

A  
BRIEF OUTLINE OF  
**COMING EVENTS**

*From the present period to the end of time,*

AS SET FORTH IN  
**THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES**

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As set forth in the Prophetic Scriptures.

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THE unfolding of coming events must be a matter of very real interest and concern to every sincere and earnest Christian. God alone foreknows the end from the beginning, and in "the Scriptures of truth" He has been pleased to reveal the future, and thus to give us certainty, where all would be darkness and mere speculation, if it were left to be discerned by the mind of man.

The prophetic writings of the Old Testament marked out the events of bygone ages with unerring certainty, long before they took place; and the prophetic teaching of Holy Writ, both Old and New, is equally certain respecting the future.

We see there, for example, the rise and fall of the four great Gentile Empires—Chaldean, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman—all predicted with perfect accuracy. In due time the events unfolded themselves, and became matters of history. So, too, what a wealth of prophetic utterances there are pointing to the coming into the world of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah; His rejection by His own people, the Jews; His death, resurrection, and session at the right hand of God: all accomplished and fulfilled when God's due time came.

But in order to rightly divide the word of truth; to understand and apply Holy Scripture according to the divine mind, we need the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit; and so when the Lord was about to depart out of the world, He told His

disciples that when the Spirit of Truth was come, He would guide them into all truth; and He would show them things to come. It was, therefore, part of the express purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit to guide into the truth, to teach, and to show these things to come. He is the divine Teacher and Guide: may we be truly conscious of our need of dependence on Him, that we may be led to a right understanding of what God has revealed in His word! It is the mission of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ—"He shall glorify Me"—and Christ is the centre round which all circles. For, if God is calling out a people in this day of grace, they are to be the companions of Christ, they are yet to stand in that peculiar relationship as "the bride, the Lamb's wife:" if He is about to put down evil and set up a rule of righteousness, as He is, it will be in order that He may "head up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." Christ is the One ever before God's thoughts, and this is most important to bear in mind if we are to have any right understanding in prophetic truth.

The first great event to which we desire to draw the reader's attention to is

## THE COMING OF CHRIST.

Now this does not mean, as some suppose, the end of the world: far from it indeed; for, as we shall see presently, the end of the world will not be for more than 1,000 years after His coming. Christ is coming first *for* His ransomed people: He is coming forth afterwards in judgment *with* them; and there is a certain period of time between these two events. In speaking of the coming of Christ *for* His people, we do not attempt to fix dates, for the simple reason that Scripture never gives any indication as to the length of the present period

of grace; nor does it teach that any sign will herald the moment when He shall come. The fixing of dates is, therefore, at variance with Scripture teaching; and it has been the means of casting much discredit on this blessed truth.

In studying prophetic truth, it is very necessary to understand the difference of the dispensations, or dealings of God with men, otherwise we shall get into hopeless confusion by applying to the Church of God *now*, statements of Scripture which refer, not to the Church, but to Israel.

God brought a vine out of Egypt, His earthly people Israel, the Jews: and He planted them in Canaan.

In due time Christ came, the true Messiah; but He was cast out and crucified. The stoning of the first christian martyr, Stephen, was tantamount to sending a message after Him saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Then God began quite a new and distinct work, namely, the gathering out from all nations, Jew or Gentile; not an earthly people, as with Israel, but a people whose calling and portion is a heavenly one. Such is the calling, such the portion of the *Church of God*.

On the rejection of the Messiah, God broke off His dealings with Israel as a nation—"blindness in part is happened to Israel"—and *this* will continue until "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." After that God will take up Israel again for blessing; and then "all Israel [*i.e.* not, as at present, individuals here and there, but the people as a nation, the elect remnant of Israel] will be saved"—(Rom. xi.) The present period which has lasted already nearly 1900 years, is a parenthesis in the ways of God, during which He is gathering out from the world a people, who are united in one body by one Spirit to one Head in heaven, and are destined to share in the glory which belongs to Christ as His bride.

Let us ask then, how will the present period of grace be brought to a close? The answer of Scripture is perfectly plain: by the coming of *Christ for His saints*. *The Church of God occupies* quite a distinct place in the ways of God—it began on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost was sent down by a glorified Christ: and it terminates with the coming of Christ.

We have not to wait for the fulfilment of any event, nor have we to look for any sign in connection with the coming of Christ: it may take place at any moment. He will “descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” It is His coming *in person*—Himself, descending into the air, and, as far as Scripture shews, unseen by the world. The last view the world got of Christ was when He was borne from the cross to the grave; after His resurrection He manifested Himself “Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God;” and the next time the world will see Him will be when He comes with the clouds of heaven in judgment.

If Christ were to come to-night for His people, what would take place? This question is very simply answered in 1st Thess. iv.—“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.”

True Christians “shall not all sleep,” that is die: for some will be alive when Christ comes, and *they* shall be “changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.”

In the briefest space of time we can well conceive, the dead in Christ will be “raised,” the living “changed.”

As to those who have died and the body gone to corruption—this body will put on incorruptibility: as to those alive when the Lord comes: the body,

being mortal, shall put on immortality. The "last trump" in 1st Cor. xv. is a well known military allusion, and was the call for the starting off of the army after all had fallen into line of march.

The loss of this hope brought worldliness, carelessness and disaster into the early church. The evil servant began to say in his heart, though perhaps he did not say it openly, my lord delays his coming; then he began to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken—he sank to the level of the world and adopted its ways. We have the description of what would take place, in the parable of the ten virgins, spoken by our Lord Himself. The whole ten took their lamps and went out to meet the coming bridegroom, just as the early Christians, the Thessalonians for instance, were "waiting for the Son from heaven." After a time they grew weary and slept; they lost the hope of Christ's coming. But at midnight a cry was made "Behold the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet him"! and at once all arose and trimmed their lamps. What a remarkable thing it is that this truth, written so plainly on the page of scripture; but long lost—overlooked and misunderstood by the people of God for centuries, was clearly brought to light again within the last 70 or 80 years! Two things were prominently brought forward: 1st, Christ Himself as a living *Person*—not mere abstract doctrine or theology; and, 2nd, His coming as the immediate hope of the Church.

Four times in the Book of Revelation Christ is presented as coming "quickly." It is not His coming for us at the hour of our death (a wholly unscriptural thought), nor His coming in the day of judgment; nor is it a spiritual manifestation of Himself to the soul of the believer, true as this is in its place; it is His actual coming for us in person. The closing chapter of the inspired volume is full of this truth, shining out all the

more forcibly at the close of a book which unfolds coming judgments, as Revelation does. Christ presents Himself as the "bright and morning star." How anxiously the watcher during the night watches for the rising of that star, which heralds the approach of day! So the Christian, during the night of Christ's rejection by the world and His absence, is to be looking for Him to come. The "day" of millennial glory will indeed be manifested for Israel, His earthly people. But before that time comes, He presents Himself as the bright and morning star to His Church; and for this we are to be watching during the darkness of the night. This is the true attitude of the Christian.

Then the Spirit, who dwells in the Church, and the Church herself, the bride say, "come." Are there any who hear, but who have never understood the proper attitude of the Church as waiting for Christ? The call comes to them to say "come" also: and lastly, Christ Himself says, "Surely I come quickly," and the ready response, indited by the Spirit, and put into the mouth of the Church, if we may so say, is, "Yes, come Lord Jesus." How striking that the book of God should close with these words: sounded out for us across the ages which have elapsed since they were written; none the less real, but only the more precious, because of the nearness of His coming, and the immediateness of the expectation to the hearts of His people!

Nearly every part of the New Testament bears witness to the fact that the coming of Christ for His people was to be a present hope, unhindered by having to await the fulfilment of any event whatever. The more we study Scripture, the more we shall see that what was set before the early Christians in apostolic days, was, *not death but the coming of Christ.*

Thus the Lord said to His sorrowing disciples



when He was going away, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." It is His coming in person; not to put down His enemies, as He will yet do, but to receive His own, to conduct us to the Father's house; and He interposes no events or signs between His departure and His return.

Again, there is this to be said about His coming—it is the fulfilment of the longing desire of Christ's heart to have His people with Himself. True love always desires to have its object with the one who loves—so Christ says, "*Where I am*" there ye may be also. Giving expression to His positive *will* concerning His own, to the Father, He says, "I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me *where I am*." Objects of the love both of the Father and the Son. Christ's love to His own is expressed, not only in having them *with Himself*, yea and *like Himself*, clothed in bodies of glory, but also in the *manner* in which this is accomplished. He does not send angels, nor even the archangel for them, but He comes in person—"I will come again, and receive you *unto Myself*, that *where I am*, there ye may be also."

So, too, He says, "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." It is not a dry theory, or a set of doctrines, even if correct; but it is just as though He said, "I am coming for you, and I want you to be just like a person with his hand on the latch of the door; so occupied in heart with my coming, that the moment I knock, you may open to me immediately."

The apostle Paul commends the Thessalonian believers—bright young converts as they were—because they were waiting for the Son of God from heaven, "even Jesus, who delivered us

from the wrath to come." We have the coming of the Lord referred to, in some way or other, in every chapter in this epistle. Again, we cannot partake of the Lord's Supper aright without calling His coming to mind; for we do it "till He come." The more we study the New Testament, the more we shall see how it is connected with every branch of truth; and the loss of it as a present hope, is the sure sign of failure, either with the individual or the Church.

As already remarked, the Church of God occupies a distinct place—it is not a continuation of the Jewish system.

Though on earth, it is composed of a people called out from the world *for heaven*. When it is a question of God's government of the earth, and an earthly inheritance, the Jews are the centre of *that*. It is, therefore, quite in keeping with the place and calling of the Church, that it should pass into heaven, unseen by the world, to which it does not belong; and without passing through the great prophetic tribulation, or having to wait for the fulfilment of events. All such things have their suited place, when it is a question of Christ's appearing for the deliverance and blessing of His earthly people, Israel, and their long-looked-for establishment in peace and security under the Messiah King in Zion.

Another point to be observed before we finish with this subject is that the Lord's coming is presented in two aspects in scripture, His "coming" and His "appearing" or manifestation.

It has been truly remarked that when we think of the *privileges* which belong to the Christian in virtue of his acceptance in Christ, it is His *coming* which is in view; when, on the other hand, we are occupied with the *responsibility* of the Christian as one who is to manifest Christ, and to serve or witness for Him in the world, it is His *appearing*

which is brought before us. The difference lies in this that between His "coming" and His "appearing" in glory, every true Christian will be "manifested before the judgment seat of Christ" in heaven (2nd Cor. v. 10), where his life and service will be gone over, and where he will get his reward, or suffer loss, as the case may be, according to the way in which he used his time and opportunities in this world. Everything will then be gone into and seen in its true light: each will receive his reward, and the place of each in the millennial kingdom will be assigned. The rewards will be given at Christ's *appearing*; hence *that* aspect of His coming is presented in connection with responsibility during the absence of the Lord.

It is well also to note here that the fact that no premonitory signs foretell the time of Christ's coming for His people, need not prevent us from exercising a spiritual judgment as to the nearness of that event. Like the pilot of a ship at sea, we may look around and take our bearings, without attempting to fix any date. We may make an estimate of our nearness to the close of the dispensation from the aspect of things, whether within the professing Church, or in the world. It has been truly said that coming events\* cast their shadow before them.

There are two streams, deep and wide, which are flowing on and gaining strength every day in Christendom—Ritualism and the Romeward movement on the one hand; and rationalism in its various forms of "higher criticism," agnosticism, &c., on the other. Another most solemn feature is the giving up of light and truth in quarters where it was once held, and where we should least expect. In the political world, the great Powers

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\* We do not here refer to the Lord's coming, but to events which will occur *after* His coming *for* His saints.

of Europe have been immensely increasing their armaments. There has been a growth of military and naval power in the far East, and there is a general feeling of unrest.

We have not to wait for signs it is true, but we should not be indifferent to these moral features of the times; because we know that the evil forces and principles which will be fully developed immediately *after* the coming of Christ, are even now in evidence.

### **The Period between the coming of the Lord for His Saints, and His appearing in manifested power and glory.**

What will take place immediately after Christ comes, and what length of time will elapse between His coming *for* and *with* His saints? In endeavouring to lay before the reader the Scriptural answer to these questions, we shall turn first to the prophet Daniel, chap. ix. 24-27. That Scripture carries us over a lengthened period of time; commencing with the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem (which took place, as Nehemiah informs us in chap. ii., in the 20th year of Artaxerxes the King), to the final judgment of those who will be allowed to desolate the city and sanctuary in the last days, just prior to the millennial reign of Christ. These seventy weeks of years are divided into three periods—first seven weeks which were occupied in the building of the city; and sixty-two weeks, making in all sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years—*after* this (we are not told how long after) as the prophecy states, Messiah is cut off.

As to the remaining week of the seventy; some very sound expositors take it that, for faith, half of the week (or three-and-a-half years) has been fulfilled in the ministry of our Lord,

which just lasted that time. Hence in the book of Revelation we find only the last half of the week referred to. According to the prophesy, room was left for the acceptance of the Messiah by the nation; and at the beginning of His ministry the announcement was made "The time is fulfilled" (Mark i. 15)—the sixty-nine weeks had gone by. But the mass of the Jewish nation were unbelieving; they rejected the Messiah and will receive Antichrist, who will make a covenant with them for one week.

On this point, another has remarked that, "In the half-week of the Lord's ministry the *remnant* received Him, the *nation* did not. When under Antichrist the nation again go through the first half-week, it will be the converse; the *nation* receive him (Antichrist), and the *remnant* do not.

The present period, during which the Church is being formed—namely, the whole time from Pentecost to the coming of Christ—being a parenthesis in God's direct dealings with the Jews as a nation, is entirely omitted, as we might expect.

The interval about which we are now concerned, occupies, therefore, not only the three and a half years already referred to; but, before that begins a certain space of time, the length of which we cannot determine. We may say, however, that it will be sufficiently long for the complete overthrow of the present political system, as we learn from such portions as Rev. vi.-ix., &c.; and the development of the social and moral state of things which will be found among the apostate Jews and the Gentiles at the close; as well as for the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the godly remnant of Israel.

We have next to inquire what will take place on the earth during the interval under consideration, always bearing in mind that the Church of God, composed of all believers of this dispensation,

has been already translated from earth to heaven, "caught up to meet the Lord in the air," and is thus kept out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell on the earth.

The Jews will be gathered back to their land; the mass of the nation in the same unbelieving state in which they were when the Lord was on earth; but a remnant will be prepared to receive their true Messiah. The prophet Zechariah thus describes this godly remnant: "But the third shall be left therein (in the land), 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." The apostate part of the nation will be "cut off and die;" but the godly ones will go through deep trial and persecution, as well as sorrow of heart for having crucified their Messiah.

*It is a fact worthy of note, that there are more Jews in Palestine at the present time, in spite of the opposition of the Turkish Government, than, probably, there ever were since the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.* Not that we have to wait for the gathering back of the Jews for Christ to come for His Church; on the contrary, the bulk of the nation will, no doubt, return afterwards; and events move so rapidly, that this would not occupy a long space of time.

There are three personages who play a very important part in the events of this period, and we have them clearly delineated in many parts of Scripture—(i.) The head of the Roman Empire; (ii.) the Antichrist; (iii.) the Assyrian, or King of the North. We shall find the first two in Rev. xiii. The former of these is described under the figure of a beast arising out of the sea—or the unsettled turbulent state of peoples; having seven heads and

ten horns. In chap. xvii. we are told that the seven heads are seven mountains, and the ten horns are ten kings, which receive power for one and the same time with the beast, that is the head of the revived Roman Empire. Though Charlemagne and the first Napoleon held sway over a large part of the empire, it has never been united under one head since it was broken up by the barbarian hordes many centuries ago. Nor has it now much strength, compared with most of the great Powers of Europe. This, however, need not create any difficulty, for Scripture plainly shows that it will be revived in a very remarkable manner, causing "all the world to wonder after the beast;" for he will derive his power and authority from the dragon—Satan. Again, chap. xvii. says that this beast "was,"—*i.e.*, in the days when John wrote—"and is not," for the empire in its unity has disappeared; "and shall be" (R.V.), thus it will re-appear in its last imperial form, with its ten subordinate kings.

The prophet Daniel describes this same person. In chap. vii. the fourth, or Roman Empire, is plainly set forth under the figure of a beast with ten horns. Amongst these arises another "little horn," which is distinguished by great penetration of mind; this little horn shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall think to change the Jewish times and laws, which shall be given into his hand for three years and a half. Though the seat of his authority is in the West, at Rome, yet he occupies himself with the affairs of the Jews, who will then be settled in Palestine.

The second beast of Rev. xiii. comes up out of the earth or settled state of things; he has two horns like a lamb, but speaks as a dragon. He is a complete travesty of the Lord Jesus Christ. The seat of his power is at Jerusalem, and he acts in league with the first beast, or head of the Roman

Empire. He is more a religious than a political or kingly personage, though he has the latter character also, and he performs remarkable miracles, causing fire to come down from heaven, as Elijah did, as a witness to the true God against Baal. He makes an image of the first beast, to which he has power to give life, and to cause that all should worship this image on pain of death. At this time Satan will have been cast out of heaven (Rev. xii. 9), where for so long he has had access to accuse the brethren before God; and now he will have his representative man on earth, in the person of this beast.

It is striking how many Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testaments, refer to this personage. Our Lord Himself said to the Jews, "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." Solemn truth! if they would not have the Sent One of the Father, they should be caught in Satan's wiles, and receive his representative, as they will in a future day. St. John says, "Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye have heard that Antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists" (R.V.); and the second beast of Rev. xiii. is undoubtedly the Antichrist. Antichrist is here characterised by two things—he denies that Jesus is the Christ, in His relation to Israel, the true Messiah; and he denies the Father and the Son, the latter being the special relationship in which the Divine Persons are revealed in Christianity.

We have a very distinct reference in 2nd Thess. ii. where he is called "the man of sin," the "son of perdition," the "lawless one." His coming is said to be "after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders."—the exact contrast to the Lord Jesus, who did His works in the power of the Holy Spirit. He was, as Peter said to the Jews, "a man approved of God among you, by



powers, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him." The man of sin is an exact counterfeit raised up by Satan. He is the impersonation and full-blown expression of the pride and assumption of which man is capable. Satan had said to Eve, "Ye shall be as gods;" and this man "exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." His place will be in the restored temple at Jerusalem, where "he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." The testimony of the prophet Daniel is exactly the same. In chap. xi. 36, we read, "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods." We would judge from what follows in Daniel, that he will be a Jew—"Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers"—Jehovah, the true God of Israel—"nor the desire of women"—Christ; "nor any god." But, as man cannot do without an object, he honours the god of fortresses or forces: his resources cannot, after all, go beyond human strength of arms, and on these he relies.

That man would rise to such a pitch of pride and wickedness, we can hardly conceive; but God allows this great manifestation of Satanic energy as a judgment on the apostate part of the nation of Israel, as well as on apostate Christendom. "For lo," says the prophet Zechariah, "I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that which is broken, nor feed that which standeth still; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces." Then follows God's judgment upon him—"Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye," &c.—the cup of iniquity is full, and judgment comes. He will be destroyed, not by angelic power, but by the

Lord in person when He appears: "whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to naught by the manifestation of His coming" (2nd Thess. ii. 8).

The final overthrow of both the head of the Roman Empire, and the Antichrist who acted in league with him, is clearly revealed in Rev. xix.—"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him. . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone." "Everlasting fire," we are told in Matt. xxv., is prepared, not for man, but "for the devil and his angels;" but what a striking fact it is, that two men will be cast in there 1,000 years before the devil! During the millennial reign of Christ, Satan will be kept bound in the bottomless pit, or abyss (Rev. xx.); after that he will be loosed for a little season; and finally "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, *where the beast and the false prophet are.*" Note the closing words here, for they prove that these two heads of evil had been there during the whole of the thousand years.

It is often asked, "If Christ were to come to-night, would there be any hope for those who have heard the gospel and rejected it?" We believe there would not. But will anyone be saved during the interval between the coming of Christ *for* His people, and His coming *with* them in judgment? The seventh chapter of Revelation shows that there will be two companies, one from amongst the Jews, and the other from amongst the Gentiles, saved during this period. These two companies are 144,000 of the tribes of Israel, and the great multitude of all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues.

And here it is well to say a word as to the importance of a right understanding of the book of Revelation. The study of this book is much

neglected by some Christians, because they consider it too obscure and deep, except for the learned. This is a serious mistake, and a great loss to them ; for the same Holy Spirit, who alone can unfold the rest of scripture, can guide us aright in this portion also.

It is helpful to bear in mind the three divisions of the book, given us in chap. i. 19, viz.:—First, chap. i.—“The things which thou hast seen.”—the vision of the Son of man judging amidst the candlesticks, or Churches. Second, chaps. ii. & iii.—“The things which are”—the seven addresses to seven Churches in Asia ; giving a prophetic outline of the history of the professing Church from the beginning when it left its first love, to the end, when it is spued out of Christ’s mouth, as utterly nauseous to Him. Third, chap. iv. to the end—“The things which shall be after these.”—In this last section the Church is no longer seen on the earth, but as included in the course of the twenty-four elders above, in heaven ; and we have the prophetic teaching respecting the judgments which are about to be poured out on the earth after the Church has gone, up to the coming of Christ in glory and in judgment.

Now, as to those who have heard the gospel and rejected it, and who will be alive when Christ comes into the air, it is well to remember that it is an invariable principle in God’s ways, to deal with men according to their responsibility, measured by the light and privileges they have had. The greater the light, the greater the responsibility.

Christendom has had great light, especially the people of the English-speaking countries, where thousands of Bibles and tracts have been circulated, and where the gospel has been widely preached. Israel, in the past, had many privileges, but they were worse than the nations, for the name of God was blasphemed among the heathen, through them.

Though God lingered long in grace, the sentence of judicial hardening, spoken by the Holy Ghost, through the prophet Isaiah, was finally pronounced after they had crucified their Messiah and refused the testimony of the Holy Spirit—"Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed," &c. And if Israel was guilty for rejecting the testimony then given, how much more guilty are those who have turned away from the much fuller revelation of God, and the free and full salvation made known in virtue of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, *God* will send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie. Nothing can be more solemn than the fact of *God* sending this strong delusion, and no doubt it will fall deepest, darkest and heaviest on those very places where the greatest light has been. "Lord, Lord open to us," say the foolish virgins in the parable—those professors of religion without life—when they find that the Bridegroom has come and the door is shut; but the Lord answers, "I know you not." The door was shut—they preferred their own ease and pleasure, and the world, to Christ, and now it was too late.

It is after the Church has been removed to heaven that the various judgments predicted in the book of Revelation, under the seven "seals," "trumpets," and "vials," will be poured out, chiefly on western Christendom.

It must not be supposed that all profession of Christianity will be given up when the Church is taken away. On the contrary, the symbol of the woman riding upon the scarlet coloured beast (Rev. xvii.) shows us that the corrupt system which we see around us in Romanism, will increase in

outward pomp and pretension for a time. This false system here prefigured, had for centuries dominated the civil power as far as permitted, and used it for its own ends. And it is not Romanism only, but Ritualism and every other form of apostate Christianity, which will go to swell this great travesty of the true Church, which is here called "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

God had waited for centuries, but at last judgment comes—"And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire" (Rev. xvii. 16, R.V.) These are strong words, for *God* will "put it into their hearts to do His mind, and to come to one mind." They are the ten kings under the revived Roman Empire, or imperial head of power, the beast in western Christendom, who "give their kingdom unto the beast;" (they recognise his authority over them, as binding all together) and will cast off this hateful corrupt system, calling itself christian, which had seduced them by its allurements, and had held them bound for so long. There has been already a sample of this, on a small scale, at the time of the French Revolution. Then, as history informs us, Christianity was formally repudiated, and the sacredness of the republic, and the worship of reason solemnised. In the day that is coming, the profession of Christianity will be given up in toto, this is what is called in 2nd Thess. ii. 3, "the apostasy." Such will be the fate of these highly favoured Christian lands.

Turning again to Daniel ix. 26-27, we find that "the prince that shall come," whose "people" (the Romans) destroyed the city and the sanctuary, shall confirm a covenant with the many, or the unbelieving mass of the Jews, for one week of seven years. In the middle of the week, he will

“cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease;” he will put a stop to the Jewish system of worship; or, as Daniel vii., dealing with the same personage under the title of the “little horn,” puts it, “he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most high: and shall think to change times and the law.” This lasts during the period of three-and-a-half years; for “they,” that is the Jewish times and law, “shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and half a time,” or three years and a half. This period will, therefore, be a time of unparalleled energy of Satan, acting both through this head of the Roman Empire and the Antichrist, in deceit and violence; and it will be a time of terrible trial to all who witness for God on the earth. It is to this time also that the Lord refers when He says, “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.”—Matthew xxiv. 21.

Now as to those who will be saved during this period—The Lord said to His disciples, whom He sent forth to preach, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.” The same work in which His disciples were then engaged, will be taken up again by the servants of God amongst the faithful remnant of Israel in a future day, in preparing a people to receive the coming Messiah. The “Everlasting gospel” (Rev. xiv. 6.) will be preached to the nations, kindreds, and tongues: “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” This gospel is wholly different from the gospel of the Grace of God which is preached to-day, telling of remission of sins through faith in the Lord Jesus, and the

efficacy of His death and resurrection. It is a call to fear God because He is about to judge, and to acknowledge Him in creation. Such a message will be most appropriate to those who have never heard the gospel of to-day, and at a time when Satan's special aim will be to supplant God's authority by that of the beast and false prophet. The Book of Revelation gives us views of various saved companies, both from amongst Jews and Gentiles; some will have suffered martyrdom during this period, and some will be spared to participate in millennial blessing (chaps. vii, 4-17; xiv. 1-5; xv. 2-4, &c.) When the Son of man comes in His glory, and judges the nations at the opening of His millennial kingdom, He will take account of how they treated these messengers and witnesses, who will be sent out before He appears in glory, and whom He calls in Matt. xxv., "These My brethren," "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Those who had received His servants, received Him, and will inherit the kingdom: those who had refused them, refused Him, and will have their place in everlasting punishment. God never leaves Himself without a witness, however dark the day, or however great the power of Satan.

We now come to speak of the Assyrian or King of the North, which brings us to the final closing events of this period.

Antichrist, acting in league with the beast, and having the seat of his power at Jerusalem, will be the inward corrupter amongst the apostate Jews: the Assyrian will be their bitter enemy from outside.

The Assyrian will occupy the territory north of Palestine; a territory of which a part is called Asia Minor, now under the rule of the Sultan of Turkey. It seems beyond question that it is the Assyrian who is described in the closing part of

Daniel viii., under the figure of the "little horn;" arising out of what had been a part of the empire of Alexander the Great, King of Greece (ver. 21). *Who will then rule this territory we cannot say, but the prophesy makes it clear that he will be possessed of great intelligence and mighty power. His power will be a power derived from elsewhere, as we read here, "not by his own power"—probably from Russia. He will be allowed to cast down some of the leaders of the Jews, and will interfere with their system of worship—prospering by his craft for a time.*

We find many references to the Assyrian in the prophets. In Isaiah x. we read, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation." God uses him as a rod for the punishment of His guilty people.

The Assyrian of the past was a type or foreshadowing of that great enemy of Israel of the future: and the overthrow of Sennacherib and his host, prefigured the final judgment of the Assyrian of the last days, at the hand of the Lord Himself. For, says the prophet, "when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks." Now clearly the Lord has not yet performed His *whole* work upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem; this punishment of the Assyrian is, therefore, future.

Again, in chap. xiv., "I will break the Assyrian in My land, and upon My mountains tread him under foot." And chap. xxx., "Through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be broken in pieces, which smote with a rod. And every stroke of the appointed staff which the Lord shall lay upon him shall be with tabrets and harps," &c. (R.V.) It is plain that what is here indicated is still future, and refers to the joy that will follow the Lord's judg-



ment of this haughty enemy of Israel, whom he will allow to chastise that people for their good.

The prophet Micah says, "And this man (the Ruler of Israel, the Messiah) shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces." This is clearly future also, and refers to the time when He who was once smitten and rejected by Israel, shall appear for their deliverance—in fact the prophecy takes in in its scope, the judgment of the last of Israel's enemies from the north—the Gog of Ezekiel.

We have already learnt from the prophet Isaiah that the Lord brought the Assyrian against Israel as the rod of correction in His hand; and it seems clear that the reference in Ezekiel xxxviii. & xxxix. is to the same person or Power. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: art thou not he of whom I have spoken in old time through My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days"—marked out by prophetic testimony beforehand, Gog comes "at the end of days:" as the Lord says, "I will bring thee against my land;" for He hid His face from His people on account of their transgressions and their sins, which obliged Him to use the rod for their chastisement.

The manner in which Gog is introduced in the prophecy is striking—The word of the Lord came to the prophet, saying, "Son of man, set thy face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal." (xxxviii., 2, R.V.)

In the word "Rosh" we have the first traces of what is now the Russian nation: the passage plainly alludes to tribes, then spreading out in the territories now occupied by the Russian Empire.

In the last days Gog comes up against Israel with an immense host and many peoples, as a cloud covering the land; but his audaciousness draws upon him the indignation of Jehovah, who appears.

on behalf of His people; and Gog perishes, with all his hosts upon the mountains of Israel, under the judgment of Jehovah.

We learn from Isaiah x., 25, that Jehovah's indignation [*i.e.* His anger against Israel on account of their idolatry and their sins] ceases with the judgment of the Assyrian—"For yet a very little while and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction."

Taking the various prophecies which refer to the great enemy of Israel from the north at this period: both the geographical and moral features would give us strong ground for believing that the "little horn" of Daniel viii, the Assyrian, and the King of the North, refer to the same person or Power, also closely connected with Gog, or Russia. It is clear that each is depicted in prophecy as coming against Israel from the north—the "little horn" of Daniel viii., coming from thence, pushes his conquests south and east, and towards "the pleasant land;" [Palestine] he stands up against the Prince of princes, but he is "broken without hand." The King of the North likewise enters "the pleasant land," and plants the tents of his palace between the Mediterranean Sea and Jerusalem; but "he shall come to his end, and there shall be none to help him."

There will be some brief lapse of time between the final ending of the last half week of Daniel ix. by the destruction of the beast and the false prophet, or Antichrist; and the full establishment of millennial blessing.

At the close of Daniel xii. we have three periods of time noted: three years and a half, or 1260 days, 1290 days, and 1335 days. The first commences in the middle of the week, when the covenant with the Jewish people is broken, and their system of worship stopped, and it ends with the overthrow of the beast and Antichrist; but the *full* establishment

of Israel at peace in their land does not come about till the close, 75 days later on. *Then* upon the destruction of the Assyrian, or King of the North, Jehovah's indignation ceases and the full blessing to Israel is brought in.

### THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IN POWER AND GLORY.

"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 the nations."

The period we have just been considering will be brought to a close by the appearing of the once-rejected, but now glorified Son of man. Those who then appear before His throne of judgment are not people who have died, but *living nations* on the earth at that time. He will deal with those nations according to the way they treated the messengers and servants whom He sent out during the period of trial and persecution just preceding; and whom He calls here "these my brethren." Those who received them, received Him, and will pass into millennial blessing: those who rejected them, rejected Him, and will depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Such is the sentence of the King.

Judgment is indeed His "strange work," for He delights in mercy: but judgment must be executed, so that righteousness may rule; and at this period there will be various acts of judgment. According to Zech. xiv., 4, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives." He will destroy all nations who come up against Jerusalem. The prophet Joel says, "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage Israel," &c.

The "day of the Lord" will be a very different thing from His coming for His Church—a day of darkness and cloudiness; because a day of vengeance and judgment.

The contrast between Christ's coming for His Church, and His appearing in glory, is most marked. In the former He will not be seen by the world; in the latter, every eye shall see Him. The former will not be heralded by any visible signs; the latter will be preceded by the most remarkable signs; "The sun shall 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 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."

His coming in warrior judgment is described in Rev. xix. He comes in all the majesty and glory that belongs to Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His eyes as a flame of fire, for none can escape His glance: royalty and victory are His, on His head are many crowns; His name is inscrutable to any but Himself: for although truly man as well as God, none can comprehend His Being. Revealed in judgment His name is told as the Word of God. A sharp sword proceeds out of His mouth, and He treads the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God Almighty. The first stroke of His judgment falls upon the head of the revived Roman Empire—the beast; and on the false prophet who was linked with him—the Antichrist: these two leaders of Satanic power and craft, are cast *alive* into the lake of fire, and the remnant of those who oppose Him are slain.

But if Christ's appearing will be a time of unmingled judgment of evil, it will also be a time of blessing and deliverance for the faithful remnant

of His Jewish people, and for those amongst the Gentiles who identified themselves with them. He will, "in those days, and in that time, . . . bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem" (Joel iii. 1). He will "pour out upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications," and they will mourn for their once-rejected and crucified Messiah; and will be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. Then He will appear for their deliverance and blessing.

### THE MILLENNIUM.

The events we have just been considering will usher in what is generally called the Millennium. This title simply means the thousand years, and is quite correct as far as it goes; because, as we learn from Rev. xx., Christ's reign over the earth lasts for that period of time.

During this happy time "A King shall reign in righteousness:" the Lord Jesus Christ, with His saints, will reign (not absolutely "on," but) "over" the earth—in connection with it; and having His seat of government at Jerusalem. There will be a manifest, visible display of the glory of God in the heavens, just as the pillar and the cloud marked His presence with Israel of old. We read in Isaiah iv. 5, "And Jehovah will create over every dwelling place of mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flame of fire by night, for over all the glory (shall be) a canopy." Again, in Rev. xxi. we find that "the holy city, Jerusalem," will come down out of heaven from God; and the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it. It does not derive its light from the sun, and then give it out: but, in a fuller way than with the pillar of fire and the cloud; the presence of God Himself

will illuminate it. "The glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof (is) the Lamb:" its shining is like a most precious stone, as a crystal-like jasper stone. During this period Satan, long practised in tempting men to sin, will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. The effects of the curse will be, to a great extent, removed: death will not be, unless for positive acts of sin against God—"the youth shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed."—Isaiah lxxv. 20.

At the close of this time of blessing, God allows one last test of man. Will 1,000 years' righteous rule and unalloyed goodness on God's part have changed the heart of man? Alas, it is not so! No sooner is Satan loosed out of his prison for a little season, than He gathers together the nations of the earth as the sand of the sea around Jerusalem. This last act of rebellion is met by summary judgment—fire comes down from heaven and destroys them.

## ETERNITY.

### The judgment of the dead—The great white Throne.

There remains still the great final session of judgment; at which all the unsaved of every age of time appear.

We have already seen that the saved—whether those who "died in faith," or "the dead *in Christ*"—had been raised at His coming for His saints (Heb. xi. 13 & 40; 1 Cor. xv. 50-57, and 1 Thess. iv. 16). The saved ones who were slain or who died during the period immediately preceding the millennium were raised also, in order to enjoy millennial blessing (Rev. xx. 4)—the unsaved, or

the "rest of the dead," remain in their graves "until the thousand years were finished." After this they are raised by God's almighty power; whether from the grave or from the sea. The "great white throne" is set: *where*, we are not told, for heaven and earth have fled from before the face of Him who sits on that throne. The Epistle of Peter tells us that "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."

Every sunrise and sunset is a mark of *time*: but here every landmark of time is gone, and we have entered upon a timeless *eternity*.

The One who sits upon this throne is the once humbled, rejected Saviour, for "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." (John v. 22) Everything is done in perfect righteousness: the judgment is according to works.

We must either be before God as saved people, in all the merits of Christ, or we must have to do with Him as unsaved, according to our own merits, and this means condemnation, for our works will not stand the searching light of that day. They were judged out of the books; this is a figure which conveys to us the idea of records of works, and these are not perfect before God. Then the book of life is referred to; but not *to write* anyone's name in it.

Could it be that any of their names were written there? No! this could not be, since none of those whose names are written in that book, appear at this throne. It is in no way a throne of grace, for the day of grace has for ever passed: it is pure unmingled judgment, and nothing but judgment. Behind this throne, far into a boundless eternity, is the "lake of fire." Death and Hades are looked

at as if personified, and cast into the lake of fire. Death is the last great enemy to be destroyed ; no one has ever been able to stand against it. Like an unstormed fortress of Satan's power it stood, until the Lord Jesus Christ died, and by His death delivered those who were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Here death has no more place, because all men have disappeared from the scene ; and Hades, the unseen, the state of disembodied spirits, has yielded up its last occupant, in order that they may appear at this resurrection of judgment— it has, therefore, ceased to exist, and—solemn thought !—there remains now *eternity*, a fixed state ; endless, infinite duration for ever and ever.

### **The New Heavens and the New Earth.**

We have just glanced at the great and solemn events closing into eternity, for the unsaved, and we now turn to the brighter theme of the eternal destiny of the saved. "We, according to His promise," says the apostle Peter, "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." If righteousness "reigns" during the millennium, it "dwells" during the eternal state : for all trace of sin and evil will be for ever gone from the whole universe ; in virtue, as we know, of the far-reaching efficacy of the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. God is love ; and in this eternal state of bliss everything will be in perfect harmony with His holy nature : He will *rest* in His love, told out in its unmingled fulness : but it will be the *same love* that we know now.

The first eight verses of Rev. xxi. describe this blessed eternity. God dwells with men. This was His purpose from the beginning. He visited Adam in Eden, but sin came in and marred everything.



As soon as redemption was accomplished, in type at least, in the pascal lamb and the deliverance through the Red Sea, then God spoke of His habitation, But God could not rest in a scene where sin and Satan's power were; a world departed and alienated from Him. *Here*, in this eternal scene of sinless perfection, it is not man tested as in Eden, and liable to fall; on the contrary, everything stands on the immutable and unchanging basis of the value and efficacy of the precious blood of Christ: and here God *dwells* with men. The whole order of things is changed—instead of sorrow and tears, so familiar in this world, God Himself shall wipe away all tears. Death cannot enter—there is no more death, neither crying nor sorrow; the whole state of things which now exists, consequent on sin having come into the world, will be *for ever passed away*.

How wide and far-reaching the range of the prophetic teaching of Scripture is: it is divinely complete. It begins with the fall in Eden, when the Seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head was promised, and it carries us through past events, now matters of history, right on into eternity itself. God has, speaking reverently, taken us into His confidence; He has revealed all these things to us for our present profit and blessing. To His Name be the praise and glory. Amen!

F. G. B.