return.

That the elect of God may be stirred up yet more and more, I would hope and pray for. The means to this end is not surely to say, My lord delayeth His coming, but to awaken the sleeping virgins with the cry of His approach. Neither the filling up of the elect number, however, nor a revival as to its spiritual state, has anything to do with the darkness of the age, which may be growing worse, while the lamps of the saints may shine the brighter. The speedy return of the bridegroom is a wholesome and practical doctrine; the heart is led to the right object, the Lord Himself—to hang on Him altogether, and



to become as it were independent of all human schemes, which are found as shifting as the sand, as fleeting as the wind, and full of all manner of deccivableness. If the Scriptures which speak of His first coming are to be literally taken, I see not why the same principle of interpretation should not govern those which speak of His second coming. The Lord's person is now at the right hand of the Father, and there it remains till His enemies, by judgment, as I have shewn, are made his footstool, Psa. cx.; Heb. x. 13. The Spirit is *in*, and ever abides *with*, the Church: in this sense there is no coming and going at all; persons confound the Spirit with the person of the Son of Man, and death with His glorious appearing. To those who may say that this hope avails but little or nothing after death, I answer, This cannot be; for it is at that day they, with the others, receive their crown, 2 Tim. iv. 5; and their glorified bodies, Philip. iii. 20. Therefore we find saints in all ages filled with the joy of this hope; even, as we may say, on their death-beds, and in times of trial. The last words of David refer to that day, see 2 Sam. xxiii.; Job in the midst of His affliction looked towards it, Job xix. 25, 27; and so did Paul at the end of his course, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 8; and also Peter, 2 Pet. i. 15—21; and many others that might be added. More depends on the issue of that day, and

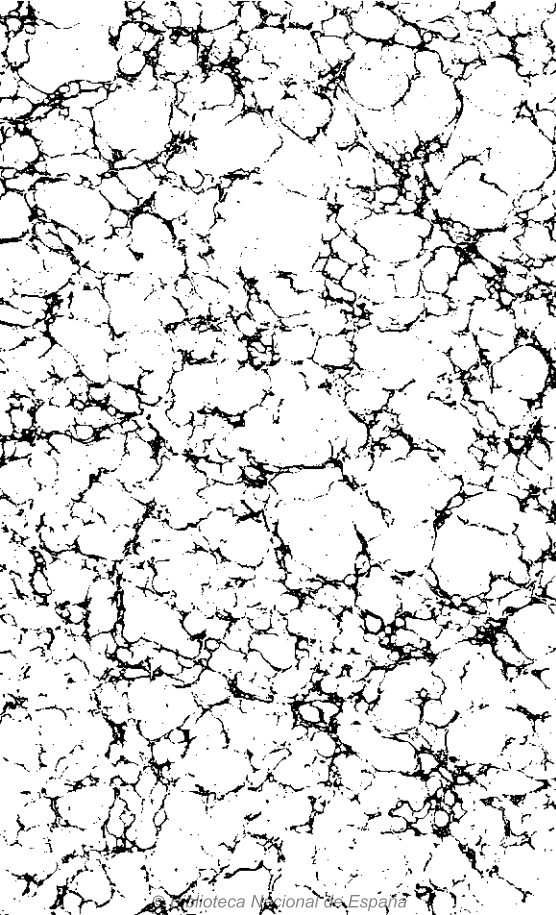
brighter hopes pertain to it, than those who have not that blessed hope can comprehend. That which gives the believer power to say, O death, where is thy sting? is the prospect of the day when this "corruptible shall put on incorruption, and death is swallowed up in victory," 1 Cor. xv. 54. Jesus will then present the Church without spot or wrinkle, Eph. v. 27. Then it will reach the full measure of his stature; his body complete; God's habitation complete; the bride complete, and with its Lord; and nothing short of all this can be called happiness without sorrow. May the Lord hasten it in his time, and awaken His saints with the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!"













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