

# LIFE IN THE FUTURE.

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By R. H. K.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE RAPTURE.

“We which are alive and remain shall be caught up.”  
(1 THESS. IV. 17.)

Nothing unusual had marked the day's proceedings in the beautiful little town of —— (which we will take as an example of all other towns), situate on the prettiest coast line in the world. And to this part visitors from every quarter of the globe came for health, pleasure, and to enjoy the thousand and one attractions of the beauties bestowed upon it by nature and art. But, as I have said, nothing had occurred on this particular day of which we speak, to indicate that aught should hinder or oppose the usual flow and current of the day's doings. People were doing exactly what all the world had done before—taking their pleasure, doing their business, and the tradesmen gleefully pocketing their gains; some of them thanking God that they had such a good run of business, as they carefully locked their huge iron safes containing their treasured store. And their hearts leaped within them as they looked upon the splendid esplanade and noble pier literally crowded with wealthy loungers, pleasure-seekers

and time-killers. Some were hurrying to the steam-packets to greet friends, others paraded gaily the promenade, and others listlessly gazed down into the blue depths of the ever-varying sea. Every heart has its peculiar object, even the heart of the veriest idler. And the people of this town very closely represented the people of all others. But would they have been thus engaged had they known the end of the coming eventful evening? I trow not. In one of the streets of the place I heard the voice of an evangelist clearly ringing through the still clear air, sounding forth the message of grace and God's wonderful love to poor sinners.

He was earnest indeed, and pleaded with sinners so simply, so sweetly, that some weary hearts cast their all, there and then, just as they were, upon Him who once said, "I will in no wise cast out." Oh, what a timely decision was theirs!

But some there were who scoffed at the preacher, and became the more hardened in their sins, because the effect of the word of God upon any hearer thereof is either of life unto life or of death unto death. Many closed their doors and closed their hearts, and sat down to their cups and their games to drown conscience, and to become giddy with pleasure, even as they stood on the brink of destruction.

It would have surprised you had you seen how many there were, whom people thought good Christians in the day time, entering into the jollities, convivialities, revellings and such like of the night season.

Now there was a deal of religiousness in this

town, and indeed it would have appeared very disrespectable, and altogether unbecoming, of any holding anything like a position in the town not to have attended some place of worship (as they persistently called their splendid buildings) on the Sunday, or "the Sabbath," as some with show of reverence called the "first day of the week." However, their Testaments told them it was "the Lord's day." But this by the way. It did not a bit matter how large a subscription appeared on the list of donations towards the building of a church or a chapel, or how handsome a gift to some society for the spread of the gospel—I say, in God's sight it was an abomination. God looks at the man, not his manner—*that* may be assumed. He looks at the heart, not at the handsome gift. These respectable, religious men were despising the poor evangelist at the very moment God was saving souls by the foolishness of the preaching. What a decisive moment was this! There was still a numerous throng drinking in the words of the preacher, though it was getting late in the evening. The silvery moon had risen, and was pouring her soft, mellowed light upon the place. The course of nature was the same. Nothing was altered, nothing indicated any stupendous act of God, but all things continued as they were from the beginning. Many still said, "Where is the promise of his coming?" But, lo! in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, a mighty change had taken place! The preacher vanished before the eyes of his audience. Many of the listeners also as suddenly disappeared. Not a sound, not an

echo did they make in their departure. Some there were who said they heard what sounded to them more like thunder than aught else. Some professed to have seen wondrous signs in the heavens, but none of their assertions could be relied on. You know when Jesus was on earth, when His Father spake to Him, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again," some who stood by said that it was the voice of an angel, and some said that it thundered. None knew the meaning thereof. Nor was it wonderful that these poor people understood not who were present at the time of which we speak.

All that night how many vainly searched for their friends! Distracted mothers looking for their children, children looking for their parents, husbands for their wives, and wives for their husbands. It was a terrible night indeed. And when the morning came, and the town woke up wholly and alive to the astounding fact, what consternation, what surprise ensued! It is perfectly indescribable. Many shops remained closed, and it was soon found that the proprietors had gone. Many offices were vacated. Servants had left their places without a moment's warning, but had taken nothing with them. In some instances servants were left in the entire possession of their employers' property. How anxiously was the arrival of the post looked for! And all the daily papers got a ready sale. Their leaders dilated on the wonderful exodus of many thousands of people, but failed to explain satisfactorily. Telegraph clerks were extremely busy, and soon it was known that all over the world,

and at the same moment, people had been snatched away from their homes, from business, and from their meetings. Now what did it all mean? People madly crowded to their churches and chapels, but many of their ministers, too, had left. It was a solemn, heartrending time. Many died from terror, not knowing what next would take place. Some to quiet the populace boldly asserted that the millennium would now dawn upon the world, and so endeavoured to preach Peace, Peace.

Alas! for the poor world. The salt of the earth is taken away, and corruption must have its sway. The light of the world is gone, and darkness and confusion must ensue. The saints are gone, and sinners remain. He who had hindered the full power of sin, the Holy Ghost, is taken away with the church. This is the solution of the mystery. The Lord Jesus had fulfilled His promise. He had called His own to Himself. He came with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and bade His people meet Him in the air. But the world heard Him not. Yes! that was the meeting-place, "the air." Whether it was in the immeasurable space of the stellar universe, or the atmosphere of the earth, is perfectly immaterial. The rapture of the saints had taken place, and they had met their Lord in the air. Upon the minds of those who had heard the gospel preached and knew the truth, though not savingly, the whole affair was as clear as noonday. Never did the scriptures appear so powerfully, and now painfully clear to their

hearts. It was self-evident that, if they belonged to Christendom, they did not belong to Christ. Most terribly was this applied to the hearts of those who had had converted parents. It was peculiarly distressing the vain searches made by some young people, who slept in the comfortable homes of their godly parents. They awoke in the morning to find practically true what they had heard as if only it were theory. O there is nothing so real as reality ! And now the awful feeling of lost, lost, lost, flooded their souls in a deluge of despair. How bitterly they lamented their lost opportunity, blaming themselves for not taking the salvation which but yesterday was within their reach. There were their fondest friends, gazing in glory on the face of Him who had loved them, and they were left—left to be swept away by the besom of destruction.

Pencil cannot picture, nor imagination conjure, the consternation amongst the professors of the different sects of the church of Christ, erroneously so-called. There was one ray of hope, they were alive upon the earth, they were not in hell, and they would search the word and see what the Lord would say concerning them. So they buoyed themselves up in a hope which proved as false as Satan could desire it, soon settling down to what we read of *the left ones* in 2 Thessalonians ii. 11: "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."

How it fared with these doomed people we shall hereafter see.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE RESURRECTION.

“The dead in Christ shall rise first.” (1 THESS. IV. 16.)

THE first evening after the wonderful event—the translation of the saints—drew on, and as yet a vague apprehension only had been received by the minds of many. But upon one particular portion of the community it exerted a most wonderful influence. It was upon the Jews. A strong delusion was already fast spreading amongst the masses; but the Jew was energised by a power that impelled him to the performance of an enterprise which his heart had long yearned for. What it was we shall speedily see. Meanwhile, we shall introduce the reader to some of the different Jewish families. In the library of the British Museum sat some thoughtful descendants of a worthy line. They had retired thither for seclusion for a short time from the great discussion of the day. They were highly educated, and knew far more of natural philosophy than of scriptural knowledge. As members of society they were refined, and as scholars classical. They had read deeply nearly every book, except the English New Testament and works on Christianity. Still they are imbued with a great amount of awe and reverence for religion. A glance at one of the ancient Codices (named *Purpureus*, and marked N), containing only a few fragments of the four gospels, written on purple vellum with silver letters, was sufficient to demand their attention.

It is referred to the end of the 6th century, so it had a claim upon them for its ancient style and great age. It was not their first desire to look into the truth of Christianity. But this their education had overruled. They had heard of some of their people—only a few indeed—who had really become like the Gentile infidels and believers in the fact that Messiah had already appeared. But their terrible excommunication was a sufficient deterrent for entertaining a thought respecting the truth. Now their convictions were too late. Was the Christian's Bible indeed true? So, absorbed in thought, they sat, they noted not the flight of time. The great question of the day aroused their dormant convictions. They would carefully search the prophets, for that purpose they had retired from domestic scenes. A crisis had come respecting their beloved nation, and they were determined to make sure work of their decision.

Very anxiously indeed was their arrival looked for by each family circle. The times were so strange. Nothing seemed too great or too impossible to occur.

The younger branches of the families kept up constant watch for their return, their attention being often distracted by the vast crowds of people moving about, as if by impulse, in an indeterminate sort of way. The older and more thoughtful ones made many inquiries, yet feared to intrude remarks which might have little relevancy to the subjects earnestly being discussed by the heads of the families.

The long-looked-for at length appeared. The

delight of the family, and the secret pride of the mother, were again in the embraces of their families. But their noble faces wore stern lines, and a decisive manner of speaking betokened their earnestness. The purport of the message each gave was as follows: Undoubtedly God has not forgotten His ancient people. We belong to His own peculiar nation whom He chose out from among all the nations, and this assuredly is the time for action and not for repose. A wonderful work has been done among the Gentiles, an undeniable proof that God is amongst us still. None can dispute the fact that thousands are gone. Many with whom we have done business, too, are gone, leaving only their goods and chattels, but not a shadow of their mortality. And what is equally remarkable, there are unmistakable evidences of a resurrection having taken place of some from the dead. Would that we had been taught the English New Testament. Already we have made many discoveries, which simply prove its teachings to have been true. One passage declares that "The dead in Christ shall rise first," and goes on to say that in the twinkling of an eye the living believers in Jesus of Nazareth would be changed and caught up in the air with those raised ones to meet their Jehovah-Jesus in the air. Now it is equally plain that this has actually taken place. It is confirmed on all sides that at the *same instant* it was consummated. Rumour brings strange statements of the resurrection. Instances are not wanting which prove in many cases those who lay in their coffins ready for interment had in the same

instant left their coffin and grave clothes, obeying, doubtless, the mandate of the Almighty. Funerals were stopped; finding the burden had gone, the bearers became alarmed. Surely the passage was divinely inspired which states, "This corruptible must put on incorruption." Doubtless that referred to those sleeping in death, and the quotation finishes, "this mortal must put on immortality"—that referred to the living. And so a resurrection and a transformation has taken place, and we have been in determined ignorance. It is a solemn time indeed. Yet something tells us of hope about to shine on Israel. And our conviction and decision is that announcements be made for immediate preparation to start *en masse* for the beloved city of God and of our forefathers, Jerusalem. The night of our dispersion is at an end, the dawn of a glorious future is about to gleam for us. What says Isaiah, son of Amoz? "Jehovah shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left . . . from the isles of the sea." This is plain language for us. Lose no time, let us hasten from a land which most assuredly is devoted to destruction, to our own land of promise, where we are sure God will again delight over His Zion. Surely our Rabbis are in error; why should they say concerning the coming of Messiah, "Cursed be he that shall calculate the time"? yet at the same time declare to us that "He is to deliver them from their afflictions and give them in reversion joy, temporal dominion and prosperity, and the triumphant possession of their own land." Why should we

further pray, as on the day of atonement, “Woe unto us, for we have no Mediator”? There is a passage in the “Targum of Onkelos” which tells us, “There shall not pass away one exercising dominion from the house of Judah until Messiah shall come.”\* To our minds this is proof positive that Messiah *has* come, for who is there that is or has been exercising dominion over Judah? But our teachers speak of Messiah as a sufferer and as a conqueror, and so they tell us of Ben Joseph the sufferer, and Ben David the conqueror. This we confess we do not quite understand. The same prophet we quote from says of Him, “His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” And to meet this our teachers have surely adopted this teaching of a twofold Messiah, which is at variance with other scriptures according to our knowledge thereof! Alas! that we gave such little attention thereto! But this we fully coincide with and readily and gladly go forth, expecting to meet Him as David the conqueror. For all His words are truth and verity.

Still one difficulty presents itself to our minds. In our confessions we say, “My death must be an atonement for my sins.” This to us is directly opposed to our law given by Moses. Still we do not see how our long-expected Messiah will be the sufferer. But of this we are confident, He will come as a conqueror. So, beloved ones, let us be up and doing. Our journey admits no delay. Our presence is required at the Holy City, there to await His coming.

\* See Genesis xlix. 10.

Now while our Jewish friends are getting ready to start on their journey to Jerusalem, we will take a general survey. What are the people doing that had received such a fright and such a shock to their nerves? Very much the same as in the days before the flood, while the ark of God was preparing. Very much the same were they doing as they had done previously to the rapture of the true believers in Jesus of Nazareth. Many were glad enough not to have their consciences disturbed. Besides, they enriched themselves with forsaken spoil. Their ministers and public lecturers declared "peace and safety," and God suffered a strong delusion to take hold of their minds, and they believed the lie that Satan foamed out in insinuations. He was a liar from the beginning, and he is a liar at the ending. It has been said that people love to be deceived. Indeed they do not like to be undeceived. But this settling down of the populace was like a lull before the storm. Their peace was that of an unwary traveller being drawn into the Maelstrom, and their safety like a dweller near the crater of Vesuvius. A corpse cannot remain long intact. So this seething mass of corruption cannot remain long. It must work, and burst all barriers of propriety, education and restraint, because the Holy Ghost had hitherto hindered the full working of evil; but being taken away with the translated ones, there is no hindrance to sin reaching a climax hitherto unapproached. Shortly, as we shall see, an awful element of evil developing itself will rapidly pave the way for that tremendous period in the world's history, designated

in scripture, '“the great tribulation.” Now is the time when Satan brings forth, on the platform of professing Christendom, his masterpiece of imitation and deception.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE MAN OF SIN.

(JOHN V. 43.)

As we have before seen, and it is very apparent in our every-day experiences, no heart can exist without an object which more or less engrosses the attention. It is true of individuals as well as of nations. The heart of the individual is the heart of the nation in miniature. They both go out after the object of its desire or ambition according to the circle of its power. To meet the eternity of the heart's desirings God has provided an eternal object, which should fully satisfy the need of every heart who believed in it. For about two thousand years salvation by faith in the Son of God has been freely offered. The object set before men was the adorable person of the Lord Jesus, a glorious Person who was worthy of the hearts and undivided affections of all, because “He died for all.” But the day of mercy and forbearance of God was closed. The judgment of vengeance against the despisers of mercy and the rejecters of His Son cannot longer be withheld. The pacification of the public mind was momentary. People were in a state of mind capable of receiving all and any preposterous thing that Satan or

his satellites could produce. The "mystery of iniquity," which had so long been working in principle, was now about to be made manifest. We must not forget that thousands of these people had been, to use their own popular phrase, sitting under the sound of the gospel. They had their sittings and pews in their various churches and chapels, and the receipts for the same for many years. But though they were members of different churches they were not members of the church of God; though possessed of sittings in the chapels they were not seated in Christ in the heavenlies. What a terrible mistake they had made! They were not *in* Christ, and now Christ would be for ever *without* them. Even during the great gospel era it was a common thing for men to lose their souls. The thought is almost unbearable, yet the hideousness must be presented. If genuine Christians had looked this boldly in the face, there would have been fewer *worldly* Christians and more zeal and love presented to the outside world, beside keeping in view the judgment-seat of Christ (of which we cannot speak in this chapter), where every action is carefully weighed. But the die is cast. Christians, real, had gone to appear before their Lord, and personally to stand before the *beema* or judgment seat, while Christians in name only were upon the earth to answer God's question, "What think ye of Christ?" Now I am speaking of people who called themselves Christians, the parts they inhabited being called Christendom, that is, Christ's kingdom, but in reality Satan's kingdom, from which shortly he is to be cast down for ever.



While we are speaking of the casting down of Satan, we must not forget that for ages he has been the prince of the power of the air, whose spirit at this very moment worketh in the children of disobedience. We have little conception of the great power of this tremendous foe of the souls of men. The "heavenly places" up to the period of which we are speaking were accessible to Satan and his angels. (See Eph. vi. 12.) And now takes place that which has been long known in literary and common parlance as the "Miltonic war." Beware, dear reader, of any theology but that taught in the word of God. Act on the Berean principle of searching the word for the confirmation of everything presented to you. But let your own heart bow to the word of God, although you may have been taught differently ever since you could speak. I do not quarrel with the great poet, but he was very far from the right track in asserting this war in heaven took place thousands of years before it actually occurred. But we have seen that the saints have met the Lord in the air, and from these boundless azure plains of heaven Satan and his armies must be ejected. The accomplishment of this work is assigned to Michael and his angels. The awful result we find in Revelation xii. "There was war in heaven : Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not ; *neither was their place found any more in heaven.* And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. . . . Therefore rejoice,

ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Such definite language needs no comment. You will observe the names of man's formidable foe ; there is no mistake as to the identity of his person. Thus we see he is cast out, but he has yet to be hurled still further down. And possessed of this knowledge, he will compensate the brevity of his stay on earth by tenfold more exertion. We have seen in our last how earnestly the Jews decided on returning to the Holy City ; this decision was as earnestly carried out. These returning Jews we understand to be of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, though all will be brought in eventually. But their return was in unbelief, having such a partial knowledge of the word of God : besides, the veil was not yet taken off their hearts. Their first work was to rebuild the temple. So unanimous were they in their determination, that in a marvellously short time the work was sufficiently complete for them again to commence offering sacrifices and performing their ceremonial worship. Nations looked on these proceedings with a covetous and disdainful air ; but the way was exceedingly open to these people who have been so long a "nation scattered." Many countries greatly assisted the Jews in their return to their own land ; especially was England actively engaged in this work of transporting the Jews to Palestine. Listen to Isaiah's address to this country. "Ho !" (not Woe, as it reads) "Ho ! to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia ; that sendeth ambas sador

by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto." (Isa. xviii.) This is very plain that the immense resources of England will be brought to bear on the restoration of Judah. The influence of England overshadows the whole earth, and doubtless the vessels and swift messengers referred to her superiority in steam navigation and travelling speed. At any rate, the Jews had all their advantages, and failed not to appropriate them.

Now at this period arose four important personages, whose tremendous influences were felt and feared wherever their names were mentioned. Though God had withdrawn the church and the Holy Ghost, leaving the world to terrible judgment, yet He would not leave it without a witness for His name. Two of the above-mentioned persons were sent by Him to testify for Him; so that in the mouth of "two witnesses" every word should be established. The other two were the powerful agents of Satan, embodying in their own persons all the energies with which hell could inspire and the ambition and wickedness of which a human heart could conceive. One of them is known in scriptural language as the "man of sin," the "Antichrist," the "Wicked" which shall be revealed. He is Satan's mock Messiah, the false prophet, the one who shall come in his own name, the false king of the Jews who shall do according to his will. The other is the beast raised out of the sea (figure of Gentiles), the great ruler who becomes head of the revived Roman Empire.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE TWO WITNESSES.

(MATTHEW XXIV. 9-14.)

STRONG currents of thought were finding embodiment in living expressions. And just as people were enduring what may be called a suspense and anxious expectancy for something, they knew not what, two men, the two witnesses, of whom we spoke in the previous chapter, started immediately into public notice. Having intimated that Satan is the arch-imitator of God, it may be well to notice in what way he has been such in order to deceive, so that we may see the more clearly his intention in this crisis. This is very observable in the word of God. We find that God has wise virgins—Satan has false virgins; Christ sows wheat—Satan sows tares; God has a “true vine”—Satan has “the vine of the earth”; Christ has a bride—Satan has a harlot; God has a city, New Jerusalem—Satan has a city, Babylon. But the vilest of his imitations, and the most blasphemous of his characters, is his last production; for as God did “miracles, and wonders, and signs” by Jesus Christ, so Antichrist will come “with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.” (Acts ii. 22; 2 Thess. ii. 9.) God has determined that every knee shall bow to Jesus, so Satan wills that all the dwellers upon earth worship the man of sin. God has purposed that the kingdoms of the whole earth shall be the kingdom of Christ. Satan is now about to set up a universal king-

dom, over which the beast shall reign. But I am forestalling. Yet the subject matter of this Satanic reign was already finding a lodgment in men's hearts. Scarcely had it found expression when, as we have before said, God's two witnesses appeared upon the scene. Mark, they are Christ's witnesses. They stand "*before the Lord of the whole earth.*" And against the floods of infidelity, ritualistic mockeries, ripening spiritualism, and ambitious designs, they utter most awful denunciations. They despised all persecutions and flattery, and clothing themselves in sackcloth, preached concerning the coming of "the great and dreadful day of the Lord," and while thousands received their word, their enemies multiplied and deadly hatred was raised against them. But their foes were powerless to inflict punishment upon them, for the prophets' words were accompanied with most astounding miracles. They possessed power to hinder rain falling from heaven, power to turn springs and wells into blood, and power to inflict fiery punishment upon their enemies. These miracles confirmed the faith of those who believed them sent of God, while it served to heighten the intensity of bitter hatred of the people, especially of the European nations. Thus they continued their testimony for three years and a half, more especially among the Jews. Even then, in spite of loud warnings, many Jews were led astray by false reports that Christ, their Messiah, was come, and they would eagerly start off to some desert or mountain, where it was said He was come to set up His throne. Alas! for

their wilful unbelief. Never was testimony for God borne so boldly and unflinchingly since the day when Jesus Christ was upon earth, and vast multitudes believed. But now a grave and substantial report was made. Again the newspapers teemed with important bulletins. They told of the One that was come to usher in the millennium, and commending the union of nations to bring it about by giving their power to this person, and it was the religious people of Christendom that gave him their support. Thus was Daniel's prophecy fulfilled concerning the revival of the Roman empire.

But the power of the two witnesses ended in three years and a half, and one of the first acts of this person who combined in his constitution the terrible natures of the lion, bear and leopard, was to kill them. This action elevated him to a tremendous height of popularity. The *dwellers upon earth* rejoiced over the destruction of the two severely righteous prophets. They made feasts, and songs, and convivialities, and sent gifts one to another, because of the victory of a host against two men. Had they not been tormentors, disturbers of the public peace, and producers of plagues? Therefore they made merry in their national holidays, and, as the king of nations had given orders that the two tormentors should not be buried, thousands of people visited Jerusalem in order to see their two dead bodies degraded and exposed to public view in the principal street of the city! People of all tongues and nations went to view the dead, and rejoiced over them. But it is a time of wonder.

Exactly three days and a half (a day for each year of their testimony) had the heartless multitudes been gazing upon their humiliated bodies, when the spirit of life from God entered into them and they stood upon their feet. O the horror, the consternation and fear depicted upon the faces of the guilty populace! Did their eyes deceive them? Indeed they did not. Scarcely was there time for a reason to be rendered, when a great voice from heaven cried "Come up hither," and the two men went up to heaven in a cloud, in full view of the multitudes of the upraised eyes of their astonished foes. Immediately a great earthquake shook the place, and a tenth part of the city was engulfed in its yawning cavern, while seven thousand men of rank and distinction found an instant abyssmal tomb, and perished in the closing chasm. An awful feeling of dread covered the remaining masses, and they gave glory to the *God of heaven*. Even in this act they reject the testimony of the departed prophets, who asserted the right of, and stood before, "the *Lord of the earth*."

And this brings us to the end of the Apocalyptic week, the last three years and a half of which is the time of the great tribulation.

The wonderful accession to power of this king is immediately applied to rule and dominion. Not a moment is lost, and very rapidly he takes the highest place, with ten powerful kingdoms, governed by ten kings directly under his control. He opens "his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." He makes war with the saints and overcomes them.

About this time a second beast arises having two horns like a lamb, but he speaks as a dragon, evidently Satan's imitation of the holy "Lamb of God." Descending from a Jew (Dan. xi. 36-38), he cannot be satisfied without holding the reins of government in the future metropolis of the world. His lust for wealth is boundless, and his desires for power insatiable. Fearful and reckless are his exploits in Jerusalem. He deceives them that dwell upon the earth, doing great wonders. And he also makes alliance with the first beast. But this brings about a time of trouble, such as was not from the beginning of the world. It is unparalleled in the history of nations. This distress is not of Jerusalem or of Palestine only, but a distress of nations; the trouble is not local, it is universal. And now we see the fruits of the labours and testimony of God's two witnesses in the lives of the Jews and the Gentiles. Their fortitude stands out in bold relief against the dark and unblushing infidelity and persecution hanging over their devoted lives.

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## CHAPTER V.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

(MATTHEW XXIV.)

IN Daniel ix. we read of a "Prince that shall come" who makes a covenant with the false prophet, who will have his seat in Jerusalem,



and will cause the earth and them that dwell therein to worship this prince, saying to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast, which they worship in the temple of God. They find to their consternation they have a demon of war instead of a prince of peace. His armies were maintained in the utmost order and rigid discipline. His arms, cannon and accoutrements for cavalry and infantry were fitted with most Satanic-like perfection for deadly work. The latest invention and improvement in every kind of engine of warfare and missiles of destruction were developed in his armaments. Surrounded by such majestic power, who would dispute a mandate of his? Not a kingdom in the world but feared and was ready to bow to his iron rule. Yet there were people, not in masses, but in companies, not collectively, but individually, that dared to deny his supremacy. They were those who believed the testimony of the "Two Witnesses." They were godly Jews, those who had embraced "the gospel of the kingdom" which John the Baptist preached, which Jesus Christ proclaimed, and which kingdom, but for His rejection, would have been established in all its fulness.

We know that, for nearly two thousand years, it had to remain in abeyance during the preaching of the gospel of the "glory of God's grace." But the "Two Witnesses" took up and carried on the preaching of this "gospel of the kingdom"; and now we come to consider how those who believed it endured to the end. It made those who received it men of worth, men of stamina, and stamped

them with a holy dignity which met their foes as the lighthouse, standing in solitary grandeur, defies the raging of the tempest.

It is impossible to describe the rapidity with which the beast took the highest place of power in the earth. Yet why should we be amazed? Who would have conjectured that France, once the queen of nations, in a few short months should be hurled from her pinnacle of glory to bite the dust in death? Yet so it was in 1870. And the period of which we are now speaking has a tendency for far greater rapidity. But we know what energised him thus. It was Satan who "gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." (Rev. xiii. 2.) He knows that his time is short, and that deeds of blood and horror must shortly be executed. The Roman Empire was now flourishing under the powerful sway of the monarch of the world. He had gained his ends and projects, and established his seat with nearly the whole of the universe at his feet. But one thing he yet craved. It was worship. Alexander the Great—eclipsed by this greater conqueror—even he was ambitious of the adoration of his subjects, although the historian glosses over the fact. The desires of the beast are limitless. (Dan. vii. 19–25.) His heart rejoiced that "all the world wondered" at him and the magnitude of his estate. But he lusted not only for power, but for power and worship. At this important crisis that other great personage, the false prophet, who from among the people, coming "in his own name," had been received by the mass of them, exer-

cised his well-nigh universal spiritual influence to promote the worship of the emperor. Now this prophet is spoken of in Revelation xiii. 11 thus: "He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." The illustration is a monstrosity in nature. He is the Antichrist, and his coming up out of the earth tells us he is a man of the Jewish people, for that is what the earth represents. No "gracious words" proceed out of his mouth, as out of the mouth of the One who spake as never man spake; but his voice is as the voice of the dragon, and the people receive him (John v. 43), and listen to him as the voice of God.

Beloved reader, this is the hour of the "strong delusion," and the time of "Jacob's trouble." It would have been impossible for the human mind to have conceived the daring impiety that is now disclosed in all its hideous array, were it not foretold by the "sure word of prophecy." This false prophet gains his power by working miracles of such an astounding character that but for the upholding power of God the very elect would be deceived thereby. Though possessed of great spiritualistic (or spiritual) power over the nations, he has secular power only in Palestine as king of the Jews, but he uses all his wonderful influence for the beast. "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell upon the earth, by the *means* of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." The bringing fire down from heaven

was, in olden times, the sign of the power of God working by His prophets. (1 Kings xviii.) What wonder, then, that this devil-energised prophet should deceive the people! But we observed that the beast was lusting for the adoration and worship of the people. And to effect this object, the false prophet lends all his miracle-working power. He issues a command to "make an image to the beast," "and he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should . . . speak." (Rev. xiii. 14, 15.) What an astonishing miracle was this! How rapidly it was flashed from one telegraph centre to another, so that all the world was apprised of it in a few moments. Then followed the mandate that all men should worship the image possessed of life, and the penalty of disobedience was death. Further, that every person should be branded with the stamp, or the name of the beast, or be stamped with the number of his name, 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." (Rev. xiii. 15, 17.) Thus we see how sternly the cruel order was most carefully carried out. Into every city, town and hamlet was the execution of this strange order carried. Alas! for them, will they indeed endure the testing time, will they *all* refuse the brand, and defy the powers that be? The day shall declare it. He was a marked man that had not been branded in the forehead or hand! Yet there were thousands that braved the test, resisted the demand, and yielded their lives rather than give to man

that which alone is due to God. All the terrors and tortures of the past inquisition were revived. Their faithfulness to the word given them by the Two Witnesses, and their constant proclamation of it, caused them to be delivered up to be afflicted (tortured), and to be killed. (Matt. xxiv. 9.) Never was there such a persecution, "not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." They were driven and persecuted by the unrelenting myrmidons of the beast and his lying prophet to every corner of the earth.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HOUR BEFORE DAWN.

(MATTHEW XXIV.)

Just in proportion as the disciples of the Two Witnesses were persecuted by Antichrist, so did they carry the good news of the reign of Christ to many a heart-sore, desiring soul. The ushering in of the gospel of grace, and the formation of the church of God, was through bitter persecutions, and its promoters received a baptism of blood, as we find in the Acts. But this hour that precedeth the dawn of a new dispensation was tenfold deeper dyed with the crimson blood of saints. The more bitter the trials, the more earnest were these dear saints in preaching the "gospel of the kingdom," and in refusing the idolatry of the Antichrist. In vain did their foes endeavour to stamp them in the forehead with the seal

of the imperial ruler of the world, or to brand them in the right hand with the mystic number of his name. And this order in its minutest detail was carried out with utmost rigour, beginning at Jerusalem. Ah! the judgments of God are indeed abroad. O Judah, thou didst more than eighteen hundred and eighty years ago crucify thy Messiah, and say, "His blood be on us, and on our children." And God remembers that prayer, and is now making inquisition for blood. Satan is the executioner of His designs in wrath, and Antichrist is the weapon.

I would that my reader read Psalm lv.—he would there find the expression of the deep, deep anguish and pain through which the godly remnant of Israel must pass. People who live in the days of peace and freedom can but faintly imagine the horrors of war and tyranny. The dead bodies of God's beloved people were cast out in the fields for the birds and fowls of the air to devour, while the quivering frames of many fell before savage beasts, as in the amphitheatres of old, in Rome. It was accounted nothing to kill a Jew, in fact this was all that was thought of, how to kill them or make them yield homage to Antichrist's idols. Their blood was "shed like water round about Jerusalem." The heathen possessed the inheritance of Messiah, and defiled the temple of God.

The Apostle Paul also dwells in detail upon this period in 2 Thessalonians ii. 3. Antichrist, the man of sin, the son of perdition, reigned in the temple itself. A very trinity of sin and evil reigned supreme. The dragon, the beast and

the false prophet. These three were one. This trinity of evil opposed and exalted itself "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped," "one of them as God, sat in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Thus was the height of iniquity reached—man setting himself in the place of God. It may be noteworthy that the famous number of the beast, with which he branded all his worshippers, 666, can only be interpreted by scripture; six is a scriptural number referring to the completion of evil, both in its exterior and interior character, before the purification takes place. This can readily be proved by the careful reader of the word. It is, as it were, the note of warning, the signal to announce the entire removal of the offensive ere is ushered in the new era. The triple use of the number, doubtless referred to the triple person, the triumvirate reigning in Jerusalem. Thus we see what assumption human nature is capable of taking. It is satisfied with taking no less a place than the place of God, in authority. If Satan, once in heaven (Ezek. xxviii. 1-19), and other mighty angels were hurled from their glorious seats of principalities (Jude 6) because of pride and ambition, how will the jealous God longer suffer puny man to usurp His power, and heap defiance upon His throne, by sitting in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God?

But God has a supreme purpose in thus permitting man to take such a height of power. Eternity will unfold it fully, but we have a very wonderful revelation of His will in the scenes enacted on Calvary. To the people of the nations

the great question of the day was—God or Antichrist. It is often asserted the darkest hour is the hour before dawn. So indeed was this for the Jewish remnant. So terrible was the hand of iron oppression and murder upon them, that but for the promise of Jesus, “those days shall be shortened” (Matt. xxiv. 15, 22), none could have been saved. As it was, two-thirds of them fell victims to the power of the desolater. But the end was fast approaching, for by severest persecution the gospel of the kingdom had been witnessed to all nations. (Matt. xxiv. 14.) Not only were these dear afflicted ones called to pass through every ordeal and suffering Satanic agency could invent, but the bitter trials of some asserting themselves as the Messiah, come to deliver them; then false prophets would suddenly make a public display of spiritualistic power, deceiving many, and any of the Jews giving heed to them were directly plunged into tenfold aggravated grief. Then the ruling element was abounding iniquity everywhere, while the love of friends and relatives waned before the fierce despotism that demanded some of their circle, lately become steadfast in the truth, to be delivered up to torture and to death.

Foxe’s Book of Martyrs would be a faint outline of these times. Homage given to Antichrist paved the way for the most idolatrous practices; devil-worship was rife (Rev. ix. 20), and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone and wood were to be seen in all parts; while murders, sorceries, fornications and robberies were common and daily



occurrences. Such was the state of society under the reign of the man of sin. Just at this critical moment an immense army (Rev. ix. 16) of two hundred millions of men from the north-east were ordered forth on their deadly mission against Judæa and the Roman world. A scene of universal warfare ensued ; carnage, bloodshed and horror were on every hand.

By the wonderful working of God the lost ten tribes began to retrace their way back to the land of their fathers. This was carried into effect a very short time afterwards. (Ezek. xx. 33-38 ; Isa. xi. 11-16.) Doubtless the gospel of the reign of the Messiah had fallen like music upon their hearts ; besides, they saw the sign of the coming of the Son of man ! Now, they who had been lost to the civilised world for ages are brought into prominence by the counsels of God. Meanwhile the earth had been visited by most dreadful plagues, while upon the nations dire calamities fell. In contrast to this scene of darkness, our next chapter will present scenes in the brightness of glory. •

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The wilderness journey is ended,  
The weary one rest has obtain'd,  
The fair side is reached of the river,  
The goal by the victor is gain'd.

The labourer's task is completed,  
Though waiting the Master's " Well done,"  
The warrior's work is accomplish'd,  
The crown, with its glory, is won !

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CONTRAST.

(2 CORINTHIANS V.)

ALTHOUGH our primary object is to view, in the light of scripture, the future history of *this world*, yet we cannot avoid for a brief space to leave the dark age of the earth, with its scenes of horror, the plagues, and bloodshed, and follow our beloved friends who were caught up to the scenes of brightness and glory. A door was opened in heaven, and there is a wonderful revelation. The Bridegroom rejoiceth over His bride, and the bride rejoiceth inasmuch as she is in the presence of the Bridegroom of her heart. It is a season of much joy in the heavens, and a time of refreshing indeed in the presence of the Lord. But after the mutual (Song of Solomon vii. 6) joy of the recognition of His bride, complete as to number, He proceeds to reward every one individually. Each ransomed one stands before that peerless One to answer for himself for the works he did while in the body. But who sits upon that judgment seat? It is their own Saviour, the blessed Jesus. He still bears the sweet name by which He was known while He trod the paths of Palestine. Yes, it is He who is the judge, and, mark you, He is not there to judge their persons, for each one shines in the likeness of Himself; but He is there to judge their works. (2 Cor. v. 10.) This passage has troubled many dear souls, but it is one of much comfort and assurance if they had taken

the Holy Spirit's teaching concerning it and not the devil's insinuations. It is overwhelming to think of the matchlessness of the love and the magnificence of the grace in the heart of the Lord Jesus. Just to think, that He gives all the blessing Himself, and now He is going to reward them because they accepted it. It is as though He could not do enough for those dearly purchased ones. With what a gaze of wonder and admiration do they look upon His incomparable beauties, and their eyes meet His looks of ineffable love, while they receive from His hands, which still bear the marks of Calvary's cross, the various rewards, rich beyond expression, for little services rendered while upon the earth. Even the cup of water given to one of His poor thirsty ones is not forgotten, but the donor gets handsomely rewarded. Every one who loved His appearing receives with Paul a crown of righteousness. Those who endured fiery temptation, and for His name's sake were faithful even to death, received a crown of life. To every one He gave a dazzling crown of glory, bright with the reflection of Himself; to each, a stone of unspeakable value, heightened by an engraving thereon bespeaking the affection of the Saviour's heart of love. None knew the full import—none could enter into the meaning of the graven name save the one who possessed it. It was, as it were, the secret of love between the heart of the Giver and the heart of the receiver. (Rev. ii. 17.) Oh, what a precious Jesus is ours! His love surpasses the love of women! His was a dying

love on Calvary ! His is an undying love in the glory ! Not a single iota of the individual's lifetime but was strictly investigated, and everything that was proved to have been laid out for His glory, every penny expended for His name's sake, received *ten thousand per cent.* (Matt. x. 42 ; Mark x. 29).

But what about the naughty actions of so many of His dear people during their pilgrim course ? How many times have people of the world said of some of these, "I do not see that such persons as they are who profess so much are any better than we who entirely disregard religiosity of any sort." Occasion enough had been given to call forth such remarks. But who shall lay aught to the charge of God's elect ? All the difference was made by their simply accepting God's testimony concerning His Son. God, being abundantly satisfied with the work accomplished by the Son of His love, for nearly two thousand years caused the good news of salvation to be proclaimed, saying, "Whosoever believeth in him [the Son of God] should not perish, but have everlasting life." And these translated ones, whose position we are now considering, had accepted the free and unconditional offer of life eternal. And now they are brought through more than conquerors over the triple foe—the world, the flesh, and Satan. Yes, in spite of wilfulness and weakness—sins and failures—they are before Him, whom not having seen, they loved. But what will He say to those whose works will not bear investigation ? He will cause all those works of self—

works of pride, works of supererogation, so called—in short, every kind of work not done to His glory, to be utterly consumed and burned by fire. (1 Cor. iii. 13.) And the doer of such works will thank Him for it, even though every single work is thus destroyed, and the person stands unadorned by a solitary deed. In this way, therefore, he suffers loss ; inasmuch as he laid up no riches in heaven he gets no recompense, but in his own person stands a monument of grace. This, then, is the effect of the setting up of the judgment-seat of Christ, to reward every one according to his work. (Mark ix. 49.)

Thus we have glanced a little at that which occupies the saints in glory, while the poor world is one scene of unutterable anarchy and confusion. But now, the once lowly Jesus of Nazareth is about to take the highest position of glory. The “despised of men” is about to manifest Himself as “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” The Prince of peace is now to be arrayed as a Man of war. Like the Hebrew type in Deuteronomy xxiv. 5, the exalted Christ is, as we have seen, engaged with His bride ere He comes to take vengeance. Every individual soul forming the church of God, His bride, has had to do with Himself personally. All are arrayed in beautiful attire, and take their proper position in following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. (Rev. xix. 14.) But this scene is anticipative of stupendous dealing of this One who is thus coming in connection with the world. This we must reserve for our next.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ARMAGEDDON.

ABOVE the roar of the tempest there is the calm of a cloudless region, and beyond the midnight darkness there is celestial glory. And this we have already seen in pursuing our subject. It was a time of gloom and thick darkness, a time of the howling of the storm and tempest among the nations. "A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth ; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh ; he will give them that are wicked to the sword. . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts, 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 : they shall not be lamented." (Jer. xxv.) Distressed by the attacks of the king of the north, Antichrist sought for increased support from the Roman emperor and his military forces. Forth went the mandates, summoning "the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty . . . into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon." (Rev. xvi.) But the beast and the Antichrist who had so proudly exalted themselves are about to be brought low ; they who had con-

centrated armies and armies to their aid shall find that "vain is the help of man." They feel that the crisis is come, but their hearts, swollen with pride, reckon not the bitter end. The creature contests the sovereignty of the globe with the Creator. The miracles performed by Moses did but harden the heart of the king of Egypt, so the outpouring of the bowls of God's wrath and judgment upon the earth do but exasperate and harden the heart of the latter-day Pharaoh, and like his predecessor of old he hurries with his multitudes of warriors down, down to everlasting destruction. The self-exalted man of the people is actually about to oppose the exalted Christ of God. Already are ten thousand rifles pointed to the heavens, with most daring impiety, defying the "King of kings." Yes, he boldly resolves to "make war with the Lamb." But words fail to convey the full force and meaning of this crowning act of infidelity, which meets such an instant reward. For the Lord Jesus, who is just about to take the throne of David, consumes the man of sin with the *brightness* of His coming! (2 Thess. ii. 8.) What a terrible end! Instantly destroyed with the brightness of the coming of Jesus! Even the *light* of His *coming* cannot be endured by him; what then must it be to be gazing upon Him who is light? Ah, sin cannot be there, but flees, with its lover, to hide in the ends of eternal darkness. So was it with the man of sin. And what of the invincible armies—the majestic display of calvary and infantry? "Every man's sword will be against his fellow.

Every horse will be smitten with blindness, and his rider with madness," and the flesh of many of them, who, it seems, were waiting orders, "shall consume away, whilst they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth." Never did the annals of history describe a battle after this sort. English, French, Germans, Americans, Spaniards, Turks, and Greeks—in fact, every nation of the globe will there be represented, all engaged in deadly conflict and mutual slaughter. Blind, raging steeds are bearing along raving maniacs; masses rolling upon masses in indescribable confusion with tiger-like ferocity, sweeping the immense squares of resistance like chaff before the wind. On, on pour cohorts of infantry, to meet exactly what they are bearing themselves—death and destruction. What an appalling spectacle! The blood comes up even to the horses' bridles. Immense masses of quivering bodies bestrew the land. Nor does the sword alone devour those God-defying warriors: for there fell "a great hail out of heaven," every stone weighing about a hundredweight each, "and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth." Thus was the flower of earth's chivalric warriors cut off. What a prospect for the lovers of war! Only death, and not victory, for them. So must perish all the enemies of the Lord Jesus.

It is noteworthy that, as the Two Witnesses were taken up alive into heaven, so the beast, and "the false prophet that wrought miracles



before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These *both* were cast *alive* into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." (Rev. xix. 20.)

Thus did the "Prince of peace" come forth as a man of war, smiting the nations and "taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel," ruling "them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (Rev. xix. 15.) And having the keys of hell and of death, "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan," was laid hold of, and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, and the prison door sealed upon him for ten hundred years. (Rev. xx.) Thus was the violent put away, Satan bound, and the two confederates cast into the everlasting burning. The wicked were cast into hell, and the nations that forget God. The scriptures were fulfilled to the very letter, which say, that "pride goeth before destruction," and that "the wages of sin is death."

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## CHAPTER IX.

### MILLENNIAL GLEAMS.

“GREAT and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name ? ” (Rev. xv.) For many ages had He shewn His long-suffering, forbearance and kindness ; but in a little moment His wrath is a “consuming fire.”

A new era is just commencing to beam upon the earth. A perfect contrast is to be presented to the dark scenes of war and tyranny under the influence of Antichrist. The long-looked-for millennium is dawning. It is not brought about, dear reader, you see, by the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God, but preceded by scenes of horror and bloodshed, and widespread judgment. Search the word and see whether these things be so or not. An awful decimation of the people has taken place. Of this we may be sure, especially when we find that it took the Jews seven months to bury the slain that lay in a valley, and seven years to clear the wreck and ruin of a battlefield. In the day of the overthrow the famous mount of Olives shall be divided (Zech. xiv. 4) ; for the Lord Jesus descends to the same place from which He ascended. We get in the conversion of the Apostle Paul a type of the sudden conversion of the Jews at this time. They look upon Him

whom they pierced ; they mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son. They see in Him their long-expected Messiah. Yes, He is indeed come as the King of Israel. He takes the reins of government, and how sweetly prosperous, how blessedly, everything falls into proper order and position. With wondrous rapidity Jerusalem becomes the splendid metropolis of the whole earth. A holy serenity, the calmness of repose, a deep, deep joy of rest and contentment seems to pervade the whole universe. There was no labouring for nought, no building for strangers to inhabit, but every one enjoys to the utmost the fruit of the work of his hands. All warlike weapons (and there were many) were turned into useful farm and gardening implements. People were singing for very joy of heart. Such a delightful contrast ! Was it not enough to fill their hearts, and cause them to shout for joy before Him who had called them out of darkness into such marvellous light ? There were no mothers mourning in Ramah, refusing to be comforted ; no more weeping in Jerusalem, and no cry of distress heard in any of the streets of the city of delight and marvels. Jerusalem was like a fountain, sending out streams of refreshing throughout the wide, wide world. Her peace was like a deep flowing river. Her missionaries went out into every nook and corner of the earth, carrying the fragrance of blessing and wisdom from *the presence of the Lord*. And oh ! if the glory of the earthly Jerusalem be so great, how shall I attempt to describe the greater glory of the city which is above it ? I can only appeal to

the unalterable word of God. Far above, but within sight of the earthly city, is the heavenly Jerusalem, suspended, as it were, in illimitable space ; it sheds its light and glory down upon the earthly city. It is impossible to describe this glowing object of intense admiration. It presents the appearance of a splendid cubical structure, being six thousand miles in circumference and covering an area of fifteen hundred square miles. "The building of the wall of it was of jasper : and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." (Rev. xxi.) The nations bring their honour and glory to it, walking in the sublime light of its heavenly brilliance that throws, like a mantle, a softened glow over the earthly Jerusalem. For the people attended the annual feast of tabernacles with but few exceptions. The temple of Jerusalem is rebuilt on a scale of grandeur and magnificence and greatness hitherto unsurpassed. The true Solomon now reigns. Oh, what a glorious time is this ! The poor earth has never rejoiced the like since the days of Eden. Would that we could dilate on the sweetness and pleasantness of the varying scenes. We see natures of people and of creatures subdued, the knowledge of the Lord filling the whole earth, as the waters cover the sea. Holiness is on the very bridles of the horses, and people look up and see the glory of God, like a living glory, illuming and cheering the whole scene, and they say, "Jehovah-shammah," *the Lord is there !* Ah ! and who, think you, are the favoured ones, the citizens of that holy city of beauty and untold treasure ? They are

those who during the dispensation of the gospel of grace (which had been proclaimed far and wide during this period), I say they are those very people that heard the gospel, and believed even to the saving of their souls. Yes, they are those who, being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, were splendidly rewarded at the judgment-seat of Christ. They followed Him on white horses when He came to overthrow Antichrist ; and now when He is ruling over the earth, taking to Himself His great power and reigning, there they are too, reigning with Him. Theirs is the noblest place, the nearest position, and theirs is the sweetest portion ! *They* are the inhabitants of this incomparable city of glory and delight. It is the mansion of the Prince of peace, and of the bride of the Lamb.

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## CHAPTER X.

### CONCLUSION.

AND now, beloved reader, we must bring the glimpse of the future history of the world to a close. We have feebly touched upon the salient points from the coming of the Lord Jesus (and He may come at any moment) for His people, until “the times of the restitution of all things” (Acts iii. 21), even the glorious millennium. We can only briefly say that this lovely era continues, as its name indicates, for the space of one thousand years. It is almost an unbroken time

of freedom from sin and death. Still, there are exceptions. Some families there are who refuse to go up to Jerusalem once a year, to the feast of tabernacles, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts. These people are visited with punishment. No rain shall fall upon them to refresh their land, and if any families of Egypt refuse to yield their homage, even the people of the country, where rain never falls, upon them a plague breaks out. So we find there is sin remaining which meets with condign punishment, and the sinner of a hundred years shall be cursed. But this occurs in the widening of the circle. For in Jerusalem, the centre of the universe, "as the days of a tree [long life] are the days of my people, and mine elect [Israel] shall long enjoy the work of their hands." "They shall not *hurt* nor *destroy* in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." (Isa. lxxv.)

I trust my reader knows where his position would be, and that his heart has seen somewhat of the counsels of God respecting himself and this sin-stained earth of ours. It may be briefly stated here that at the close of the millennium Satan will be loosed out of his prison. He directly introduces evil, proving, alas ! what a nature man possesses. Listen to the words of scripture : "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go 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 the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Rev. xx.) Then takes place the second resurrection. Those wicked who had been mingling with the dust for ages were not raised, of course, when the Lord Jesus came for His living and sleeping believers, but they are now raised ; and what for, dear reader ? To stand before "the great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away." The sea yields up the dead, so long held in safe keeping ; the grave no more retains its terror-stricken occupants, and hades, the unseen world, yields its prison-bound spirits, to stand with all the guilty before God to be judged and condemned and cast into the lake of fire. No believer in Jesus stands before "the great white throne," for we find that all, without exception, are cast into the region of irremediable, utter woe. This is the awful end of every person that rejects Christ.

Now, my thoughtful reader, what have you to say to these things ? I challenge your heart for an answer. It is very evident that the world is on the eve of mighty events ; and what should we be looking for, we who are living in this time when the gospel is proclaimed in all simplicity and fulness ? Our position should be the same as those dear ones of whom it is said, they were "looking for his Son from heaven."

We have seen, too, in spite of all the immense

efforts of evangelisation put forth, that the time when "a nation shall be born in a day" (by the way, a phrase not known in scripture), is not in this dispensation, but that the Jews are the people employed in the conversion of the nations by the preaching of "the gospel of the kingdom." But let none slack their energies in proclaiming far and near the gospel of grace. And let none forget that Mary's quiet, loving occupation with Jesus Himself was more refreshing to the heart of the Lord Jesus than Martha's bustling activity. Be it the honest endeavour of each one to know his true position. Let us not be looking from our own standpoint so much, but let us have God's view of things as they are. "Search the scriptures." Follow the example of the noble Bereans. It is quite possible that the soul may be more taken up with service than with the constant and sweet contemplation of the Person of the Christ of God.

And now, with the deep sense of approaching solemnities, let us live for eternity; in the loving expectation of the Saviour's fulfilling His word, "I will come again," let us live superior to all surroundings and circumstances, adverse or otherwise: and, with the judgment-seat of Christ before us, that divine, discriminating scrutiny of every good or bad work of every Christian, let us live "as becometh saints." May the Lord give the power!