

# THE SCROLL OF TIME;

OR,

## EPOCHS AND DISPENSATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

### A KEY TO THE CHART.

*With Special References to  
The Book of Revelation and other Prophecies.*

BY

JOHN ASHTON SAVAGE.

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"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."—JAMES v. 8.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."—ROM. xiii. 12.

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## PREFACE.

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**I**N studying historical and dispensational truth, the two important elements of *time* and *order* necessarily require to be as constantly before the mind, and as fully considered as the facts themselves, before we can arrive at a full and clear apprehension of such facts in all their relative bearings.

However clearly isolated facts of history may be seen, when looked at separately, if their relative order be not also clearly understood, there cannot be a full and correct comprehension of the facts themselves.

In considering the epochs and dispensations of Scripture, and the truths connected with them, it often happens that this important point is not sufficiently borne in mind. Facts are isolated and examined by themselves, and certain conclusions deduced therefrom, without properly considering the connections these truths may have with others in the Word, or the order in which they should be taken. Consequently much misapprehension prevails among Christians with reference to the dispensational truths of Scripture ; and especially with regard to prophecy.

This is particularly manifested in the way various statements and predictions of Scripture are mixed up or confused, and entirely misplaced as to time and order, so that their force and specific meaning are completely lost. The habit of selecting and discoursing upon single texts, or portions detached from their context, has largely contributed to this misunderstanding of Scripture ; and at the same time has tended to obscure and destroy the order and harmony of the book as a whole.

As a few examples of the confusion occasioned by this inattention to dispensational order, we may cite the following. Frequently we hear it said that there is to be *one* resurrection

of the good and the evil, on the same day at the end of the world. These two facts, it is true, are sometimes stated in the same passage (as in Matt. xxv. 46, and John v. 28, 29), but it is never stated that they will take place at the *same time*; while in Rev. xx. 4, 5, we are taught that there will be *two* resurrections, with at least a thousand years between them. "They (the saints of the first resurrection) lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

Again, it is often asserted that there is to be *one* judgment of the good and bad together, whereas Scripture teaches that there are to be *two* (not to mention the judgment of the saints); first, the judgment of the living *nations* (Matt. xxv. 31, and Rev. xix. 11-21), and then a thousand years after this, the judgment of the *dead* at the great white throne (Rev. xx. 12-15).

So likewise the two stages of the Lord's second coming (*i.e.*, His *coming for* His saints at the Rapture, and His subsequent *appearing with* them), are spoken of as one event; while the Word of God shows us that between these two, there is to be an interval of time—the day of tribulation, during which several occurrences are to take place.

With the view of directing special attention to these epochs and dispensations of Scripture, I was led some sixteen years ago to devise the accompanying chart in the hope that by appealing to the eye (by which the understanding and memory are more vividly impressed than by verbal description), their relative position and order might be better understood.

My expectations have, to a certain extent, been realised, for the chart (which has passed through several editions) has been helpful to many, in clearing up certain points in the dispensational and prophetic Scriptures that had been previously misunderstood.

These encouraging results have been brought about simply through the aid afforded by the pictorial design of the chart itself, with the few words of explanation and the Scripture quotations that appear upon it.

As it was my intention, however, from the first, to prepare a short key to the chart, the letters and figures which appear

on its lower margin, were inserted for purposes of reference, and are made use of throughout the present volume.

In the course of writing this key, I found so many important truths in the sacred Word, with reference to the subjects before me, that in order to give as clear and comprehensive a view as possible of the different epochs and dispensations, it became necessary to go somewhat more fully into these than was at first intended. Thus the work has considerably expanded during the process of preparation, and may be regarded as something more than a mere key to the chart.

In my efforts to arrange and connect some of the main links of prophecy, which appear to relate to the same periods of time, I have striven to bear in mind, and act upon, the important principle given to us in 2 Peter i. 20-21, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." An able writer commenting upon this passage remarks, "The apostle goes on to warn the faithful, that the prophecies of Scripture were not like the utterances of human will, and were not to be interpreted as though each had a separate solution—as though every prophecy were sufficient in itself for the explanation of its full meaning. They were all parts of one whole, having one and the same object, even the kingdom of God ; and each event was a preliminary step towards this object, and a link in the chain of God's government which led to it, impossible to be explained, unless the aim of the whole were apprehended—the revealed aim of the counsels of God in the glory of His Christ."

According to this important principle, we see that Scripture becomes its own interpreter, and further, that no prophecy can really be properly understood *separately* or *independently* of other prophecies, because all are so many links of one great chain of truth.

These truths may be compared to a grand mosaic composed of a great variety of parts, which by being properly arranged and joined together, form *one* perfect picture. However much each piece may be admired separately, as beautiful in itself, they must all be fitted exactly in their right places

before the whole design can be properly seen and realised. Moreover, it is only then that the value and purpose of each can be appreciated. If one piece be either omitted or misplaced, the picture will, to a certain extent, be marred.

So, too, the meaning of any prophecy can only be correctly understood, when the scope and design of the prophetic word as a whole is seen.

As one result of my endeavours (however imperfectly performed) thus to group together some of the leading prophecies, that seem to refer to the same time and circumstances—and that appear to have a direct bearing upon the several epochs and dispensations as a whole—I trust it will be seen, how remarkably these help to throw light upon each other, and that the true key to a right understanding of them will be found in thus viewing and comparing them together.

Indeed, one most delightful and profitable part of my task in tracing out the connecting links of the great dispensational and prophetical chain of truth, has been to note the way in which the various portions gathered from different parts of the Word, dovetail so wonderfully together, and form one grand harmonious whole, bearing upon every line of it the impress of its divine origin and authority.

If my feeble attempts to collect and arrange these precious Scriptures, with the view of showing their divine unity, comprehensiveness, and perfect harmony, lead others to search out for themselves, and more fully apprehend, the glorious purposes of God which He has been so graciously pleased to reveal to us, I shall not have written in vain.

Moreover this little work is sent forth with the earnest prayer that all who read it may be led by the Holy Spirit, as true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, to fully realise and practically enjoy the "blessed hope" of the Lord's personal return, to translate the Church to heaven before the day of tribulation; so that they may be ready for that momentous crisis (now so near at hand), their loins girded about and their lights burning, and they themselves like unto men that wait for their Lord. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh, shall find watching."

JOHN A. SAVAGE.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

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# EPOCHS AND DISPENSATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

WITH AN

*Explanatory Key to the Accompanying Chart.*

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## CHAPTER I.

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

**A**N epoch may be briefly defined as a period of time, marked by some remarkable event or events, from which a new order of historical circumstances begins,—a fresh starting-point, or era, of which the Deluge is a familiar instance.

The word “dispensation” has several meanings, but the sense in which it is employed in the chart, and in the following key to it, is the commonly accepted one as applied to Scripture subjects,—namely, the distribution of a series of historical events through certain periods of time, from one epoch to another. It is used in this sense in Ephesians i. 10,—“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.”

All events and occurrences in Scripture may be conveniently arranged in such epochs and dispensations, each having its own distinctive features.

Indeed, it must be obvious to every careful reader of the Bible, that this order of dispensations, with certain intervening epochs between each of them, underlies the whole structure of Biblical record.

And not only do we see these successive dispensations in Scripture thus following one another in due order, but we also find that they are marked by certain moral features or

characteristics that distinguish them one from the other. Thus, for instance, the past Jewish dispensation must be regarded as quite different in every feature from the present Christian dispensation ; and any attempt to blend or to amalgamate the principles of the one with those of the other must inevitably lead to utter confusion. Indeed, it may be confidently stated that this attempt to combine the principles of the Jewish system with the totally different ones of Christianity, has been one of the most fruitful sources of error and confusion in the professing Church of these latter days, and the cause of innumerable mistakes in the interpretation of God's blessed Word.

Such having been the case, it becomes at once apparent that a right understanding of these scriptural dispensations, and of the principles and characteristics of each, is of the utmost importance, and is quite essential to a full and proper apprehension of the Scriptures as a whole. There are indeed many portions of the Word that cannot be rightly understood, apart from their dispensational connections, as must be evident to all who think on the subject for a moment.

For it often happens in the experience of Bible students, when meeting with difficulties in the Word, that the moment they perceive the true place in the dispensational order to which the portion under consideration belongs, light breaks in, and everything becomes clear and intelligible.

Having thus in view the great importance of rightly understanding the scriptural order of truth, a coloured chart or map has been devised and is presented herewith, in which all the epochs and dispensations of Scripture, from the creation to the end of the world, are graphically displayed ; so that by appealing to the eye—through which the understanding and memory are more readily and vividly impressed than by mere verbal description—a comprehensive view of the order and relative connections of the several dispensations may be readily seen and remembered.

To this chart the present work is mainly intended to serve as an explanatory key ; while, at the same time, such needed descriptions and references are added as may help to make the whole a fairly full outline of these important subjects within a moderate compass.

## CHAPTER II.

## CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHART.

WE will now turn to the chart itself, and, first of all, give a short general description of its construction and purpose.

It will be noticed that the whole chart is divided by a horizontal line into two parts; the uppermost (coloured blue) to represent the heaven or heavenlies, and the lower (coloured green) the earth; so as thus to show the transactions in each sphere separately, as well as the points at which they come in contact. Below this middle line, the successive epochs are indicated by narrow oblong and perpendicular lines, numbering *ten* epochs in all, as shown by the figures at the lower margin of the chart; while the various dispensations are represented, for the most part, by small circles between each of the epoch lines, also numbering *ten* in all, as marked by the capital letters at the bottom, from A to K.

The narrow red line that runs through the three dispensations C, D, and H,—*i.e.*, from the call of Abram to the Captivity, where it is broken off, and again resumed in the millennium,—is intended to represent the history of the Israelites as a *nation*, under the special and direct government of God, during which He could say of them, “Ye are My people.” After the Captivity, more than two thousand years ago, they ceased to be a nation of God’s people, and they have ever since continued in the “Loammi” position of “Not My people,” having been cast off for their repeated rebellions. Hence the break or discontinuance of the red line at epoch 5. But they will be restored again as a nation to God’s favour, and to their own land, as stated in Hosea i. 10, —“In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.” Therefore the red line is again resumed, and continued through the millennial dispensation.

The great image of Daniel ii. is used to represent the

"TIMES OF THE GENTILES," or the history of the nations of the world, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the end of the age, extending through the three dispensations E, F, G, from epochs 5 to 8. The Christian dispensation is shown in an oblong space—marked F below—and divided into two parts, the ministries of John the Baptist and of Christ, and the Church period.

In this latter portion the professing Church, or Christendom, is indicated by the figure of the seven-branched candlestick, because it is so represented in Revelation i. 20, and its history is given in the addresses to the seven Churches, from Ephesus to Laodicea (Rev. ii. and iii.).

In this division the *oval* figure that is seen is intended to represent the "one body," or the assembly of God, composed of *all true Christians*, wherever they are found, whether scattered among the various denominations, or, it may be, not connected with any of them; and it is seen again in the *oval* above in the heavens, after the first resurrection. The dark space immediately following the Christian period is intended to show the "day of tribulation" (Dan. xii. 1, and Matt. xxiv. 21), and the semicircle that follows this represents the millennium, its red line showing that Israel is now restored. The next shaded space after the millennium and epoch 9, indicates the last apostasy and final battle; after which is the judgment of the great "white throne," and this carries us down to the very end of this world's history. Then follow the new heaven and new earth, that emerge into the eternal state, which is indicated by the arc of an endless circle. The lines in the heavens show the first coming of Christ to this world, His ascension to heaven; and then the two stages of His second coming,—first, *for* His saints, *before* the day of tribulation, then *with* them just *before* the millennium. The larger *oval* figure in the heavens and the *crown* below represent the saints of the first resurrection—the "New Jerusalem"—reigning from above over the earth during the thousand years of the millennium.

The serpents and the crooked or zig-zag lines, that appear in different parts of the chart, are intended to represent "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" (Rev. xii. 9).

First of all, he is seen as "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2), and also as "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4).

Next we see this great serpent cast down from the heavens to the earth during the day of tribulation; and after that day closes, he is bound in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. Being again loosed, he comes to the earth, to lead its inhabitants to their last rebellion and utter destruction; after which he is finally cast into the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 7-15).

Each of the foregoing points, which have been just glanced at in a general way, will be treated of more fully when they come up for consideration in their regular order.

## CHAPTER III.

## CREATION OF THE WORLD—[EPOCH 1].

THE first epoch which claims our attention is that great work of God, the creation of the world, of which we have a sublime account in the first and second chapters of Genesis.

Doubtless the world had existed for ages before the second period mentioned in Genesis i. 2 and onwards, when God formed it as a habitation for man, and to this the remains of extinct animals and plants found by geologists in the various rocky strata and sedimentary deposits of the earth clearly testify. Moreover, it is probable that some great convulsions had occurred at different periods of time (probably with many centuries intervening between each) during these long past ages, by which the animals and plants of each successive period were (it is assumed) completely swept away, and others of a different sort were created in their stead; the earth being renewed or remodelled after each catastrophe to suit the altered condition of things.

To the demands of geologists, that it would require millions of years to produce the condition of things now witnessed in the rocks and deposits of the earth, we can confidently point to the interval of time that is evidently implied between the first and second verses of Genesis i., as fully answering all such demands. For between the statement in the first verse, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and the next sentence in the second verse, "And the earth was without form, and void," &c., there may have intervened millions of years, for anything we know to the contrary, during which the extinct animals and plants, whose remains are now found in the deep rocky layers of the earth's crust, may have existed. Besides, it is not said that God *created* the earth without form, as such a statement would be a reflection on the wisdom and power of God; on the contrary, after each act of creation we read, "God saw that it was good."

The world if created ages before, as the words in the second verse seem to imply, was at this crisis or epoch found "without form, and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep ;" probably in consequence of one of those catastrophes just alluded to, and the Almighty Creator came forth to remodel it and prepare it as a habitation for man, by the work of creation described in the opening chapters of Genesis.\*

In this stupendous work of creation we see the decree of Omnipotence going forth in the potent words of creative power, "Let there be," and light, order, and symmetry instantly appear everywhere. All kinds of living creatures, and growing plants, spring forth at once into existence, all perfect in design and mechanism, through the infinite power and wisdom of God. How sublime, how magnificent, and yet how simply described !

And this grand work of creation was all accomplished in six literal days ("evenings and mornings"), otherwise there could be no meaning in the command, "Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy. . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day" (Exod. xx. 8-11).

With what intense relief and satisfaction the Christian can turn from the absurd and senseless theory of evolution (by which the scientists of these last days attempt in their folly to account for the existence of the natural world around us), to this simple, grand, and comprehensible account of its creation, given to us directly from God Himself through His servant Moses, which bears upon every line the impress of divine authority, and which, moreover, furnishes us with a perfectly satisfactory explanation (as far as it is necessary for us to know) of the origin of all things, so that even a child can understand it.

Of course we do not pretend to inquire *how* all these things were made, for in doing so we should be committing the folly

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\* Isaiah xlv. 18 throws further light on this point, and clearly confirms the above remarks, "God Himself that formed the earth and made it ; He hath established it, He created it *not in vain*, He formed it to be inhabited." "In vain" in the original has the same force as *without form and void* in Genesis i., where God *formed* the earth out of chaos *to be inhabited*.

of those who, "professing themselves to be wise, . . . became fools" by prying into things they never could know. For where, we might ask, is the philosopher who could fully describe the growth even of a daisy? Enough for us to know that the infinite and omnipotent God "spake, and it was done ; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psa. xxxiii. 9).

Therefore we can confidently and intelligently say, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Heb. xi. 3). But the astounding thing is, that persons of intelligence, and of the highest education too, should be so beguiled as to believe in the absurd and nonsensical theory of evolution in these so-called enlightened times. And what an awful proof it is that "the god of this world" is more than ever blinding the minds of them which believe not, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. iv. 4).

Surely this is one of the many signs that we are indeed in the last days.

## CHAPTER IV.

## FROM THE CREATION TO THE DELUGE.

## [DISPENSATION A.]

THE work of creation being finished, the first dispensation of the world's history begins. But, alas! the very first page of it is sadly marred and stained by the introduction of sin, through the subtlety of Satan, who appears early on the scene.

Where all was before bright and beautiful, in the happy innocence of that lovely garden of Eden, there was now sorrow, gloom, and depravity ; and that dark cloud of sin which then arose, was henceforth to hang like a funeral pall over all the future history of the world, down to the end of time—ever casting its deep and sombre shadow over everything. But God, in His infinite love and mercy, immediately points to the remedy in announcing the redemption that Christ should accomplish in due time, The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15).

The dispensation that followed the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, extended for about 1656 years, without any material break or change, and the chief moral feature of this long period was a sad exemplification of the unrestrained self-will of man, who, left to himself and his own devices, became more and more corrupt, self-willed, and rebellious as time wore on.

The leading particulars and events recorded of this period may be briefly noted as follows :—

(1.) The description of the beautiful garden of Eden ; the placing of Adam and Eve therein, in happy innocence, by God Himself ; and the commandment given to them concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. ii.).

(2.) The serpent's subtle temptation that led to the "Fall of Man," and the entrance of sin into the world. The guilt and sorrow, and the terrible curse that consequently followed upon the whole world ; and the expulsion of Adam and Eve

from the garden of Eden. Also the gracious announcement of a Deliverer,—the seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii.).

(3.) The offerings of Cain and Abel—Cain's rejected and Abel's accepted; the former being the offering of a proud, self-sufficient, and disobedient soul, and the latter of a humble, submissive heart, acting in accordance with the then right way of approaching God through sacrifice. Abel slain by his brother Cain, "because his (Cain's) own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John iii. 12). The first recorded fruit of sin manifested in a foul murder (Gen. iv.).

These two brothers have ever served as types of the two classes of mankind which have always existed since the Fall—Abel representing the righteous, who accept God's way of salvation, and bow their hearts to His commands; and Cain, the wicked, who refuse to submit to God's ways, and who, in the pride and self-will of their rebellious hearts, vainly strive "to establish their own righteousness," instead of submitting to the righteousness of God (Rom. x. 3). The "way of Cain" (Jude 11) has ever been the way of the ungodly world.

(4.) The descendants of Cain and of Seth, particularly noted, thus showing us the distinct lines and genealogies of the two classes—the evil and the good. Seth takes the place of righteous Abel, and thus a line of demarcation is drawn between these two—Seth and Cain—and their descendants (Gen. iv. and v.).

(5.) In the line of Seth one particularly bright gleam of history shines out prominently above all its surroundings, and that is the beautiful, though very short account of Enoch, the man of God, "who walked with God three hundred years . . . and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. v. 22-24). What a long and noble testimony in those dark times, the dim twilight of this world's history.

Further light is given to us with regard to this godly and noble character in Hebrews xi. 5, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

From Jude 14, we learn that he was a prophet, and that he prophesied, saying, "Behold the Lord has come with ten

thousands of His saints ;” \*—the first announcement of the second coming of the Lord, an event that is yet future, though mentioned thousands of years before His first coming, which has long passed. It was appropriately foretold, too, by one who was not permitted to die, but who was translated bodily to heaven, as Elijah was : and thus it may be intended to foreshadow the future rapture or translation of *living* saints at Christ's second coming. This seems to be all the more probable when we consider a certain parallelism that appears in the circumstances connected with these two events. For Enoch was translated to heaven *before* the Deluge judgment, and was thus *delivered from* it, while Noah had to be in it, though he was *preserved through* it. So also the living saints at the Lord's coming will be caught up to heaven *before* the day of tribulation (as promised in Rev. iii. 10), but unbelievers will have to pass into the fiery trial of that awful day, while a godly remnant of both Jews and Gentiles (see Rev. vii.) will be *preserved through it*, to enter into millennial blessing. Thus Enoch, the first prophet of the Lord's second coming, may very properly be regarded, as to his translation, as a fitting type of the future translation of living saints to heaven, when the Lord comes *for* His own, as set forth in 1 Thessalonians iv.

(6.) As men began to multiply, wickedness continually increased during this first dispensation, until “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. vi. 5, 11, 12).

Therefore it was that God determined to destroy all—except one family—by an overwhelming flood (Gen. vi. 13). Noah was instructed to build “an ark to the saving of his house,” and all the animals that were to go in with him, and he patiently toiled at it for a number of years.

During all those long years Noah doubtless preached repentance to those unbelieving and disobedient people, who in all probability returned the warnings of this man of God

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\* In the A.V. this passage reads, “cometh with,” but in several of the best translations it is rendered “came,” or “has come with,”—a future event foretold in the past tense, like the prophecy in the 53rd of Isaiah.

with insulting jeers and scoffings, and still went on in their evil ways, until Noah entered the ark, and the terrible deluge overtook them all.

The preaching to those disobedient antediluvians is clearly referred to in 1 Peter iii. 19, 20, "By which also He (Christ by the Spirit) went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved." Their *souls* were in "prison" *when Peter wrote*, but they were living on the earth in Noah's day, the time when Christ, by the Spirit, went to preach to them, chiefly, it may be, through the instrumentality of Noah.

What noble faith we see here in this upright servant of God, toiling on perseveringly for many years, without the faintest sign of the threatened deluge to encourage him—nothing but the bare word of God. It is for this that he is deservedly enrolled among the nobles of faith in Hebrews xi. 7, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

(7.) The closing scenes of this first dispensation furnish us with another very striking and solemn type of what the last scenes of the present dispensation will be. For though the gospel of God's free grace has been proclaimed for centuries, and is still sounding forth its gracious calls and warnings to the world, when the next awful judgment comes to pass,—namely, the judgment of the nations by the Lord Himself (Matt. xxv. 31, 32; Rev. xix. 11-21),—the great majority of mankind will be found as heedless and unbelieving as they were in the days of Noah.

To this our Lord alludes in Matthew xxiv. 37-39, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." How strange, that in the face of such a plain scripture—and of others of like import—

there should be found many Christians who maintain that the world is to grow better and better through the preaching of the gospel until the *spiritual* millennium they are thinking about, shall come to pass!

The wicked days of Noah's time will yet be repeated, *before* the millennium comes.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE DELUGE—[EPOCH 2].

FROM THE DELUGE TO THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

[DISPENSATION B.]

WE now come to the second great epoch,—the memorable Deluge,—the first direct judgment of God upon this world for its daring and persistent wickedness. When the long years of patient waiting had come to an end—the ark being now finished—and the warning voice of Noah had ceased to call the people to repentance, the animals of every kind—the beasts of the forest, as well as those that were tame and domesticated—came wending their way with the fowls of heaven and every creeping thing, to the ark of safety prepared for them, under God's directing power, and they entered in with Noah and his family. Then the door was shut, or, as it is significantly stated, "The Lord shut him in." The one door (and there was but one) was closed, and firmly fixed, so that none could open it, for God Himself had closed it. How awfully solemn to think that the door was at that moment closed for ever on all those many thousands of hardened unbelievers, who had refused to listen to the voice of mercy!

And so, alas! it will be later on, when another door will be shut, and the unbelievers will be excluded; for it would seem that neither the judgments and warnings of the past, nor the entreaties of God's ambassadors, will change the main tide of this world's wickedness, though a few here and there will believe; but in comparison with the vast majority that will not, their number will indeed be very small, as our Lord said when down here, "Few there be that find it."

When Noah and his family were safely shut in the ark, the rain began to descend in torrents, and so continued for forty days and nights. And in addition to the windows of heaven being thus opened, the fountains of the deep—the vast sub-

terranean springs in the interior of the earth—burst forth with tremendous force, and the dry land was completely covered with water, even to the tops of the highest hills, and every living creature perished.

Though Scripture is silent as to the first effect of this appalling catastrophe upon those doomed antediluvians, yet we can well imagine that their consternation and horror must have been awful in the extreme, as they were thus suddenly awakened to the terrible fact that the judgment predicted by Noah, on account of their sin and folly in rebelling against God, was now about to overtake them. We can also imagine their frantic efforts to escape by striving to ascend the highest summits, and, it may be, by uttering the most agonising cries to Noah to open the ark and let them in.

But it was all in vain, for the waters rose, until every peak was covered, and all were overwhelmed in inevitable destruction.

The waters continued to rise and to prevail for about six months, when they were at their highest. Then God caused a wind to pass over this all-pervading ocean, which began to abate from that time, and the ark soon rested upon the mountains of Ararat. Three months and forty days later (or about nine months after the flood began) Noah sent out two birds,—first a raven, which never returned; then a dove, which returned because she found no rest for the sole of her foot. When the dove was sent out the second time, it returned with an olive leaf, so Noah knew that the waters were abated, and after waiting for about two months more, till the face of the ground was dry, he and all with him came forth at the command of God, having been in the ark for a little over a year.

Thus cleansed by the removal of all its wicked inhabitants, the world began another phase of its history with only eight persons on it, Noah and his wife, his three sons, and their wives.

The first thing Noah, as a righteous man of God did, was to build an altar unto the Lord, and to offer burnt-offerings thereon; with which the Lord was well pleased, and He entered into a covenant with him, and with all creation through him.

The two leading points of this interesting covenant are,

that "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. viii. 22), and that the earth should not again be destroyed by a flood of waters. "The waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. ix. 15, 16). And this beautiful "bow in the cloud" ever continues to be the perpetual token of that gracious covenant.

Then during the dispensation that followed,—that is, from the Deluge to the call of Abraham, which lasted about four hundred and twenty-seven years,—we see that God began to deal in a general governmental way with the children of men, and that the chief feature of this period was, as briefly stated on the chart, "the public governmental dealings of God with the world."

After an account of the covenant with Noah, and of the posterity of his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, we have a description of the most prominent event of that period,—namely, the erection of the Tower of Babel on the plain of Shinar, where the great city of Babylon was afterwards built.

In this event we have another striking example of the pride, independence, and obstinate self-will of the human heart, which led the people of that day into direct disobedience of God's commands; for God's purpose from the first was that mankind should multiply and replenish the earth (Gen. i. 28), but these rebellious ones said, "Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. xi. 4). To accomplish this they set about building their high tower and great city, when God, in His displeasure, came down, and, by confounding their language, scattered them all over the world. Here again, even after such a terrible judgment as the Deluge, we find an ungodly world drifting rapidly into the evil courses to which it is so prone.

In this noted rebellion we see the first attempt to establish an unholy confederacy in opposition to the ways and purposes of God, which became in that day, and also subsequently, the nucleus and hostile camp of the enemies of

God,—the very centre, too, of various systems of idolatry. Consequently this Babel, or Babylon, ever stands out prominently in Scripture as the type of all lawlessness and rebellion against God, which we, even in this day of full Gospel light, see growing more pronounced than ever, and, as we know from God's Word, will continue to grow, until it culminates in the abominations of the two beasts and the Babylon of the Apocalypse.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE CALL OF ABRAHAM—[EPOCH 3].

## CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE EXODUS.

## [DISPENSATION C.]

AT the next epoch, the call of Abraham, we come to a distinctly new departure from all that had gone before.

God, in His counsels of wisdom and goodness, had purposed to have a race or nation of people for His own peculiar possession, who were to be separated from all other nations, and known as the "people of God," as He said by His prophet, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos iii. 2); though for a time they have forfeited this privileged position by their backslidings. They were also to be under His special guidance and protection, and to them He would communicate His desires, purposes, and ways, so that they should be living witnesses to declare His glory among the Gentiles. "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise" (Isa. xliii. 21).

This election of grace was, moreover, to be a preparation for the advent in the latter days of the great Redeemer of the world, who was to be born of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and was to come as the Messiah King still later on.

So Abraham (whose lineage in the line of Shem we have in Genesis xi.) was called to leave his home and his kindred in Ur of the Chaldees, to go whithersoever the Lord should lead him; and God made that memorable covenant with him that he should be the father of a great nation, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, and that his descendants should possess all the land of Canaan, "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

The special feature of this divine covenant was the promise of *earthly* possessions and blessings to Abraham and

his descendants, the Israelites, who were to be God's peculiarly privileged people *on the earth*, under His special care and guidance ; while all their enjoyments, prospects, and hopes, were bounded by an earthly sphere.

In all these provisions we see at once the fundamental difference between the Jewish and the Christian dispensations, the latter being wholly *heavenly* in its character, its aspirations, aims, and hopes, and thus connected and associated with Christ now in the heavens, as Paul beautifully describes it in Ephesians ii. 6, God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And it is most important ever to remember this distinction, that we may be preserved from the confusion into which many have fallen through not clearly seeing this difference between the earthly and the heavenly position.

The red line in the chart begins with the call of Abraham and with the covenant then made with him, and marks the important fact that God's special dealings with Abraham and his descendants—afterwards known as the Israelites—commenced with that call and covenant, and it is seen running through two dispensations, down to the Captivity, when for a time it was broken off.

This dispensation (C) embraces the interesting and instructive histories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons, and the early history of Moses and Aaron, which are recorded in Genesis xii.-l., and Exodus i.-xii., 51.

The history of Abraham, the founder of the Israelitish nation, is particularly full of the most interesting details ; hence in Hebrews xi., which recounts the doings of Old Testament heroes, special notice is taken of his wonderful faith and obedience. The three principal occasions on which his faith was displayed are there mentioned, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed ; and he went out, not knowing whither he went ;" "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country," &c. ; and "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac" ; &c. (Heb. xi. 8, 9, 17).

The leading events of this period are :—

1. Abraham's history, some of the chief incidents of which

are his journeys to Egypt and through the land of Canaan ; his separation from Lot ; his interview with three angels, one of whom was the Lord ; his pleading for Sodom and Gomorrah before the destruction of those cities ; his offering up of his son Isaac ; and his sending his servant to procure a wife for Isaac, &c.

2. The history of Isaac, and particulars concerning his two sons, Jacob and Esau (Heb. xi. 20).

3. The separate history of Jacob ; his sojourn in Padan-aram and his marriage there ; his wrestling with the Angel—the Lord—with many particulars concerning his twelve sons, the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel (Heb. xi. 21).

All the foregoing patriarchs wandered for many years, as strangers and pilgrims, in the land of Canaan that was ultimately to be theirs, resting in simple faith on the promises of God which they had received, but without ever coming into possession of the land (Heb. xi. 13).

4. The wonderful history of Joseph ; his being sold into Egypt by his brethren ; his imprisonment, deliverance, and elevation to be ruler of the land, through the special providence of God ; his sending for his father and all his relatives to dwell in the land of Egypt ; his command regarding his bones, and his death (Heb. xi. 22).

5. The oppression of the children of Israel by the Egyptians after the death of Joseph.

6. The remarkable incidents connected with the birth of Moses ; his position and education in the court of Pharaoh ; his faith in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer with the people of God ; his defence of his oppressed brethren and his flight to Midian ; the appearance of God to him in the burning bush ; and the mission given to him to go to Egypt to deliver the Israelites from their cruel bondage (Heb. xi. 23-27).

7. The ten miraculous plagues of Egypt ; in some respects types of the judgments yet to come at the time of the end.

8. The institution of the passover. This passover, the most important feast ever given to God's people, was appointed by God Himself in all its wonderful details, to be observed on that memorable night (and ever afterwards), the last night of their sojourn in the land of their bondage.

The observance of this significant institution by the Israelites, on that awful night when the destroying angel passed through the land to slay all the first-born of the Egyptians, must have been extremely solemn, telling of the terrible judgment of God on the one hand, and of merciful deliverance on the other; while the sprinkling of the blood on the door-posts, and the roasted lamb eaten with bitter herbs, and in haste, may have suggested some deeper and more extended meaning underneath it all, though it could be seen but dimly in that day. But this feast of the passover is of surpassing interest to us, and to the whole world, as well as to the Jews, inasmuch as the slain lamb without blemish was doubtless intended to serve as a type of Christ, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" while the sprinkled blood on the door-posts (affording perfect protection to the inmates within), taken with the words, "When I see the blood, I will pass over," ever serves as a figure of the perfect efficacy of Christ's atonement for sin by the offering of Himself; so that all who believe and rest in the work which He accomplished by giving His life as a sacrifice for sin, will be saved and delivered from death and judgment, as the Israelites were delivered from the destroying angel on that eventful night. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7).

This testimony of faith and obedience (marked at times by sad failure, as all the testimonies of man on this earth have ever been), continued from the call of Abraham to the Exodus for four hundred and thirty years; that is, the sojourning of Abraham and his descendants, including the residence of the Israelites in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years altogether (Exod. xii. 40; Gal. iii. 17).

The chief distinguishing feature of this dispensation, as a whole, is that it may be generally described as a period of "Promise and Testimony."

## CHAPTER VII.

## EXODUS OF ISRAELITES—[EPOCH 4].

## EXODUS TO THE CAPTIVITY—[DISPENSATION D].

**A**FTER the Israelites had suffered hard bondage in the land of Egypt for more than two hundred years,\* the Lord sent Moses to procure their deliverance, to bring them out of that land, and to be their leader through the wilderness to the land of promise (Exod. iii.).

The last terrible stroke of judgment that fell upon the Egyptians, when the destroying angel entered their dwellings in the dead of night, and slew all their first-born, completely broke down their stubborn resistance to the demands of Moses; so that, in the utmost consternation, they hastened, even that same night, to drive the Israelites out of the land: "And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men;" and to hasten their movements, they lent them such things as they required (Exod. xii.).

So all the Israelites—"about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle"—departed in haste from Egypt that very night, and journeyed from Rameses to Succoth.

As soon as they started, God, in His marvellous condescension, undertook to be their Guide, by means of a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night; such as had never been seen before. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night."

In Exod. xiv. we have a most graphic account of the first great event that befell them after they had journeyed a short

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\* In three passages, Gen. xv. 13, Exod. xii. 40, and Acts vii. 6, this period is given as 400 or 430 years; reckoned doubtless from a different point of view.

distance—the “passage of the Red Sea.” When Pharaoh and his mighty host pursued them, and bore down upon them in a defile leading to the sea, the hearts of the people melted within them for fear ; and they cried unto the Lord in their distress. Then Moses, the servant of God, in the full confidence of a noble faith, could boldly say, even at such a critical moment, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.” Never was faith more signally rewarded.

The Lord immediately provided a wondrous way of deliverance, by opening up a highway in the midst of the sea—the very barrier that blocked their way—for them to pass over. And they “went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground : and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left ” (Exod. xiv.).

A most marvellous scene was presented to view by this stupendous miracle, the thousands of Israel marching forward between those high walls of water until they safely reached the other side ; but when the proud-hearted Pharaoh, with his formidable army, essayed to follow them, the waters swiftly returned, and they were all instantly overwhelmed and destroyed.

That was to Israel a glorious day of deliverance ; ever to be had in remembrance with praises and thanksgivings ; and we wonder not at their bursting forth into that grand exulting song of triumph given to us in Exod. xv. : for the Lord had truly “triumphed gloriously.” This memorable event is frequently referred to in Scripture ; and has always been regarded as an expressive type of the full salvation and deliverance provided for every true believer by the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, through His perfect work.

The departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, and their entering upon a long pilgrimage through the wilderness, to a land they had never seen, was a most important crisis in their history ; as it was the commencement for them, of entirely new circumstances and conditions of life ; under which they were brought into nearer relationship to God (who was pleased, in His infinite goodness, to become their special Guide and Protector), so as to be instructed and disciplined by Him in His governmental principles and ways, through the instrumentality of Moses and other leaders and prophets.

Following their divinely directed movements after they crossed the Red Sea, we have a series of the most wonderful occurrences mentioned, such as never transpired in the history of any other people or nation. We can but merely glance at some of them, without entering into details.

A few of the leading incidents in this part of their extraordinary history are their various journeyings through the wilderness, guided by the pillar of cloud; the many miraculous interpositions of Jehovah on their behalf, sending them bread from heaven, and giving them water out of the rock, &c.; the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; the construction of the tabernacle and the ark; the appointment of various sacrifices, offerings, and feasts; the frequent direct communications from God to them, through Moses; the visitations of God in judgment for their iniquities, and, on the other hand, the subjugation of their enemies when they were obedient and trusted in Him.

All these remarkable events connected with their long pilgrimage of forty years may be regarded as the first part of their history, in the dispensation we are now considering.

Moreover, all the circumstances of this notable pilgrimage have ever been a rich mine of most precious instruction to believers throughout all ages. Indeed we are expressly told that these things were written for our profit. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (or types): and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Cor. x. 11).

Marvellous types and foreshadowings of the glorious work of Christ in redemption, and of the experiences of believers, they have found their full accomplishment in the antitypes of these latter days.

All the events of this period of Israel's history, from their Exodus to their entrance into Canaan, are recorded in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

In the second part of this dispensation we have the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan under Joshua; his conquests and possession of Palestine, and his subsequent division of the land.

The chief points of interest in this part of their history are—the memorable passage of the Jordan; the encampment

at Gilgal, when the manna ceased, and the people ate of the old corn of the land ; the overthrow of Jericho ; the numerous battles with the kings of Canaan, and Joshua's final victories ; and the division of Palestine among the twelve tribes,—all of which are narrated in the book of Joshua.

Then, in the third part, we find the Israelites under the government of judges—some fifteen in number, from Othniel to Samuel—for a period of about two hundred and thirty years, of which we have an account in the first twelve chapters of the book of Judges.

This part comprises many battles with the heathen kings around them, in some of which they were victorious, because they trusted in God and were obedient ; and in others they were defeated by reason of their disobedience and rebelliousness.

On account of their oft-repeated departures from God, and their participation with the heathen in their idolatrous and wicked ways, God also permitted their enemies to reduce them, at various times, to a state of servitude for several years.

Thus they were made subject to the kings of Mesopotamia, and of Moab, to Jabin and Sisera, to the kings of Midian and Ammon, and to the Philistines.

In the fourth part we have the government of a long roll of kings of Judah and Israel (in two different lines after the division), from Saul the first to Zedekiah the last, who was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon—particulars of which are recorded in 1 Samuel x.-xxxi., 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles.

This kingly period, which lasted for about five hundred and seven years, includes a variety of intensely interesting histories, which are full of the most profitable instruction. But it would be foreign to our purpose to do more than just allude to them in a very general way.

The first four kings—Saul, David, Solomon, and Rehoboam—reigned over the whole house of Israel ; but, after the revolt under Rehoboam, we have two separate lines—the one of the kings of Judah, and the other of the kings of Israel.

The total number of monarchs during these five hundred and seven years was twenty-three over Judah and nineteen over Israel ; some of whom “did that which was right in the

sight of the Lord," and many others who did that which was evil. But of all these forty-two kings, David—the man after God's own heart; the "sweet psalmist of Israel"—stands out pre-eminently above them all as the noblest character, and the most faithful and devoted servant of the Lord. "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." He was distinguished above all for his unwavering and realistic faith in God, and for the grand courage which that faith gave him in fighting the battles of the Lord, as well as for his profound piety, and earnest devotion as a true worshipper of God; while he was the best and most righteous ruler the Israelites ever had. Hence he has been most highly honoured of God, in being chosen as the special type of the Lord Jesus in His kingly character and future reign; while to him is assigned the headship of the whole house of Israel; and the privilege of being regarded as chief in the direct lineage of Christ Himself, which facts are so often referred to in Scripture: "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper," &c. (Jer. xxiii. 5). "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matt. xxi. 9). "And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Luke i. 32; Isa. ix. 7), and many other similar passages.

The whole of this dispensation—*i.e.* from the Exodus to the Captivity—comprising the foregoing series of events—continued for about nine hundred and four years; and, taken as a whole, may be described as a time of law, and judicial and kingly government, the latter beginning with Saul.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE CAPTIVITY OF THE JEWS—[EPOCH 5].

## FROM THE CAPTIVITY TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

## [DISPENSATION E.]

WE now come to a memorable, but very sad, epoch in the history of God's people,—the captivity and complete break-up of the nation that had for many centuries enjoyed the protection and favour of Jehovah.

Prophet after prophet had been sent to warn them of approaching judgment if they continued in their departure from God, and oft-repeated disobedience of His commands, but they heeded not. Then the prophet Jeremiah was commissioned by God to convey to them the dread message,—“This whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years” (Jer. xxv. 11).

And so it came to pass, for Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, took Jerusalem, and carried away Jehoiachin, his family, and all the mighty people of the land, as well as all the sacred treasures of the house of the Lord, to Babylon. Eleven years later, he went down a second time, laid waste the city, and took Zedekiah (the uncle of Jehoiachin, whom he had made king) and the rest of the people captives to Babylon: thus completing the terrible work of destruction and the breaking up of the Jewish nation.

The first dismemberment of the nation took place when Shalmaneser carried the ten tribes of Israel captives to Assyria (they have been lost ever since), over a hundred years before the captivity of Judah (2 Kings xvii.).

With the captivity by Nebuchadnezzar of the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin the dissolution of the whole nation was complete. For though Judah returned after the seventy years of captivity (see Ezra and Nehemiah), they were subject always more or less to other nations until their final

dispersion at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the Roman general, in the year A.D. 70.

Israel having thus forfeited and lost its position of power as a nation before God, the sceptre of earthly government was transferred to the Gentiles, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, and is to continue in their hands "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24).

Therefore from this epoch (No. 5), the period called "TIMES OF THE GENTILES" commenced, which has continued ever since, and will still go on until the end of the present age.

The whole of this era—the times of the Gentiles—is represented in the chart by the great image described in the second of Daniel, which is interpreted by Daniel as the symbolical representation of the four great national powers or kingdoms that should succeed one another from the time of Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 606) down to the end of the day of tribulation, just before the millennium, when the stone "cut out of the mountain without hands" (the Lord Jesus) "shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms" (vers. 44, 45).

In Revelation xix. 11-21 we see the fulfilment of this prophecy. These four successive kingdoms are also represented, in another vision in Daniel vii., by four wild beasts, and it is interesting to note the marked difference in the symbolism employed. To a monarch like Nebuchadnezzar, who prided himself on national greatness and power, these Gentile kingdoms are suitably made to appear as a strong metallic image, the common symbol of a nation's greatness (he set up an image of gold to be worshipped); but when they are looked upon from God's point of view in all their perverse moral characteristics, they are presented to His servant Daniel as four wild and ravenous beasts—the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the fourth beast dreadful and terrible. How exceedingly interesting and instructive it is to note the way God looks upon this world, and thus to see that what man, in the pride of his political power, considers grand and excellent in the government of nations, is after all represented by the holy God under the symbols of wild beasts.

Truly, "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke xvi. 15). Well did

our Lord say, "My kingdom is not of this world," for its moral features are totally different from the ruling principles of worldly governments.

The salient points in these two wonderful visions are presented in the following tabular form to show their correspondence in purpose as to history, though they are so differently represented metaphorically, as well as to give a succinct view of them and their application as a whole :—

## THE DREAMS OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND DANIEL.

The Image, Dan. ii.	The Beasts, Dan. vii.	The Kingdoms.	First Monarchs by whom they were Founded.	Time when Founded.
The Gold.	The Lion.	Babylonian.	Nebuchadnezzar.	606 B.C. Dan. ii. 38.
" Silver.	" Bear.	Medo-Persian.	Darius.	538 " Dan. v. 31.
" Brass.	" Leopard.	Grecian.	Alexander the Great.	336 " Dan. viii. 7, 8.
" Iron.	" Ten-horned Beast.	Roman.	Augustus Cæsar.	27 " Luke ii. 1.

Furthermore, in the last scenes of both these prophetic visions we see an exact correspondence in three important particulars in which they mutually explain each other.

1st, The coming forth of a Judge to execute judgment on these nations. In the first or image dream the Judge is the Stone "cut out of the mountain without hands" (Dan. ii. 34, 45), while in the second we behold "One like the Son of Man" coming in the clouds of heaven (Dan. vii. 13; Matt. xxv. 31).

2nd, The destruction of the nations involved in this judgment. In the first dream we find that the Stone smote the image upon his feet,—“Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors” (Dan. ii. 34, 35). In the second it is stated, “But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end” (Dan. vii. 26).

3rd. The establishment of the millennial kingdom of Christ. In the first dream we read, “The Stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Dan. ii. 35, 44); and in the second, that “The

kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Dan. vii. 27).

Here it may be well to pause for a moment to inquire how far the past history of these four nations has agreed with the prophetic visions given to Daniel more than two thousand years ago. To this there can be but one answer, and that is, that in the histories of these kingdoms we find a complete exemplification of all the particulars mentioned in the prophecies as far as they have yet been fulfilled.

This, I presume, is admitted by all historians. Indeed, with the plainly established facts of history before them, they could come to no other conclusion.

These four great kingdoms have not only existed, but have successively followed each other in the exact order given in the visions. Moreover, all the characteristic features predicted of them have been fully verified in every particular; thus incidentally furnishing us with another incontrovertible proof—if indeed proof were needed—of the divine origin and authenticity of the Holy Scriptures.

We have seen the proud imperious lion of Babylonia suddenly overthrown and destroyed by the ruthless and rapacious bear of Medo-Persia; and this latter, in the full strength and power of its enormous forces, borne down upon and completely crushed by the swift and agile spring of the Grecian leopard. Then, as the wheels of history roll on, we see the nameless fourth beast—"dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly"—in the Roman legions, conquering and subduing all before them in their furious onslaughts in the east as well as in the west, and also in the north and in the south. This is graphically depicted in the vision,—“And it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it” (Dan. vii. 7).

And this mighty Roman force has been the dominant power of the world for nearly two thousand years, but is now drawing near to its end, as must be evident to all thoughtful students of God's Word, and to those whose eyes are open to

see the signs of the present time. To us, who can now look back and see how all these predictions have been thus far fulfilled, it becomes a matter of the greatest moment to watch the approaching end of this last phase of Gentile domination, which shall bring about such great changes in the leading nations of the world; and, above all, we should seek to be ready for the next momentous crisis, the "coming of the Lord."

Another very peculiar feature in the vision of the great image, which deserves to be specially noticed—because of the attention directed to it—is the "miry clay" that appears in the feet and toes, mixed with the iron, and the effects produced by its presence there,—“As the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken (or brittle)” (Dan. ii. 41-43).

As iron is used here to represent the strength and power of the Roman kingdom (“Forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things”), what, we might ask, does this clay represent?

Now when we look at all that is said about the clay, and the effects produced by its admixture with the iron, we cannot find much difficulty in discovering what is meant by the symbol. “And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay” (Dan. ii. 41-43).

Here four things should be noted—first, it is a *mixture* of iron and clay, *not two separate* kingdoms, as Greece and Rome were; second, it should be partly strong and partly broken (or brittle); third, they should *minge* but *not cleave* one to another; and fourth, the clay appears only in the feet and toes, at the end of the kingdom.

With these four points before us, let us inquire, What in the present social and governmental conditions of the

nations, that constitute the remaining fragments of the old Roman empire, answers to this clay element? What may this *internal* element be, that mingles mechanically with, and permeates these nations, producing brittleness or weakness, division and disorder; that cannot in its nature unite with the iron or ruling power, but is ever an opposing element to all law, order, and proper government? Surely there can be but one reply to these questions, and that is, that modern democracy, in the disintegrating effects it produces in every country, is this clay element, for it fully answers to every point in the description given of the results of the clay mixed with the iron, especially the peculiar and *unprecedented* phases of democracy that have so remarkably developed in these last days of Gentile supremacy—unprecedented both as to their general lawlessness and their opposition to the powers that be.

This conclusion appears to me to be irresistible, seeing that nothing else that could be named would so fully and correctly correspond to what is said respecting the presence of the clay element in the image, as these various forms of *modern democracy*.

Do we not see this miry clay surging up before our eyes in the Socialism, Communism, Nihilism, Fenianism, Radicalism, and many other forms of democratic lawlessness that are rapidly becoming the cause of trouble and weakness, confusion and disorder, to every nation throughout Europe? Indeed, it is a most marked and prominent feature of the times, and is constantly referred to as such by the secular press.

Democracy, in some form or other, it is true, has existed from time immemorial, but it may be fairly questioned if it has ever before appeared in the desperately outrageous and defiant forms it is now assuming. Thousands are banded together as the sworn enemies of all law and order, and many even exult in the terrible name of "Anarchists," desiring as such, to overthrow every form of lawful government in the world, and to introduce universal anarchy!\* This, too, is

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\* The following extract from a recent "Anarchist Manifesto" will serve to show the principles and character of this class of democrats:—

"It is absolutely necessary to act with violence against all that is bad, otherwise we shall always be slaves and starving. If we look in

taking place, not in one, but in every country of Europe. For the better accomplishment of their disloyal purposes, they form themselves into organised confederacies and alliances in all European states, whereby people of the most dissimilar habits, customs, and languages, become united in one common bond of brotherhood, under the boasted name of "Internationalism," apparently with the object of interfering with and unsettling the institutions of society, and of weakening their respective governments.

With these startling facts before us, it seems most reasonable to conclude that we are beginning to see the fulfilment of the last part of Daniel's remarkable prophecy, in these unprecedented forms of democracy, rising up from the *lower strata* of society—hence so aptly called the "miry clay"—as a weakening, disturbing, and paralysing element in every nation.

As showing the prominence to which this clay element has attained in these days, we have also the fact that rulers and persons in high authority are more than ever pandering to and courting the favour of the people, or masses, for political purposes, seemingly giving expression to the old cry, "The voice of the people is the voice of God;" and this attitude of the higher towards the lower classes, seems to me further to verify verse 43 of Daniel ii., "And whereas thou sawest iron

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the most distant history, from tribe to tribe, we see everywhere that violence is, and always will be, the mother of conquest. Property in any form is nothing but the result of theft and assassination; consequently, the more a man has assassinated and robbed the more he has become rich and powerful; that is why we Anarchists always affirm that property is theft. This method of individual property, being consequently the true cause of human misfortune, ought to be destroyed entirely, because it has produced a whole arsenal of infamous laws. It has created skilful robbers able to defend, so far, all they have robbed, and who enjoy boldly and peacefully the fruit of their crimes. Then, if it is necessary to put down all political, military, and religious authority, as well as all those law manufacturers, it is absolutely necessary to burn the churches, palaces, and convents, soldiers' barracks, offices, fortresses, prisons, and so destroy entirely all that have lived till now by human work without contributing to it. We must then at any cost take possession of the land, machinery, all working instruments, railways, telephones, and all that gold and science have placed till now in the banks only of the rich, who use them only to make us produce the gold. . . . Courage, companions, Long live Anarchy."

mixed with miry clay, they (the iron or ruling powers) shall mingle themselves with the seed of men (the masses, or miry clay): but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." This *apparent* mingling of the higher with the lower is constantly going on in the social and political movements of the day.

Now if the foregoing interpretation of these passages be correct, we are at once confronted with the solemn thought, that as we now see the clay element (which only appears in the feet and toes of the image, the last phase of its history), so we must be near the time when the Stone strikes the feet and destroys the whole—that is, near the judgment of the nations mentioned in Matthew xxv. 31, 32, Revelation xix. 11-21, and many other scriptures.

Again, if this judgment be so close at hand, how much closer must be the coming of the Lord to take up the Church, for we learn from Scripture that this will take place some few years before He comes to judge?

How important it is to be ready for this great event, and to be constantly bearing in mind the words of our Lord, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."

The dispensation from the Captivity to the birth of Christ lasted for about five hundred and eighty-seven years, and some of its leading events may be briefly summarised as follows:—

1. The wonderful dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and its prophetic interpretation by Daniel (chap. ii.).
2. The setting up of an image by Nebuchadnezzar to be worshipped, and the account of the three faithful Jews who refused to worship it (chap. iii.).
3. Daniel's wonderful visions and their interpretations, especially the one of chapter vii., which we have briefly looked at.
4. The histories of the three great prophets of the Captivity—Jeremiah,\* Daniel, and Ezekiel.

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\* Jeremiah was taken as a captive, but not to Babylon, for he was released by Nebuzar-adan at Ramah, and went to reside at Mizpah among the remnant of Judah left in the land. He was afterwards carried down to Egypt, where he continued to prophesy for some time (Jer. xl.-xliii.).

5. The overthrow of the Babylonian kingdom by the Medes and Persians, and the reigns of Darius and Cyrus.

6. The return of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, to Palestine, after seventy years' captivity, by the decree, and under the direction, of Cyrus. Ezra and Nehemiah give us a full account of this.

7. The prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi after the restoration, the two first having been in the Captivity.\*

8. The subduing of the Persian monarchy by the Grecians, under Alexander the Great (B.C. 333), (Dan. viii. 3-8, and xi. 3, 4).

9. The division of Alexander's kingdom (B.C. 323) among his four generals, Seleucus, Ptolemy, Cassander, and Lysimachus (Dan. viii. 8, xi. 4).

10. The wars of the kings of the North (Syria) and the kings of the South (Egypt) with each other, beginning with Seleucus and Ptolemy; and the repeated invasions of Palestine by them, during which the Jews were subject to the conquering power for the time being, which was sometimes the North and sometimes the South (Dan. xi. 5-35).

11. The oppressive and cruel treatment of the Jews, under the tyrannical rule of the notorious ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, king of the North. His devastations in Palestine, and the setting up of idolatry in Jerusalem, even in the temple of God, "The abomination that maketh desolate" (Dan. xi. 31), and the "Wars of the Maccabees" in opposing him (Dan. viii. 9-14, and xi. 21-35). He is the double type of the Beast and

\* TIMES OF THE SIXTEEN PROPHETS.

Before the Captivity of Israel and Judah	{ Joel, Jonah, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Mi- cah, Nahum, Ze- phaniah, Habakkuk, Obadiah (uncertain, may be at this time or during the Cap- tivity), Jeremiah .	{ They prophesied (either at the same time or in succession) from seventy to eighty years before the captivity of Israel in Assyria, and after that period to some few years before the captivity of Judah in Babylon; altogether from 150 to 170 years. Jeremiah prophesied for about twenty years before the captivity of Judah, and also during the first part of it.
During the Captivity	{ Ezekiel, Daniel . . .	{ These two lived in Chaldea during the cap- tivity down to the end of the seventy years.
After the Restoration	{ Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi . . . . .	{ Haggai and Zechariah were likewise in the captivity, but delivered their prophecies in Jerusalem after the restoration from Baby- lon. Malachi continued to prophesy for about forty-five years after the return of the Jews, and with him ended the prophetic period.

the Antichrist, who will again persecute the Jews, and set up idolatry in Jerusalem during the Great Tribulation (Matt. xxiv. 15 ; Rev. xiii.) [See Josephus and the two books of the Maccabees in the Apocrypha.]

12. The Jews governed for a considerable while after this by their high priests, though still subject to the Gentile powers,—first Grecian, then Roman,—during which time, through the rivalry and contentions of opposing factions, they were frequently at war among themselves.

13. The subjugation of the Grecian and Syrian monarchy by the Romans, under the leadership of the great generals Pompey and Julius Cæsar ; and the establishment of the Empire by the ascension of Augustus Cæsar to the throne (B.C. 27), when Palestine became a Roman province (Luke ii. 1).

In connection with the “times of the Gentiles,” it may be well to notice that we have in Scripture another important line of prophecy, that is distinctly and exclusively Jewish, running parallel with the times of the Gentiles, beginning somewhat later, but continuing through the same period down to the end of the present age, and even extending into the Millennium. This is the remarkable prophecy of the “SEVENTY WEEKS,” in Daniel ix. 24-27, a small illustrative chart of which is given on the next page, to show the time it covers in history, and the manner in which that time is distributed, or divided.

Assuming that the coloured diagram on the chart, and the appended notes, will sufficiently explain the main features of this famous prophecy, nothing further need be said at present with reference to it (the details will be specially noted later on), except to remark that, as it obviously has a very direct bearing upon the dispensations of Scripture, it is of the first importance rightly to understand it.

The seventy weeks may be regarded as a dispensational line in itself, looked at from an entirely Jewish point of view, but coalescing in some points, at the “time of the end,” with the Gentile line.

It is this particular fact that gives it special interest in connection with the subjects now under review ; therefore it will be more fully considered when we come to look at the period referred to in Scripture as the Day of Tribulation.

# SEVENTY WEEKS

DANIEL IX. 24-27.

Are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city,

Times of the Gentiles. Kingdoms.		PERSIAN.		GREEK.		ROMAN.		Time.	
		The twentieth year of <b>Artaxerxes.</b> NEHEMIAH II. 1		Wars of Maccabees.		CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.		Going forth of the command- ment to restore Jerusalem, &c	
		Weeks.	Years.					454	
		7	49					The building of Jerusalem	
		62	434						
		After threescore & two weeks						shall Messiah be cut off. A.D	
		And the people of the prince that		A long INTERVAL or undefined period of time.				shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. LUKE XXI. 20-24.	
		And he (the Roman prince) shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.						29	
		CREAT TRIBULATION.						483	
		1		Three-and-a-half years		7		Not reckoned.	
				Time, times, and a half time.				Seven Years	
		70		490					
JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS. <i>Matt. xxv. ; Rev. xix.</i>		To finish the transgres- sion, and to make an end of sins, and to make re- conciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prop- hecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.						3. The long interval after Christ's crucifixion is the Christian dispensation, which still continues, and will continue until Christ comes to take up the Church to heaven.	
NOTES. 1. The 70 weeks (shewn by the red hand in centre) are divided into three periods; viz., 7+62+1=70 weeks, which are weeks of years; thus: 49+434+7=490 years; and these years extend prophetically from the com- mand to restore Jerusalem by Artaxerxes in the 20th year of his reign (Neh. ii.) to the Millennium.								4. When the last week, or 7 years, is to com- mence Scripture does not definitely say; but it will probably be soon after the Church is removed, and then God will resume His direct dealings with Israel as a nation.	
2. FIRST PERIOD. 7 weeks or 49 years. The building of Jerusalem.								These 7 years will be the most terrible time of tribulation that the world has ever known; while the last half for 3½ years will be the "Great Tribulation" (Matt. xxiv. 21) the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" (Jer. xxx. 7), when the (Roman) prince shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and set up the abomination of desolation in the holy place.	
SECOND PERIOD. 62 weeks or 434 years. From building to Messiah cut off.								5. The greater part of the Book of Revela- tion is taken up with the events of these notable years, when the judgments of the Seals, Trumpets, and Vials will be exe- cuted; i.e., from Chap. vi. to Chap. xix. inclusive.	
An undefined Interval.									
THIRD PERIOD. 1 week or 7 years. Covenant of prince that shall come.									
70 " 490 "									
						</			

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE BIRTH OF CHRIST—[EPOCH 6].

## THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

## LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS CHRIST.

**A**FTER the events enumerated in the previous chapter, a grand and glorious era dawned upon this world—the greatest and most momentous epoch of its history—the birth of Jesus Christ. We have now reached the marvellous advent of the Lord of life and glory, the Son of God Himself, who came down to live as a Man on this earth, so that He might become the Saviour of the world, God “manifest in the flesh,” “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. ii. 6, 7).

No wonder that this transcendent event was heralded by a heavenly host with that grand ascription of praise which ever rolls on, and will continue to reverberate throughout the whole universe to all eternity, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

From that day a mighty change—a complete transformation—was to pass over the aspect of everything in this world with regard to all things, both moral and spiritual.

The “Light of the world” had now come to penetrate the gloom of ages, and from henceforth all things would be viewed and judged in that light, whether as to life and joy on the one hand, or as to death and misery on the other,—“To the one the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life” (2 Cor. ii. 16).

As we are dealing only with the chief outlines of dispensational truth, we can merely refer in a general way to the sublime records of the four evangelists, in which the holy presence of our blessed Lord on earth, His noble work and

ministry, His grand miraculous power, His perfect life and spotless character, His amazing love and gentleness, and His divine and precious utterances, are so wonderfully and beautifully set forth. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil," and glorify God the Father (John xvii. 4).

But it is of considerable importance in connection with our subject to take special notice of the character of John's, and of our Lord's ministry, as their work and service, though limited as to time, constituted a peculiar and distinct dispensation of itself, quite different from all that had preceded it, and different also from the present Christian era.

The gospel they preached was the "gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. iv. 23), which, of course, was exactly suited to the divine order of things in that day; hence the burden of it was, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." The Messiah had come to His own to proclaim His coming kingdom, and was ready to take His throne and reign over the house of David, according to prophecy, but "His own received Him not."\*

In keeping with this leading thought, the Lord Jesus sent forth His twelve disciples to preach this gospel, and commanded them, saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. x. 5-7).

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\* Christ presented Himself to the Jewish nation as their King on the day that He rode into Jerusalem, thus fulfilling the prophecy in Zechariah ix. 9,—*"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."* This took place exactly sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years, from the time the commandment was given to Nehemiah to build Jerusalem, according to Daniel ix. 25 (see the chart of Seventy Weeks. But a few days after they cried, "Crucify, crucify Him," and He was then "cut off" and had nothing (Dan. ix. 26). From that day the house of Israel has been left desolate, according to the word of the Lord (Matt. xxiii. 38); and some years later, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus—A.D. 70—they realised the awful fulfilment of the prophecy given in Luke xxi. 24,—*"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."*

From this we learn two things—that the gospel message of that day was only to be preached to the Jews, and that it was to be concerning the establishment of His coming kingdom, and present salvation to all who believed.

This first commission was mainly to proclaim His coming as the long-expected Messiah, and it was this that constituted its distinguishing feature.

The Church had not yet been formed, nor indeed could it be, until the great work of redemption was accomplished, and the Lord had ascended to heaven, and sent down the Holy Ghost. Then the gospel message assumed another and different character, in keeping with the altered condition of things. It is therefore important to see clearly, and to ever bear in mind this marked difference between the time and ministry of our Lord—the preaching of the “gospel of the kingdom”—and the present Christian dispensation when the “gospel of the grace of God” is proclaimed (Acts xx. 24).

We shall have occasion to notice this later on. Much misapprehension with regard to the teaching of Christ and His disciples has arisen from not distinguishing between their ministry and the present proclamation of the gospel, which is, as we have seen, quite different in character, though both are from God, and are equally important in their respective places. With reference to this distinction, it should also be remarked that the Lord Jesus, *after* His resurrection, gave a second and more extended commission to His disciples, saying to them, “Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark xvi. 15).

But this mission was to be carried out *after* the descent of the Holy Ghost; for His last words to them, when He had “commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father,” were, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts i. 4-8). A new *application* of the gospel?

Thus the Lord graciously provided for the *change* that was to take place in the preaching of the gospel, when His disciples were “endued with power from on high,” and fully equipped for their *new* and world-wide mission.

This period, the most momentous and far-reaching in its blessed consequences, continued for the short space of thirty-three years, embracing the only perfect life of a Man on earth—the wonderful life, work, and ministry of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ, which will be had in everlasting remembrance. It is indicated in the chart by the small space between the birth of Christ and the crucifixion, over which a star appears as the symbol of the Lord's presence on this earth, for He is worthily called "The Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. xxii. 16); in Numbers xxiv. 17,—“Star out of Jacob.”

## CHAPTER X.

## THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF CHRIST.

## THE CHRISTIAN AND CHURCH PERIOD.

## [DISPENSATION F.]

WITH the close of Christ's blessed work and ministry on the earth, we come to the most stupendous of all events that have ever transpired in the universe, the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ ; an event that is, on the one hand, the greatest display of the infinite love of God the Father and of the Lord Jesus, and on the other, the exhibition of the awful depravity of man.

It is the one solitary and unparalleled event that stands out prominently as a fixed point or dividing line between two eternities, the past and the future ; the productive source of infinite results as to righteousness and peace, mercy and truth, both in heaven and on earth ; and that which will be the everlasting theme of praise and thanksgiving throughout the countless ages of eternity. The glorious work of redemption, foretold first in the garden of Eden, and then by all the prophets, was by this transaction completed, full atonement was made for sin, and all the righteous claims of a holy God fully and for ever met by that one perfect offering,—“Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. ix. 26). “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins” (Rom. iii. 25). So that, by the abounding love of God in providing such a way of salvation, guilty man, through faith in the finished work of Christ, may be not only pardoned and saved, but graciously enabled to enter into the very presence of God Himself,—“Having . . . boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh” (Heb. x. 19, 20).

The crucifixion is marked in the chart by a cross, and the line going upwards from it indicates the ascension of Christ into heaven, where He is now seated "on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

When it is considered that the expiatory death of Christ marks the greatest and most important turning-point in the moral history of mankind, we can well understand how that, after the atoning work was done, and Christ had triumphed over death and the grave, and ascended into heaven, a greater change than had ever occurred before in the domain of moral and spiritual things should be brought about. In fact from this moment a complete transformation in the spiritual condition of all the children of God was inaugurated, a perfectly new order of Divine proceedings instituted, and a nearer and higher relationship established between God and man.

For this change the Lord had in some measure prepared His disciples, in His last precious discourses to them, especially in those memorable words of John xiv. 26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"; and of John xvi. 13, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come."

These wonderful words carry us on to the next great epoch, —The Descent of the Holy Ghost.

The apostles waited at Jerusalem, "and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts ii. 1-4).

Thus the "promise of the Father," referred to by the Lord Jesus, was at length fulfilled by an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit, such as had never occurred before; nor indeed could have, for the reason stated in John vii. 39, "The

Holy Ghost was not yet given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

It is exceedingly important to bear in mind that this marvellous event was the beginning of *a new order of things* altogether, and this was soon manifested in the unfolding and development of some of God's counsels that had been hidden for ages.

The first results of this outpouring were the supernatural power displayed by the apostles, in speaking with other tongues (or in languages they had never learned), and their effectual preaching of the Gospel of Christ,—“God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. . . . Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts ii. 36-39).

When full effect had been given by the power of the Holy Spirit to these words, we see about three thousand souls truly converted to God, and they, with the apostles, were gathered together for the *first time* into one body, to form that new and divinely constituted assembly, “The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” This was the glorious birthday of the Church of God—the beginning of an entirely new era to all true believers in Christ, of which the Old Testament saints could never have had the slightest conception, seeing it “was hid from ages,” and had never been the subject of prophecy in their day.\* Yet, strange to say, notwithstanding these and many other plain statements of Scripture concerning the origin and constitution of the Church, there are some who still speak of the “Jewish Church”—that is, of the Israelites in the wilderness being an assembly identical with the Christian Church of the present day!

It is true that the words, “The church in the wilderness,” are used in Acts vii. 38, but the meaning of the word “church” in this passage (or “ecclesia,” in the original Greek) is “assembly,” and Stephen was simply referring to the con-

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\* “The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to His saints” (Col. i. 26). See Rom. xvi. 25 ; 1 Cor. ii. 7 ; Eph. iii. 9.

gregation of Israel ; for the word may be used of *any assembly*, as in Acts xix. 41, where it is actually employed to designate a riotous mob (see original there).

Moreover the plain and emphatical statements of the apostle Paul, to whom the doctrine of the Church was specially revealed, answers all questions as to its origin and constitution, and the foundation principles upon which it is based : for he says, " By revelation He made known unto me the mystery ; . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit ; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel, . . . to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God " (Eph. iii. 3-10). And again, " For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus " (Gal. iii. 27, 28, and Col. iii. 11). How could there be such an amalgamation in that which was an exclusively Jewish order of things ? It would be simply impossible. Therefore the Christian Church could not exist while God recognised the Jewish economy (which He Himself had appointed) as His testimony on the earth. For it must be evident that two such dissimilar systems, as the Jewish and the Christian, could not go on together, or be owned of God, at the same time. Nor could there be a blending of the two without producing the utmost confusion.

In 1 Cor. xii. 13 we also read : " For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." How, we might ask, could there be a baptism by the Spirit, of Jews and Gentiles into one body, either in the wilderness, or in Palestine—when as yet the Holy Ghost had not been given (John vii. 39) ; and a union between Jews and Gentiles (a thing most abhorrent to the Jews) had never been mentioned, or even thought of ? (See what is said about it in Acts x. and xi.)

We have, therefore, abundant authority from Scripture for

confidently maintaining that the Church of Christ was not formed until the day of Pentecost ; and that in the account we have in Acts ii. we see it in all its primitive beauty, fresh from the hand of God, who then constituted it for His own glory, by the Holy Spirit's power.

It is a serious mistake to say that the Church was formed during the ministry either of John or of our Lord upon earth. Christ never spoke of it as existing at that time ; but, in alluding to it, said, "Upon this rock *I will* build My church" (Matt. xvi. 18). Clearly, this was a reference to a then *future* act. Much confusion in the interpretation of the times of our Lord and of John the Baptist has been caused by this mistake, for they, as we have already seen, were altogether different from the dispensation subsequent to Pentecost.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the doctrine concerning the Church is particularly unfolded ; whilst we also have much precious and important information on this subject in 1st Corinthians (chapters x., xi., xii., and xiv.), as well as a great many instructive allusions to it in the epistles generally, and in the Acts of the Apostles.

The chief particulars obtained from all these scriptures concerning the constitution and principles of the Church, or assembly of God, may be briefly summed up as follows :—

1. It is composed solely of true believers in Christ, who have been renewed and sealed by the Spirit of God. "Sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 2).

2. It is formed by the power of the Holy Spirit alone, by His gathering together all true believers into one body around the Lord Jesus Christ. Man could have no part whatever in its formation.

3. Christ is its Centre and Head ; and to His name alone believers are gathered to form the Church. "Head over all things to the Church, which is His body" (Eph. i. 22, 23). He is, moreover, sole Master in His own house ; nor does He ever delegate His divine prerogative, or authority, to any persons, whether they be apostles, prophets, or teachers.

4. In the sight of God this true assembly ever appears as "one body" ; an indivisible whole, that can never be separated,

however scattered its members may be throughout the confused systems and denominations of Christendom.

5. All who compose it occupy the same standing, and enjoy perfect equality in the presence of Christ their Head, while He is graciously pleased to dispense His gifts to each and all, according to their several ability.

6. Its special mission in the world is to glorify God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ ; to bear a faithful testimony to the truth of God, and thus to display the manifold wisdom and righteousness of God. It is entirely heavenly in character, outside, and apart from, everything in this world, and having no connection whatever with it.

7. It is referred to in the Word under various names, thus :—

1. The Church. In the Acts, Epistles, and Revelation.
2. House of God (1 Tim. iii. 15 ; Heb. x. 21).
3. Household and family of God (Eph. ii. 19, iii. 15 ; 1 Peter ii. 17).
4. Building and holy temple (1 Cor. iii. 9 ; Eph. ii. 21, 22).
5. Mystery of Christ (Eph. iii. 4).
6. One body (Rom. xii. 4, 5 ; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13 ; Eph. i. 23, iv. 4, 16 ; Col. i. 18-24, ii. 17, iii. 15).
7. One new man (Eph. ii. 15).
8. One flock (John x. 16 ; 1 Peter v. 3).
9. The bride (Rev. xix. 7, xxi. 2, 9, and xxii. 17).
10. The city, or New Jerusalem (Heb. xii. 22 ; Rev. xxi. 2, 10).

Looking at the various sections of the professing Church in their entirety, from a human point of view, it will be found that true Christians and mere professors of religion (the wheat and the tares) are joined together as members of their respective sections or societies, which are called churches. Now this mixture of believers and unbelievers is generally known by the name of Christendom, to distinguish it from the true Church or One Body, which consists of Christians only.

It is consequently of great importance to bear this obvious distinction in mind, while endeavouring to understand the various allusions in Scripture to these two aspects of the Church—its outward profession and its inward reality—as they are both recognised in the Word and often referred to

Witness, for example, the parables of our Lord, in which we have the fruitful and the unfruitful soil; the wheat and the tares in the same field; the good and the bad fish in the same net; and the wise and the foolish virgins, &c. These are mainly prophetic utterances with regard to the history of the Church during the present or Christian dispensation. So also in the addresses given in Revelation ii. and iii. (another prophetic view of the whole history of the professing Church) these two classes are manifestly seen.

In considering the application of these remarkable parables, we learn that the words "kingdom of heaven," with which they all begin, are used somewhat in the same sense that we use the word Christendom—to designate the whole professing Church, unbelievers as well as believers—their prophetic application being more especially intended for the present period; so that, by keeping this thought always in mind, we are considerably helped in understanding these instructive parables. The words "kingdom of heaven" are used in other scriptures, sometimes in a more exclusive, and sometimes in a more extended, sense in setting forth its different phases.

In the chart it will be seen that Christendom is represented by a seven-branched candlestick, according to Revelation i. 20: "The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." The white oval figure is intended to represent the true Church of God—the "One Body"—composed entirely of true believers; for however divided and scattered they may be among the various religious denominations of Christendom, they constitute but one company in the sight of God (Eph. iv. 4; 1 Cor. xii. 13). The eye seen in the oval indicates the faith of all true believers looking up to Christ in heaven, waiting, watching, and longing for His return. "Looking unto Jesus" (Heb. xii. 2). "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20).

The history of the Church is indicated by the names of the seven Churches—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea—being placed one above each branch of the candlestick, in the historical order in which they appear in Revelation ii. and iii.

These seven were doubtless in existence when John wrote

the Revelation, and were apparently selected from others also in existence at that time, on account of certain characteristic features in each of them, to represent the successive stages of the Church's history, from its formation down to the time when the Lord comes to take His own to heaven. These stages are most wonderfully depicted by our Lord Himself in Revelation ii. and iii., in which the most solemn and precious lessons of instruction are imparted, with the admonition repeated seven times: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

It is this extremely interesting period that constitutes the second division of the book of Revelation, mentioned in chap. i. 19 as "the things which are." It has continued for nearly two thousand years, and is still going on, though now evidently drawing to a close.

One of its peculiarities deserves to be specially mentioned, namely, that its *duration was not to be defined*; and that no one but God Himself was to know how long it might continue. It was to be a dispensation unlike all others, from which the element of time was to be eliminated, so far as man was concerned, while the great event (the second advent of our Lord) to take place at, or near, its close was to be an *ever present thought*, throughout the whole period, however long it might last.

From the very first its termination was to be expected at any moment; hence the oft-repeated words, "The time is at hand," or "near," "Behold, I come quickly," &c.

Believers were to be always kept waiting and watching for their Lord and Master's return, even though it might be delayed for centuries; a most wise and gracious provision of the blessed Lord, to keep our hearts ever centred upon Himself in heaven, and to prevent us from dropping down to the world's level and ways. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke xii. 37).

This was to be the grand outlook and watchword of the saints through all the centuries of this undefined era, listening for the shout of the Lord which should summon them into His glorious presence.

When this "blessed hope" or expectation is forgotten, or deliberately set aside (as is, alas, so often the case), we see what sad results directly follow: "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him, . . . and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites" (Matt. xxiv. 48-51).

In looking back on the past history of the Church, as delineated in the seven addresses of Revelation ii. and iii., we can now see how all the features mentioned in each successive stage have been most accurately exemplified in the several states of Christendom, from the beginning down to the present day. And surely, when we look at the condition of the professing Church at the present time, evidence is not lacking to show that we have come to the last stage of its history, the Laodicean period. If this be so, what next?

The three chief characteristics of Laodicea appear to be:—

1. Lukewarmness and indifference as to real piety and devotion to Christ. "Thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot."
2. The exhibition of a *proud, boastful spirit* of independence, saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."
3. Ignorance and self-delusion as to their low spiritual condition. "Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

In looking at all the sections of the professing Church at the present time, do we not see these very characteristics becoming more strikingly manifested every day? For, with the extraordinary activity and restlessness displayed among all denominations, and the immense amount of *apparent* zeal in religious services (implying some *external* warmth at least), we see painful evidence of a great lack of *true devotion* and *fidelity* to Christ, and to the interests of His present testimony on the earth. And is not this want of faithfulness to Christ and to His truth also clearly shown in the remarkable readiness of many of the professing teachers and leaders of to-day, to adopt a variety of most erroneous religious theories and strange

heresies, that undermine the very fundamental doctrines of His blessed Word, and even the central and most precious truth of Christ's atonement? This is also seen in the loose, irreverent, and daring manner in which the inspired Scriptures are being tampered with and perverted; and in the heterodox schools of theology that are multiplying so rapidly in these days. Moreover, in addition to all this, we are confronted on every side by a proud, boastful spirit, by a vast amount of self-laudation, as to the progress and success of our religious societies and missionary enterprises, the wealth and magnitude of our churches, the superior structure of our ecclesiastical edifices, with their ornate services and high ritual, and by the continual increase of clerical pretentiousness and sacerdotalism. In another direction, too, we see the exhibition of much vainglory, and the assumption of superior knowledge and attainments in spiritual matters, as the outcome of deep-rooted self-righteousness; instead of that true lowliness of heart that finds its greatest comfort in sitting at the feet of Jesus, and learning of Him, the meek and lowly One, those divine lessons of love and humility, without which we are "become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Of course, these remarks only apply to the general mass of professing Christendom, for even in Laodicea, may be found a godly remnant—the overcomers—to whom the Lord speaks the comforting words: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. iii. 21).

In all this outward display the professing Church is plainly saying, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." And yet, notwithstanding this proud boasting, we see a lamentable want of real spiritual discernment, and deep heartfelt piety: "And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

May we not, therefore, regard the present condition of Christendom as one of the signs (with many others that are now coming more plainly before us every day) that we are indeed drawing near to the end of the Church's history on earth, and are now on the very eve of that grand crisis—the coming of the Lord to take up all believers to Himself?

If these deductions, which are now humbly commended to

the serious and prayerful consideration of all believers and students of God's Word, be correct, we have arrived at a most solemn and momentous period in the Church's history, so that it should be a matter of the utmost concern with every one to inquire diligently and to search the Scriptures to see if these things be so, and what we may expect in the near future:—"The wise shall understand" (Dan. xii. 10).

Now that we have come in our investigations to the last stage of the Church's history on the earth—*i.e.*, to the present day in which we live—all the events to be considered from *this point* will of course be *future* ones; and it should be observed that it is these which constitute the *third* division of Revelation, noted as "the things which shall be after these" (Rev. i. 19). It is not "hereafter," as in the A.V., but "after these" (the correct reading), which implies that when the things which "are" have come to an end, the next series of events begins at once. When the Church's history on earth ends, the judgments commence,—the seals, trumpets, and vials, &c. (chap. vi., and onwards).

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE COMING OF THE LORD FOR HIS SAINTS.

## (FIRST STAGE.)

## THE RAPTURE AND FIRST RESURRECTION.

## [EPOCH VII.]

AS soon as the Church has run its course on the earth, and the last believer is gathered in to complete the Bride of the Lamb, that auspicious day (the brightest and happiest that ever dawns for believers), so long expected and desired, will arrive, and the blessed Lord Jesus will suddenly come forth from the seat of His glory to gather together the fruits of His redemption work into His immediate presence, according to His gracious promise, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 3).

This translation to glory is often called the Rapture (though the word is not used in Scripture), as the saints will be suddenly caught up from the earth, and, with entrancing delight and unspeakable joy, will rise to meet their Divine Lord in the heavens.

If we gaze with contemplative wonder and admiration on the grandeur of Elijah's ascent in a chariot of fire, what shall we say of the splendour and magnificence of that scene when the Lord Himself shall come in grand majestic power to meet that countless host of risen saints, in their new spiritual bodies,—“fashioned like unto His glorious body,”—to welcome and to conduct them to the mansions which He has gone to prepare? As nothing has ever occurred to which we could compare the wondrous scenes of this coming day, we utterly fail in our highest efforts of imagination to conceive the fulness of glory, joy, and exultation that will be then manifested.

The astounding fact that confronts us at the present day is, that there should be found Christians who actually do not

take any interest whatever in this sublime subject, never speak of it, or teach it; while some even venture, in spite of Scripture, to deny that such an event will take place! And yet the Word of God, when carefully read, plainly sets forth the *personal* coming of the Lord before the millennium to take up His saints.

What then, we might ask, has produced this general apathy and indifference—and in some cases downright opposition—with regard to a subject of such great importance? Mainly, misinterpretation of God's Word and tradition, for which the so-called learned divines and theologians have much to answer, who by their highly elaborated theories and skilful criticisms, have made the Word of God of none effect, with reference to this as well as to many other subjects. The wise and prudent in their own eyes have never been the custodians of God's secrets, *but they are revealed to the babes* (Matt. xi. 25).

Satan, too, has ever been specially busy (as we might expect he would be), striving to divert the souls of men from thinking of, and looking for, a personal Christ. Christ they may have in a vague, religious, and sentimental way, but the person of the Christ is what the devil ever wages war against, and he intensely dislikes to see a soul truly in communion with Jesus Christ; while the Lord's coming in the clouds with great power and glory—as the prelude to Satan's being driven from his present seat of power in the heavens—is what he naturally dreads above everything.

Still it is lamentable to think that so many true children of God should be deprived of the consolation of this "blessed hope," through the subtle devices of our great adversary, who has used not a few learned teachers, and even some good men, as instruments (though they knew it not), to pervert this precious and soul-comforting truth.

Of the many passages in Scripture referring to this personal coming of the Lord, the fullest and most explicit is that wonderfully graphic account of the Rapture given in 1 Thessalonians iv. 15-17, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel,

and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." How plain and simple, and yet how superlatively grand is this description of the glorious day for which we are waiting.

Let us consider for a moment the seven points of this *special revelation* given to the apostle Paul by the Lord Himself.

(1.) "We which are alive and remain"—saints living on the earth at the time of His coming, and the use of the personal pronoun "we" in the present tense, shows us that these saints expected He might come in their day, for of the Thessalonians it is said, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). They were evidently taught by Paul to look for it at any moment, and it is the happy privilege of every Christian to say, "We which are alive and remain." We look not for death, the grave, and the worm, though we may be called to "sleep through Jesus," to be "absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

(2.) "Shall not prevent them which are asleep." All the saints from Adam down to that time, who have fallen asleep through Jesus, will have their resurrection bodies *first*, or just before the living saints. We shall not go before them; but even if there be any interval between, it will be very short, as all will be changed, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," for the two companies go up *together* to meet the Lord. In Hebrews xi. 40, we read, "That they (Old Testament saints) without us should not be made perfect"—*i.e.*, should not have their new bodies. All the Old as well as all the New Testament believers will be thus translated to heaven on the same day and hour.

(3.) "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." The Lord leaves His seat in heaven, and descends into the regions of the air, with a shout (as of a great military commander calling his forces together), and thus summons His saints into His glorious presence. Two other sounds will be heard—the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.

The saints only, we may reasonably presume, will hear these, which by the mighty power of God will instantly gather them—a glorified host—in the air. The world may hear nothing, and see no signs, but it will suddenly miss the departed saints; while those who have an intellectual knowledge of the coming of the Lord will know at once, to their dismay, what has taken place,—“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52).

(4.) “The dead in Christ shall rise first,” that is, just before the living saints are changed, as we have already noticed.

(5.) “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds.” As already remarked, the two companies shall be caught up *together* to meet the Lord.

What a scene of surpassing grandeur! Not a solitary Elijah going up in a chariot of fire, but untold millions of glorified saints mounting upwards in the power of God, clad with the radiance of heaven itself, and doubtless filling its vault with their loud hallelujahs! How paltry and insignificant is all that man calls great and grand in the pageantries of the world, compared with the splendour of this heavenly scene! Who would not wish to be there? Well, thank God, every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ will certainly be in that company, and God grant that all the readers of these lines may have their place among that happy throng.

(6.) “To meet the Lord in the air.” Oh, the joy and ineffable delight that will then thrill every heart of that vast multitude, when they first see Him face to face, and behold His glory! Moreover, the joy of the Lord Himself, when “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied,” will be reflected on their beaming countenances, and all heaven will rejoice together.

The Lord on this occasion, only descends into the air. It is at the second stage of His appearing that He comes to the earth.

(7.) “And so shall we ever be with the Lord.” What an immensity of meaning is in those words, “For ever with the

Lord." They are indeed unfathomable, for who could measure the blessedness of spending an eternity in His Divine presence, beholding His glory?—"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me" (John xvii. 24).

From these, and other references, it is supposed that the Rapture will be *silent* and *invisible* to the world, though, of course, they will immediately realise the consequences of it, in the sudden departure of so many Christians, and will then be fully aware of what has happened.

Indeed, we may naturally suppose that great consternation and alarm will be produced throughout the whole of Christendom by such a stupendous event as the sudden disappearance of these believers,—probably without any immediate warning; while the effect upon *nominal* Christians, who may have flattered themselves that all was right, and that they were ready, will no doubt be terrible in the extreme, when they realise the agonising fact that the Lord has indeed come, and that they have been left behind and rejected, like the foolish virgins. To this large class of professors that day will indeed be an awful awakening.

Looking at the parable of the ten virgins, it would seem as if, just before the Lord's coming, when the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom!" goes forth more loudly than ever, there may be a widespread and deep impression of the impending nearness of the event, so that many nominal Christians—the foolish virgins—will begin to inquire after the truth, saying, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out." But while going to get it, they so long delay earnestly seeking the Lord, that the Bridegroom comes, and not being ready, they are left without, and to their great sorrow find that the door is shut.

The impression is certainly increasing every day as to the approaching nearness of the Lord's coming, and many more are now joining in the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom!" May not this therefore be the time referred to in the portion of the parable to which we have just alluded? If it be so, what a solemn call to all to be ready without delay, lest they, like the foolish virgins, be found without the "one thing needful," when the Lord comes.

This translation of the saints at the first stage of the Lord's coming is frequently alluded to throughout the New Testament, but is never referred to in the Old, because the Church—the mystery hidden from ages—was not formed in those days; therefore the translation of that which was not then in existence, and was not even alluded to in prophecy, could not be mentioned. In 1 Corinthians xv. 51, 52, the change at the Rapture is also spoken of as “a mystery.” “Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.”

It will be, as we have already seen, the time of the “first resurrection,”—“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. xx. 6). See also 1 Corinthians xv., where it is specially dwelt upon.

It is also alluded to in Romans viii. 23 as the time to which all true saints of God are ever looking forward. “Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;” “There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body;” and it is this latter that will be given to us on that day.

We are told (most marvellous thought) that this spiritual body will be like the Lord's glorious body—“Who shall change our vile body (or body of humiliation), that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. iii. 21); “We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John iii. 2).

While the foregoing are some of the leading references to this deeply interesting and important subject, there are many others which it would be well carefully to examine and compare; but as they are too numerous to quote in full, a list of the principal ones is given in the footnote below.\*

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\* THE FIRST STAGE OF THE LORD'S COMING—THE RAPTURE.—Matt. xxv. 10; John v. 28; John xiv. 3, 28; John xxi. 22; Rom. viii. 23; 1 Cor. i. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 26; 1 Cor. xv. 23; Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Thess. i. 10; 1 Thess. ii. 19; 1 Thess. iv. 15-17; 1 Thess. v. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 1, 7; Titus ii. 13; Heb. x. 37; James v. 7, 8; 1 John ii. 28; Rev. ii. 25; Rev. iii. 10, 11; Rev. xxii. 7, 20.

When we come to consider the second stage, a similar list of the leading passages referring to it will be given.

One very prevalent error with regard to this subject, which has had the mischievous effect of turning away the minds of many Christians from the reception and right understanding of this blessed truth, is the extraordinary notion that the words in 1 Thessalonians iv., and similar passages, describe the "last day of judgment at the end of the world!" And not only this. The judgment of the nations of Matthew xxv. 31, 32, and Revelation xix. 11-21, and the judgment of the white throne (more than a thousand years later, Rev. xx. 11, 12), are mixed together, and made to appear as *one and the same event*, to take place "at the end of the world," after which the earth will be burnt up!

Nothing could be more contrary to the teaching of Scripture than such an erroneous notion, and it shows us how carelessly the Word of God is read, even by many who undertake to explain it to others.

One of the chief objects I had in view in devising the chart was to call special attention to this particular error, as well as to others connected with it, by showing on a diagram (which, by directly appealing to the eye, is more easily understood and remembered), the *relative positions* of the *three great epochs* referred to above, and the *events* both which take place between each, and which follow after them; so that their positions with regard to each other, and the time when they are to occur, might be seen and clearly understood.

Now a glance at the chart will enable any one to comprehend this in a moment, for it will be seen that after the line in the heavens, which is intended to mark the first stage of the Lord's coming—*i.e.*, Epoch 7—the day of tribulation is indicated by a darkly shaded space. This will be of some years' duration, as shown in Dispensation G, and described farther on. Then the next line from heaven to earth—*i.e.*, Epoch 8—marks the second stage of the Lord's coming; after which we have the millennium, and the last apostasy, before we come to the judgment of the white throne (Epoch 10), so we thus see a series of six successive and totally different events, with plainly stated intervals of time between them.

To confound these three very distinct epochs (the first and

second stages of the coming of Christ, and the judgment of the white throne), between each of which numerous events are to occur, cannot but be the cause of immense confusion, and of a complete derangement of dispensational truth.

It is therefore hoped that the perusal of these remarks, together with the representations on the chart, may induce many to re-examine the Word more closely with reference to these important points, and may thus lead them to a fuller and more correct apprehension of the matter.

With regard to the two stages of the Lord's coming,—to which frequent allusions have already been made, there appears to be considerable divergence of thought. Many Christians who clearly hold, and rightly teach, the pre-millennial advent of Christ, say that He will come at the close of the present age, to take up the Church, and to judge the nations; and they thus make the Rapture and this judgment concurrent events—not seeing that the day of tribulation is to intervene between them.

This misapprehension has frequently caused much confusion in the interpretation of many of the Scriptures directly relating to the subject, and of others connected with it.

In some passages, it is true, these two appear to be represented as one, for in reality there is only *one coming*, but *it is to be in two stages*—first in the air, and second to the earth, with an interval of some years between. As one example out of many others, Titus ii. 13 may be cited, “Looking for that blessed hope, *and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*”

Seeing it is most important to be clear about this, I would now direct attention to some of the chief points of difference between these two, as well as to their bearing upon other events at the time of the end :—

1. Nothing is mentioned as occurring before the first stage, because it was to be an ever-present thought, and was to be *looked for at any moment* during the whole time the Church remained on earth, even though the Lord should tarry for centuries.

The Thessalonians understood this, for they were waiting for God's Son from heaven (1 Thess. i. 10), and were surprised when any of their number died, as they doubtless cherished

the inspired words of Paul in his first epistle to them, "We which are alive and remain," expecting to tarry here until the Lord should come. But with regard to the second stage, certain definite events were to take place before it should come to pass. This they did not understand at first, and hence the apostle writes his second epistle to correct their mistake, and to give them a clear knowledge of the difference between the two.

Consequently in 2 Thessalonians ii. 1, 2, we have them put side by side and contrasted. "The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him," in verse 1, gives us the first corresponding with 1 Thessalonians iv. 17; and in verse 2 we have the second, "The day of Christ," which is a totally different period. Then the apostle shows that this second shall not come except there be a falling away first, "and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." In verses 7 and 8, we have further particulars as to the time when the Antichrist shall appear. "Only he who now letteth (or restraineth) will let, until he be taken out of the way;" that is, the Church, in the power of the Holy Ghost, now restrains, but when it is taken to heaven at the Rapture, that wicked (or lawless) one shall be revealed, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." Thus we have the two stages again referred to, "taken out of the way," signifying the first when Christ comes to take the Church up to heaven, after which comes the revelation of the Antichrist; and then the second when the Lord appears to consume him with the brightness of His coming.

Here we have *three* distinct events in regular order:—

- (1.) The first stage of the coming of Christ to take away the Church.
- (2.) The presence and awful career of the Antichrist.
- (3.) The second stage of Christ's coming and the destruction of the Man of sin. So that before this second Antichrist must appear on the scene, to fulfil his terrible mission, and continue for a few years to deceive the nations—specially in the East—with his lying wonders.

To regard these two different phases of the Lord's coming

as identical, or to think that they are to happen at the same time, is obviously contrary to Scripture, and is therefore a serious mistake, calculated to produce sad confusion.

2. At the first the Lord comes **FOR** His saints (John xiv. 3 ; 1 Thess. iv. 15-17, &c.), but at the second He comes **WITH** them. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 14). In Rev. xix. 11, 14, we read that John saw heaven opened, "and behold a white horse ; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True (the Lord Jesus coming forth to judge the world), . . . and the armies in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,"—evidently risen saints. Now these saints must be taken to heaven before they can thus come *with* the Lord ; they are seen there at the "marriage supper of the Lamb," previously to their coming out with Him to execute judgment.

3. The first stage of Christ's coming will most probably be invisible to the world, as it is not stated in Scripture that any shall see or hear Him except the saints who are caught up on that occasion. These shall suddenly, and it may be silently, disappear, being changed "in the twinkling of an eye," and caught up to heaven, doubtless to the great consternation of all who miss them. But when our Lord comes to judge, the whole world shall see Him. "Behold, He cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see Him : . . . and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7). "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64).

4. At the first the Lord will come to deliver all true Christians living at the time from the "Great Tribulation," by taking them up to heaven, so that it will be a time of great rejoicing for them ; but at the second He will execute judgment on the ungodly nations of the world, and there will be fearful scenes of terror and wailing at the destruction of the wicked. "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30). This will be the judgment of the *living nations*, as described in Matthew xxv. 31-46, but certainly not that of the *dead* at

the great white throne, which is to take place more than a thousand years later (Rev. xx. 11, 12).

5. At the first the Lord is seen as the Bridegroom coming for His Bride, the Church, as we find in the parable of the Ten Virgins; while at the second He will come as the Nobleman to reckon with His servants, to give rewards to the faithful, and to punish the unfaithful, as stated in Matthew xxv. 14-30, and Luke xix. 12-26.

6. The first will be the time of the resurrection of all true believers from the days of Adam downwards. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection," while the raising of the wicked dead, to appear before the great white throne, will not (as we have already said) take place till more than a thousand years later.

7. At the first stage the Lord meets the saints in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17), but at the second He will come to the earth. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zech. xiv. 4, and Acts i. 11). [This point is more fully examined further on.]

To these seven points of difference we might yet add another, derived from the striking figures that are employed to point to these two aspects of the Lord's coming (the "MORNING STAR" and the "SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"), taken in connection with the portions of Scripture in which they occur.

It is a remarkable fact, and worthy of special notice, that one of these expressions occurs in the *last chapter* of the Old Testament, and the other in the *last chapter* of the New. To the Jewish saints the hope of Israel is given, in the *closing words* of their Scriptures, and to their *last* prophet, Malachi, "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2).

To the Christian, the Hope of the Church is presented in the closing words of the New Testament, as the coming of the "Bright and Morning Star." The morning star is the harbinger of day, seen in the heavens just before the sun rises; and it is for Christ's appearing as such that we Christians are now looking, the prelude to His coming later on (after a short interval of terrible darkness—the great tribulation), to the

godly remnant of Jewish saints as the Sun of Righteousness ; then to shine forth in all the full splendour and glory of the millennial day.

To the true Church Christ will soon come as the "Bright and Morning Star," and we are exhorted to take heed to the sure word of prophecy "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day Star arise in your hearts ;" but to the Jewish remnant, at the end of the tribulation, He will come as the "Sun of Righteousness" to heal their backslidings, to restore them to the full favour of God, and to deliver them from all their enemies.

Thus we see the two different phases of the Lord's coming very plainly set forth in these instructive passages.

One other point it may be well to look at before closing this chapter on the Rapture, and that is the TIME when it is to take place.

For centuries people have been asking the question, "When will the Lord come?" And many have striven to answer it by various ingenious theories and calculations. But all in vain, for the simple reason that not one word is given in Scripture to guide as to this. On the contrary, we are expressly and plainly told that this secret is only known to God Himself. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray : for ye know not when the time is" (Mark xiii. 32, 33). One would think that with such emphatic words as these given by the Lord Himself, no person would ever attempt for a moment to discover the time when He should come. Yet many, strange to say, have actually ventured, in the most daring and positive way, to name not only the year and the month, but also the *very day*, when the Lord is to come! And what is also most astounding is the fact that these would-be prophets profess to deduce their calculations from the Word of God itself!

These irreverent attempts have produced incalculable mischief, as the enemy has not been slow in making use of them (in all probability he has been the instigator of them) to bring all prophetic truth, and especially the coming of the Lord, into sad disrepute with many, who do not take the trouble to study the Word for themselves.

But while it is going against Scripture to attempt to fix the date of Christ's coming, we may, I think, profitably consider the *relative* time of His second advent as to both its aspects ; that is to say, the *position* it occupies in Scripture with regard to all that precedes and follows after it ; for we thereby gain a fuller and more comprehensive view of the surrounding events themselves.

We know that as soon as the history of the Church on earth comes to an end, it will be taken up to heaven by the Lord ; and, as we see that its history closes with Laodicea at the end of Revelation iii., we are naturally led to conclude that its translation occurs, or is implied in the prospective vision as taking place, between chapters iii. and iv., though this is not expressly stated. Some of the chief scriptural reasons that seem to warrant this conclusion may be briefly given as follows :—

1. The Church is never represented *on the earth* in the book of Revelation *after* chapter iii., which we certainly may assume would not have been the case if it had not been removed to heaven ; for it is inconceivable that nothing should be said about it during all the momentous transactions under the seals, trumpets, and vials, &c. (chapter vi. and onwards), if it were upon the earth during these judgments.

2. The first view we have of saints, or believers, immediately after chapter iii., is the four and twenty elders seated on thrones, with golden crowns on their heads. This could be no other company than the saints of the first resurrection : as is clearly proved by their song, in which they refer to themselves and other believers as redeemed to God by Christ's blood "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. v. 9).

3. The door opened in heaven, and John being called to "come up hither" (chap. iv. 1), appear to involve the taking up of the Church and the saints of the first resurrection, as, when the time arrives, they will be summoned in like manner by the "shout" of the Lord, to enter into heaven through the door that He will then open for them (1 Thess. iv. 16). Besides, it is a significant fact that John, who had seen the history of the Church *on the earth* from an *earthly* standpoint—Patmos—is at this juncture caught up to heaven to look at

everything henceforth from a *heavenly* one. Does not this seem to imply that the Church being now regarded in the vision as taken up, John, as a member of it, was also brought there in spirit, that he might see the scenes that follow (chap. vi. and onwards) from that heavenly point of view, from which he, together with all the other members, should ultimately see the very same events actually taking place?

4. It cannot be said that the day of tribulation spoken of by Daniel, chap. xii. 1, and by our Lord in Matthew xxiv. 21, has yet come to pass. No such time as that described in those, and other, passages has ever appeared in history. This dark period is evidently future. With reference to it, our Lord has given to the saints represented by the Philadelphian Church a most precious promise (applicable to all true believers living on the earth when the Lord comes), that they should be kept from, or out of, it. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10).

After chapters iv. and v. (in which two glorious heavenly scenes are displayed), we take it that the day of tribulation begins (chap. vi.) with the opening of the first seal of judgment, under which and the three following ones—the four horses—terrible and unprecedented wars will be causing intense distress and suffering, and the most fearful consequences throughout Europe and the East,—the "beginning of sorrows." But before this we see the Church and the Old Testament saints safe in heaven as the "four and twenty elders," showing that Christ had previously come to take them out of all these scenes of tribulation, and had thus fulfilled His gracious promise to the Philadelphians.

5. After Revelation vi. a marked change appears in the moral and religious order of things on the earth; for at this time we see God beginning to resume His dealings with His ancient people, the Jews, in accordance with former Jewish principles; so that the character of the religious institutions and observances of God's faithful servants of that day appears again to assume the former Jewish aspect, unlike in every respect to the Christian or Church order of the present

time. This plainly shows us that the Church could not be on the scene after chapter vi., and must therefore have been previously removed.

6. Neither of the two companies of saints mentioned in Revelation vii., the one hundred and forty-four thousand Israelites, and the palm-bearing Gentiles, could possibly be the Church, because both are represented as passing through the great tribulation, though specially preserved by God through it, and coming out safely at the end of it to enjoy millennial blessings *on the earth*. Not a word is said about their going to heaven, and the description of them does not agree with the Church state.

Nor could the witnesses in chapter xi. be said to be the Church, because everything about them is Jewish, and the central scene of their testimony is Jerusalem.

Other considerations as we go on will, I trust, tend to confirm the foregoing statements, and to convince the reader that it is a most important point to see that the Lord will come to take up the Church *before* the great day of tribulation and the millennium which succeeds it.

“ O happy morn ! the Lord will come  
And take His waiting people home  
Beyond the reach of care ;  
Where guilt and sin are all unknown :  
The Lord will come and claim His own,  
And place them with Him on His throne,  
The glory bright to share.

The resurrection-morn will break,  
And every sleeping saint awake,  
Brought forth in light again ;  
O morn, too bright for mortal eyes !  
When all the ransomed Church shall rise,  
And wing their way to yonder skies—  
Called up with Christ to reign.”

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE DAY OF TRIBULATION—[DISPENSATION G].

THOUGH we could not point to any references in the Old Testament to the Church or to the Rapture, we find that it, as well as the New, abounds in allusions to the Day of Tribulation and to the second stage of Christ's coming, which is to follow that day. But as they are far too numerous to quote in full, we shall confine ourselves to some of the leading ones which refer in the plainest language to this time of trouble.

The three most direct and striking passages that arrest our attention, and set the matter very distinctly before us are the predictions of Daniel, Jeremiah, and our Lord, so frequently alluded to.

In Daniel xii. 1 we read: "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

In Jeremiah xxx. 7 we have: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it;" and in Matt. xxiv. 21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."

Though these passages may perhaps be regarded as referring more strictly to the last half of the seven years of trouble, they are quoted here to show that a time of unparalleled distress and tribulation is unmistakably coming, such as has never been known before.

That it is yet future must be evident, on a careful consideration of these plain statements, taken in connection with other direct references to the same subject.

In Daniel xii. 4, 9, it is clearly stated that it is to be at "the time of the end"; while our Lord in Matthew xxiv. also points to the same period in answer to the question (ver.

3) "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Moreover it is very plain that the "abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," has not stood in the holy place (ver. 15) since the Lord delivered this prophecy. For never, from the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (more than 175 years before Christ), has such a profanity occurred in Jerusalem. Antiochus did set up an idol—the image of Jupiter Olympus—in the temple, and it was the abomination of that day (Daniel xi. 31). In this vile act, and as a wicked persecutor of the Jews and the cause of their apostasy, he is rightly regarded as an exact *type* of the Antichrist, who will, later on, set up the "abomination of desolation" as foretold by the Lord (*see* Rev. xiii. 14, 15). Certainly this particular profanation did not take place at the destruction of Jerusalem; for then the temple was utterly demolished, and the Jews have never had another.

Many have thought that the tribulation spoken of by our Lord refers mainly to the general troubles, persecutions, and trials that Christians were to endure throughout the whole of the present dispensation; but when His words are closely examined, and the local references to Judea and to Jewish customs duly considered, it will be seen that such was not the meaning of the prophecy.

Yet it is in consequence of the prevalence of this mistaken idea, that so many have completely lost the force and bearing of the specific teaching of our Lord on this subject. Nothing could be plainer than the fact that His discourse recorded in Matthew xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi. relates exclusively to the Jewish people, and to the circumstances through which they would have to pass from the days of the apostles down to the time of the end, while it is evident that a limited or shortened period at the close—"the great tribulation"—really constitutes the main burden of the whole discourse, to which all the remarks throughout converge; as it finishes with Christ's coming to deliver His people out of it, and to judge the nations. From verse 15 to 28 of Matthew xxiv. we have an account of this tribulation among the Jews in Judæa. The same may be said of Daniel's and Jeremiah's prophecies; for they are entirely Jewish, and refer exclusively to the end of the age. On the other hand, by some strange perversity of error, those who do

see that this prophecy is unmistakably Jewish, run into the other extreme by maintaining that it only relates to the past destruction of Jerusalem, evidently not observing that verses 29 and 30 of Matthew xxiv. completely dispel such a thought; for we read there, "*Immediately after the tribulation* of those days shall the sun be darkened, &c. . . . and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven," showing that the Lord then comes to judge the living nations. Did Christ thus come after the destruction of Jerusalem? Certainly not; and as that is still a future event, so also is the great tribulation that immediately precedes it.

It is true that in Luke xxi. 20-24 the destruction of Jerusalem (now past) is referred to in a parenthetical way, though this is omitted by the other two evangelists; while a long interval is obviously implied between verses 24 and 25, as from the latter to verse 28 the prophecy clearly relates to the time of the end, as in Matthew xxiv. and Mark xiii.

At this point it is necessary to revert to the prophecy of the "seventy weeks" of Daniel ix. 24-27, which it should be remembered is also an entirely Jewish prophecy (*see* the small chart).

It will be noticed that they are divided into three parts, but as the two first terminated at the crucifixion of Christ, we purpose dealing with the third part only—the *last week* of the seventy.

The first thing that strikes us is the remarkable separation of this one week from the sixty-nine; and we are led to conclude from the context that the division was made because a long interval of time was to elapse between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week. Of this undefined interval nearly nineteen centuries have already passed as the Christian era, commencing when Christ the Messiah was cut off, and had nothing.

We also observe that this notable week of seven years is marked by two very significant events or epochs, which furnish us with a valuable key to some portions of the Revelation, as well as to the circumstances and length of the great tribulation.

First, A certain prince shall come, and confirm a (not *the* as in A.V.) covenant with many (Jews of course) for one week, that is, for seven years.

Second, "In the midst of the week he"—the prince—"shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."

Surely no one will venture to say that either of these events has yet occurred ; for they were to take place *after* Messiah was cut off (verse 26), and no Gentile prince has yet made a seven years' covenant with the Jews since Christ was crucified ; nor have the Jewish sacrifices been made to cease, seeing they have never had any since Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus.

We learn elsewhere that this prince will be one of the heads of the revived Roman empire ; a prince of the people who destroyed Jerusalem (ver. 26), and he will, we presume, acquire such a position of power through his various conquests, especially in the East, as to be able to stipulate, in this seven years' covenant with the Jews, to give them possession of their own land. They, on their part, will acknowledge him as their protector, and will agree to pay tribute to him, as their forefathers did to the Cæsars of old. For what other covenant, it may be asked, could a Gentile prince make with the Jewish nation which would be acceptable to them ?

Mere temporary relief, or emigration to some other country than Palestine, would never satisfy the undying wish of the Jews to return to their own land. For this reason I assume that the chief stipulation of this important covenant will be the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, and that under it a large number, especially of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, will return ; most of them in unbelief, but with a godly remnant in their midst. The ten lost tribes return at a later period (Zech. xiii. 8, 9). After three and a half years—that is to say, in "the midst of the week"—this prince will turn against the Jews and begin to persecute them by interfering with their religious worship at Jerusalem, the only place where they could resume their sacrifices and oblations.

This is another proof that they must be partially restored to Palestine, and allowed to worship in their new temple, soon after this covenant is made with them ; for they have never had any sacrifices since they were driven out of Jerusalem by Titus.

Now in Daniel vii. we see a "little horn" prominently noticed, in connection with the ten kings of the revived Roman power, who shall rise, and "subdue three kings" (ver. 24).

"And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and *shall wear out the saints of the Most High*, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until *a time and times and the dividing of time*,"—i.e., three and a half years.

This is manifestly the same prince referred to above, for he persecutes the same people—the Jewish saints—for the same time, three and a half years, breaking his covenant in the midst of the week.

In Revelation xiii., where we have two beasts, we see this terrible prince appearing as the first (ver. 12), doing exactly what was prophesied of him in Daniel vii., thus, "There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. . . . And it was given unto him *to make war with the saints, and to overcome them*" (Rev. xiii. 5, 7).

We see in these three scriptures—Daniel ix., Daniel vii., and Revelation xiii.—a Roman prince beginning in the midst of the seven years to persecute and make war with the Jewish saints; and continuing his persecutions throughout the last three and a half years.

Then, again, in Daniel ix. 27, it is plainly stated that the one who begins to persecute the Jews in the middle of the week is the same person who commences it by a covenant with them; and thus we are irresistibly led to the conclusion that the notable individual mentioned in the prophecy of Daniel vii. as the "little horn," and in chapter ix., as the "prince," is identical with the one who appears in the first part of Revelation xiii.

By thus comparing these passages in Daniel and Revelation, we are enabled to discover where, in the Revelation, the *middle* of the week commences, or rather *one of the facts* (with others mentioned further on) which *marks* the beginning of that period. And that point—coincident with another fact in Revelation ix. i.—is where the first beast begins to "make war with the saints," recorded in chapter xiii., from which time he continues his persecutions for forty-two months,—that is, for three and a half years. We are helped to arrive at the commencement of the week by seeing when this same prince makes a covenant with the Jews.

Continuing these comparisons of Daniel and Revelation, we may in the next place endeavour to answer the important question, In what part of the book of Revelation may we look for the commencement of the last week or seven years?

Allowing, as already explained, that the "little horn," and the "prince" of Daniel, and the "first beast" of Revelation xiii., refer to the same person, each of them being represented as persecuting God's people for three and a half years, we have thus the last half of the week clearly marked out by the conduct of this prince; and further, as a natural sequence, he who thus persecutes must be the same one who commences the week by making a covenant with the Jews (Daniel ix. 27).

Where then, in Revelation, might we look for such a person commencing these seven years? I think we have a clue to this in what is said about the "little horn" *subduing* "three kings," for he is thus presented to us as a CONQUEROR.\*

\* Points of identification of the "Little Horn," and the "Prince," of Daniel vii. and ix., with the "First Beast" of Revelation xiii., and the "Conqueror" of Revelation vi. 2.

#### DANIEL.

1. The little horn had "a mouth speaking great things" (vii. 8, 20).

2. He "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them" (vii. 21, 25).

3. "He shall speak great words against the Most High" (vii. 25).

4. "They shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time,"— $3\frac{1}{2}$  years (vii. 25).

5. "And in the midst of the week he (the prince) shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," &c. (ix. 27).

6. "He (the little horn) shall subdue three kings" (vii. 8, 20, 24).

#### REVELATION.

"There was given unto him (the first beast) a mouth speaking great things" (xiii. 5).

"It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (xiii. 7).

"He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name" (xiii. 6).

"Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months,"— $3\frac{1}{2}$  years (xiii. 5).

The beast begins to persecute or make war with the Jewish saints in the midst of the week; seeing that it is from that time he continues to do so for forty and two months, or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years (xiii. 5, 7).

The rider on the white horse goes forth "conquering, and to conquer" (vi. 2).

We could not, as already shown, look for this week to begin *before* the removal of the Church. But when its history closes in Revelation iii., and we see it, with other saints, in heaven in chapters iv. and v., under the figure of the elders, the next thing presented to our view in chapter vi., as soon as the first seal is opened, is a CONQUEROR, "And I saw, and behold a white horse : and he that sat on him had a bow ; and a crown was given unto him : and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. vi. 2). This is just the point where we might naturally look for the beginning of the last week ; and when we see such a conqueror appearing at this particular juncture (the commencement of a new series of events by the opening of the first seal), we are further led to conclude that he will be the person to commence it by making this covenant with the Jews.

It therefore seems to me that in him we have the "prince that shall come," and that with the opening of the first seal the long-suspended seven years will begin, and continue through all the seals, trumpets, and vials, down to chapter xix., or nearly so.

Besides, after the removal of the Church, we should expect to find the Jewish order of things resumed, and God beginning to deal with His people Israel as of old ; and it is this change we see in chapter vi., which is thence continued to the end. For in the fifth seal we hear in the cry of the souls under the altar a strictly Jewish prayer, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. vi. 10.) No Christian could utter that petition, as we are taught to pray for our enemies ; but it was appropriate in David's day, as we see in the Psalms, and will be so again when Jewish conditions are resumed after the Church's translation.

From these considerations, and the foregoing identification of the little horn of Daniel vii., the prince of Daniel ix., the conqueror of Revelation vi., and the first beast of Revelation xiii., as *one and the same person*, we arrive at the conclusion that this notable personage, so often referred to in Scripture under different names, will in the near future appear as a conqueror (*i.e.*, as some great military leader, like Napoleon the First or Alexander the Great), who will subdue three

kings, and enter into a seven years' covenant with the Jews to give them possession of their own land. Then after three and a half years he will come more prominently forward as the first beast of Revelation xiii., energised (and, indeed, probably possessed) by the dragon, and be set up as a god to be worshipped; when he will begin to persecute the godly Jews, because they refuse to do this; causing their sacrifices and oblations to cease, through the instrumentality of his vicegerent and high priest in Jerusalem, the second beast (or Antichrist), and continuing his persecutions for the last three and a half years.\*

The whole seven years, though a short dispensation, comprise nearly all the judgments of the book of Revelation, and are represented on the chart by a *dark* or shaded space, lettered G. But as the troubles of the last half of these years will evidently be far more severe than those of the first, and as it will be the most terrible time ever known in this world's dark history; it seems to be the period specially referred to by our Lord as the "GREAT TRIBULATION" (Matt. xxiv. 21), and by Jeremiah and Daniel as "the time of Jacob's trouble." Therefore a *darker* shade of colouring appears in the chart to indicate this.

As we have been endeavouring to trace out the commence-

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\* To those who may not have had their attention specially directed to the numbers so often referred to, the following explanation may be useful. "Times" in Daniel iv. 23 stands for years; "till seven times pass over him"—that is, Nebuchadnezzar's affliction was to continue for seven years; and the phrase, "Time, times, and an half," signifies three and a half years: thus, time, one year; times, two; and an half, a half-year. The Jewish month was always reckoned as thirty days; and with this as a divisor, the following little sum will show how the numbers in Daniel and Revelation exactly correspond:—

$$\begin{array}{r} 3,0 \ ) \ 126,0 \text{ days} \\ 12 \ ) \ 42 \text{ months} \\ \hline 3.6 \text{ i.e., 3 years and 6 months.} \end{array}$$

It will be observed that a marked prominence is given to these numbers in Daniel and in Revelation, as they are referred to some *eight* times in the two books, thus:—Three times in Daniel as "time, times, and a half time" (vii. and xii.), and "midst of the week" (ix.); five times in Revelation as "a time, and times, and half a time," "1,260 days," and "forty-two months." These numbers furnish us with a valuable key to the interpretation of these prophecies.

ment of the last seven years, the next point that comes up for consideration is to discover if possible the particular events that distinctly mark the *middle*, when, as we have observed, the great tribulation begins. This, I scarcely need say, is also a question of considerable importance in connection with the interpretation of the Revelation, as it has often been discussed, and various opinions expressed with regard to it.

Here, again, our key number—three and a half years—will be of material help to us. But, first of all, I would direct attention to Revelation viii. 13, where we see “an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!” All the seven seals had been opened, and the first four trumpets had already sounded, when we come to a distinct *break* in the series of judgments (each of the series of seven seals, trumpets, and vials appear to be divided into two groups of *four and three*, the last three being different in character from the first four), and a very different order of judgments follows, far more dreadful than the preceding.

At this point, I take it, we come to the middle of the week—the dividing line between the two halves, and my reasons for so thinking will appear presently.

At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, which brings on the first woe, we see a “star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit” (ix. 1). Who could this Star be but Satan, “the prince of the power of the air,” who has held, and still holds, a place in the heavens? Of this I should think there could not be the possibility of a doubt, when we find that he opens the bottomless pit—the prison house of demons—and that he is called the king and angel of the bottomless pit, “whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.” From all that is stated here and elsewhere, about this fall of Satan, it appears evident to me that it is the first event of this momentous period, the last three and a half years; for in chapter xii., where we have a fuller account of this casting down of the great Dragon—looked at from another important point of view—we see that he immediately *begins*

*to persecute the woman*,—"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child" (ver. 13); and that she is nourished for a *time and times and a half time* from the face of the serpent.

As this Satanic persecution covers exactly the whole period of three and a half years, and evidently begins directly he is cast down, it clearly follows that *the last half of the week commences with his fall from heaven* at the sounding of the fifth trumpet, which ushers in the first woe.

Moreover, the foregoing conclusion, that the fall of Satan marks the commencement of the last three and a half years, is further corroborated by the similarity of the language employed by the angel announcing in Revelation viii. 13, "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth," to the loud voice in chapter xii. 12, declaring, "*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,"—thus showing that both announcements refer to the same event, to the woeful consequences to the inhabitants of the earth, arising from the hateful presence of the devil and his innumerable hosts of demons, beginning with the fall of the "star" (Satan) from heaven (ix. 1). The "*short time*" mentioned in this last verse may be, and very probably is, the last three and a half years which he knows is all that will be allowed to him for his desperate struggle for supremacy, during which the woman and her seed (the godly remnant of Israelites) will be the special objects of his persecution. Perhaps this is what our Lord also alludes to in Matthew xxiv. 22, "But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened;" the "elect" being the godly Jewish remnant which will then be persecuted.

The three woe trumpets run in *consecutive* order, and embrace the whole three and a half years described in Revelation ix., x., and xi.; chapter x. being a parenthesis, in which the mighty angel solemnly announces the end of this time of trouble. These woes form the direct historical line of this short period; but, as it appears to be one of the most eventful recorded in the Apocalypse, full of fearful conflict and unparalleled distress, we are brought back in the vision

several times to see *other transactions* that take place *concurrently* with the three woes.

These additional particulars seem to partake of the character of explanatory episodes, and are found in chapters xi. (verses 1 to 13), xii., xiii., and portions of xiv., while in three of these chapters the key number "three and a half years" is mentioned no less than *five times*, thus so distinctly marking the exact duration of the events described, that we cannot be wrong in assigning these chapters to this period.

The concurrent episodes referred to above—the relative bearings of which it is important rightly to understand—may perhaps be more readily seen when put in the form of a diagram as follows, in which the whole period of three and a half years is represented by six parallel lines—the first line showing the three *consecutive* woes and the other five the events that run throughout the same period of time:—

	FIFTH TRUMPET OR FIRST WOE.	SIXTH TRUMPET OR SECOND WOE.	SEVENTH TRUMPET OR THIRD WOE.
	Rev. ix. 1-12.	ix. 13-21.	xi. 14-18.
Rev.	<u>A parenthesis. The mighty angel announcing the close of the</u>		
x.	<u>period, at the sounding of the seventh trumpet.</u>		
	<u>Temple in Jerusalem measured and so owned of God. Outer</u>		
xi.	<u>court trodden under foot by Gentiles 42 months.</u>		
	<u>Testimony of witnesses for 1260 days. Their martyrdom and</u>		
	<u>ascension to heaven.</u>		
	<u>The dragon cast out of heaven to the earth; persecutes the</u>		
xii.	<u>woman for a time, times, and a half time.</u>		
	<u>The woman preserved from the dragon, and nourished for 1260</u>		
	<u>days.</u>		
	<u>Appearance and deeds of the first beast, his war with the</u>		
xiii.	<u>Jewish saints, and their persecution for 42 months.</u>		
	<u>The lying wonders of the second beast (Antichrist), and his</u>		
	<u>setting up idolatry in Jerusalem.</u>		
	<u>Preaching the everlasting Gospel continued, having begun in</u>		
xiv.	<u>first half of week. Fall of Babylon announced.</u>		
	<u>Blessedness of those who die at that time. Judgment of the</u>		
	<u>beast and those who worship him proclaimed.</u>		

It may be well to note that at the end of chap. xi., just after the sounding of the seventh trumpet, we see a *break* in

the *direct line* of historical events, for the interposition of the concurrent or additional ones just referred to, which take us over the same period several times. Then, at the beginning of chap. xvi., we see the *direct line* resumed with the pouring out of the vials.

It is also worthy of notice, as a guiding point, that at the end of chap. xi., where the direct chain is seemingly interrupted for a moment, we find an allusion to the *temple in heaven*; while at the end of chap. xv., just as it is about to be taken up again, the *temple in heaven* is once more alluded to; as if these references to it at these particular points, were intended to serve as connecting *links* between the two ends of the broken chain. Of course there are other important thoughts connected with this introduction of the temple, into which I do not at present enter.

In the sevenfold summary of chapter xiv. we also see the 144,000 with the Lamb on Mount Zion, and the harvest and vintage at the end of the dispensation.

Now, when we consider for a moment what is involved in these awful woe judgments, beginning with the casting down of Satan to the earth, we begin to realise more fully the force of our Lord's significant words with regard to this brief period: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. xxiv. 21). It will, beyond doubt, be a time of unprecedented woe to the dwellers on the earth; indeed its distinguishing feature will be "woe, woe, woe," throughout; and as we see the dark and dreadful picture unfolding itself in the vision, we can readily understand why it should be so designated.

In the first place we see the great "prince of the power of the air" cast down to the earth and his angels with him (Rev. xii. 9); the "star" that is seen falling from heaven in chapter ix. 1. He then opens the bottomless pit, and there arises "a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power" (Rev. ix. 2, 3).

When we consider the effects produced by this dreadful

judgment, the great darkness, the torment inflicted by the locusts and *whence they came*, it seems natural to suppose that they symbolically represent demons coming forth from the abyss, who, by some darkening and bewildering influence and terrible delusions, torment the souls of those "which have not the seal of God in their foreheads." So fearful will this torment be, that "they shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them" (Rev. ix. 6).

In the second woe, we see the great and mysterious army of horsemen coming forth to execute their deadly mission. Looking at the very peculiar symbols employed to describe these strange horsemen, and the similarity of some of these symbols to those used in the previous woe, such as "smoke," "fire," "horses to battle," and "tails like scorpions" in the first, and "tails like serpents" in the second, it seems possible that there may be also in this second woe some further supernatural or demoniacal power acting in association with human agencies.

For a distinguishing feature of this time of woe (which begins with Satan and his angels being cast down), will be an unprecedented and fuller display of Satanic power than was ever known before on the earth, as indicated by the voice from heaven saying, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath" (Rev. xii. 12).

No wonder that it is called a time of "woe"—"such as was not since the beginning of the world . . . no, nor ever shall be."

Although this is, according to the infallible Word of God, the dark prospect that awaits this unbelieving world, yet they heed not these warnings, but sneer and scoff at the prophetic word, lulled by the great charmer Satan into the profound slumber of death; and he will keep them indulging in their vain and delusive dreams, until the day of awakening shall suddenly and unexpectedly startle them into the discovery of their tremendous mistake, when it is too late! It will be as it was in the days of Noah. Even many Christian teachers are loudly proclaiming that the world is growing better (contrary to what Paul says in 2 Timothy iii. 13, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse"), and that a spiritual millennium

will be gradually brought about by their evangelistic efforts. What a sad delusion!

But, oh! what immense consolation to every true believer is found in that precious promise of our blessed Lord, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10).\*

There is also great consolation in knowing that at the end of the struggle our chief Captain, the Lord of Hosts, shall triumph gloriously; when all these terrible foes—human and Satanic—shall be utterly defeated, and cast down in a moment by His almighty word into the depths of the bottomless pit.

Another matter of considerable importance (partially alluded to already), to which it may be well to call special attention, is, that during this time of great tribulation (particularly towards the end of it) three notable personages appear on the scene; and are the most prominent actors in the extraordinary events of this terrible period.

Each of them is referred to several times in a very marked

\* That the Church will not be in, or have to pass through, the great tribulation is conclusively proved from the following Scriptures:—

1. The five passages—Jer. xxx. 7; Dan. xii. 1; Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.; and Luke xxi.—from which we get a direct account of it, distinctly apply to the Jews, to Jacob, Jerusalem, and Judea. The Church is never mentioned once in connection with it.

2. In Revelation vii. 14, we have quite a different class of saints from the elders. These saints come out of the great tribulation, while the elders are seen in heaven already, and nothing is said of them passing through it.

3. In Revelation xii. 9-12 we see the trial of the heavenly saints is ended, and they are rejoicing when Satan is cast down to *begin* the three and a half years' persecution. They are therefore entirely out of it.

4. In 2 Thessalonians ii. 1, 2, the apostle shows the Thessalonians that as they were to be gathered *to* Christ, they could not be in the day of trouble that preceded His appearing, for they must be with Him before He appeared. They were to go to meet Him in the air, and hence would not pass through the judgment of that day, its trials or its terrors.

5. The promise of the Lord in Revelation iii. 10 plainly states that the Church will be kept from that great tribulation. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

manner, and under different names, both in the Old and in the New Testaments.

In order that we may get a succinct and comprehensive view of these persons, they are grouped together in the three following columns under their different names, with the leading passages of Scripture referring to them. A fourth is mentioned in Daniel xi. 40 as the "king of the south;" but so little is said of him, that it will not be necessary to do more than refer to him in a general way, in his connection with the others at the time of the end.

*The Three Notable Personages of the "Last Days."*

THE PRINCE.

1. Little horn	...	...	...	Dan. vii. 8, 24, 25.
2. Prince that shall come	...	...	...	Dan. ix. 26.
3. Conqueror	...	...	...	Rev. vi. 2.
4. First beast	...	...	...	Rev. xiii. 1-8, xix. 19.
5. Eighth head	...	...	...	Rev. xvii. 11.
6. 666. The number of his name	...	...	...	Rev. xiii. 18.

THE ANTICHRIST.

1. Wilful King	...	...	...	{ Dan. xi. 36; Jer. iv. 9; Isa. xxx. 33, lvii. 9.
2. Idol (or worthless) Shepherd	...	...	...	Zech. xi. 16, 17.
3. False Messiah	...	...	...	John v. 43.
4. Man of Sin	...	...	...	2 Thess. ii. 3-10.
5. Antichrist	...	...	...	1 John ii. 18.
6. Beast with two horns	...	...	...	Rev. xiii. 11.
7. False Prophet	...	...	...	Rev. xix. 20.

THE KING OF THE NORTH.

1. Assyrian	...	...	...	{ Isa. x. 5, 24, xiv. 25, xxxi. 8.
2. Scourge	...	...	...	Isa. xxviii. 2, 15, 18.
3. Fierce King	...	...	...	Dan. viii. 23-25.
4. Gog, Prince of Rosh (Russia)	...	...	...	{ Ezek. xxxviii. & xxxix. ; Zech. xiv. 2.
5. King of the North	...	...	...	Dan. xi. 40-45.

The above references, I need hardly say, are to be taken as representing, not certain political powers or religious systems, but three actual and remarkable men in high positions of authority in their respective spheres at this time.

In one respect they will be alike; that is, they will be

notorious for their high-handed wickedness and opposition to God and to His people, the prince and the Antichrist specially so, above all persons that have ever lived on this earth.

But these three great leaders of men will be totally different as to nationality, character, and position, and will have their seat of government and their residence in different countries.

It would be well for all who wish to be clear on this subject to examine closely all the foregoing references, with their context readings, as there appears to be considerable misapprehension with regard to these noted characters, owing, I take it, to loose or careless reading.

In the popular mind the word Antichrist seems to stand for all three, and sometimes for the Pope; indeed for any notoriously wicked person that may be expected to appear in the last days! No wonder that so much confusion exists with regard to these prophetic truths when such vague notions can be entertained. Many eminent writers, especially of the historical school, have long maintained that Popery, or rather the Pope, is the Antichrist. Popery is manifestly anti-Christian, but for all that the Pope is not *the* Antichrist of Scripture, as we see from the different language used to describe Popery.

Nothing could be plainer than the words employed in Scripture to depict this system. She is the "mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (Rev. xvii. 5). She is like the *woman* that took the leaven and hid it "in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened;" and is the antitype of the idolatrous *woman* that appears in the ephah in Zechariah v. 5-11.

The Babylonish idolatry of that vision which had found a resting-place for a while among the Israelites in Palestine (but was now returning to Babylon), is thus a striking *type* of Popery, described as a woman—the figure here of "*wickedness*"—enclosed or *mysteriously hidden* in the ephah, the symbol of *commerce*,—that trade or commerce in souls or sacerdotal things which is a marked feature of all systems of idolatry, papal as well as pagan.\*

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\* The vision of the ephah (Zech. v.) appears to represent the abominable idolatry introduced into Palestine from Babylon, its original source and seat, now departing from Israel and returning whence it came. It was being carried back by the two women, having the wings

She is also the *woman* Jezebel of Thyatira (Rev. ii. 20), the high priestess of idolatry, and of every kind of abomination; and that great city which "made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. xiv. 8). No one could fail to see the likeness of the great harlot in these remarkable passages. Antichrist is not so described, although some of the features (as might be expected) of both these great apostasies are alike.

Another prevalent mistake made—even by some able writers on prophetic subjects—is to think that the Roman prince and the Antichrist are one and the same person. This shows but little discernment as to things which differ, and leads to much confusion in the interpretation of certain scriptures.

These, and some other points regarding the three notable persons who shall be such prominent actors during the day of tribulation, will, I trust, be more clearly seen as we pursue the subject, and briefly consider each of them as set forth in the passages already quoted, together with some other references.

First, The Prince. We have already (it will be remembered) pretty fully described this man (a Roman, because he is the "prince that shall come" of the people who destroyed Jerusalem), (Dan. ix. 26), so that we have only a few more words to add in order to distinguish him from the other two, the Antichrist and the King of the North.

of the unclean stork, to its original and congenial home in the land of Shinar, to be "established, and set there upon her own base." This prophecy was given *after* the Captivity, and has found its fulfilment in the fact that the Jews have never had idolatry among them *since then*. Up to the present their house has been "swept and garnished." But at the time of the end the unclean spirit of idolatry will return, as our Lord foretold, with "seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (Matt. xii. 43-45). See Rev. xiii.

The words in verse 6, "This is their resemblance through all the earth," seem to point to the fact that all the systems of idolatry throughout the world are alike in principle, and *resemble* that which had its chief origin in Babylon. It has been truly said that Popery is Christianised paganism; idolatry in its most subtle and blasphemous forms. Hence its name in Revelation, "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots." [See Heslop's "Two Babylons," and Brock's "Rome, Pagan and Papal."]

He will be a Gentile monarch, not by hereditary right, as it is said of him in Revelation vi. 2, "A crown was *given* unto him." He will be the head of the ten confederated kingdoms of the revived Roman empire, by virtue of his superior military prowess, and his wonderful conquests; and will probably have his chief seat of government in Rome, or some other European capital, while he may possibly (like Constantine the Great) be in possession of Byzantium or Constantinople at the same time.

Moreover, it is thought by many, that in his sudden appearance on the scene, his character, his incomparable military genius and abilities, his general career, and great conquests, he will be very like Napoleon the First.

As the Roman prince and a great conqueror, he will make his seven years' covenant with the Jews, and be for a time their friend and protector. Later on he will appear as the first beast of Revelation xiii., possessed and energised by the dragon, and so endowed with extraordinary and supernatural powers, that he will be regarded as a god, and set up to be worshipped (Rev. xiii. 4).

He will then turn against the faithful Jews in Palestine, and, through his vicegerent (the Antichrist) in Jerusalem, will continue to persecute or make war with them for forty and two months, because they refuse to worship him or his image. Besides this, he will open "his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Power will also be given him by Satan "over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life" (Rev. xiii. 6, 7, 8). Then he will come to his awful doom, for in his last desperate battle against the Lord, he will be taken and *cast alive* into the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20). "The beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. vii. 11). It is to this first beast, or Roman prince, that the mystical number 666 is applied, and not to the Antichrist, as so commonly stated.

Second, The Antichrist, who will be an apostate Jew, and as such a totally different character from the Gentile prince. We have one indirect proof of this in the words of our Lord in John v. 43, "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." He, the true Messiah, had come in His Father's name, and was not received by the Jews; another man, a false Messiah, should come in his own name, and him they would receive. Evidently the one referred to as coming in his own name could not be a Gentile, for the Jews could never receive any one but a Jew as their Messiah, no matter what his pretensions might be. Doubtless our Lord was looking forward to this time when this Jewish Antichrist should appear in Jerusalem, claiming to be the true Messiah, and should be welcomed by the Jews as such.

In Zechariah xi. 15-17, this apostate Jew is contrasted with the Good Shepherd, and called the "idol shepherd that leaveth the flock" (or worthless), who "shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces." He will set up an *idol* in Jerusalem, and he himself will be worshipped (2 Thess. ii. 4). He appears in Daniel xi. 36-39 as the wilful king (claiming to be king of the Jews), under the suzerainty of the Roman prince, with whom he will have entered into a covenant, and for whom he will act as vicegerent and high priest in Jerusalem. Here, too, he appears as an apostate Jew, for he shall not regard the God of his fathers, that is, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, nor the desire of the Jewish women to be the mother of the Messiah.

Probably the "god of forces," and the "strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory," will be his sovereign lord and head, the Roman prince, whom he will so highly honour as to have an image made of him, which he will set up to be worshipped.

Again we see him in Revelation xiii. 11 as "another beast," having "*two horns like a lamb*, and he spake as a dragon." Simulating outwardly, as much as possible, the true Lamb of God, in order to deceive the Jews, his words and acts will be instigated by the dragon or devil within him. He will also be the antitype of the notorious Antiochus Epiphanes, who set up a statue of Jupiter Olympus in the temple at Jerusalem, which he commanded the Jews to worship (B.C. 170); for he will also set up an image of the first beast in the restored temple, and command the Jews to worship it on penalty of death (Rev. xiii. 15). This will be "the abomination of desola-

tion, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," to which our Lord referred in Matthew xxiv. 15. He will, moreover, endeavour to imitate Elijah the prophet (another Jewish act) by calling fire down from heaven in the sight of men, as a test of his divine mission; and it would seem that in some mysterious manner he will apparently be successful in doing this, and in accomplishing various astounding miracles through Satanic power (like the magicians of Egypt), as is set forth in 2 Thessalonians ii. 9, 10, "Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish."

Lastly, we see him as the "false prophet" in Revelation xix. 20, when he is taken with his master, the first beast, and both are "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

Thus these two noted characters will earn for themselves above all that have ever lived on the earth the terrible and unenviable notoriety of being *cast alive* into the lake of fire.

Here I would again remind the reader that the number 666 does not apply to the Antichrist, as so often erroneously stated, but to the first beast or Roman prince, as will be readily seen when verses 15 to 18 of Revelation xiii. are carefully examined.

Third, The king of the north—the great monarch who will be exercising sovereign power at this time over the countries north and north-east of Palestine. I doubt not that Russia is the kingdom principally referred to as the north, which with its numerous allies mentioned in Ezekiel xxxviii. 5, 6 (Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, and Togarmah) will constitute this vast invading host, as it, with some of its Eastern confederates, such as Persia, &c., will at this time be in possession of the countries formerly held by the ancient Assyrians; and hence the "Assyrian" is often spoken of as coming down in this invasion. Therefore the "king of the north" and the "Assyrian" are regarded as the same person in these references.

Very full particulars of this last invasion of Palestine by the king of the north, and the kings from the east associated with him, are given in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel. But as we shall have occasion to notice this subject in another connection a little further on, we will

now only direct attention to one or two points, which may further help us to distinguish this personage from the two already described.

In Isaiah xxviii. 15, 18, we find him and the prince thus incidentally alluded to:—"Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. . . . your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." The apostate Jews are here represented as having made a covenant with death and with hell; that is, with the prince, as we have already seen in Daniel ix. 27; but notwithstanding their boast of having a powerful protector under this covenant, the "overflowing scourge" (the king of the north) shall pass through their land, and they, the Jews, shall be trodden down by it. In Daniel xi. 40 we see this king of the north in contact with the wilful king or Antichrist. "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south (Egypt) push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships," &c. This scene will be in Palestine, as we are told in verse 41 that "he shall enter also into the *glorious land*."

His fate is mentioned in verse 45,—“He shall come to his end, and none shall help him;” while in Daniel viii., where the same king appears as a “king of fierce countenance” (ver. 23), it is still more explicitly described:—"He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand" (ver. 25), showing that, like the other two, he shall be judged and destroyed by the Lord Himself.

It is hoped that these brief notes, but more especially the Scriptures that have been alluded to, will be sufficient to convince the reader that these three notable personages of the last closing days of this age will be totally distinct characters, occupying wholly different positions, and located in separate countries. To mix them together in a vague general way, as is often done, or to mistake one for the other, must obviously lead to much misunderstanding in the interpretation

of these important prophecies relating to the great events now before us, and comparatively near at hand.

For the sake of clearness, and in order to impress these more distinctly on the memory, it may be well to briefly review the whole period of the last week of Daniel's prophecy, comprising, as we have already assumed, all the events between chapters vi. and xix. of Revelation inclusive. This review is presented in the following short summary under two divisions—the first and second halves of seven years:—

### THE FIRST THREE AND A HALF YEARS.

1. Opening of the first four seals: judgments of the four horses, and appearance of the conqueror; great wars and their terrible consequences (Rev. vi. 1-8).

2. Opening of the fifth seal: souls under the altar; persecution and martyrdom, and prayer for vengeance (vi. 9-11).

3. Opening of the sixth seal: great convulsions, upheavals, and changes in political, social, commercial, and religious affairs throughout the world; consequent terror and fear that the end of the world and the last judgment are come (ver. 12-17).

4. A parenthesis: sealing of the 144,000 Jewish saints, and description of the saved Gentile palm-bearers (vii.).

5. Opening of the seventh seal: silence, and a solemn scene in heaven (the angel at the altar) preparatory to the seven angels coming forth with their seven trumpets (viii. 1-6).

6. The first four trumpets: special judgments on society at large; revolutions and their dire consequences; tyranny and oppression of rulers and leaders of the people, together with the disastrous and ruinous effects produced by false teachers; limited to a "third part," probably the Roman world (viii. 7-12).

7. The angel's announcement of the three woes: middle of the week (viii. 13).

### EVENTS OF THE SECOND THREE AND A HALF YEARS—

#### THE "GREAT TRIBULATION."

1. The fifth trumpet or first woe: Satan and his angels cast down from heaven to earth; demons let loose from the bottomless pit, who torment for five months those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads (ix. 1-12 and xii. 7-12).

[This is shown on the chart by the serpent and crooked line descending from above.]

2. The sixth trumpet or second woe: the four angels that were bound in the Euphrates loosed; then the horsemen come and kill the third part of men (ix. 13-21).

3. A parenthesis: the mighty angel announces with a solemn oath that there should be no longer delay in concluding the judgments of God; and that at the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God should be finished (chap. x.).

4. The temple services partially restored by the pious Jews in Jerusalem, and to a certain extent owned of God; the outer court left to the Gentiles, who tread the holy city under foot for forty and two months (xi. 1, 2).

5. Testimony of the witnesses for 1,260 days; their martyrdom, resurrection, and ascension to heaven in the sight of their enemies; followed by an earthquake by which seven thousand are slain (xi. 3-13).

6. The godly Jewish remnant, persecuted by the dragon for 1,260 days, or "time and times, and half a time;" the woman protected and nourished (xii. 6, 13-17).

7. The terrible wickedness of the first beast, the head of the revived Roman empire, displayed in blasphemy against God and His tabernacle, and in making war with the saints for forty-two months (xiii. 1-10).

8. The awful doings during the same period of the second beast (Antichrist), that had "two horns like a lamb," and spake "as a dragon," in deceiving them that dwell on the earth by his miraculous powers and lying wonders, in setting up an image of the first beast, and in killing those who refuse to worship it (xiii. 11-18). This idol—set up in the temple at Jerusalem—will be "the abomination of desolation" (Dan. xii. 11; Matt. xxiv. 15). [The idolatry of the apostate Jews, led by the Antichrist at this time, will be the fulfilment of our Lord's words in Matthew xii. 43-45.]

9. The 144,000 Israelites (previously sealed) preserved through this great tribulation, together with the multitude of saved Gentiles (the palm-bearers) beheld coming out of it at the end, while the Israelites are seen on Mount Zion,—both parties thus entering into the enjoyment of millennial blessings on the earth (vii. and xiv. 1-5).

10. Preaching of the everlasting Gospel, commenced no doubt during the first part of the week, but now more widely and earnestly proclaimed during the last three and a half years (xiv. 6, 7). The godly Jewish remnant will be leading preachers of this Gospel to every nation, those whom our Lord calls "My brethren" (*i.e.*, His Jewish brethren) in Matthew xxv. 40. The Gospel preached during the day of tribulation is that which is referred to in Matthew xxiv. 14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."\*

11. The overthrow and destruction of Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots (Popery), by the beast and the kings of the resuscitated Roman empire, who shall at this time utterly destroy her moral, religious, and ecclesiastical supremacy over them. Infidelity and idolatry will then be supreme (xvii. 12-18).

12. Seventh trumpet, or third woe: the great crisis *at the end* of the last three and a half years, when the Gentile power and domination (the national authority committed to the Gentiles from the time of Nebuchadnezzar) shall finally come to an end. The "times of the Gentiles . . . fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24); "the mystery of God . . . finished" (Rev. x. 7); high-handed wickedness and deliberate opposition to Him effectually checked, and the Lord God Almighty taking to Himself His great power and reigning. It will be the beginning of the end; but a further space of time will elapse before full millennial blessings are brought in.

Immediately following the close of the momentous last half of the week, the seven vials of the wrath of God will be poured out on the earth.

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\* The misapplication of this passage has had the lamentable effect of hindering many Christians from receiving the plain teaching of the Word with regard to the second coming of our Lord; that is, as to its being a *present hope*, and an event *to be always expected* at any time (1 Thess. i. 10 and iv. 15-17). The root of the error is in not seeing that the Gospel alluded to is, not the present Gospel of the grace of God, but the "Gospel of the kingdom," which will be preached during the day of tribulation, *after the translation of the Church*. The character of it is given in Revelation xiv. 7 (see Psa. xcvi. 13). Therefore it is a great mistake to say the Lord will not come till the *present gospel* is proclaimed to every nation, for the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom is an event to take place *after* His coming.

As we find in Daniel xii. 12 a period of time, that extends beyond the 1260 days by seventy-five, mentioned in the words, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days" (that is,  $1,260 + 75 = 1,335$ ), it seems to me reasonable to conclude, considering the import of the whole chapter, that the *execution* of God's wrath in the pouring out of the seven vials will take these seventy-five days more before Christ comes to judge the nations, and bring in full blessing by setting up His millennial kingdom. These words, I take it, signify that it will indeed be a blessed privilege, not only to be safely preserved through the great tribulation,—*i.e.*, during the last three and a half years, or 1,260 days,—but also to come out of the terrible day of God's wrath during the additional seventy-five days (*i.e.*, to the end of the 1,335), so as to be safely introduced into the full enjoyment of millennial blessings on the earth.\*

As the sixth and seventh vials (which immediately pre-

\* The four chief prophetic periods mentioned in Daniel are :—

1. Time, times, and a half-time, to which special reference has already been made (Dan. vii., xii.).

2. 1,290 days (Dan. xii. 11),—the whole time during which the daily sacrifices shall be taken away by the antichrist ; that is, thirty days in addition to the 1,260 ( $1260 + 30 = 1,290$ ) before they are fully restored to the godly remnant of Jews.

3. 1,335 days (Dan. xii. 12), which extend seventy-five days beyond the 1,260 ( $1,260 + 75 = 1,335$ ), so that during these additional seventy-five, after the seventh trumpet has been sounded at the end of the 1,260, the seven vials (it is assumed) will be poured out.

4. 2,300 days (Dan. viii. 14), the time the "little horn" (not the same as the "little horn" of Dan. vii.) "waxed great," and "magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away" (ver. 10, 11). This is what the noted Antiochus Epiphanes (the "little horn" here) did at Jerusalem during these 2,300 literal days. This period has passed into history long ago, and has no reference whatever to the events at the time of the end ; so that an unwarranted liberty has been taken with this scripture in converting these days ("evenings and mornings" in the margin) into 2,300 years ; while nothing could be more erroneous than the absurd superstructure that has been reared upon this false basis, the promulgators of which daringly assume to name the very day when Christ is to return, in spite of Scripture, especially of the plain statement in Mark xiii. 32, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven." The result of these fanciful speculations has been to bring much discredit upon the prophetic word.

cede the next great crisis, the second stage of the Lord's coming) unfold to us the closing and deeply solemn scenes that are to transpire at the end of the age, it may be well to consider them separately, and somewhat more in detail than the previous judgments; especially as these two last vials appear to be connected with the final fulfilment of several important prophecies, largely dwelt upon in other parts of Scripture, with which it may be well to consider and compare them.

These connections we will now endeavour to trace out, by citing the leading passages that evidently refer to the same period,—the end of the age,—in which different aspects of the great events that are to occur at that time are shown to us.

The sixth vial: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Passing over the significant parenthesis in verse 15, we find the place mentioned in which these various parties are to be brought together: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. xvi. 12-16).

The main thought presented to us in this vial, is that of certain gatherings of the kings from the east, and of the whole world, preparatory to the great battle and judgments that are to follow soon afterwards.

We shall now consider the four facts that are stated to occur at the pouring out of the sixth vial, in the order in which they are given:—

First, The drying up of the river Euphrates. This great river was the eastern boundary of the Roman empire, and the dividing line between the east, north-east, and Palestine. Here it appears to represent the eastern barrier between these countries, and as a figure it consequently applies to whatever nation or power holds this frontier position against any invasions from the north and east. As Turkey is that power,

it may be that the overthrow and dissolution of the Turkish nation is symbolised by this drying up of the Euphrates ; for when that event takes place, the way will be clearly opened for the kings from the north and east to come down as here described. "And the water thereof was dried up," seems to be an intimation—assuming Turkey to be thus represented—that the Ottoman empire will be broken up and removed out of the way. It has long been a weak and tottering nation, at the mercy of its neighbours both on the north and on the west ; and every year it shows signs of growing weakness, so that its dissolution may be near at hand, and must doubtless come to pass with the final solution of the "Eastern question."

Second, "That the way of the kings from the east might be prepared." The phrase, "from the east," not only refers to countries directly east of Palestine but to those north-east as well. In Scripture the word is often used to point to countries in the north-east, perhaps, for one reason, because people in travelling from the east to Palestine had generally to enter it by the north through Syria, to avoid the great desert ; so that they would thus appear to be coming from the north. It is thus frequently employed to describe not only Arabia and the lands of Moab and Ammon, but likewise Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldea, which lie rather to the north. Abraham is spoken of as coming from the east, whereas he came from Mesopotamia, which is really north-east of Palestine.

Now, with this Scriptural thought we are, I think, perfectly safe in concluding that the "kings from the east" here referred to include those from the north-east as well.

Moreover, when we find from several important prophecies in the Old Testament that a great king of the north—sometimes called the Assyrian—with numerous allies from the east, is to come down to invade Palestine at the time of the end, to which time the sixth and seventh vials apply, we are further confirmed in the impression that the kings in this passage, and the Assyrian with his allies mentioned elsewhere, are the same persons.

On this assumption we shall now proceed to quote the different Old Testament scriptures which relate to this coming invasion, and to compare them with one another, and with what we have in Revelation xvi. and xix.

As this will be an important crisis in the history of the Israelites (who will be partially restored to Palestine at this time), it is frequently alluded to in their prophecies. And, first of all, we will refer again to Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix., in which we have the fullest account of this invasion of the last days.

In the 38th of Ezekiel 3-6, we read, "Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal (Russia): and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, . . . a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands; and many people with thee." Thus we see Persia from the east, Togarmah (Armenia) from the north, and others, united with Russia in being gathered together against Israel in the latter days.

In verses 8 and 16, it is also stated, "in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel. . . . Thou shalt come up against My people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against My land, that the heathen may know Me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes."

The Israelites are seen here as partially restored to their own land (specially the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin), as they will return some time prior to this under the covenant made with them by the prince that is to come.

These two chapters, the 38th and 39th of Ezekiel, are wholly taken up with the details of this great gathering, and its tremendous results, and we shall have occasion to look at them again.\*

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\* "Here are two facts to remark on—First, It is at Jerusalem principally that all this disaster will take place; secondly, God has named in His word all the nations who will participate in it. We see all the descendants of Noah, of whom we have the catalogue in Genesis x., reappear on the scene at the moment of this judgment of God. We shall find nearly all of them under the beast or under Gog. . . . If you consult Genesis x., you will read (verse 5), 'By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands.' In the generation of the sons

In Daniel viii. 23-25, we have another account of this mighty king of the north and his armies coming down to fight against Israel. "And in the latter time of their kingdom (the ancient Syrian kingdom), when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace (or prosperity) shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."

In Daniel xi. 40-45, we have a similar description of this king of the north and his armies entering the "glorious land" to fight against Israel in the latter days: "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south (Egypt) push at him (the wilful king, or Antichrist, in Jerusalem, verse 36): and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown. . . . He shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. . . . He shall plant the tabernacles (or

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of Japheth are named Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, under the same names in Ezekiel xxxviii. as followers of Gog; you will also find there Persia, which was united to Media (Madai), and from whose hands it received the crown (Dan. viii.). Those mentioned above are the nations who comprise Russia, Asia Minor, Tartary, and Persia (all the people, in short, of which the empire of Russia is composed, or which are under its influence). They are described as under the dominion of Gog, prince of Rosh (the Russians), Mesec (Moscow), and Tubal (Tobolsk). The children of Ham, in Genesis x. 6, Cush (Ethiopia), and Phut, are also found (Ezek. xxxviii., 5, see margin) under Gog, . . . and the remainder of Cush and Libyans you will find in the scenes of the last day (Dan. xi. 43). . . . Aram or Syria was displaced by Asshur, and is found under the title of the king of the north. The same remarks, it appears, may be made of Lud. Javan (Greece) is to be in the last combat (Zech. ix. 13)."—J. N. DARBY.

tents) of his palace between the seas (Mediterranean and Dead Seas) in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

In Joel iii. 2, 9-12, we have likewise another very explicit prophecy concerning this gathering together of the "northern army" (chap. ii. 20) to invade Palestine at the end of the age, as well as of their complete discomfiture by the direct intervention of God Himself. "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, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land. . . . Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about."

Again, in Zechariah xiv. 2, we have a strikingly similar account of this great invasion of Palestine and its results, with the judgments that follow: "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." And in Zechariah xii. 2, 3: "Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it."

So also in Zephaniah iii. 8, this gathering of the nations to the closing judgment of the age is referred to: "Therefore wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy."

That these remarkable prophecies relate to the same event must be evident, when we consider how strikingly they correspond concerning the main facts predicted of the great crisis that is to come at the end of the age. For they all agree as to a great gathering of kings and nations to a conflict in Palestine, and near Jerusalem, the result of which will be the entire overthrow of these enemies of God and their final destruction.

They also agree as to the *time* when these events are to happen, namely, in the "latter days," or "time of the end," and they thus point to the closing scenes of this dispensation.

Although in Joel iii. and Zechariah xiv. the time is not specified, yet as the facts of the Lord's coming and the millennium are mentioned as quickly following the great conflict, we are led to conclude that the end of the age is the time to be understood in these prophecies also. This again corresponds with the time of the gatherings under the sixth vial, preparatory to the great battle and judgment of the nations.

Another link between Daniel and Revelation appears in the statement (Dan. xi. 40) that when the king of the north comes down to invade Palestine, the wilful king (Antichrist) will be in power at Jerusalem; while in Revelation xix. 20 we see the Antichrist, as the false prophet taken, at the same closing conflict, when the king of the north shall come to his end, as well as "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army" (verse 19). This is further corroborated by what is said about the fate of the king of the north in Daniel viii. 25, "He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." So, too, the beast and false prophet when gathered together to war (presumably at this same time) against the Prince of princes, shall also be taken and cast into the lake of fire; to which the king of the north—the Assyrian—will likewise be consigned (see Isa. xxx. 31-33).

It appears to me we see another important point of identification of the king of the north in Daniel xi. with Gog of Ezekiel xxxviii. in the statement given in both these references, that the Libyans and Ethiopians are connected with their

armies. In Ezekiel they appear as allies of Gog, "Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them;" and in Daniel xi. 43, as followers, "And the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps," thus very naturally leading to the conclusion that these passages refer to the *same king* and to the armies that follow him in this invasion of Palestine. At first sight it might appear strange to find these two African nations, Ethiopia and Libya, so far removed from Russia, as allies of Gog; but when we turn to Daniel xi. 42, 43, we see how this may be accounted for. The king of the north, in first coming down to Palestine, encounters the king of the south (Egypt) at or near Jerusalem, and at that time probably takes the city and half its inhabitants into captivity (Zech. xiv.); then overcomes and drives back the king of the south, and goes down to Egypt, where "he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt." Then it is said, "the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps." Thus through his conquests in the south he shall draw these Libyans and Ethiopians from the west and south of Egypt into his army as followers to augment his forces on his return to the Holy Land, where he and all his hosts will be destroyed on the hills of Palestine. Here then, I think, we have one very distinct point of resemblance, in which these two prophecies help to explain each other.

Again, at the end of Ezekiel xxxix., after the destruction of Gog and his armies is described, we read, "Thus saith the Lord God; Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for My holy name. . . . Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there" (verses 25, 28). In verse 22 it is also stated, "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God *from that day and forward.*" This event—the restoration of the whole house of Israel—is just what we are to look for *after* the judgment of the nations (see Matt. xxiv. 31).

Some writers have supposed that the invasion of Gog is not the same as that given in Daniel xi., Joel iii., and Zechariah xiv., although admitting that Gog is a king of the north, but

have said that he will come down later on, when, it may be, the whole house of Israel is gathered to their own land. This view would put Gog's invasion *after* the judgment of the nations, seeing that the Israelites are not *all* gathered till then (Matt. xxiv. 31), and really after the millennium has commenced. But can we conceive of such an invasion and terrible battle taking place near and at Jerusalem after the Lord has set up His throne there, and His enemies have been made His footstool?

No proofs from Scripture are adduced in favour of this view other than the two chapters of Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix. themselves, which, it seems to me, do not afford sufficient warrant for it, but the reverse, as already stated. Moreover, we have a further confirmation of the views I have endeavoured to set forth in the foregoing remarks in Ezekiel xxviii. 26, "They shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God." Execution of judgment on Israel's enemies appears to come first, and then the millennium.

Having in the foregoing dwelt upon the first gathering from the east to Armageddon, and what may be involved in it as seen in the light of certain Old Testament prophecies, we will now return to verses 13 and 14 of Revelation xvi. to consider the statement concerning the second gathering mentioned, to the battle of that great day.

Third, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

Here we have apparently a more extensive gathering to the great battle than in the one from the east and north. For the unclean spirits go forth "unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world." It is supposed that the earth and the whole world here signifies the prophetic earth, either the sphere of the old Roman world (as in Luke ii. 1), or the regions that

will be ruled over by the revived Roman empire under the ten confederated kings of the last days.

Very probably these words have this restricted meaning ; and regarding them in this light, they would seem to point to the fact, that kings from the west as well as from the east will be gathered to this battle. Indeed, in Revelation xix. 19 we see the Roman prince—the “beast”—with the kings of the earth engaged in war against the Lord, while he and the false prophet are taken, which seems to confirm the thought of the western nations taking part in this conflict representatively at least, if no more.

The agencies employed in this widespread gathering are an embodiment of all the evil influences—in a sort of diabolical trinity—that have ever been, and still are, engaged in gathering deluded souls to the final judgments of God. They are the three satanic powers that appear in Revelation xiii.—the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet—as the instrumental sources whence the unclean spirits go forth to do their deadly work as the end draws near.

It is when the sixth vial is poured out that their activity, and the full results of their infernal power, will be seen in the gathering, through terrible delusions and lying wonders, of “the kings of the earth and of the whole world . . . to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

As there is evidence all around us of the solemn fact that the coming events of the terrible day of tribulation are more than ever casting their dark shadows over the world, it may be well to notice these signs of the times, and of the approaching nearness of the period when these diabolical influences will be in full force.

We have distinct *foreshadowings*, increasingly manifested everywhere, of the evil day that is coming, when Satan and all his agents will be in greater power on the earth (for a short time) than they have ever been. And we may even now trace out beforehand, and somewhat understand, the workings of these agents of evil, represented by “unclean spirits like frogs,” by the effects which we see produced on mankind at the present time through Satanic influence ; and which may be regarded as forecasts of what they will do later on.

The first we notice comes out of the “mouth of the dragon,”

that "old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." In this, I doubt not, we have the more *direct* power of Satan as the gathering force, such as we may see displayed by him in the many delusive systems of teaching now becoming so prevalent, a foreshadowing of what is coming on the earth during the closing scenes of this age.

Witness the recent astounding development of that subtle but abominable system of theosophy, in this land of Bibles, Sunday-schools, and innumerable Christian churches and chapels,—imported, too, direct from benighted India and China; a truly Satanic system, which has for ages been luring to destruction its millions in eastern lands, and which has now come to reap another large harvest of deluded souls throughout civilised and enlightened Europe, and thus gather them to that awful judgment of the day of God. Nothing that has ever appeared on this earth in opposition to God and to His truth, has exhibited more deadly hate and diabolical antagonism to every principle of Christianity than all these vile delusions of spiritualism, or spiritism, and theosophy.\* They are indeed the infernal breath of Satan himself, that proceedeth directly out of his mouth.†

With such extraordinary developments in our midst, we surely cannot fail to see a distinct and premonitory verification of the words in 1st Timothy iv. 1, as well as a remarkable sign that we are drawing near to the end, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

The second spirit comes "out of the mouth of the beast."

\* See "Spiritualism and Theosophy," in "Earth's Earliest Ages," by G. H. Pember.

† As one sample of the teaching of modern theosophy, the following recent utterance of a leading theosophist may be given:—"Theosophy is pantheistic, in that it believes in the absolute as universal life. It does not believe in the personal anthropomorphic God, nor in heaven and hell, nor in eternal punishment, nor in the resurrection of the body, nor in vicarious atonement, nor in the deity of Christ. It looks upon Him as an initiate or Mahatma, but no more unique than Buddha, or any of the world's great teachers. In some things it pays more attention to Buddha's teachings than to Christ's, and historically it places the former six hundred years before the latter."

Now, beast is the symbol used in Scripture to represent the nations, the rulers of nations, or national powers (see Dan. vii. ; Rev. xiii., xvii.) ; so that, from the nations of the world, as the instrumental expression of wilful unbelief and scepticism under the lead of Satan, this unclean spirit goes forth. Therefore it is reasonable to infer, that their unbelieving worldliness is the present foreshadowing of the going forth of this second unclean spirit, which specially manifests itself in the various forms of scepticism, infidelity, rationalism, agnosticism, &c., so rapidly increasing all over the world, and becoming more pronounced and determined than ever ; thus already preparing the way, through the delusions of the father of lies, for the gathering of vast multitudes to the battle of that great day.

Moreover, this growing scepticism affords us another sign that we are approaching that day to which our Lord refers in Luke xviii. 8, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" The reference here is to the end of the great tribulation, when the Lord comes to judge the nations, and shows that the world will not grow better, but worse, before that day of the Lord comes.

The third spirit comes "out of the mouth of the false prophet." Here, it appears to me, that the instrumentality employed by Satan will be the religious systems of the world as the special gathering force of delusion, that finds its culmination in the apostasy of the Antichrist, particularly in view here.

When we see Popery, ritualism, and all kinds of sacerdotalism, as well as a vast variety of heresies and false religious notions growing everywhere with amazing rapidity, we cannot but recognise very distinctly the presence of this unclean spirit busily at work even at the present time, preparing the way for the fuller and grosser delusions of the Antichrist later on. Thus we have, in the extraordinary state of Christendom all around us, another plain premonitory forecast of that terrible day.

No doubt the abominable apostasy and blasphemous idolatry of the Antichrist (who is called the "false prophet" in Rev. xix. 20), is that more especially referred to as the unclean spirit "out of the mouth of the false prophet." And

this answers to what is said of him in 2 Thessalonians ii. 9, 10, "Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish."

We have also many other references to the delusions and apostasy of the end of the age; such as 2 Timothy iii. 1, 13, "In the last days perilous times shall come. . . . Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived;" in 1 Timothy iv. 2, "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;" and in 1 John ii. 18, "It is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." These are the sad foreshadowings, now becoming more prominent every day, that point us to the nearness of the end.

Fourth, In the fourth statement under the sixth vial, we are told the place to which they are gathered. "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

The reference here is probably to the mountain of Megiddo, near the river Kishon, where the Israelites, under Deborah and Barak, defeated Sisera and his hosts (Judges iv. and v. 19, 20). Perhaps this battle may in one sense be regarded as a sort of type of the great combat yet to take place on this same spot, or more correctly, between it and Jerusalem, judging from what is said in Joel iii. The great invading hosts will be gathered to Armageddon, where they may be encamped preparatory to this final conflict; and will probably march south towards Jerusalem, to be met by the Lord Himself in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel iii. 2, 12), and there completely destroyed, as the armies of Sisera were at the former battle of Megiddo, when "all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left" (Judges iv. 16).

In concluding these remarks on this great gathering, it may be well to note, in passing, that this important event may have some bearing upon the return of the lost ten tribes of Israel to join their brethren in their own land; for the commotion raised in eastern countries by such a great move, and the interest awakened with regard to Palestine in connection

with it, may have the effect of arousing the long lost tribes (whose descendants, it is supposed, are somewhere in the east, whither their forefathers were carried by Shalmaneser, 2 Kings xvii.) to inquire more fully into their origin, so that it may be the means of preparing them for the full return of all the tribes, at, or immediately after, the coming of the Lord to judge the nations.

Judah and Benjamin will be previously restored, in part at least, under the covenant with the prince ; but at this time all the tribes will certainly be gathered back to their land, as we see in Matthew xxiv. 31, " And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

A very striking passage in Isaiah xi. 11-16 refers to this return, and seems to suggest a sort of parallel between the kings from the east coming down and the return of the ten tribes : " It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. . . . They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west ; they shall spoil them of the east together : they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab ; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea ; and with His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over the river (presumably the Euphrates), and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria ; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt."

There also appears some connection between these two events, by way of contrast, in the allusion to Edom, Moab, and Ammon. For in Daniel xi. 41 it is said of the king of the north, that " these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom,

and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon ;” and the passage just quoted from Isaiah seems to explain this, by showing us that it will be reserved for the Israelites, as an act of retributive justice, to subdue the descendants of their ancient enemies, the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites ; probably at the time of, or very soon after, their return to their own land, and subsequently to the invasion from the east (see also Ezek. xxv. 14).

This subject—the return of the whole house of Israel to their own land—is frequently referred to in the Old Testament, in the most glowing and emphatic language, showing the important place it occupies in prophetic promises graciously given by God to His people. But as it would not be in accordance with our purpose to go into a detailed examination of all these important prophecies, a list of some of the leading passages referring to it is given in the footnote below, as a help, it may be, to any who wish to investigate more fully this subject.\*

Here it may be interesting to note the very significant parenthesis that occurs between the sixth and seventh vials, in which the blessed Lord, looking at the approaching nearness of the day of His judgment of the nations, mercifully breaks in with the solemn warning: “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” (Rev. xvi. 15). It is not so that the Lord comes to the Church, but to the world, as we learn from 1 Thessalonians v. 2-4, “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety ; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child ; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.”

Yet the world, for the most part, heeds not these solemn

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\* SOME OF THE LEADING PROPHECIES RELATING TO THE RESTORATION AND RETURN OF THE ISRAELITES TO PALESTINE.—Isa. v. 26, x. 21, 22, xi. 11-16, xiv. 1-3, xviii. 7, xxvii. 12, 13, xxxv. 10, lx. 21, 22, lxvi. 19, 20 ; Jer. xvi. 15, 16, xxiii. 3, xxix. 14, xxx. 18, xxxi. 8, 11, xxxii. 37, L. 19, 20 ; Ezek. xi. 17-20, xx. 34, 35, xxv. 14, xxxvii. ; Micah ii. 12, iv 6, v. 3 ; Zeph. ii. 9, iii. 8-10 ; Zech. ii. 6-11, viii. 7, 8, x. 6-11 ; Rom. xi. 23-27.

warnings, nor can it be said that many of the numerous teachers throughout Christendom are directing the attention of their hearers as they should do to these and many other very important admonitions of the sacred Word.

The SEVENTH VIAL (Rev. xvi. 17-21). The seven vials are said to be the "vials of the wrath of God upon the earth;" in which we seem to have another aspect, and more awful expression, of the judgments of God, than in any of the preceding displays of His indignation. This last terrible vial ends the providential and direct dealings of God in the execution of His wrath upon the earth, and brings us to the very eve of the coming of the Lord in person to judge the nations, which is to be the closing scene of the age.

The gatherings under the sixth vial, as we have seen, are to the great battle in which the Lord is to be the Conqueror and the Judge, when He appears as the "King of kings and Lord of lords."

But the seventh vial is not the battle itself, though it may be closely connected with it as that which immediately precedes the day of the Lord. Perhaps we may say it will be a sort of prelude to it, though somewhat different in character, as it is the closing act of God's wrath upon the earth at, or near, the end of the age.

At the same time, the details of this vial clearly mark the end, as announced by the great voice out of the temple, saying, "It is done." We see the "mystery of God" finished at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the wrath of God fully accomplished at the pouring out of the seventh vial. All that therefore remains at this juncture to end the present dispensation, and to "bring in everlasting righteousness," and the "restitution of all things," is the final judgment of the nations, and the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

This last vial is poured out into the air, thus affecting the whole scene of social and governmental life. All the social systems, as well as the governing powers, and the sustaining influence of the nations, are paralyzed.

The voices and thunders and lightnings, however viewed, symbolically or otherwise, will be the awful expressions of the holy indignation and righteous wrath of God against iniquity, which will then be in its highest phase of development.

"And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great." Metaphorically these words may signify that up to this there had never been so great disruptions of all the elements of organised social existence. At the same time, literal earthquakes may very likely be made to accompany these. The "great city" is regarded by some writers as representing the centre of organisation under the beast, the head of the revived Roman empire, now divided into three parts. Perhaps it may also refer to the breaking up of the system of apostacy symbolised by the woman, as in Revelation xvii. 18, "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth," while in a secondary sense it may apply to the city of Rome itself, as the seat both of the infidel power under the beast and of the religious apostasy of Popery. In Revelation, Jerusalem is never the great, but always "the holy," city.

"The cities of the nations fell," may be intended to signify that all the outside organisations connected with the Roman nation in open rebellion against God will be overthrown or completely broken up. These words seem also to include the thought of some special visitations or calamities upon their principal cities.

"And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath." The most terrible of all these judgments, and indeed the most awful announcement of judgment in the whole word of God, taken in connection with nearly the same expression in Revelation xix. 15, "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," and with the judgment pronounced in Revelation xiv. 10 upon those who worship the beast and his image; is directed against the false and blasphemous systems of religion, of which Babylon the mother of harlots, and the apostasy of the Antichrist in the last days, are the two great centres; thus showing us that man's religion, instigated by, and under the direction of, the devil, which attempts to combine every evil principle of the world, with a hypocritical pretence of worshipping and serving God, is the most hateful and abominable of all things in His sight, and in the end will meet with the most signal punishment direct from

His own hand. Here it is the awful doom of Babylon, of which Popery is the chief expression, that is specially before us, at the consideration of which all who are carried away by her delusions ought to tremble.

The power and influence of Babylon over the nations that supported her ("the beast that carrieth her"), will first of all be destroyed by those nations themselves, as we find in Revelation xvii. 16, "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." This may be the first judgment pronounced upon her in Revelation xiv. 8, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." Then in Revelation xviii., we have her full moral character and seductive wickedness depicted, under the symbol of a great and gorgeous city, and her final doom at the hand of God declared in verse 21, "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."

This latter and final judgment may be the full execution of what is announced at the pouring out of the seventh vial, in the words, "Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath."

"Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." This may mean that all the established order and means of security afforded by the governments of these nations, as well as their general trade and commerce, will become so deranged and disorganised as to be wholly unreliable, and will thus appear to pass away.

And a great hail, as of a talent weight, comes down out of heaven upon men. Another most crushing and destructive judgment, direct from the hand of God, upon the wicked. It is difficult to determine the nature of this dreadful visitation, and whether it is to be understood in a figurative or in a literal sense. Looking at the words, "a talent weight," one might be inclined to regard the latter as the correct mode of interpretation. Whatever it may be, we see that all those men are not destroyed by it, for it is further stated that "men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail."

This last statement shows us that the judgment of the nations had not yet taken place (though it may follow soon after), for these wicked blasphemers will then be destroyed. This also furnishes us with another proof that the last vial judgments, and the day of the Lord, when He comes forth in person to judge the nations, are distinct.

This latter event, viewed in its several aspects as the second stage of the Lord's coming, the "Day of the Lord," the "Judgment of the nations," and the "Battle of that great day of God Almighty," will be the subject for consideration in our next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE SECOND STAGE OF THE LORD'S COMING, AND THE  
JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS—[EPOCH 8].

AT this great epoch we come to a stupendous crisis in the history of the world, and a most awful judgment of the wicked nations that are found in open rebellion against God at the end of the present age.

It is presented to us in the Word under various aspects, such as—

1. The appearing and second stage of the Lord's coming.
2. The day of the Lord.
3. The harvest and vintage.
4. The battle of that great day of God Almighty.
5. The judgment of the nations.

In this chapter we shall consider the different ways in which this great day is set forth, with the principal scriptures relating to it.

We have already partly anticipated the remarks we have now to make on this subject, when contrasting it with the first stage of the Lord's coming, and may consequently be under the necessity of repeating some of the previous statements, as it is difficult to avoid this when looking at a subject from different points of view. At the same time, it cannot be otherwise than profitable to review a matter of such great importance as this, though much may have to be repeated, if thereby it be better understood, and more deeply impressed on the memory.

The Scriptures both of the Old and of the New Testaments, as might be expected, abound in references to this important subject, in which the most sublime and expressive language is employed to set it forth. It will, however, be sufficient for our purpose just to note briefly the chief or salient points of this great epoch, and the circumstances connected with it, as

deduced from these various Scriptures, together with some of the leading passages referring thereto; while for those who may wish to further pursue the study of this intensely solemn subject, a list of the principal passages relating to it is given in the footnote below.\*

The main facts of this momentous crisis are therefore condensed and summarised under the following heads:—

I. Certain signs in the heavens and on the earth are to appear shortly before this great event transpires, and in this respect it will be very different from the first stage of the Lord's coming, before which no such signs are to occur. "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel ii. 30, 31; Acts ii. 19, 20). "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven; and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30; Mark xiii. 24-26). "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke xxi. 25, 26).

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\* PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT RELATING TO THE SECOND STAGE OF THE LORD'S COMING (THE "DAY OF THE LORD") :—

Matt. vii. 22, xiii. 39-41, 49, xvi. 27, xxiv. 27-31, xxv. 19, 31, 32, xxvi. 64; Mark viii. 38, xiii. 26, xiv. 62; Luke ix. 26, xii. 45, 46, xvii. 24-30, xviii. 8, xix. 15-27, xxi. 27, 28; Acts i. 11, ii. 19-21; 1 Cor. i. 8, iv. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14; Phil. ii. 16; Col. iii. 4; 1 Thess. iii. 13; 1 Thess. v. 2-4; 2 Thess. i. 7-10; 2 Thess. ii. 2, 3, 8; 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8; Titus ii. 13; Heb. ix. 28; 1 Peter i. 7, 13, iv. 13, v. 4; 2 Peter i. 16; 1 John iii. 2; Jude 14; Rev. i. 7, iii. 3, xiv. 14-20, xix. 11-21, xxii. 12.

A FEW LEADING PASSAGES, SELECTED FROM A GREAT MANY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THAT REFER TO THE "DAY OF THE LORD" :—

Psa. ii. 2-9, ix. 8, l. 3, 6; xcvi. 8, 9, cx. 1-7; Isa. ii. 10-21, xxvi. 21, xl. 10, lxi. 2, lxvi. 15-18; Jer. xxv. 30, 31; Ezek. xxxix. 17-21, 28, 29; Dan. ii. 44, 45, vii. 13, 14, 22, 26, 27, viii. 25; Joel ii. 11, 30, 31, iii. 13-16; Zeph. i. 7, 14-18, iii. 8; Haggai ii. 7, 22; Zech. xiv. 3-9; Mal. iv. 1-5.

Of course it would be impossible for any one to say precisely what these great signs will be, as the remarkable language employed to describe them may in one sense be regarded as literal, and in another as figurative. There is every reason to suppose that there will be at such a momentous time as this, just before the manifestation of the Lord Himself, at the second stage of His coming, some extraordinary and miraculous signs in the heavenly bodies, as well as on the earth; while the rulers and great leaders of the world, so often represented in Revelation by the sun, moon, and stars, may be cast down from their seats of authority and influence, and so answer to the figurative interpretation.

But whatever these signs, they will be instantly recognised when they appear, and evidently be most appalling in their terrible effects upon the inhabitants of the earth, producing a state of general commotion and alarm, especially throughout the nations that are found in a state of rebellion against God and His people.

At the opening of the sixth seal, similar signs in the sun, moon, and stars are mentioned, together with a great earthquake: "And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth," &c. (Rev. vi. 12, 13). It is, I believe, rightly assumed by most writers on the Apocalypse that the language here is entirely symbolical, referring to the terrible revolutions and upheavals in political, social, commercial, and religious affairs, by which governmental authority will be upset, and society at large terribly disorganised. If taken literally, there would obviously be an end to everything in the world, and no time left for the occurrence of events after this period.

The effects produced by these revolutions will be (as it often has been when great earthquakes or other calamities occur) to lead people to conclude that the last day of judgment has come; and in their awful fear, stimulated by their evil consciences, they *imagine* the Lord is about to sit on His throne of judgment, and call on the mountains and rocks to hide them from His presence. It is evident, however, the Lord does not come at this time (except in the imaginary

fears of the people), because if He did, there would be no time left for all the trumpets, the vials, and the other events recorded *after* the sixth vial, to take place.

But at the crisis we are now considering, this very day of the Lord will actually come, when the Lord, the righteous Judge, will sit on His throne to judge the nations, and will send His angels to "gather out of His kingdom all offences, and those that practise lawlessness" (Matt. xiii. 41).

At this time, therefore, there will indeed be *real cause* for the deepest alarm, and for the wicked saying to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. vi. 16).

These are the preliminary scenes that are to precede the great crisis which closes the present age. Yet it would seem from a passage in Joel ii. 32, quoted in Acts ii. 21, that even at this last moment, when these signs and wonders begin to appear, any who really repent, and call on the name of the Lord, will be delivered: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

How marvellously the abounding mercy of God shines out, in His thus lingering and yearning over rebellious sinners to the last moment, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter iii. 9).

2. It is the second stage of the Lord's coming, and the world shall behold Him on this occasion. "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory" (Mark xiii. 26, and Luke xxi. 27). "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64). Because He will thus appear as the Almighty Judge of the whole world, there will be the most fearful and unprecedented wailing and mourning, and great terror all over the earth. "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall the tribes of the land mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30). "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all tribes of the land shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7). How different this from the first stage of

His coming, to take up the saints to heaven, when they alone shall see Him.

Hence this second stage is called the time of His *appearing* or *revelation*, and is thus distinguished from His coming *for* His saints. "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom" (2 Tim. iv. 1). "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus ii. 13). "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels" (2 Thess. i. 7 ; 1 Pet. iv. 13). "Waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 7). "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke xvii. 30).

3. The saints of God, translated to heaven at the first resurrection, will appear *with* the Lord on this solemn occasion.

"The Lord cometh *with* ten thousands of His saints" (Jude 14). "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also *appear with* Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4). "To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ *with* all His saints" (1 Thess. iii. 13). "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). Thus we see, from this last verse, that the saints will not only be with the Lord on that occasion, but also be *like Him* in their risen and glorified bodies, given to them at the Rapture.

Just before they come forth with the Lord, there will be a marvellous and most glorious scene in heaven, "the marriage supper of the Lamb." The Bridegroom has His bride, and the announcement is hailed in heaven with loud hallelujahs and great rejoicing : "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. xix. 7, 9). Then heaven is opened, and the Lord comes forth on a white horse (symbolically) in all the splendour of His majesty, as the "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." "And the armies which were in heaven (the risen saints) followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev. xix. 11-14).

These armies could not be angels, though doubtless innumerable hosts of these holy beings will also accompany the

Lord and His saints, as we learn from other scriptures ; but it could never be said of angels that they were "clothed in fine linen, white and clean," because that would imply previous defilement. Besides, we are plainly told in Revelation xix. 8, "That she (the bride) should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white (or bright and pure): for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." Furthermore, no one could surely suppose for a moment that the saints seen already in heaven at the marriage of the Lamb, could be merely disembodied spirits, or *souls* ; for we see that the bride "hath made herself ready," that is, the pre-ordained number of the saints of the one body, the Church, is gathered in at this time, perfectly complete, in all the full glory of their new resurrection bodies, "fashioned like unto His glorious body." In accordance with this fact, they, like the Lord Himself, appear following Him "upon *white horses* (symbolically), clothed in fine linen, white and clean." It would be most incongruous to think of spirits, thus represented, as coming on white horses with the Lord, when He appears in His glorified body on a similar white horse, to be *seen* by every eye on that great day.

Moreover, we are expressly told, as already noticed, that "When Christ, who is our life, shall *appear*, then shall ye also *appear* with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4).

So that the "armies which were in heaven"—or more correctly, which *are* in heaven (R.V.)—are beyond question the risen and glorified saints already in that place, some time before the Lord comes to judge the nations. They must be there in their new bodies before they could come with Him on this day. How and when, we might ask, did they get there? In a previous chapter we have already answered this question, by showing from Scripture that they were raised and translated to heaven at the Rapture, *before* the tribulation, and they now appear coming *with* the Lord *after* that terrible day has come to an end.

Yet, with these and other plain Scriptural statements before them, there are many Bible students, and even writers on the Apocalypse, who do not see the two stages of the Lord's coming, notwithstanding the great difference between them as to the time and circumstances connected with each. Moreover, in consequence of this sad want of discernment many

serious mistakes are made with regard to the interpretation of other important portions of the prophetic word ; for it is as important to see the *divine order* of truth, as it is to understand the truth itself in an abstract way. Indeed, it is only by attending to both these points that we can get a real and deep insight into the Word of God.

The order as to these three prophetic events is—First, the Rapture, or the coming of the Lord for His saints, and the first resurrection ; second, the day of tribulation (an interval of at least a few years) ; and third, the second stage of the Lord's coming, and the judgment of the nations.

4. It is also called the "day of the Lord," or the "day of Christ," or "His day." "The day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thess. ii. 2, Phil. i. 6). "For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven ; so shall also the Son of man be in His day" (Luke xvii. 24). "That ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 8).

In the Old Testament, the phrases "the day of the Lord," and "that day," are often used interchangeably with reference to this period ; but it may be well to bear in mind that, in many instances, these words may have a *more extended* meaning, and frequently include not only the closing scenes of the great tribulation and the end of this age, but also the millennial reign of Christ, and even down to the end of this world's history after the judgment of the white throne ; as we find in 2 Peter iii. 10, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ; in the which 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." It is only by carefully noting the context that the *limited* meaning may be discerned from the *extended* one.

A large number of references to this great day of the Lord may be found in Scripture, particularly in the Old Testament, displaying a variety of the most solemn facts concerning it, some relating to this second stage of the Lord's coming, and others to the *whole time* of His authority, judgment, and kingly reign over the earth.

In view of the great prominence that is given to it in the sacred Word, this subject should ever be one of the deepest

interest to all true believers, who cannot fail to find it a most profitable study thus to search out these wonderful purposes of God, and one which has a deep practical bearing upon their consciences and daily walk.

A few only of the more direct passages bearing upon the point now before us can be quoted.

"Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (Joel. i. 15). "Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" (Amos v. 20). "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers" (Zeph. i. 14-16). "But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city" (Luke x. 12). In Joel ii. 31 it is called "the *terrible* day of the Lord;" in Acts ii. 20—quoted from Joel—the "*notable* day of the Lord;" and in Malachi iv. 5, "the great and *dreadful* day of the Lord." "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. v. 2). "It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth" (Isa. xxiv. 21). "Thus saith the Lord God; Howl ye, Woe worth the day! For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen" (Ezek. xxx. 2, 3). "The Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" (Joel ii. 11). (For further references see footnote on page 110.)

5. This notable time is also represented as the harvest and vintage of the world. In Matthew xiii. 39, 40, our Lord says of it, "The harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this age." Thus the harvest gives us the thought of its being a discriminative

judgment, a separation of the bad from the good, as we have seen already in the separation of the sheep and the goats of Matthew xxv.

We have two distinct thoughts in the harvest and vintage,—in the first, *separation*; and in the second, *destruction*. And when we compare the prophecies of our Lord with what we find in the Revelation relating specially to this judgment, we see these two thoughts fully borne out, together with the results that follow in each case.

In Matthew xxv. we see three classes of persons represented, namely, the “sheep,” the “goats,” and “My brethren,” corresponding to the three mentioned in Revelation during the day of the tribulation. For in chapter vii. we see the 144,000 Jewish sealed ones, some of which—the godly remnant, at least—answer to the class called “My brethren,” *i.e.*, the Lord’s Jewish brethren; and the great multitude of Gentile saints, the palm-bearers, some of whom will constitute the “sheep;”\* while the ungodly nations will compose the third class, that is the “goats.”

During the tribulation many of the Jewish saints, or brethren, will be active and faithful preachers of the Gospel of the kingdom; and all the Gentiles who then receive and treat them kindly, *as the messengers of God*, will be regarded as the Lord’s sheep, set on His right hand, commended for their kindness to His brethren as having been done to Himself, and addressed with the gracious words, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt xxv. 34); that is, inherit the millennial kingdom (together with the Jewish saints) about to be established; and not the glory above, as so often interpreted. Then these two classes,—the Jewish brethren and the Gentile sheep,—both corresponding, *in part* at least, to the sealed 144,000 and the palm-bearers of Revelation vii., after being specially preserved by God through all the troubles and judgments of the tribulation, will be separated from the wicked at this harvest, to enter into, and become the inhabitants of, the restored millennial earth; while of the goats (the wicked

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\* The sheep here are those who are saved *after* the Rapture, and should therefore be regarded as a different class *dispensationally* from the saints constituting the Church, the sheep of to-day.

nations) it is said, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." The destruction of the wicked will be at the vintage, immediately following the harvest.

We will now turn to the Apocalypse, and see what is said there about the harvest and the vintage.

In Revelation xiv. 14-16 we read: "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud One sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for Thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."

Again we see, as in Matthew xxv., the Son of man, the Lord Jesus, *coming upon the clouds of heaven, crowned with a golden crown*, the figure of His most glorious and divine majesty, to judge the living nations on the earth, and symbolically represented as a mighty Reaper, with a sharp sickle in His hand. The immediate and momentous result is announced in the very solemn and significant words, "And the earth was reaped!" This seems to represent the harvest. Then in verses 17 to 20 we have the terrible vintage described: "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

The Lord alone could act as the discriminating judge between good and evil, and He therefore directs the harvest Himself,—the separation of the wheat from the tares, or of the sheep from the goats.

But when judgment is to be executed upon the wicked, as in this vintage, He either employs His servants, the mighty

angels, to do it, or associates them with Himself in the execution of it. Hence we see here two additional angels—one having a sharp sickle, as the Lord Himself, and the other having power over fire—engaged in gathering “the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.” The wicked deeds, the sour wild grapes or evil fruits (from the “vine of Sodom,” Deut. xxxii. 32) of an ungodly and hypocritical world, have at length come to their full, and are therefore ripe for judgment. Then, when their deeds are fully brought into the light, the angel with the sickle gathers “the vine of the earth” (that is, the wicked themselves, who have borne nothing but evil and bitter fruits all their days), which is now cast “into the great winepress of the wrath of God.” How inexpressibly awful this will be, and what unutterable woe and anguish, that may soon descend upon the wicked and rebellious nations of this earth, are expressed in these few pregnant words! It is sad to think that there are vast multitudes in Christendom upon whom such words, even though often heard or read by them, make no impression whatever, owing to the blinding and hardening effects of sin and unbelief!

This same time of the harvest and vintage is also mentioned in Joel iii. 13-16, where the Jewish aspect of this concluding judgment is presented to us. It is apparently connected with the great battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat, taking place either immediately after it, or simultaneously with it. “Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel.”

6. Another remarkable view of this tremendous crisis is found in the concluding part of the great vision of Daniel ii., where a stone, cut out of the mountain without human hands, smites the image and breaks it to pieces.

We have seen that great metallic image, representing the

four successive Gentile kingdoms or empires, in their governmental history, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar down to the end of this age, deteriorating (as to their principles of government and organisation) from the gold of the Babylonian period to the silver of the Medo-Persian, and from the brass of the Grecian to the iron of the Roman.

Last of all, we come to the feeblest and most imperfect form of governmental rule, the mixture of the miry clay with the iron in the feet of the image, producing, as Daniel says, brokenness or brittleness ; showing, in the light of heaven, that the vaunted boast of the nations of these days that they are becoming stronger and better, is a sadly mistaken notion. While contemplating the brittleness and disintegration produced by the clay element, which so aptly represents (as we have seen in a previous chapter) the unprecedented forms of democracy that are now rapidly developing all over the world, we surely cannot but conclude that we have at length come nearly to the close of the history of the Gentile nations ; as the image ends with the feet and toes, in which we see the clay mixed with the iron.

As the various forms of democracy and general iniquity rise to the full height of lawlessness, we behold a mighty stone suddenly descending, striking the image on the feet with irresistible force, and breaking it to pieces. "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors ; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them" (Dan. ii. 34, 35).

We see, in these expressive symbols, the Lord Jesus Christ, the "Stone," coming in all the might of His divine power to judge the rebellious nations, and to destroy them.

Thus too the "times of the Gentiles" will be fulfilled, and those kingdoms that have existed and continued in power for over two thousand years, and are found at the end in direct opposition to God and to His truth, will be entirely swept away, never to be revived again as ruling powers.

Our Lord, in alluding to this event, uses the very same symbol, with reference to Himself, as the One who is to exe-

cute judgment. "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. xxi. 44). The Jewish nation fell on that stone, and was scattered all over the world. "Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock." On Him they fell and were broken; but when the stone falls upon the nations, as we have seen in Daniel, it will grind them to powder! Furthermore, the falling of this stone upon the wicked takes place at the very close of this dispensation, indeed it is the momentous event that brings it to an end; for as soon as these nations are swept away, the stone becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth (ver. 35). That is, the Lord will then immediately set up His millennial kingdom, and become the one rightful Sovereign of the whole world. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (ver. 44).

7. It will also be the battle of that great day of God Almighty, and, as already noticed, the judgment of the nations.

Under the sixth vial, we have seen the two different gatherings to the great battle in the land of Palestine; the kings from the east with their armies, and the kings of the earth and of the whole world,—meaning probably the Roman, or prophetic, earth, or western nations.

Bearing in mind the several passages already quoted from the prophecies with reference to these gatherings, and the circumstances connected with them, we may form a fairly correct idea of the state of affairs in Palestine and at Jerusalem at this time of the end, and of the order of the events that will take place on the occasion of this great battle, as well as of the results that follow.

In the first place, we see the Jews partially restored to their own land. Under the seven years covenant with the Roman prince, a temple is rebuilt in Jerusalem (not Ezekiel's temple), the godly remnant worshipping there, and in some measure owned of God (Rev. xi. 1); while the mass or majority of the Jews—the "many"—with whom the prince had made a covenant, are being led by the Antichrist into the most

abominable apostasy and idolatry. He, reigning as king in Jerusalem (owning allegiance and subjection to the Roman prince, as the imperial head and suzerain of Palestine), sets up an image of the first beast in the temple, and commands the Jews to worship it ("the abomination of desolation," Matt. xxiv. 15); to which decree the majority will submit (Matt. xii. 43-45). Many of the godly remnant who refuse to receive the mark of the beast, and to worship his image, are slain (Rev. xi. 7), and there is great distress and tribulation in consequence. It is "the time of Jacob's trouble." Near the end the king of the south (Egypt) goes to war with the king at Jerusalem ("shall push at him"); when the king of the north also comes down like a whirlwind, to oppose the king of the south, and to fight against the Jews, for the possession of their land (Dan. xi. 40, 41).

*Jerusalem is taken by the nations, led by the king of the north* (judging from Isa. xxviii. 15, 18, Ezek. xxxviii. 2-16, Dan. viii. 23-25, and Dan. xi. 40, 41), and the Jews therein subjected to the most terrible hardships (Zech. xiv. 2). Then this king drives back the Egyptians, and following them to Egypt, overcomes them there, and takes much spoil (Dan. xi. 43). Turning northwards again, "with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many," and with fresh allies gathered from Africa, the Libyans and Ethiopians at his steps, he returns to Palestine to complete his conquests; where he plants "the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain" (Dan. xi. 45.)

The mass of the apostate Jews, confiding in the covenant made with their protector, the Roman prince, appeal to him for help against their northern foes. But, notwithstanding their confidence in him, as being able to deliver them in this their time of extreme need, "the overflowing scourge (the king of the north) shall pass through," and they "shall be trodden down by it" (Isa. xxviii. 18).

The prince and the kings of the earth—that is, of the western nations—hasten to help the king in Jerusalem, and the apostate Jews under his influence (Dan. xi. 36-39); while the pious Jews are crying to Jehovah to deliver them from their enemies, who are oppressing them, from the north as well as from the south, fighting against each other for the pos-

session of Palestine, and, at the same time, persecuting the godly remnant on all sides.

The faithful Israelites, being thus overwhelmed by these terrible foes, earnestly cry to the God of Israel for help in their extremity, in the language of their Psalms ; many of which will be found as applicable to this period, as they were to former times of trouble. "O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance ; Thy holy temple have they defiled ; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of Thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of Thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. . . . How long, Lord ? wilt Thou be angry for ever ? shall Thy jealousy burn like fire ? Pour out Thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known Thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon Thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place" (Psa. lxxix. 1, 2, 5-7). "Keep not Thou silence, O God : hold not Thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, Thine enemies make a tumult : and they that hate Thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against Thy people, and consulted against Thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation ; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. . . . Let them be confounded and troubled for ever ; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish : that men may know that Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth" (Psa. lxxxiii. 1-4, 17, 18). "They shall call on My name, and I will hear them : I will say, It is My people : and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. xiii. 9.)

Their earnest supplications will be heard, and directly answered when their Messiah shall suddenly appear as their Deliverer. "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley ; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (Zech. xiv. 3, 4).

Thus the Lord Himself goes forth, accompanied by the

armies of heaven, to fight against the nations assembled in Armageddon and in the valley of Jehoshaphat ; for it is there that the enemies of the Lord and of His people will be gathered at this time, as we are informed in Revelation xix. 19, " And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army." The beast is first and prominent, then the kings of the earth.

Turning again to Joel iii. 9-16, we have some further particulars concerning this great battle, " Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles ; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near ; let them come up : beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears : let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about : thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat : for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe : come, get you down ; for the press is full, the fats overflow ; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision : for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem ; and the heavens and the earth shall shake : but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel."

In Isaiah lxvi. 15, 16, we have another description of this mighty conflict : " For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh : and the slain of the Lord shall be many " (see also Isa. xxx. 30-33).

It is doubtless to this coming of the Lord to the mount of Olives that the angels refer in Acts i. 11 : " Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven ; " for at this time He will return to that very same mountain from which He ascended.

It is therefore, not the Lord's coming for His saints (the

Rapture), but His coming with them, to judge the nations, that is referred to by the angels. Our Lord also appears to refer to this day in Matthew xxiii. 39, "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Then, indeed, when they shall actually behold their long-expected Messiah coming in all the majesty of His kingly power, to deliver them from their enemies, will they exultingly shout, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt. xxi. 9, and Psa. cxviii. 26.) And at this coming, the Lord will be victorious over all these enemies, whom He will destroy, and from whom He will deliver His people Israel. Thus the closing scene of the great battle, and of the present age, will be the judgment of those nations that are found directly opposed to God and to His people; or rather that aspect of it which is described as the "vintage" in which the enemies of God will be destroyed. "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. xxv. 31, 32). This is the "harvest" judgment, then follows the "vintage."

It is important to notice, that it is the *living nations* that are thus gathered before the Lord to be judged, and that *the dead*, or those who had previously died, are *not* raised at this time to come before Him. Not observing this distinction, many have fallen into the error of confounding this judgment of the nations with that of the white throne, which is to take place more than a thousand years later, when the "dead, small and great," shall stand before God (Rev. xx. 12). The error of regarding these two very different judgments as one and the same event, has led to many mistakes in the interpretation of the prophetic word, by which the order of dispensational truth has been seriously disarranged, and sadly confused.

In Scripture we find *three* distinct judgments, namely, of the house of God or of *believers* (Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Pet. iv. 17), of the *nations*, and of the *dead* at the white throne, all of which take place at different times. The first, or judgment of the saints will not be to condemnation, for

"there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Moreover, it will be in heaven, after the saints have been raised in their new bodies, and are fully glorified. At the same time, it will be such a manifestation of all their ways and conduct down here, as shall bring out more fully into the light of heaven the wisdom, goodness, mercy, and forbearance of God towards them during all their earthly career, and shall call forth from them the heavenly song of "Glory to God in the highest."

That with which we are now dealing is the second, or judgment of the nations of this world, and more especially the concluding part of it, the terrible vintage. "For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isa. xxvi. 21); "For My determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them Mine indignation, even all My fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy" (Zeph. iii. 8).

It will be the judgment of the "quick," *i.e.*, of the *living*, referred to in connection with the judgment of the dead, although there will be a long interval between them (Acts x. 42; 2 Tim. iv. 1; and 1. Pet. iv. 5).

One feature of this judgment particularly mentioned is, that it will come suddenly and unexpectedly upon the world. "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. xxiv. 37-39; Luke xvii. 26-27). "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. v. 2, 3).

This will, moreover, be the awful day of God's vengeance on His enemies. "Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence" (Isa. xxxv. 4). "The Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserveth wrath for His enemies" (Nah. i. 2). "For, behold, the day

cometh, that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch " (Mal. iv. 1). " Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood ; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire " (Isa. ix. 5). " When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power " (2 Thess. i. 7-9). All His enemies shall be made His footstool. " At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father " (Philip. ii. 10, 11).

It is to this time that the parable in Matthew xiii. 40-42 applies : " As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire ; so shall it be in the end of this world (or age). The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity ; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." At this time, too, the sayings in Matthew xxiv. 40, 41 shall be fulfilled : " Then shall two be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill ; the one shall be taken, and the other left." The *taken* ones shall be judged and cast out (as the tares are gathered and cast into the fire), while the left ones shall be preserved, and remain on the earth for the millennium,—in the same way that the flood came and took all the wicked away (ver. 39), while Noah and his family were preserved, and dwelt on the earth for many years afterwards. This passage is commonly, but wrongly, interpreted the reverse way,—that is, the taken are supposed to go to heaven, and those that are left to be destroyed. But this appears contrary to the general bearing of the passage, when all the circumstances are fully considered.

When we reflect on the tremendous issues of this judgment of the Lord, we are not surprised to find it so often alluded

to in Scripture, and set forth in such deeply solemn language ; for it will be the closing scene of the present dispensation, when the wicked nations will be judged, and the evildoers put away, when much of the present order of things will be greatly changed, and when a new and different era will commence.

It is at this time, moreover, that the "mystery of God" shall be finished, as announced prospectively by the angel in Revelation x. 7, a short time after the sounding of the seventh trumpet. That wonderful mystery of God has permitted high-handed wickedness to triumph so long in the world ; has allowed Satan for ages to exercise such a demoralising power and rule over mankind as the god and prince of this world ; and has also allowed the wicked, thus led on by Satan, to continue in determined opposition to God, to blaspheme His holy name, to set at nought His messages of love and mercy, to trample godliness under foot, to persecute and kill His saints, to practise the grossest injustice and oppression, and to indulge in all manner of abominable iniquity with impunity. For, during all the long centuries of the past, and up to the present time, these evils have been going on openly and defiantly ; and it has indeed been a great mystery that the holy God, who hates sin with a perfect hatred, should permit it to continue so long. But when the Lord comes, and takes to Himself His power to reign, there will doubtless be a great change as to all this ; then at least deliberate and flagrant manifestations of sin will be suppressed, and not permitted to go on in such a determined and persistent manner as at present. For sin, though it may be committed, as we learn from Scripture, even during the millennium, will, for the most part, be speedily judged and suppressed.

The "mystery of God" spoken of in Colossians ii. 2 is entirely different from the mystery we have been dwelling upon, for it refers exclusively to the union of Christ with His saints,—the members of the one body, the Church, in all their wonderful constitution and relationship to Him as the Head,—and is the same as the "mystery of Christ" in Ephesians iii. 4.

For a full account of the final results of the battle of that great day of God Almighty, and of the judgment of the nations, where we have the vintage specially set forth, we must

turn again to that remarkable description in Revelation xix. 11-21, which has already been alluded to several times.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him 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. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

Such is the appalling judgment which now awaits the rebellious nations of this unbelieving world, and which will suddenly fall upon them. At the very time they are saying, "Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them."

Nothing indeed could be more dreadful than the scene depicted in the solemn and significant words quoted above, especially that which is expressed in the fearful sentence,

"He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God!" No wonder it is said in Revelation i. 7, that when the Lord thus comes, "All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." Doubtless a wail of distress and anguish will then arise from this earth, such as has never been heard before. For it is the day of God's vengeance, a day when "the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zeph. i. 14, 15).

When our Lord read in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16-21) the words from Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, ending, "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord," He suddenly stopped in the middle of the sentence, saying, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." The remaining portion of that sentence has had to wait for its fulfilment more than eighteen hundred years already, and may have still to wait a little longer. Then the Lord will come forth (not as a humble reader in the synagogue, but as the King of kings, and the Judge of the whole earth) to finish, as it were, the reading of that remarkable sentence, which is, "And the day of vengeance of our God;" for it will be fulfilled by the Lord Himself, as the first portion was being fulfilled by Him when He read it in Nazareth.

The Lord appears in this scene in both His kingly and judicial character, as all authority has been given to Him to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man. He shall set up His throne, to reign over the whole earth; and on this occasion, in His own almighty power, He will destroy His enemies with the sharp sword that goeth out of His mouth; for He has but to speak or to command, either in the creation of a world, or in its destruction, and it is instantly done.

In Psalm ii. 9 we read, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Then, and in this manner, vast numbers of the wicked inhabitants of the world will be slain. "For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (Isa. lxvi. 16 and Isa. xxxiv. 1-4).

This dreadful fact is further emphasized by the call of the angel to the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven—the vultures

or birds that feed on dead carcasses—to “Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God ; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men,” &c. Compare the words of our Lord that refer to the same event, “For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together” (Matt. xxiv. 28 and Luke xvii. 37).

In Ezekiel xxxix. 17-20, we have a similar reference to the fowls of heaven being called together to eat the flesh of the slain after the battle in which Gog and all his armies are killed on the hills of Israel ; and which, we have endeavoured to show, is identical with that of Armageddon, the battle of that great day of God Almighty closing with the judgment of the nations. This gathering of the fowls to the great sacrifice and supper of God seems to give us another strong link of connection between the battles recorded in Ezekiel xxxix. and Revelation xix., and thus to help in establishing their identity. “Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come ; gather yourselves on every side to My sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan,” &c.

There is another remarkable passage in Isaiah lxiii. 1-4, that appears to refer to this terrible judgment of God, in which some of the same symbols are employed as in Revelation xix., such as garments dyed with blood, treading the winepress, &c. The words are, “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength ? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat ? I have trodden the wine-press alone ; and of the people there was none with me : for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.”

8. We see moreover that this judgment of the nations will be followed by three notable events.

*First.* The awful execution of God's righteous judgment upon the two most notable characters in all history for high-handed wickedness and direct rebellion against God, the beast and the false prophet (Antichrist),—the two whose diabolical deeds are described in Revelation xiii.

Both these persons will be taken, and "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." This appalling doom seems to be specially reserved for the two most notorious individuals that have ever appeared in the history of this fallen world.\*

*Second.* The dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, will be bound for a thousand years, cast into the bottomless pit, shut up, and a seal set upon him, "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (Rev. xx. 2, 3).

*Third.* The restoration of the scattered remnants of the whole house of Israel—that is, of the twelve tribes—to the favour of God, and to their own land of Palestine, from all parts of the world: "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. xxiv. 31).

This subject is very largely dwelt upon in many of the Old Testament prophets, and is set forth in the most glowing and striking language. The thirty-seventh of Ezekiel is one re-

\* Though it is reserved for these wicked characters (the beast and the false prophet) to be *cast alive* into the lake of fire, the king of the North (or the Assyrian), the third of the trio, will also be consigned to this same dreadful lake, which is so carefully set forth in that remarkable passage in Isaiah xxx. 33, "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

Tophet represents the lake of fire, prepared for the king (the Antichrist), into which the Assyrian is cast, after being destroyed by the Lord at the battle of Armageddon, as described in ver. 30: "And the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones."

markable example of this, where we have a graphic picture of the restoration of Israel in the vision of the "dry bones;" the whole twelve tribes being brought to life again as a nation. Gathered together from the various countries where they had been scattered, and buried out of sight for so many centuries, they are here seen restored to their own land and to the favour of God. The parable of the "two sticks" in the same chapter, shows the final union of the ten lost tribes with the other two; Judah representing the two, Judah and Benjamin, and Ephraim the other ten, now joined together as one nation, never to be separated. "And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all" (Ezek. xxxvii. 22). [For further references to this subject see the footnote on page 105.]

Thus this present age closes, this dispensation comes to an end, with the judgment of the nations. But it certainly is not the "end of the world," as so often erroneously stated; for the millennium, the last apostasy, and the judgment of the "White Throne," are all to occur *after* this time, and extend over a period of more than a thousand years.

This age, taken in its widest sense, may be said to have commenced with our Lord's first coming to this earth, and may therefore be considered as comprising in a general way:—

1. The life and ministry of Christ, His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven.
2. The history of the Church on the earth.
3. The first stage of the Lord's coming and the Rapture.
4. The day of tribulation.
5. The second stage of the Lord's coming, and the judgment of the nations,—with which it ends.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE MILLENNIUM—[DISPENSATION H].

**I**N our last chapter we saw from Daniel ii. 35 that when the "stone" falls upon the image, and breaks it to pieces, the stone itself becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth; and in verse 44 the purport of these metaphors is given in the words, "The God of heaven" shall "set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed."

When the ruling powers of the prophetic world are thus judged and removed, they will be superseded by the kingdom of the Lord, as expressed in the triumphant utterances of the voices in heaven after the sounding of the seventh trumpet: "The kingdom of the world of our Lord and of His Christ is come; and He shall reign to the ages of ages" (New Trans., Rev. xi. 15).

Then the millennium begins, and the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the King of the whole world. It is not going to be gradually brought about by the preaching of the Gospel, or by the evangelisation of the world (desirable as that blessed work may be), but by the *personal coming* of Christ Himself—first to judge the nations, and put away the evildoers; and then to set up His kingdom.

As soon as the world is cleared of the beast and the Antichrist, and of their followers, and Satan, the great adversary of mankind, is cast into the bottomless pit, with all his armies of demons, men being delivered from their baleful presence, the blessed Sabbath of rest and peace, so long foretold by the prophets, will commence. "There remaineth . . . a rest (or keeping of a Sabbath) to the people of God" (Heb. iv. 9).

One special characteristic of this period is, that there will be no devils on the earth. Indeed, it could not be the Lord's millennium, such as we find in Scripture, if there were to be any in it. Satan, who has reigned as the god of this world

for nearly six thousand years, must as a matter of course be cast out of it before the Lord takes His throne. Obviously he could not be allowed to remain on the earth for a single hour as a reigning prince when Christ becomes the one sovereign Lord and King of the whole world. How then is he to be cast out? Surely the preaching of the Gospel will never do it, for after centuries of preaching he is as much the god of this world as ever. But at the coming of the Lord, and before the millennium begins, an angel descends from heaven and, binding him, as we learn from Revelation xx. 2, shuts him up in the abyss for a thousand years,—another convincing proof that the second coming of the Lord *must* be premillennial.

It has often been stated that a widespread tradition prevails in many different countries, to the effect that the world will continue to exist for *six thousand years* from the creation to the end of this age in its present condition, and that then there will come a Sabbath of a thousand years.

Although we have no direct statement in Scripture to warrant this tradition, yet it is quite possible, not to say probable, that it may ultimately prove to be the divine purpose of God, whose appointments are all founded in perfect wisdom and order. Most probably it derived its origin, in the first instance, from the account of the creation in Genesis, where it is seen that the work was accomplished in six days, and God “rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.” By regarding each of these days as one thousand years on the principle of 2 Peter iii. 8, it might be naturally supposed that there would be six thousand years of work, followed by a Sabbath of a thousand years. Six thousand years of toil and trouble, sickness and death; and then undisturbed rest and peace, and true happiness, to the people of God for a thousand years! Truly a most beautiful and happy thought. The nearest approach to this that we find in Scripture is the institution of the *seventh year* as a Sabbath of rest. “Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard” (Lev. xxv. 3, 4). It is very likely that this scripture may also have had something to

do with the origination of the above tradition, further strengthened, it may be, by another cycle of years found in the Word—the years of jubilee,—both these cycles of sevens and fifties being analogous in principle, though different as to the number of years; so that we have thus some indirect foundation in Scripture for this belief.

Some writers on the subject have also expressed the opinion that we are now very near the end of the six thousand years of the world's history, though our chronologies do not show it. They, however, say that Archbishop Usher's, as well as others, are defective and unreliable, maintaining that a large number of years have been omitted in calculating the times of the Judges, and other periods; and consequently that the age of the world is really greater than it appears in our tables. One thing is certain, that the chronologies that have been propounded are sadly at variance; so that with such conflicting opinions, and the difficulties that beset the necessary calculations, no one is really able to state with anything like definiteness or precision the exact age of the world at the present time.

Probably God in His divine wisdom has seen fit to allow the subject to remain in this state of uncertainty, just as the time of the second advent of our Lord is kept a secret, and known only to God Himself.

At the same time, judging from various significant signs, my own impression is that those are likely to be most correct who maintain that we are nearer the end of the six thousand years of the world's history than many people suppose; and therefore near to the glorious Sabbath that is coming.

With regard to the inhabitants of the earth at large at the commencement of the millennium—especially of the nations outside the prophetic sphere—we have very little information in the prophecies of Scripture.

We see, however, two companies of saints mentioned in Revelation vii., as specially kept while passing through the great tribulation, and preserved through all its persecutions and troubles, as well as through the judgments of that time, to enter into the blessings of the millennial kingdom, as had been foretold in prophecy concerning God's people by Isaiah in chap. xxvi. 20: "Come, My people, enter thou into thy

chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Thus they are kept protected through that day of God's indignation and vengeance upon the wicked.

These two companies, as already noticed, are the 144,000 Israelites sealed out of every tribe, and the great multitude of palm-bearers (Rev. vii.)—the Gentiles,—who, it may be, with many others that are not mentioned, will then enter upon the new order of things, to begin another and different phase of the world's history under the righteous reign of the Divine King, the Lord Himself. For, beside these two companies of saints, there are allusions in the Word to other nations and peoples who will be on the earth during the millennium, though they are not so specifically described. In one of these we see that the Israelites in that millennial day are to be sent "to the isles afar off that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles" (Isa. lxvi. 19).

A great many references appear in the Scriptures with regard to this glorious millennium, especially in the Old Testament; but we shall only be able to note some of the chief passages relating to it; and in doing so, we shall endeavour to present the main features of this wonderful dispensation under seven different heads.

FIRST. The King who is to reign, and the character of His reign.

Among the vast number of monarchs who have governed from time to time the various nations of the world, there has never been one truly righteous and perfect sovereign seated upon any one of these earthly thrones. Even the best kings of Israel, such as David and Hezekiah, were personally faulty, and in their administrations very defective. But the Lord Jesus, who is soon coming to rule over the earth, will be this one perfect and righteous King, and will therefore have full power and dominion over the whole world during His millennial reign.

As soon as He appears invested with supreme authority as the Judge of the whole earth (Rev. xix.), He also appears in all the majesty of His kingly power as "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" and then, by virtue of His rights, both

as Creator and Redeemer, He takes possession of His own world, for it had been ordained of old that He should have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psa. ii. 8).

The Old Testament prophecies abound with allusions both to Christ as King, and to His perfect and glorious reign. "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (Zech. xiv. 9).

While the Lord will thus rule over the whole world, He will be in a special manner the King of His ancient people, the Israelites. Hence the numerous references to this fact. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6, and Psa. lxxxix. 18-20). The Lord will actually reign in Jerusalem on the throne of His father David over the house of Jacob.

According to the words of Hosea iii. 4, 5, the Israelites have been for hundreds of years without a king; but in the latter days, when they shall be restored to their land, their long desired Messiah will appear to reign over them: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord . . . and His goodness in the latter days." This reign of the Messiah King, which has ever been the hope and expectation of true Israelites, is beautifully expressed in the angel's announcement to Mary, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 32, 33). Then, and *not till then*, will the words so often repeated in the Psalms be fulfilled, "The Lord reigneth"; and all the saints of that happy day—led on by the devout Israelites—will rejoice and sing, "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the Lord Most High is terrible; He is a great King over

all the earth. . . . Sing praises to God, sing praises : sing praises unto our King ; sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth ; sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the heathen : God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness" (Psa. xlvii. 1, 2, 6-8). "Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory ? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory ? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory" (Psa. xxiv. 7-10).

His dominion, moreover, shall be universal, for He alone shall have sovereign power over all the inhabitants of the earth. "And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him : His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii. 14).

Much is given in Scripture with regard to the character of the Lord's blessed reign ; for it is repeatedly stated that it will be characterised by perfect wisdom, righteousness, truth, justice, and holiness. The world will then, for the first time in its chequered history, be rightly governed under the sway of the one true and holy King. "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isa. xxxii. 1). "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given : and the government shall be upon His shoulder : and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever" (Isa. ix. 6, 7). "Give the king Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with judgment. . . . In his days shall the righteous flourish ; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . . Yea, all kings shall fall

down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper" (Psa. lxxii. 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 12). In this seventy-second Psalm we have a beautiful picture of the Lord's perfect reign during the millennium. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre" (Psa. xlv. 6). This and many other Psalms—as well as the prophets—are full of this grand theme.

The governmental rule of the Lord Jesus will, in every respect, be a complete contrast to all that has gone before.

All human governments have hitherto failed, more or less, to cope successfully with evil; to effectually suppress crime, oppression, injustice, and rebellion; to stop the ravages of war, and to secure a state of permanent peace.

The most they have done has been partially to keep in check these evils for varying intervals of time, after which they break out again, in defiance of all authority and order.

For with all the complex and elaborate machinery of our modern governments, what do we find but growing dissatisfaction and disorder, constant conflicts between the ruling powers and the people, struggles between the employers and the employed, deliberate frauds and gross injustice, and hosts of other evils, which the authorities seem powerless to effectually put an end to?

Even in our highest courts we find at times sad miscarriages of justice, the innocent being punished, while the guilty—through various legal quibbles, or the contradictory evidence of unreliable witnesses—are allowed to go free; and some of our most distinguished judges often disagree as to the interpretation of the laws on our statute books, which are assumed to be the embodiment of the wisdom of ages. Furthermore, when we see the terrible spirit of lawlessness that is now abroad everywhere, culminating in the various and unprecedented forms of a reckless democracy (the "miry clay" of these last days, already noted in chapter vi.), daringly opposing the powers that be, and producing general uneasiness and a sense of instability, it must be admitted that the impotency of the ruling powers to deal with evil is becoming more and more apparent every day.

Even the government of Nebuchadnezzar of old was

founded on a better principle than our modern constitutions, for all authority and power were in the hands of *one sovereign* ruler of the whole nation ; his word was law, and he had but to command and it was done. It was the *one man* government—such as the Lord Jesus Christ's will be,—the most perfect of all, when the *right man* can be found to wield it, though Nebuchadnezzar was not, of course, such an one in himself, as he was only a pagan despot. Still, the foundation principle of his rule—undivided authority centred in one man—was represented by “gold.” Then later on, as counsellors and advisers were multiplied and called in to assist the sovereign and share in his responsibilities, we come down lower and lower in the various degrees of inferiority (in proportion as authority becomes divided), from the “silver” to the “brass” and the “iron,” and, lastly, to the most inferior of all, the *mixture* of miry clay with the iron. This latter condition of things—to which the governments of the world have now come—distinctly presents a marked indication of weakness and instability ; owing to the loosening or disintegrating effects of the clay element, the democratic power, that is, in its very nature, ever antagonistic to regular law and settled government.

All this will be changed when the Lord comes to reign ; for He will be the one all-wise and perfect Ruler, to whom absolute power and authority will be committed ; and if evil shall then venture to assert itself, it will be checked and righteously judged, and the offender removed, or otherwise dealt with, in divine wisdom by the Lord and His servants. The heavenly saints, it is true, will rule with Him, for they will be His administrators, sent forth direct from Himself with all wisdom and power to carry out His behests and to execute His judgments, while everything will finally be determined by His infallible and infinite wisdom.

Of the King it is recorded, “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord ; . . . and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears ; but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth ; and He shall

smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins" (Isa. xi. 2-5).

He will not depend on the unreliable evidence of witnesses, no two of whom might agree as to what they saw or heard ; but being perfectly acquainted with every detail of all that transpires, He will at once judge and reprove with equity. And should the transgressions be such as to require severer punishment, He will, with the breath of His mouth, slay the wicked, or command such to be cut off at once, and not allow them to go on transgressing with apparent impunity. The people of God will then acknowledge the blessedness of a true and righteous government (never as yet seen in this world) administered by the one all-wise and perfect King. Moreover, He will appear in that day in all the glory of His divine majesty, especially in Jerusalem, the seat of His earthly government ; and many grand and glorious scenes will be witnessed, such as have never been known on this earth, and of which we can form but a faint conception at present.

David, in Psalm cxlv., speaks of " the glorious majesty of His kingdom ;" for the Lord shall be personally seen in Jerusalem as the glorious King reigning over the house of Israel.

In the transfiguration on the mount we have a very beautiful and sublime picture of a millennial scene. The Lord had said to His disciples, " Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom " (Matt. xvi. 28 ; Mark ix. 1 ; Luke ix. 27). In the verses that immediately follow the above passages we read : " And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them : and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here ; if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them :

and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Matt. xvii. 1-5). Thus the above prophecy, that there were some who should not taste death till they had seen the Son of man coming in His kingdom, was *fulfilled six or eight days afterwards*, when the Lord took three of His disciples (those who should not die till they had seen His glory) up into the high mountain, and they beheld Him in all the majesty of His kingly character, when "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light," and as He will appear in the millennium.

Though this wonderful scene may have lasted but a very short time, it was a striking representation of that glorious day which is coming. The two classes of saints of the first resurrection who shall then reign with Christ are represented by Moses and Elias,—the former typifying the saints that will have *died* as he had died; the latter those who shall *not die*, but be changed at the Rapture, as Elijah had been changed and caught up into heaven; while the three disciples represent the inhabitants of the earth in the millennium, who will be delighted with the presence of the Lord and of the risen saints.

Peter, who could never forget this transcendent scene, pointedly alludes to it in his second Epistle, chap. i. 16-18, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount."

Evidently Peter had in view the King coming in His millennial kingdom, a representation of which he had seen in the mount.

It may be well to note that while Christ is spoken of as the "King of the Jews," and will be pre-eminently, in the millennium, the King of Israel, and indeed of the whole world, He is never called in Scripture the King of the Church or of Christians, because He holds a much *nearer* relationship to

them than that of a king to his subjects, for He is pleased to call them "My brethren." He is the Head, while they are the members of the "one body," the Church. "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones;" and hereafter, when with Him in glory, He will be the Bridegroom, and the Church will be His bride. Some of our hymns are partly responsible for this mistake of calling Christ the King of Christians. The words in Revelation xv. 3, "King of saints," should be "King of nations," as more correctly given in the margin of the Authorised Version.

Another and far more serious mistake, that deserves to be particularly noticed, is the error of *spiritualising* all these prophecies relating to the reign of Christ on the earth, the future hopes and blessings of Israel, and the millennium.

It would be almost incredible, did we not know it to be a fact, that a great many of the leading commentators on Scripture, a vast number of Biblical writers, and many learned theologians, maintain that all that is stated in the sacred Word concerning the reign of Christ on the earth simply means Christ's *spiritual reign in the hearts of Christian believers*; that all, or nearly all, the blessings promised to Israel are *blessings to the Church*; and that the millennium will be a time when *all mankind will be converted*, and become *spiritually* subject to Christ, which happy state of things is to be *gradually* brought about by the preaching of the Gospel. To these erroneous views they further add the mistaken notion, that when the Gospel thus spreads all over the world, and is preached in every nation, the last day of judgment will come, after which the world will be burnt up, and finally destroyed!

This unwarranted and mischievous practice of spiritualising God's blessed Word, under the specious but false plea that it gives a higher view of truth, has done incalculable harm to thousands, who have been hindered thereby from seeing and enjoying much of the beauty, harmony, and consistency of the inspired Word. The surprise is, that these spiritualising interpreters can maintain their mistaken views, in the face of so much plain and pointed teaching of Scripture with regard to the *personal* reign of Christ with His saints on or over the

earth; as well as to the *actual* restoration of Israel to their own land, according to the numerous predictions of the prophets.

It is indeed difficult to imagine how certain passages could be spiritualised, such as, "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And *His feet shall stand* in that day upon the *mount of Olives*, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zech. xiv. 3, 4). "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him* go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). "We shall reign on the earth;" coupled with, "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. v. and xx.).

Many similar passages might be cited that demand a literal interpretation, if any sense is to be made out of them. Again, what an immense amount of misunderstanding of God's Word is produced by the statements, incessantly heard in sermons, discourses, and hymns, that Zion is the Church, that Israel means Christians, and that Jerusalem in the Old Testament sometimes bears a symbolical reference to the Church! Indeed, the very *headings in our Bibles* (which of course are not inspired) help to perpetuate these palpable errors, as, for instance, over Isaiah, chapter liv., "Prosperity of the Church;" Isaiah xl. "Evangelical predictions;" Isaiah lxvi., "Enlargement of the Church;" and Isaiah lix., "Blessings of the Gospel!" A glance at the contents of these four chapters is sufficient to show how sadly misleading these headings are.

Zion in Scripture is always primarily used to denote Mount Zion in Jerusalem, and its temple there,—the spot whither all the Jews had to go up to worship, the appointed place of God's presence;—and, secondarily, it is sometimes applied to the Israelites as God's people, gathered to His centre in Jerusalem. But not in one single instance can Zion in the Old Testament be taken to refer to the Church, seeing that it was totally unknown then, and was never the subject of prophecy, until our Lord foretold it in the words, "Upon this rock I will build My church." Even in Hebrews xii. 22, "Mount Sion" is not used to denote it, but to express the fact that believers have come by faith to the mount of royal grace and not to Sinai.

Why, we might ask, should Christians, who have such rich stores of spiritual instruction in the Gospels and the Epistles (such as could not have been given to the Old Testament saints) as to their blessings "in heavenly places in Christ," desire to appropriate to themselves the privileges contained in the Old Testament prophecies, which were specially given to the Jews, and, by a false method of spiritualising, seek to rob them of their portion? This seems both selfish and unfair, as well as unscriptural.\*

SECOND. The hope of Israel, their blessing, place, and portion in the millennium.

The possession of the land of Canaan (in accordance with the covenant that God made with Abraham) under the reign of the promised Messiah, who should rule over the house of His father David, has ever been the undying hope of the Israelites. Hence, whilst "waiting for the consolation of Israel," and the "redemption in Jerusalem," they were ever ready to inquire, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

As this hope was given to them by God Himself through the prophets sent to them from time to time, they have had divine authority for entertaining it, and for ever looking forward to its realisation. In the millennium, but not till then, all that God has ever promised to them will be fully realised. The whole house of Israel shall be restored, not only to their own land, but also to the favour of God, who will resume His

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\* The Rev. J. Wilkinson, in the preface to his third edition of "Israel, my Glory," very truthfully remarks: "Commentaries and sermons are still too largely characterized by spiritualising all promises made to Israel, and 'literalising' all curses denounced on the same people. This principle is unjust, unscriptural, and misleading. All the promises in the Word of God are made some to Israel, and some to the Gentiles; if the Gentiles take their own and Israel's also, none are left for poor Israel. No wonder so little interest has been manifested in the spiritual welfare of Israel, still 'beloved for the fathers' sake,' when the Gentiles have found only curses under Israel's name as the Jews' portion of the Word of God. The promise that Christ will be 'a light to lighten the Gentiles,' is a portion to the Gentiles and not to the Jews. This is readily admitted. The promise that He will be 'the Glory of His people Israel,' will be fulfilled literally and exclusively in the interest of His ancient people."

dealings with them as of old ; and will be pleased to again call them " My people, . . . the sons of the living God " (Hosea i. 10). [This fact is denoted in the Chart by the *red line*, which appears running through Dispensations C and D, and is broken off at the Captivity, being resumed, and extended through the whole millennium.]

From Zechariah we learn that this restoration to God's favour will be preceded by deep and heartfelt repentance, when they shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and discover that He is of a truth their Messiah. " And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications : and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn, In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem " (Zech. xii. 10 - 14). Then Jehovah graciously comes in, and provides full deliverance by cleansing them from all their uncleanness, through the application to their hearts and consciences of the blood of Christ, and through the washing of water by the Word. " In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness " (Zech. xiii. 1). They shall realise that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that in consequence of that atonement, the guilt of sin and all moral defilement is washed away by the application to their consciences of the Word of God, based on Christ's finished work. Not only cleansed by blood, but washed by water—that purification all need continually—both of which we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. " This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ ; not by water only, but by water and blood." The " fountain opened " is, of course, a figurative expression, signifying that the one true source of cleansing provided for all in the atonement of Christ is *applied at this time* to the repentant Israelites. This figure also represents the moral power of the death of Christ for the cleansing of all defilement such as is implied in the washing of the feet in John xiii. It does not say it is opened *in* the house of David, but *to* the house, &c. ; that is, the cleansing fountain *already opened* by the atonement of Christ,

is now applied *to* these restored Israelites, and by it they are cleansed from all their defilements. It is distinctly a Jewish reference, specially applicable to them at this particular crisis; but, like many other portions of the Word often *exclusively* applied to Christians, without any thought of the Jews whatever. Of course we and all believers come to the same fountain; but here the allusion is to the Jews. Of this work of purification it is further added, "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. xiii. 9). Then will come to pass the words in Ezekiel xxxvi. 24-27, "I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them" (compare Ezekiel xi. 19, 20). "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning" (Isa. iv. 4). See also Isaiah lix. 20, 21, and Jeremiah xxxi. 33, 34. The words in Romans xi. 26, 27, will then be fulfilled, "All Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

After the children of Israel are restored to the land of their fathers, and are purified and renewed, they will possess the long-expected kingdom, under the reign of Christ. It is chiefly to these Israelitish saints (who shall then be the foremost or leading people in the whole world, and the very reverse of what they are now) that Daniel refers in chapter vii. 22, "And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Many other allusions to this fact are found in the

prophets, such as, "For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things. And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong" (Zech. viii. 12, 13).

"But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions" (Obad. 17). "Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel" (Ezek. xi. 17). "Ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord" (Ezek. xxxvii. 13, 14).

In Revelation vii. we see the 144,000 Israelites sealed that they might be preserved through the day of tribulation; and just as the millennium opens we see these same Jewish saints on Mount Sion with the Lamb, "having His Father's name written in their foreheads" (Rev. xiv. 1); showing that God in His faithfulness had indeed safely kept them all through the "time of Jacob's trouble." And their appearance on Mount Zion with the Lamb (whom they will *now* be delighted to recognise as "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world") is the occasion of great rejoicing among their brethren, the harpers (the martyred saints of the tribulation now risen and in heaven), "and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand,"—doubtless because they had passed triumphantly through the trials and troubles of that same dark period.

When they have come into possession of their own land, and all their fond hopes and aspirations are fully realised, and they are found worshipping once more on their holy hill of Zion, in the most holy portion of their restored temple the "sanctuary," they will doubtless repeat and sing with holy joy and enthusiasm those beautiful psalms that specially refer

to this period,—such as “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King” (Psa. xlviii. 2); “The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God” (Psa. lxxxvii. 2, 3); “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion” (Psa. ii. 6).

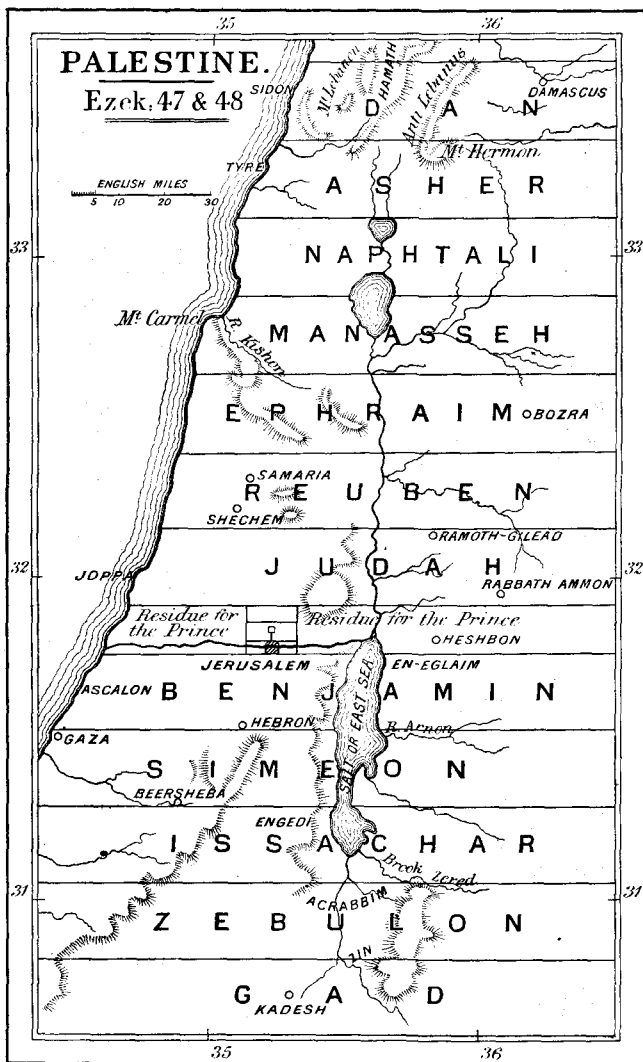
Jehovah Himself in their midst will cheer and comfort them with the thrilling words of their prophets: “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord” (Zech. ii. 10); “Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem” (Zeph. iii. 14); “Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust: arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem” (Isa. lii. 1, 2, 9).

From these wonderful scriptures, and a great many others like them, we see that the despised Israelites, so long trodden down and ill-treated by the Gentiles, will be the highly favoured people of God, and will be blessed with innumerable blessings, both temporal and spiritual; the best of all being the presence of Jehovah Himself in their midst—Jehovah-Shammah, “the Lord is there” (Ezek. xlviii. 35). “Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all” (Jer. xxxi. 12). The foregoing scriptures are beyond question strictly Jewish references to a literal Zion, a literal Jerusalem, and literal circumstances yet to come; but when they are exclusively appropriated by the Church, and used as descriptive of Christian blessings and privileges, what can we say but that such a spiritualising method is a most serious misapplication of God’s Word,

which diverts attention from the plain and obvious meaning of such passages, and in reality amounts to a downright perversion of the sacred Scriptures! Yet there are thousands who continually repeat and sing them in their churches and chapels, who never have a thought of the Jews to whom they were specially given, but think only of themselves; while there are many who do not even believe that God's ancient people are to return to their own land, or that these inspired predictions are to be fulfilled, as if the solemn covenant of God could ever be set aside! Such is the terrible unbelief to which we have come in these last days.

When the Israelites shall have come into full possession of their land, it will be divided among them in accordance with the original and divine purpose of God, as announced in Deuteronomy xxxii. 8, 9,—“When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.” The whole of Palestine, from the river of Egypt (the Nile) to the great river Euphrates, will be distributed among the restored twelve tribes of Israel on a systematic plan, according to special directions given by God Himself; of which we have a full account in Ezekiel xlvii. and xlviii. From these chapters we learn that the land will be divided into twelve parallel segments, running from east to west. (See the Map of Palestine.)

In addition to these twelve divisions, a square portion is to be offered as an holy oblation to the Lord between the allotments of Judah and Benjamin. “All the oblation shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city” (Ezek. xlviii. 20). “And the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it” (ver. 8). Assuming these measurements to be in cubits (of twenty-one inches to the cubit), it will be a little over eight miles square. It is to be divided into three parallel portions; two of the same size, and the third smaller. The first (the *central* and most important) is the “holy portion,” twenty-five thousand (cubits) in length by ten thousand in breadth. “In it shall be the sanctuary and the most holy



place. The holy portion of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the Lord" (Ezek. xlv. 3, 4).

The second, on the *north* side of the square, is also to be ten thousand in breadth; and shall be for "the Levites, the ministers of the house" (ver. 5). The third or smaller portion on the *south* side shall be the same length as the first two, but only five thousand broad; for a "possession of the city" (Jerusalem). It "shall be a profane [place] for the city, for dwelling, and for suburbs; and the city shall be in the midst thereof" (Ezek. xlviii. 15).

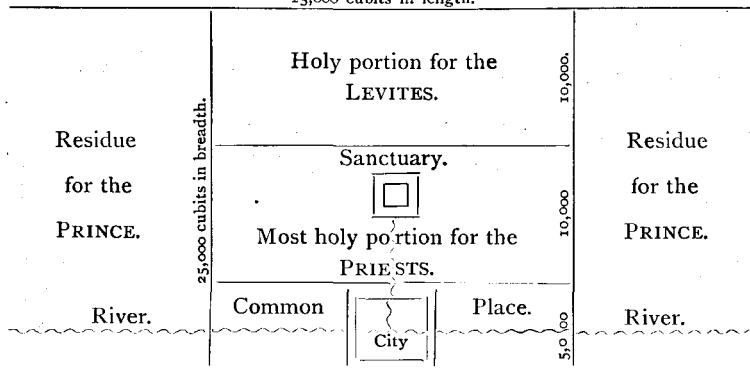
The remaining portions on either side of the whole oblation, east and west, shall be for the prince for his possession: "And the residue shall be for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation" (Ezek. xlviii. 21). "In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and My princes shall no more oppress My people; and the rest of the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes" (Ezek. xlv. 8). (See Map and Diagram.\*)

A wonderful river is to issue from the sanctuary, and flow

### \* JUDAH.

#### THE HOLY OBLATION.

25,000 cubits in length.



### BENJAMIN.

The sanctuary is to be exactly in the midst of the Holy Square, and in the centre of the priests' portion from east to west, but a little to the north of that portion, so as to be in the middle of the whole.

eastward to the Dead Sea (after first flowing a short distance to Jerusalem, as shown in the diagram), whose "waters shall be healed." It shall no longer be a dead but a living sea, full of all kinds of fish, "exceeding many," whilst on the banks of the river all manner of fruit trees shall grow, and bear fruit in great abundance. "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine" (Ezek. xlvii. 8-12).

In Joel iii. 18 we have another allusion to this millennial river. "And a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim."

In Zechariah xiv. 8 this river is described as flowing from Jerusalem in two branches, one to the east, and the other to the west. "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea (the eastern or Dead Sea), and half of them toward the hinder sea (the Mediterranean): in summer and in winter shall it be."

It is supposed that the river from the sanctuary is to flow a short distance southward to Jerusalem, and then branch off into two streams, one flowing east and the other west, as mentioned in the above passage from Zechariah.

This thought appears to be much strengthened by the allusion in Ezekiel xlvii. 9 to "rivers," or a double river, rising in the sanctuary.

Probably it is to this river that reference is made in Psalm xlv. 4: "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High;" and again in Psalm lxxv. 9: "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it; Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water."

Thus there will be some great and marvellous physical changes in Palestine just before, and as soon as the millennium begins, as foretold in Zechariah xiv. and the concluding chapters of Ezekiel,—the miraculous rent in the Mount of Olives, producing a very great valley, half the mountain being removed

towards the north, and half towards the south, and this extraordinary river flowing from Jerusalem (rising from under the sanctuary to the north of that city), half towards the Dead Sea, and half towards the Mediterranean, a river that enlarges as it progresses, with "waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over."

THIRD. Rewards to the heavenly saints, and their reigning with Christ over the earth.

It will come to pass in this millennial day, especially at the commencement of it, that the Nobleman (or King) of Luke xix. 11-27 will return, after receiving His kingdom, to reckon with His servants, and to give them their rewards according to their faithfulness in using the talents, which had been committed to them, while on the earth. The reward given, as mentioned in the parable, will be authority to rule over certain cities,—in some cases five, and in others ten,—or "over many things," as in Matthew xxv. 21, 23, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things I will make thee ruler over many things." In other scriptures this giving of rewards by the Lord to His servants is also mentioned. "Behold, the Lord God will come . . . behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him" (Isa. xl. 10). "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12). "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27). The time has come "that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets" (Rev. xi. 18). "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour" (1 Cor. iii. 8).

On the minds of many Christians there seems to be a vague impression to the effect that all these, and other statements of the Word with regard to future rewards, relate *wholly* to the blessedness of the saints in heaven; or it may be to some special distinctions that will be given to them in the glory above. But this exclusive localising is not borne out by Scripture, and is indeed quite contrary to the thought that runs through all the passages just quoted.

It is true that our Lord speaks of great reward and treasure in heaven, and that Peter mentions the inheritance

reserved there for believers ; but these, and many other like statements, appear to refer to the *general* blessedness of glorified saints given to all alike on the ground of Christ's atonement.

The question may be asked, Will there be distinctions in heaven, and will some have higher positions or blessings than others? It would be difficult to point to anything in Scripture that definitely warrants such a thought. At the same time, it might not be wise to positively assert the contrary, because we have no explicit teaching one way or the other. One of the passages most commonly cited is 1st Corinthians xv. 41, "One star differeth from another star in glory." But it does not refer to the subject at all. It is simply an illustration used to show that as the natural sun, moon, and stars differ from one another in brilliancy, so will the *celestial bodies* of saints after the resurrection differ from their *terrestrial ones*. The whole argument of the chapter is the contrast between corruption and incorruption, dishonour and glory, weakness and power, natural and spiritual bodies, &c., and it never touches the question of distinctions among the saints in heaven. The above passage is thus often entirely misapplied.

Whether there may be such distinctions or not, one thing is very certain, that there will be differences in the Lord's kingdom *on the earth*. It is important to observe, that the rewards spoken of in Scripture are generally, if not exclusively, connected with Christ's appearing and kingdom, and that *different* ones will be given according to the degrees of faithfulness in service down here. Even the "crown of life," of which our Lord and the apostles speak, is more or less connected with the earthly kingdom, though the honour of receiving it will no doubt be reckoned as one of the highest gifts of heaven.

Paul having fought the good fight, &c., could say, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the *righteous Judge*, shall give me at *that day*: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His *appearing*" (2 Tim. iv. 8). James tells us, "Blessed is the man that *endureth temptation*: for when he is *tried*, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (James i. 12). Peter, in like manner, says, "When the chief Shepherd *shall appear*, ye shall receive a crown of glory

that fadeth not away" (1 Peter v. 4); and in Revelation the Lord's message to Smyrna is, "Be thou *faithful* unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (ch. ii. 10); and to Philadelphia, "Behold, I *come* quickly: *hold that fast* which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11). Note the words I have italicized, which point to the Lord's appearing, and to the conduct of the saints connected with the crown of glory. It is not salvation, but rewards for faithful service on the earth.

In 1st Corinthians ix. 24-27 we read, "They which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. So *run*, that ye *may obtain*. And every man that *striveth* for the *mastery* is temperate in all things," &c. These words clearly refer to diligence in service.

The same teaching is presented in 1st Corinthians iii. 12-15, where we learn that the faithful builder or teacher who builds with "gold, silver, precious stones," so that his work abides, shall receive a reward; while he who uses "wood, hay, stubble," shall *suffer loss*, and his work be burned,—not the loss of his soul, but of his *reward*, for it is added, "he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." Furthermore, looking at all the promises to the "overcomers" in Revelation ii. and iii., we see that two main thoughts run through them all,—namely, nearness to, and intimacy with Christ Himself, and association with Him in His blessed reign on the earth; while some of these promises very pointedly and unmistakably refer to the coming kingdom, such as that to Thyatira,—“He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give *power over the nations* (there are no nations in heaven): and he shall *rule them* with a *rod of iron*; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father" (Rev. ii. 26, 27); that to Philadelphia,—“I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God" (Rev. iii. 12). In Revelation xxi. 10 we see the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven in the millennium. Again, the Lord says to Laodicea,—“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. iii. 21).

Thus the rewards given at the appearing of the Lord, are represented in a different light from the blessedness given to all believers in the heavenly glory, through the free and unmerited grace of God, on the ground of Christ's finished work of redemption. We have two sides to the blessings conferred on the saints hereafter,—one being connected with the heavenly glory, and the other with the earthly reign, and bestowed on account of faithful service.

These distinct aspects of future blessings are usually so mixed up in the popular mind of Christendom as to appear one and the same thing, being resolved into a general and vague idea of happiness in heaven. Few seem to take in the thought—although it is so plainly revealed in the Word—that believers will have *to do with this world*, and will rule over it with Christ in His millennial kingdom. This is owing, no doubt, to the erroneous system of spiritualising the Scriptures referring to the subject.

With many Christians the one thought that appears to occupy them is that of being in heaven. It is indeed a blessed thing to go there ; but such a desire savours more or less of selfishness, as it does not rise beyond our own happiness. In Scripture a much higher thought is set before us (without excluding the blessedness of heaven) as to the desires and prospects that should ever animate us with regard to the future ; namely, that of the triumph and glory of our blessed Lord in His kingdom on this earth, where He was despised, rejected, and cast out. The sacred Word abounds with references to this glorious subject, such as, "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth" (Phil. ii. 9, 10) ; "And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him : His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii. 14) ; "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . . Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him : all nations shall serve Him" (Psa. lxxii. 8, 11).

Surely true loyalty of heart to the Lord Jesus, who is to

be King over the whole earth, ought to characterise every Christian, lifting us above ourselves, and leading us to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, and take to Thyself Thy power to reign." Look at the noble and enthusiastic loyalty of David with regard to the King and His kingdom, so grandly and beautifully expressed throughout the Psalms. Many of them are royal millennial songs, prepared beforehand for that glorious day, and often sung by pious Jews, as they were by David, in anticipation of that time.

Christians ought not to be behind the Psalmist in devotedness to the Lord. The first thing the Jewish disciples were taught to pray for was, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Even the thief on the cross said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

As already observed, the special privilege granted to the heavenly saints in the millennium as a reward for their faithfulness, is power to reign with Christ over the earth, to which the following passages allude. "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. v. 10). "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. xx. 4). "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Tim. ii. 12). "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke xxii. 29, 30; Matt. xix. 28).

It is this future reigning of the saints that gives such force to the argument of the apostle Paul in 1st Corinthians vi. 2: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"

Who, it might be asked, are these saints that are thus to reign with Christ? To this question we have a very direct and explicit answer in Revelation xx. 4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they

lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." In this verse we have *three classes* of saints.

First, Those who sat upon thrones, "and judgment was given unto them," the saints of the first resurrection—or Rapture,—who are seen as the "four and twenty elders" around the throne in Revelation iv. and v.

Second, "The souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," the martyred saints of the *first half* of the last week, seen at the opening of the fifth seal under the altar, crying for vengeance (Rev. vi. 9-11).

Third, Those who "had not worshipped the beast," &c.—the martyred saints of the *last half* of the week, the witnesses [the number "two" is probably used here symbolically to denote adequate or sufficient testimony (see Matt. xviii. 16), while representing many] whom we see slain near the close of the last three and a half years, but, after three days and a half, raised from the dead and taken up to heaven in a cloud.

The second class, or souls "under the altar," that were to rest until their brethren (the witnesses) should be killed, will, it is very likely, be raised at the same time as their fellow-martyrs (the third class), and both companies will then ascend to heaven together to join the previously translated saints of the Rapture.

These three classes of *risen* saints are *grouped together* in this verse, and it is stated, "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Though a small interval of time intervenes between their resurrection, it is further added of these three, "This is the first resurrection," to distinguish them from the rest of the dead who "lived not again until the thousand years were finished," and who will at the end of that time realise the terrible meaning of the *second* resurrection and the "*second death*," when they appear before God at the judgment of the great white throne.

There cannot therefore be any doubt as to the saints who are to reign with Christ during the millennium. That exalted privilege will be the blessed portion of all true believers, from the beginning of the world to the time of the first resurrection, when both the Old and New Testament saints shall receive their new celestial bodies, and be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. "They (Old Testa-

ment saints) without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. xi. 40). These are the armies that come out of heaven with the Lord to judge the nations.

But it must not be supposed that the saints will come back to *dwell*, or to take up their abode, on this earth. On the contrary, they will rule *over* the earth from the *heavens* above. This interesting fact we learn chiefly from particulars given to us concerning the New Jerusalem in Revelation xxi. 10, where John sees "The holy Jerusalem, *descending out of heaven* from God." This heavenly city will be composed of all the saints of the first resurrection, among whom the Church will be specially distinguished by having some peculiarly honoured position of nearness to the Lord as His bride,—“The holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” This great *company of saints, with the Lord in their midst, will come down to the lower heavens, some distance above the earth* (we are not told how far), and from that heavenly centre they will reign over the earth.

It should be remembered that there are *three* heavens alluded to in Scripture. The *first* or lowest is the firmament or the earth's atmosphere; the *second*, the interstellar space where planets revolve; and the *third*, the highest place of God's glory. It was to this last that Paul was caught up in a trance (2 Cor. xii. 2, 3). Doubtless it is in the second heaven that Satan, "the prince of the power of the air," has his seat at present, and from which he will ere long be cast down. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. vi. 12). But Christ, the true and rightful Sovereign, after casting out the usurper, will take His place in those same heavens with all His saints, to reign in perfect righteousness over the earth.\*

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\* It may be well to notice that the first part of Revelation xxi. continues the narration of the events concerning the end of the world from chapter xx. (with which it ought to be connected) down to the last one of all, the creation of a new heaven and a new earth long after the millennium has passed away, and at the *end of verse 8* the book of Revelation properly ends. In these eight verses of chapter xxi. we see that the holy city, New

The description of this wonderful city is exceedingly grand. Nothing could be more magnificent than this picture, in which the purest metals and the most precious gems of this earth, are used as symbols to depict its glory,—symbols intended doubtless to convey lessons of the deepest spiritual instruction to the saints of God. In reflecting upon the whole scene, we cannot help wondering at His love and goodness in raising poor worms of the earth to such a position of heavenly honour and splendour, in intimate connection with the Lord of life and glory. How true are the words of the apostle John, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John iii. 2); and the notable words of Paul, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10).

It is said of this marvellous city, “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” The whole scene is flooded with the light of the glory of God and of the Lamb, far surpassing in splendour anything that has ever been seen in this world. This supernatural and glorious light will stream down from the heavenly city over Mount Zion, and especially over the temple or sanctuary in the most holy portion, somewhat like the pillar of cloud and of fire that rested on the tabernacle in the wilderness, the Shechinah that appeared between the cherubim on the mercy-seat, and the glory of the Lord that filled the temple in the days of Solomon, only it may be much more extensive and brilliant than any of these former manifestations.

There also appears to be an allusion to this marvellous light in Isaiah iv. 5: “The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and

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Jerusalem, will have some special place in connection with the new heaven and new earth. Then from verse 9 to the *fifth verse* of chapter xxii., the Spirit of God *takes us back* to show us the place of glory and power that the same holy Jerusalem will occupy during the millennium.

smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night : for upon all the glory shall be a covering " (see marginal reading). Compare Ezekiel xliii. 2, " And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east : and His voice was like a noise of many waters : and the earth shined with His glory ; " and again, in Zechariah ii. 5, " For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her. "

Continuing the description of the New Jerusalem, we read, " The nations shall walk by its light ; and the kings of the earth bring their glory to it. And its gates shall not be shut at all by day, for night shall not be there. And they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations to it " (New Trans., Rev. xxi. 24-26).

The saints of this holy city will descend from their heavenly centre in the execution of their mission of ruling and judging on the earth. A glorious pathway of light will in all probability connect the heavenly capital above—the New Jerusalem—with the earthly capital in Palestine, where the Lord will then be reigning ; and upon this pathway the risen saints in their celestial and glorified bodies will (it may be supposed) continually ascend and descend in the performance of their holy services. Of this we probably have a prefigurement in Jacob's dream, when he beheld " a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven : and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it " (Gen. xxviii. 12). Our Lord's words to Nathanael may have also been intended to bear some reference to these millennial circumstances, " Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man " (John i. 51).

[In the chart the *oval* figure above the millennial period is intended to represent the glorified saints in the New Jerusalem ; while the radial lines descending therefrom denote their coming down to *rule* over the earth. The *golden crown* seen lower down in this space is also intended to point to the righteous reign of Christ with His saints.]

Although the millennium will be characterised as a time of prevailing holiness, particularly in the Holy Land, yet the fact that the heavenly saints are to judge the world, and even

to rule "with a rod of iron," clearly implies that the tendency to sin will still exist, and that consequently there will be transgressors who will have to be judged and properly dealt with. For though Satan and all his emissaries will be absent from the scene, poor human nature, with its innate tendency to evil, will be there. Besides, we are not told in Scripture that all will be converted even in that blessed day; so that sin will sometimes be committed, though no doubt it will be the exception rather than the rule as at present.

In Isaiah lxxv. 20, 22, we read: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old, shall be accursed. . . . They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

From these words we learn two things. First, that the people of this time—the millennium—will live to a very great age, so that persons a hundred years old will be regarded as but children; and that many, if not all, will pass through the whole thousand years. Methuselah lived nearly as long as that. Indeed, it seems very probable that the assigned duration of human life during this glorious Sabbath will be a thousand years, and that only those who commit some deliberate wickedness will be cut off. Second, that "the *sinner* being a hundred years old shall be accursed;" that is, judged and condemned. The offenders in this day of holiness will no doubt be judged, and it may be in some cases cut off at once, or otherwise righteously dealt with. In these disciplinary acts the risen saints will in all likelihood be called to take part, under the immediate direction of the Lord the King, while rendering useful service in thousands of ways by counselling and guiding all who may require their assistance. For if they are to be frequent visitors to this earth (as we have already assumed), coming down and returning to their home above, no doubt the righteous will be delighted with their presence, as Peter, James, and John were delighted to be in the company of the Lord and Moses and Elias on the mount of transfiguration, saying, "It is good for us to be here."

As to the practical exercise of their judicial functions, perhaps Peter's action in dealing with Ananias and Sapphira, and the results that followed, may be regarded as furnishing us with a general illustration of the judgment that will be exercised in similar cases by the saints in the millennium.

FOURTH. It will be a time of universal peace, while true happiness and holiness will be its prominent features. But it must be remembered that the scriptures which refer to these blessings mainly apply to the Israelites restored to Palestine. Still many of them will no doubt flow out from that holy and happy centre to all the surrounding nations, and to the world at large. "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9).

True peace fled from this world the day that sin entered into it, with all its dire consequences, and has never yet returned to the world at large, nor will it do so, until the Prince of Peace Himself comes to establish it in His kingdom.

When we look at the past history of this restless and turbulent scene, we see that all the way down from the beginning—a long dark record of nearly sixty centuries—it is deeply stained with innumerable wars, some of them the most horrible and devastating, in which millions of precious souls have been hurriedly driven out of time into the solemn realities of eternity. Yet with all this, as the centuries rolled on, rulers and statesmen cried aloud for peace, and protested that they were about to put an end to all war, and bring about a time of general tranquillity. But these promises have never been fulfilled. At every fresh stride of civilisation our rulers and statesmen repeatedly proclaim with louder voices than ever, often too with the utmost confidence, that all these great improvements are soon to usher in the glorious and long-desired era of peace. That day has not yet come, nor do we see that the much lauded improvements of these last days—good as many of them undoubtedly are in themselves—have helped in the least to extirpate the demon of war that is still unquestionably lurking beneath the apparently placid surface of the political world. On the contrary, science itself, with some of its most wonderful discoveries, is being more than ever harnessed to the chariot of war; and never has there

been a time when the preparations for it have been conducted on such an extensive scale, or when the expenditure of the different nations lavished upon these preparations has been so enormous, as at present. Millions are spent by the nations of Europe in providing the various deadly munitions of war for the mighty conflict that is soon coming. Terrible iron-clads and enormous guns, torpedoes and magazine rifles, are some of the awful engines of destruction that are being rapidly multiplied; while governments vie with one another in hurrying on their construction.

It is appalling to think that all these expensive appliances are expressly designed for the wholesale slaughter of human beings, and for the destruction of property! Yet the rulers, when they make their set speeches to their people, assert again and again that the result they hope to achieve by these means is peace! Their ministers and statesmen echo and highly applaud these pacific speeches, while they know full well that a gigantic war—the long-expected European conflagration—is impending, and likely to burst over this Continent in the near future. Moreover, some competent authorities, who are in positions to judge correctly as to what is coming, assert that this great conflict will be one of the most terrible and far-reaching as to its consequences that has ever been known.\*

We know from some of the unfulfilled prophecies of Scripture that there are yet to be wars before the end of the age, as our Lord said while looking forward to these last days, that

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\* *Extract from a Speech recently delivered by Lord Wolseley.*

“He saw on all sides great nations arming to the teeth for the coming struggle. Those who studied the map of Europe at the present moment, must feel that there was hanging over a war cloud greater than ever hung before, and if that burst, as surely it would, it meant not a contest between two highly trained armies, but a war of devastation, a war of extinction between great nations, the whole of whose population was armed and trained to fight. It was a sad thing to think that at this period of the nineteenth century, notwithstanding all the beneficial results of physical, moral, and philosophical teaching, as far as one could see, the tendency of the time, instead of leading to peace, led to war. It was a strange thing that the older the world became the larger were the sums of money devoted to the purpose of warlike implements, and the greater the portion of the population in every country trained to arms.”

there should be "wars and rumours of wars." What do the first four seals—the four horses—of Revelation vi. mean, if not wars and their consequences? to take place, be it remembered, *after* the Church and all the risen saints have been translated to heaven, who are seen in the two *previous* chapters (iv. and v.) crowned and seated around the throne as the four-and-twenty elders. The Church has not yet been caught up, consequently those wars are yet to come. Then, again, the king of the north has not yet come down to devastate Palestine for the last time; nor has the battle of Armageddon taken place, in which he and all his mighty armies, together with the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, shall be destroyed on the hills of Israel. Therefore we can confidently repeat, that there will be no real and lasting peace on the earth until the Lord Jesus comes to establish it.

Furthermore, the great "Eastern question," that has been menacing the peace of Europe for so many years, has not been settled, and indeed never will be, until the children of Israel, to whom the whole of Palestine belongs (as it was given to them for a perpetual inheritance by a solemn covenant of God), are restored to the full possession of their own land. This must come to pass, because God has said it, and not all the nations of the earth combined will be able to prevent it. The Eastern question is God's question, His controversy with the nations that still debar His people from taking possession of their own land.

But this restoration of Israel is not likely to take place without a tremendous conflict, as is known by those who are acquainted with the state of affairs in the East, and with the undying traditional designs and ambition of the great power of the north. So here again we have war ahead,—a war that is becoming more imminent every day; and is the constant theme of the secular papers, some of which have more than once predicted that it may come upon us as suddenly as thunder and lightning from a clear sky. My own impression is, that whenever it does come, it will in all probability change the map of Europe, and will be the *beginning of the end*. In this I may be mistaken; but I mention it for the consideration of those who are watching the drifting of things in the restless and unsettled state of Europe and the East towards

some momentous crisis. Daniel says, "The wise shall understand."

The millennium will be the reverse of all this, for real and lasting peace will prevail all over the world, as is clearly set forth in numerous scriptures. "The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. ix. 6, 7). "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places" (Isa. xxxii. 17, 18). "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. ii. 4). "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire" (Psa. xlv. 9). "In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Psa. lxxii. 7).

Delightful scenes of joy and gladness shall be seen on every hand, and true happiness shall be the portion of God's children, especially of the Israelites in Palestine, for sorrow, sickness, want, and distress shall be banished from their midst. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isa. lv. 12). "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees . . . well refined" (Isa. xxv. 6). "To comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified" (Isa. lxi. 2, 3). "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. xxxv. 10, lxxv. 19). "They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall

not sorrow any more at all" (Jer. xxxi. 12). "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. vii. 16, 17; Isa. xlix. 10).

All these beautiful and glowing scriptures particularly describe the blest and happy condition of the godly Israelites, who will then be true and intelligent worshippers of God, in the fear of the Lord, and in humble subjection to His statutes. Holiness, too, shall be a marked feature throughout the land. "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 34). "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of Thy youth" (Psa. cx. 3). "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD" (Zech. xiv. 20). "Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain" (Zech. viii. 3).

Wrong-doing and open transgression may, as we have seen, sometimes occur, but such cases of wilful evil will be speedily judged, and righteously corrected. What a contrast to the present time, when high-handed sinners put on a bold and daring front, and "draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope" (Isa. v. 18).

FIFTH. Great changes in the natural world.

The terrible curse that fell upon the earth and upon man at the fall, in consequence of sin, was,—“Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground” (Gen. iii. 17-19). The sad effects of this curse have continued for nearly six thousand years, as expressed in Romans viii. 22, “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” But in the happy days

of the millennium, these sad groans that have been rising to heaven for so many centuries, will be hushed, as the curse will be to a great extent removed, and the earth restored to its pristine beauty and fertility, particularly in the favoured land of Palestine.

The Almighty Creator has but to command, as at the first, "Let the earth bring forth," and in a moment the face of nature may be completely changed, the most sterile valleys, the great sandy deserts, the wild wildernesses of weeds and bushes, and even the flinty rocks, being converted into fertile and productive fields and gardens. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. . . . Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes" (Isa. xxxv. 1, 6, 7). "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isa. lv. 13). "Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us" (Psa. lxvii. 6). "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt" (Amos ix. 13). "I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen" (Ezek. xxxvi. 29, 30). "For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things" (Zech. viii. 12). This, we see, specially applies to the land of Palestine, though no doubt the world at large will be greatly changed.

Generally these passages are applied in a metaphorical sense, as descriptive of the improved *moral* condition of the people of that day. But though they may thus be used as

apt figures of moral changes, and spiritual conditions of soul, it surely must be obvious to all who carefully consider these words, that *primarily* they should be regarded as descriptions of actual physical changes in the natural world. To *exclusively* and *directly* apply these scriptures to the growth of spiritual life in the *Church*, as is often done, is, it seems to me, a gross perversion of the sacred Word.

There will in that day be no deep distressing want or poverty, and consequently not that terrible struggle for existence which is now so prevalent. On the contrary, there will be abundance of good things for all classes, provided by the bountiful Creator, who giveth to all liberally, temporal as well as spiritual blessings.

Some doubters of the rationalistic school imagine, that if people live through the thousand years, and the population be thus greatly increased, it will be impossible to provide sufficient food and other necessities for them! What a limitation of the omnipotence of God, who with a word can call into existence this and all the great and innumerable worlds we see around us! What unworthy thoughts many seem to have of the infinite God, the Creator of all things! See what a grand and wonderful display of omnipotence appears when our Lord, without any outward show, quietly lifts His eyes to heaven to give thanks, and then feeds five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, and, after all are filled, twelve baskets full of fragments remain! And if the number had been five millions, it would have been the same to Him, for they would all have been filled. What amazing power, so easily and quietly put forth, to gather together, or rather create, *on the instant*, bread and fish in such abundance! Can the proud scientist explain that? How insignificant all the highest achievements of science appear in the presence of this one fact. What folly then to doubt and reason, and to call in question the almighty power of God.

We can be sure that when God restores the earth to its former state of productiveness, there will be marvellous prodigality of supply, and a profusion of everything needful, such as we have not the slightest conception of at present. Part of the curse, it will be remembered, was that man should "eat

the *herb of the field*," which was to be obtained by the "sweat" of his face—by hard toil, and continuous labour in cultivating the ground. Moreover, it seems that fruit grown on trees was the food originally provided for man, and it did not require such severe labour to procure it. In the passage already quoted from Ezek. xxxvi. 30, we see it is particularly stated, "I will multiply the *fruit of the tree*," as well as the increase of the field (see also Ezek. xxxiv. 27); thus partly returning to the Paradise condition of things.

In Ezek. xlvii. 12 we have another very remarkable allusion to this abundant supply of fruit in Palestine, in connection with that wonderful river that is to flow eastward from the sanctuary: "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine;" no fading leaf or cessation of fruit bearing, as with us in winter, but new fruits by some of the trees, every month according to their respective seasons of bearing.

There will also be a complete change in the nature and habits of the animal creation. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 6-9). "I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land; and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods" (Ezek. xxxiv. 25).

These passages, like a great many others, as we have already observed, are most commonly interpreted or applied figuratively, in accordance with the mistaken practice of spiritualising almost everything in the Old Testament pro-

phacies, whereby their special force and obvious teaching is often completely lost. They may at times, no doubt, be profitably used in a figurative sense as *illustrations or parables*, but their true and primary meaning is only to be found in their literal interpretation.

SIXTH. The prominent position of Palestine at this time, the glory of Mount Zion, and the restoration of sacrifices and offerings near to Jerusalem, *i.e.*, in the sanctuary to the north of the city.

The Holy Land will be the most prominent and important country in the world during the millennium, and Jerusalem will be the glorious metropolis and centre of the whole earth, when the Israelites, the rightful owners, shall have taken full possession of it according to the decrees and counsels of God. "Thus saith the Lord God; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her" (Ezek. v. 5).

The two circumstances that will give such importance to Jerusalem are, first, that it will be the *earthly centre* of the great King, the Messiah, reigning over the house of His father David, and the spot where He shall appear personally; and, second, that it will be near the *central* place of Divine worship, where the bright symbol of God's presence will be seen over the sanctuary in the most holy portion, and whither all the nations of the world are to go up on certain occasions to worship Him. "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously" (Isa. xxiv. 23). "Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain. . . . Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord" (Zech. viii. 3, 22). Thus the Lord will be seen in His glory reigning as King in Jerusalem, admired and adored by all. "The place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever" (Ezek. xliii. 7; Isa. lx. 13).

As soon as the Israelites are restored to their land,

their first consideration will be to rebuild the temple, and to resume their sacrifices and oblations, as in the days of David and Solomon, for this has been the desire of every pious Jew since their dispersion. This movement will be approved and owned of God ; while the building, and all the arrangements of the temple, the order of the various sacrifices and offerings, and the ministrations of the priests, will be carried out in strict accordance with the divine commands given in the prophecy of Ezekiel, which the Jews will as closely follow in that day, as their forefathers did the directions given to them through Moses. Thus in Ezekiel, chapters xl. to xliii. 17, full particulars are given concerning the measurements and arrangements of the new temple, upon which the glory of God is to shine. In chapter xliii. 18-27 directions are given with regard to the various sacrifices to be offered by the priests. In the three chapters xlv. to xlv. we find very full instructions concerning the ministrations of the high priest, "the Prince," the ordinary priests and Levites, the various offerings they are to prepare, and the portions of the land to be allotted to them, as well as details respecting the Prince and his portion. In xlvii. 1-12 an account is given of that wonderful river which is to flow from under the house, the fruit trees growing on its banks, and the fish in it "exceeding many." Chapters xlvii. 13-23 and xlviii. contain directions as to the division of the land among the twelve tribes of Israel, and the special portions to be given to the priests, the Levites, and the Prince.

Thus these last nine chapters of Ezekiel wholly relate to the millennial period, following in consecutive order chapter xxxix., in which we have the destruction of the king of the north at the battle of Armageddon, which is to take place at the end of the age, and before the millennium.

In view of the teaching we have in the epistles, and especially in the Hebrews, that the sacrifices and offerings and priestly ministrations under the Jewish economy were only types and shadows of Christ and of His work of redemption, which have passed away since the one perfect offering of Christ Himself has been made once for all, it may seem strange that they should be again resumed.

But there is nothing contrary to present teaching, or

difficult to understand, if we regard this going back to Jewish institutions as a *memorial* service,—that is, a looking *backward*, instead of *forward*, to Christ and His finished work of redemption, just as we now look backward in the Lord's Supper. For there never can be but *one* way of salvation and entrance into blessing, either in the past, the present, or the future, and that is through the atoning work of Christ.

It is remarkable that the Israelites, for the most part, failed to see Christ prefigured, as the suffering Victim atoning for sin, in the sacrifices which they were commanded to observe, though God, in pardoning sin, ever had that all-important fact in view, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. x. 4). Therefore, as they failed to learn that great and essential lesson of salvation through a suffering and dying Saviour, which God so graciously set before them in the sacrifices, it may be that He intends they should fully learn it in the millennium, according to His original purpose. So that in all the appointed sacrifices and ordinances restored to them after the same pattern as those given through Moses, they shall see Christ, and Christ only, from beginning to end, as the foundation of all God's purposes of mercy towards them and the whole world; and thus, in *looking back* through these sacrifices and offerings, they will see, with wonder and admiration, how perfectly all those ordinances typically set forth the glories of Christ and His wonderful way of redemption. This was of course God's original intention, and if His people failed to perceive it at one period of their history, they will have to learn it at some other; as all the purposes of God must ever stand fast, and be fully accomplished, even though centuries may intervene between their announcement and their realisation.

When Jerusalem shall become the recognised religious as well as geographical centre of the world, and the true worship of God is re-established there (especially in the sanctuary to the north of that favoured city) under the Jewish ritual, all the Gentile nations are to go up on certain occasions to join in worship with the Israelites, who shall be the priests and leaders of such worship, and the chief religious teachers of that day. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that

the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. ii. 2, 3, and Micah iv. 1, 2). "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" (Jer. iii. 17). "And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent Me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech. ii. 11, 12). "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord" (Zech. viii. 22). "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain" (Zech. xiv. 16, 17).

Thus we see, that all the nations are to go up at least yearly to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, then personally reigning in Jerusalem; and to keep the feast of tabernacles there, and that if they neglect to do so, they will lose their usual supply of rain.

In that day of true godliness, when all the Jewish people shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, it will doubtless be the chief and first concern of these pious Israelites, restored to the favour of God, to praise and worship Him continually, and to keep His statutes; and the going up to Jerusalem will evidently be a prominent feature of the millennial day, esteemed by all the saints as a most blessed and happy privilege. Companies will no doubt be seen wending their way there to behold with adoring reverence the glorious per-

son of the Lord the King, and the glory of Jehovah over the sanctuary, and to unite with the devout Israelites in praising and worshipping God in the beauty of holiness. (Psa. xxix. 2.) "And the nations shall walk by its light: and the kings of the earth bring their glory to it. . . . And they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations to it" (Rev. xxi. 24, 26).

SEVENTH. The glory and mission of Israel in the millennium.

When Israel as a nation is purified, and truly converted to God, and when Jehovah dwells in their midst (Isa. xii.), they will be instruments and channels of blessing to the whole world. This thought appears first in the covenant made with Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 18). This is to be understood in a twofold sense, —first, through Christ the Saviour of the world, who came of the seed of Abraham; and, second, through the Israelites themselves as a nation being God's appointed testimony on the earth in the millennium, and the religious teachers of the surrounding nations. The glory of the Lord's presence in their midst will then be shining out through them to all; giving them godly power and influence over those with whom they come in contact. Moreover, to their holy city Jerusalem, upon which the glory of the Lord shall arise, the Gentiles shall come to worship God.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. . . . And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . . The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations" (Isa. lx. 1, 3, 14, 15). "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O

captive daughter of Zion. . . . How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ! . . . Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem : for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations ; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God " (Isa. lii. 1, 2, 7, 9, 10). " I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth. . . . Behold, I will lift up Mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up My standard to the people : and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers : they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet ; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord : for they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me " (Isa. xlix. 6, 22, 23). " He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root : Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit " (Isa. xxvii. 6). " For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory : and thou shalt be called by a new name. . . . Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God " (Isa. lxii. 1-3). " In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land : whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance " (Isa. xix. 24, 25). " At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you ; for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord " (Zeph. iii. 20). " And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people : and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent Me unto thee. And the

Lord shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech. ii. 11, 12). "And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong. . . . Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zech. viii. 13, 22, 23).

The Jews will also be sent to declare the glory of the Lord among the Gentiles, and to show that He reigns as King in Zion. "I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles" (Isa. lxvi. 19).

The prophecies of the Old Testament are largely occupied with this interesting subject. The passages just quoted are only a selection of the principal ones, and show us not only the great importance attached to this subject in the Word, but also the abounding love and mercy of God towards His ancient people, cheering and comforting them with the prospect of a glorious future, even in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah, when they were in a deplorably low moral condition, and about to come under the chastising hand of God for their idolatries and wickedness, and to be carried away captives to Babylon.

Though God has permitted the Gentiles to ill-treat His people for centuries, when He stretches forth His hand again to restore them it will be a serious time of judgment for those who now oppress and persecute them, for then they shall realise the full force of the solemn words of our Lord: "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily" (Luke xviii. 7, 8). God hath said

of His chosen people, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye" (Zech. ii. 8).

It seems strange that many Christians, in reading the distinctively Jewish predictions which we have been considering in this chapter, apply most of them to the Christian Church. Certainly such a sad misapplication is a serious error, which has had the effect of hindering thousands from rightly understanding the prophetic word.

In penning the foregoing brief and general survey of millennial truth, two things presented themselves as specially noticeable,—First, the large number of references to it in the various books of the Bible, and the glowing and emphatic language in which it is portrayed, thus showing its great importance; and, second, the perfect contrast this grand picture presents to the whole present order of things.

Now, we have sorrow, misery, and death constantly before us; then, real joy, happiness, and long life as the portion of the children of God (Isa. lxxv. 22):—now, deep poverty and want, and dreadful struggles for bare existence; then, as a general rule, abundance for all of everything needful:—now, nature groaning under the curse; then, the curse removed, and the earth renovated, and made like the garden of Eden, particularly in the Holy Land:—now, sin, high-handed wickedness, and rebellion stalking defiantly through the earth; then, real submission to Divine authority, righteousness and true godliness prevailing especially among the restored Israelites:—now, terribly devastating wars and bloodshed, the cruel passions of men let loose to hurt and destroy one another; then, genuine peace and real kindness and benevolence. Now, foul language and blasphemies often assail the ear; then, pious hymns and anthems of adoring praise and worship shall be perpetually ascending to God from the vast number of true saints who will then be far more numerous than at present; and, to crown all (that which indeed will be the foundation as well as the source of all this blessedness), instead of the diabolical reign of Satan, the god of this world (2 Cor. iv. 4), there will be the perfectly righteous and glorious reign of the King of kings and Lord of lords—the kingdom of heaven truly established on the earth. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

## CHAPTER XV.

## SATAN LOOSED OUT OF HIS PRISON.

## THE LAST REBELLION AND FINAL BATTLE.

## [EPOCH 9 AND DISPENSATION I.]

WHEN the millennium closes, and these years of rest have come to an end, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison-house, the bottomless pit, to visit this world once more ; and he will again come forth as the unchangeable and implacable enemy of God and man, to renew his diabolical mission of stirring up rebellion against God in the hearts of mankind, and to promote every species of wickedness in the world. His main tactics will also be the same as ever,—deceit and lying,—for he is the father of lies ; “and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth” (Rev. xx. 8). The pernicious results of his evil work will soon become apparent, in a widespread apostasy from the truth, and a determined rebellion against God and His people,—the last that shall ever be permitted in this world.

It is sad to reflect that, after such a long and glorious reign of righteousness, under the direct and personal sway of the Lord Jesus Himself, during which the world at large will have enjoyed the highest spiritual advantages that could be conferred upon it, there will still be found in the heart of man that which will respond to the evil suggestions of Satan. This shows us that fallen human nature is ever the same, always retaining its unchangeable disposition to go astray, and to sin against God ; even after a millennium of familiar acquaintance with heavenly things and principles.

Human nature, therefore, will be the same in the millennium as at other times ; but it will then for the most part be kept in check (through the fear of God’s judgments, with which

many offences will be visited in that day) and hindered from manifesting itself in overt acts as at present.

Some may, from the fear of consequences, assume a fair outward show of submission and obedience, while insincere in their hearts. To this class the Psalmist probably refers in Psalm lxvi. 3 (margin), "Through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies yield *feigned obedience* unto Thee;" and again in Psalm xviii. 44 (margin), "As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me: the strangers shall yield *feigned obedience* unto Me." Insubordination may thus be lurking in the hearts of many for a long while, without manifesting itself. Then when Satan comes again upon the scene, the subdued embers of discontent smouldering, it may be, in the hearts of many during the latter days of the millennium, will be suddenly fanned by his subtle devices into a furious flame of bold and daring rebellion against God and His people. "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" (Rev. xx. 7, 8).

Here we see another gathering of an immense host to a great battle *after* the millennium, similar in some respects to the gathering at Armageddon which takes place *before* it. Surely it is scarcely necessary to say that they are totally different events, with at least one thousand years between them. Therefore it would be a great mistake to confound the "Gog and Magog" here with "Gog, the land of Magog" in Ezekiel xxxviii. Ezekiel refers to Gog the king of the north, the literal ruler of the land of Magog (probably Russia), and is thus limited; but "Gog and Magog" in the passage before us appears to be a *symbolical expression*, employed to designate a widespread rebellion "in the four quarters of the earth," whither Satan goes to deceive the nations, while the words that immediately follow seem to point particularly to that portion of the rebellious host that will be gathered in Palestine, to make war with God's people there. "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city."

Though this last rebellion may be general throughout the world,—as the words "four quarters of the earth" seem to imply,—only that manifestation of it that is specially directed against God's people in the Holy Land is described, doubtless because Jerusalem, "the beloved city," will be God's earthly centre at this time. Bearing this fact in mind, we may possibly see a reason for the use of the words "Gog and Magog" anti-typically here, in view of certain similarities that appear between this last battle and the previous one at or near Armageddon.

As the first battle will be against the people of God in the land of Palestine, so will this last one be against the same people in the same land, and probably in nearly the same part of that land; while the results in both cases will be exactly alike, namely, the utter destruction of the enemies of God, though the mode of their destruction will be different. Therefore we can see the appropriateness of using the same appellation—Gog and Magog—in the second as in the first case, the first bearing a literal, and the second a figurative application, especially as Armageddon seems to be taken as a *type* of the last battle.

These post-millennial rebels, lured by Satan's deceptions, are seen in the vision going up "on the breadth of the earth," but to what extent or with what general results we are not informed, as the seer only records their action in one locality in Palestine, the "camp of the saints . . . and the beloved city" (Rev. xx. 9).

To ascertain what this "camp of the saints" may be, we have to turn to Ezekiel and Zechariah. In these prophecies we have already seen that in the millennium Jerusalem will be the metropolis of the world, whither all the nations are to go up to worship God; also that new and special arrangements will be made for carrying on this worship, and the services of the sanctuary: and that in the new division of the land a large square space will be set apart for these purposes, and divided into three portions,—one being for the priests, and called the most holy, in the midst of which the sanctuary will be situated; another for the Levites, and the third, known as the common place, which will include the city of Jerusalem. Within the sacred precincts of this conse-

crated ground, all sacrifices and offerings will be made, and the priests and Levites will have their dwelling-places there, while the symbol of the Divine presence will be seen, as in the camp of the children of Israel in the wilderness, and the Lord Himself as the glorious King will be in the midst of all. This holy spot—which includes the beloved city—will, I doubt not, be the “camp of the saints” of God referred to; against which these daring rebels will go up to battle at this time.

But their destruction will be terribly swift and complete, by a direct judgment from God out of heaven, as it was in the case of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. “And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Rev. xx. 9).

[In the chart, the return of Satan to the earth is shown by the upward movement of the serpent, and the shaded space after it indicates the last apostasy and rebellion.]

Thus, some time after the millennium (we are not told how long), the history of this fallen world closes in this sad and awful manner, for it is the last information we have in Scripture of human beings on this present earth.

Quickly following this last judgment, the great enemy of God and adversary of mankind, the devil, will be finally cast out,—not now into the bottomless pit, where he had been previously bound for a thousand years,—but 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. 10). [See in the chart the serpent line descending for the last time.]

In Revelation xiii. we saw the diabolical trinity of evil,—the dragon, the first beast, and the second beast or false prophet (Antichrist),—putting forth all their malignant power; led on and energised by the dragon, and fighting against God and His saints. A thousand years before the time we are now dwelling upon, two members of this awful trinity—the beast and false prophet—will have been cast alive into the lake of fire; and now their princely leader, the chief of the devils, the terrible dragon himself, is also cast into the same place, whence neither he nor any of his deluded followers will ever be permitted to go forth again to fight against God. How

awful to contemplate the doom of those two persons,—the beast and the false prophet,—who by this time will have been tormented in this lake for more than a thousand years, and yet it is added of them and of the devil, “And shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever!”

In this connection we may also quote the words in Revelation xiv. 9-11, that describe the similarly appalling doom of him who worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark in his forehead, or in his hand. “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and *whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*” Our Lord, in recounting the fate of the ungodly, also refers to this same awful fire: “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark ix. 44, 46, 48). But, thank God, a perfect way of escape is provided, by faith in Christ and His atoning work, for all who will now believe.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## JUDGMENT OF THE WHITE THRONE.

## THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH.

## [EPOCH 10 AND DISPENSATION K.]

WE come in this chapter to the last judgment of all, and the end not merely of an age or dispensation, but of the world itself. The long course of time, that began with the creation, now closes for ever; and this extremely solemn occasion—the last great judgment—will be the concluding scene of the life-histories of all the ungodly and impenitent who have ever lived on this earth. (The judgment of the saints will be totally different, at another time and in a different scene, for it will take place in heaven after the saints have been glorified.) “And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Rev. xx. 11, 12). Considering when this is to happen, and all the circumstances connected with it, we see at once that this momentous judgment is quite distinct, both as to its character and as to the results that follow, from all the other judgments mentioned in the Word, while it is the last that will take place in connection with this world.

Here I would once more direct attention to the serious error (already alluded to in previous chapters) that is held and taught with regard to this and the other judgments of Scripture, and to the second advent of our Lord. This mistaken view, that appears to be almost universally entertained throughout the Christian world, and is often taught by preachers and

teachers, is, that the three great events—(1) the first stage of our Lord's coming *for* His saints,—the Rapture and first resurrection; (2) the second stage of Christ's coming *with* His saints to the judgment of the nations; and (3) this judgment at the white throne—are all to take place at the *same time*, as the several parts of *one* great event, commonly called the "last day of judgment"! It appears to me astounding that any Bible readers should be found holding such an erroneous view, when Scripture so plainly distinguishes between these three different events, both as to the time of their occurrence and as to the circumstances connected with them. As we have already pretty largely dwelt upon the difference between the Rapture and the second stage of Christ's coming or appearing, we will now for a moment look at the difference between the judgment of the nations and that of the dead at the white throne.

First. Christ is ordained to be the "Judge of quick (or living) and dead;" but it is nowhere stated that these two judgments take place at the same time. In 2nd Timothy iv. 1, we read, "Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom;" that is, the judgment of the *quick at His appearing*, when He judges the living nations just before He sets up *His kingdom*, which will be more than a thousand years before the judgment of the dead.

Second. At Christ's appearing (Matt. xxv. 31, 32, and Rev. xix. 11-18), it is plainly stated that "before Him shall be gathered all *nations*," and that He "should smite the *nations*;" but at the white throne we see a different class altogether, the "*dead*, small and great," and not a word said about nations. Moreover, we see the *spirits of the dead* are gathered here, from wherever they had been since they died, and are now invested with immortal bodies to be finally judged. This is the very reverse of being *slain*, as the nations are represented to be, for it is the second resurrection. "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (or hades) delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. xx. 13).

Third. In the first judgment, *two* classes are mentioned, the sheep and the goats; but in the last, *one* class, the *dead*.

Fourth. In the first, only *one* point of conduct is mentioned

by which the sheep are distinguished from the goats, and according to which they are judged—namely, kindness shown, and help afforded, to Christ's brethren in their time of trouble; but at the white throne, they are "judged out of those things which were written in the book, according to their works," the books being symbolically the records of the thoughts, feelings, motives, and actions of their whole lives.

It would therefore be absurd to say that this conclusive judgment was to be determined by the display of *one* quality or course of conduct,—love practically shown to the brethren,—as it will be when the nations are judged. On the contrary, all their various works, their sins of omission and commission, will in that day come into judgment.

Fifth. Another very marked difference appears in the fact that the two classes, the sheep and the goats, are very differently dealt with, the sheep being addressed with the words, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," while the goats are destroyed or killed ("He should smite the nations"), as we find from Revelation xix. 15. At the white throne we see no second class called to blessing, but all cast into the lake of fire. Following the first judgment there is a *kingdom to be inherited*; but *before* the second, or last, the *world even ceases to exist*. "From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Clearly there could be no kingdom after this crisis, though there will be a new heaven and new earth.

Sixth. The first judgment takes place *before* the millennium, while the second will be after the last rebellion, and even after the world is destroyed. This is very clearly and strikingly shown; for in Revelation xix. we have the judgment of the nations, then in chapter xx. the succeeding events that follow this in consecutive order—thus, the casting of Satan into the bottomless pit; the appearance of the saints of the first resurrection, who are to reign with Christ a thousand years; Satan loosed at the *expiration* of the thousand years; the last apostasy and rebellion; the rebels encompassing the camp of the saints and the beloved city; their final downfall; and, last of all, the total destruction of the world.\*

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\* In the above paragraph I have enumerated seven events in Revelation xx. that appear in consecutive order after those recorded in chapter

*After all these events have transpired*, we come to the judgment of the great white throne in verse 11. These facts, so circumstantially stated, with the long interval between them so distinctly mentioned, prove that the judgment of chapter xx. 11-15 cannot possibly be the same as that recorded in chapter xix. 11-21.

Seventh. Furthermore, it must be evident that those who have part in the first resurrection, and who are to reign for a thousand years, are not raised at the *same time* as the other class, of whom it is said, "*The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.*" Yet, strange to say, there are many who confidently assert, in the presence of such explicit statements, that there is to be but *one* general resurrection, and *one* judgment of the *righteous* and the *wicked*! When they add to this the sadly mistaken idea that the Rapture is also to occur at the *same time* as these two judgments, we certainly see a most extraordinary as well as thoughtless error (as to these important dispensational truths) widely and persistently disseminated throughout the whole of Christendom.

Some will, no doubt, refer in vindication of their theory to the well-known scripture, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" or judgment (John v. 28, 29).

Here, no doubt, we have the two distinct resurrections—of the good and of the evil—very plainly stated; but it does

xix. The second in the series is the "*appearance* of the saints of the first resurrection;" and as the word *consecutive* is applied to the whole series, some might be led to suppose that the first resurrection is to take place *at this time*, that is, *after* the judgment of the nations, and *after* Satan is cast out. This—as we have already seen—is not so, for the first resurrection occurs *before* the events of Revelation xix., but the saints *already risen* and in heaven are introduced here to show that they are *those* who are to *reign* with Christ a thousand years. We have many instances in Scripture of previous occurrences being thus referred to in the regular narration of events for the purpose of explanation. Such, for instance, as the birth and ascension of the Man-child (Christ) in Revelation xii., that had taken place long before John's vision, but is *introduced there*, I doubt not, to show us the main *cause* of the dragon's *antagonism* to the woman (Israel), because she had brought forth the Man-child, the Lord Jesus, against whom Satan is ever waging war.

not follow because they are put together in the *same passage*, that they are to take place simultaneously.\* And in this instance we know that such an inference is decidedly incorrect, when we turn to other scriptures that tell us plainly of a long interval between these two. This verse simply gives a general statement of the facts of two resurrections of the dead, without any allusion whatever to when they are to occur. In Scripture we have numerous instances similar to this, of different events being linked together in the same passage, while the time of their occurrence may be hundreds of years apart; for an explanation of which we may have to go to other parts of the Word. For example, in Isaiah lxi. 2 we read, "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." In this one sentence we have two distinct prophetic events, but were they on that account to take place at the same time? Certainly not, as we see in a moment on turning to Luke iv. 18, 19, where we find our Lord, while reading this passage in the synagogue, stopped and closed the book after the words "acceptable year of the Lord," saying, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He did not read the following words, "the day of vengeance," and say that it also was *then* fulfilled, because that day had not yet come, so He closed the book in the middle of the sentence. Nearly nineteen centuries have passed, but the second event—"the day of vengeance"—has not yet come.

Again, Peter on the day of Pentecost quoted Joel's prophecy concerning the last days, to show that *one part* of it, referring to the pouring out of the Spirit, was then partially, and in a preliminary way, accomplished; but while he also

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\* "Persons may say 'the hour is coming' implies that all are to be raised much about the same time. But the word 'hour' is often used in Scripture (and indeed everywhere else) in a large sense. It might comprehend a thousand years or more, so that if one resurrection took place at the beginning of the millennium and the other at the end of it, it might still be the same 'hour.' 'The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live' (John v. 25). This refers to what has been going on ever since Christ was on earth up to this moment. The 'hour' there takes in nearly two thousand years, and surely it is not too much to infer that the 'hour' in verse 28 might embrace if necessary a period equally long."—"Lectures on the Book of Revelation," by William Kelly, page 452.

quoted the other portions of the same prophecy (all given in the *same passage* in Joel ii. 28-32), they have certainly *not yet*, after all these hundreds of years, been fulfilled in any sense, partially or otherwise. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." That day of the Lord is yet to come, as repeatedly noted in our previous remarks. Many more such instances might be adduced, if necessary, showing that different events contained in the same prophecy will often be found to have widely different times of fulfilment.

On this last solemn occasion,—after the world has disappeared,—we see countless millions of the dead, small and great, summoned before the white throne, to hear the dread sentence that is to fix their eternal doom. Few though the words be which are employed to set this judgment before us, they are so exceedingly appalling as to cause the imagination to shrink instinctively from the contemplation of them. And that which will add such intense sadness to the whole scene, will be the reflection that all thus adjudged will be so because of their deliberate rejection of the gracious salvation provided by the Lord Jesus Christ; like those whom our blessed Lord so pathetically lamented over in the words, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life;" to whom also the apostle Paul refers in Hebrews x. 26, 27: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

Let us now inquire who these dead may be who are thus to be judged at the white throne. The fifth verse of Revelation xx. supplies us with a sufficient answer to this question,—“The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”

The words “rest of the dead” obviously imply two classes,—the first, as we are told in verse 4, being those who had either died in the Lord, or had been changed at the Rapture, and who are afterwards seen in heaven seated around the throne (Rev. iv. and v.). For *all true believers*—Old as well as New Testament saints—will be in the first resurrection.

It necessarily follows that the second class, or rest of the

dead, must be *unbelievers*, who, by their wilful rejection of Christ's salvation, had lost the blessedness of the first resurrection; and whose souls had been consequently left in a disembodied state in hades until the thousand years were finished; then to come forth and appear before this judgment-seat. As there will be a *first* so there will be a *second* resurrection, a *first death* and a *second death*,—as in verse 6 it is said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the *second death hath no power*." But on these ungodly dead the second death hath all its full and dreadful power, and it is to realise this they come forth at this dread tribunal, then to be consigned to the "lake of fire," which is the "second death,"—"they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" or judgment (John v. 29). The first class of the dead and the changed ones (all believers), will have been raised a thousand years before "unto the resurrection of life." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. xxv. 46); a "resurrection of life" and a "resurrection of judgment," but manifestly with a long interval of time between them (John v. 29).

The dead at the white throne will accordingly include all the wicked who have passed from time into eternity, from the beginning of the world to its close. "Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged" (Rev. xi. 18). Death and the grave had claimed them as their prey through many successive generations, and hades had been for ages the abode of their disembodied spirits. These, and the great sea, that had likewise swallowed its millions, now pour forth in countless multitudes the dead that are in them, to appear before the judgment bar of God,—immortal bodies being given to them, that shall never decay or die, but shall endure for ever and ever; for it is not annihilation, as the doubters of God's plain Word would have us believe.

It is indeed fearful to think that these lost spirits of the dead should thus be raised and furnished with imperishable bodies, to come under the awful sentence of God's righteous wrath for their persistent impenitence and rebellion against Him; and their deliberate refusal of all His gracious offers of mercy and salvation provided by Jesus Christ. "He that

believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God *abideth* on him" (John iii. 36). "And the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. xx. 12). All the evil deeds of their lives, the blotted pages of their history, appear in these books as the handwriting against them, according to which they will be judged and condemned.

How different it will be with believers; for no such records will be kept to appear against them, because Christ has for ever taken them away by His atonement. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John v. 24). "Whose names are in the book of life" (Philip. iv. 3; Rev. xxi. 27).

Many have thought that, as the "book of life" is introduced here, some saints may die during the millennium, and appear at this judgment, and that it is therefore presented to indicate the fact of their names being written in it, so that they would not be condemned with the wicked.

But there does not appear to be any authority whatever for this supposition, inasmuch as it does not say that *any names* of those gathered to this judgment were found written in the book of life. Indeed, the inference is strongly the other way, that not a single name of all the vast host gathered to this tribunal will be found in that book. A far more reasonable explanation as to its appearance here may, I think, be found in the thought, that it is specially mentioned to show that God, in His infinite mercy and goodness, had provided a way of deliverance from the wrath to come for *all who would accept it*; and that all who accepted God's way had their names inscribed in this blessed book as those appointed to everlasting life. Indeed, the allusion to it in this connection will be a most solemn and significant feature of this judgment of the unbelievers. For while the thought of it will vindicate and exalt the love and mercy of God in providing salvation for all, and His good pleasure in thus recording the names of

those who receive it, it will greatly aggravate the guilt of the lost when they discover their awful sin and folly in having neglected so great a salvation, thus losing the blessed privilege of having their names recorded in God's book of life. It is as if the Judge should say: "Behold, this book, in which it would have been My delight to record the names of all, had they but accepted the precious gift of eternal life, provided at such infinite cost by Jesus Christ the Lord; but 'I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof. . . . For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of My counsel; they despised all My reproof: therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices'" (Prov. i. 24-31). These lost souls will then be compelled to acknowledge the righteousness of God's judgment in excluding their names from the book of life, because of their deliberate rejection of Christ.

Thus its presence (so very precious to all the saints of God) will be a strong and incriminating witness against the unbelievers on that day, seeing that their names are not written therein; whereas they *might have been*, but for their persistent rebellion against God. Consequently we see but one terrible fate awaited them all, for "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Even "death and hell (or hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev. xx. 14, 15).

[In the chart three unrolled scrolls are drawn to represent the "books" that are opened at this last judgment.]

Connected with the judgment of the great white throne—or just before it—we come to the end of the world and everything in it, for it is then to be completely destroyed: "From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (Rev. xx. 11). It is to this final event that Peter refers in his second epistle, chapter iii. 7, 10, 12, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which 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. . . . Wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

While Peter in his epistles does not apparently allude to the Rapture, or first stage of the Lord's coming (this was specially given to Paul to unfold), he distinctly refers to the second, the appearing or revelation of Christ, and the judgment connected therewith.

He had for a moment seen the King in His millennial glory on the mount of transfiguration, a scene he could never forget, and one likely to have much to do in colouring his after-life and thoughts.

To this he touchingly refers in 2 Peter i. 15-18, and concludes by emphasizing the importance of taking heed to the sure work of prophecy, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, "until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts" (verse 19). This no doubt primarily points to the prophetic word concerning the "day of the Lord," when He will appear to judge the nations, though in *principle* these words may also be applicable to believers now looking and waiting for the Rapture.

Then in chapter iii.—as quoted above—he again alludes to that "day" in a wider sense. The words, "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," are used by Paul, in 1 Thessalonians v. 2, with reference to the Lord's coming to judge the nations; and also by our Lord in Revelation xvi. 15, in allusion to the same occasion. But it would seem that Peter, while dwelling on this appearing of the Lord, is carried by the Spirit further down the stream of time, even beyond the millennial period, to the very end of the world. So that the previous judgment of the nations, and this end of all things before the white throne, appear to occur at the same time, although there is more than a thousand years between them. Another instance of the fact—previously noticed—that in Scripture we frequently find prophecies side by side, and apparently connected, but with long intervals between their fulfilment. From these instances we see that the matter of time is of secondary importance, compared with the events themselves, because in the infinite mind of God all time—

past, present, and future—is one everlasting present. For “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet. iii. 8).

In Peter’s account of the end of all things, we have a short though graphic description of the final and complete destruction of this earth: “The heavens shall pass away with a great noise.” The first heaven or firmament (Gen. i. 8), the earth’s atmosphere, will be dissolved or decomposed and pass away into space, probably by a terrible explosion, “and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Pet. iii. 10).

All this will be brought about by the direct intervention of God Himself, the omnipotent Creator and Disposer of all things, and may possibly be another stupendous and supernatural catastrophe, similar in some respects (though far more destructive) to those which it is supposed took place through all the successive ages of the pre-Adamite world before it was finally prepared as a habitation for man.

Moreover, the words, “The day of the Lord,” are used by Peter in connection with the final destruction of the earth, showing us that that day extends through long intervals of time. Taken in its widest sense, it may be said to comprise several events, beginning with the Lord’s coming forth to take the book and open its seven seals of judgment on the earth, after the removal of the Church; extending through the day of tribulation, to the judgment of the nations; and including the whole millennial period, the time of the last apostasy, the destruction of the rebels, and the judgment of the white throne, down to the end of all things.

Then this day comes to an end, and the Lord delivers up the kingdom to God, as we are told in 1 Corinthians xv. 24-28: “Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself

be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

From these remarkable words we learn, that when the Lord Jesus Christ shall have fully accomplished all the work that was committed to Him, as the righteous Judge and Ruler of this world, He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Then a new heaven and a new earth shall be created, and the eternal state will begin, as John tells us in Revelation xxi. 1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." Peter also, in the chapter from which we have just quoted, mentions this: "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. iii. 13).

In Isaiah lxv. 17 and lxvi. 22, the creation of new heavens and a new earth is likewise mentioned; but it would appear from the context that the words probably refer to the millennium, and not to the period we are now considering.

The short account we have of this new scene is contained in the first eight verses of Revelation xxi., which is a continuation of chapter xx., and ought to have been included in it, as we come to the end of the book at the eighth verse; then onward through the rest of chapter xxi., and in the first five verses of xxii. we are taken *back* to behold the glories of the New Jerusalem during the millennium.

As the new earth will doubtless be totally different from the present one, and all the conditions of physical life and existence may be entirely altered, we cannot conceive what it will be like. "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

One leading feature which we find in the account of it is, that God will not only reign over its inhabitants, but will tabernacle and dwell with them, which marks a distinct difference between the state of things then and that in the millennium. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there

be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. xxi. 3, 4).

Another remarkable fact stated is, that the New Jerusalem shall in some way be connected with this state of things, apparently coming down from heaven to be the instrument of blessing and joy to its inhabitants in happy communion with them, though not, it may be, to rule over them, as in the millennium. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. xxi. 2).

Although we are not told who the inhabitants of this new world will be, yet from the allusions to tears wiped away, no more death or sorrow, crying or pain, and the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven to be associated with it, we might be led to infer that they will be saints who once dwelt on the present earth,—possibly those of the millennial period, in immortal and glorified bodies that will never be subject to pain or sorrow or death.

What a bright and glorious picture is presented to us in this eternal state of felicity, standing out in such marked contrast to all that has been known in the sad history of the present world! As another has said: "In this eternal scene of bliss, sin and death are unknown, or remembered only as vanquished foes. There is no more wandering, for all have entered into the permanent rest that remaineth for the people of God; no more expectation, for every longing of the heart has found complete satisfaction. Distance from God is no more known, for the glorified saints are fitted for the presence of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold evil."

In concluding our remarks on these interesting epochs and dispensations of Scripture,—the stepping-stones in the great river of time,—and considering their momentous bearing upon the destinies of mankind, and the point in that long stream to which we have now come in these last days, we may well exclaim with the Apostle Peter, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (2 Pet. iii. 11.)

Moreover, when we look at what is transpiring around us, and see so many unmistakable signs of the near approach of the end of the present dispensation, it becomes us, as

Christians who are animated with the "blessed hope" of our beloved Master's speedy return to take us to Himself, to be more than ever on the watch-tower; constantly watching and waiting for His glorious presence, "for our redemption (that of the body) draweth nigh." Thus only can we with full assurance raise and repeat the midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom." We can also take up in these last moments the words of the Apostle Paul with greater emphasis than ever, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. xiii. 11),—the salvation of the *body*, by the resurrection from among the dead.

That we are on the eve of a most momentous crisis, must surely be evident to all intelligent readers of Scripture, who have their eyes open to see what is going on in these remarkable times all over the world. Even secular papers, that pay little or no attention to Scripture, are constantly referring to the extraordinary activity and restlessness that prevail in the political, the social, and the religious world;—the stone, as it were, rolling down the mountain side, visibly accelerating in its speed as it draws nearer and nearer to the bottom of the hill.

Do we not see the dark and ominous cloud of a tremendous war looming up on the national horizon, expanding portentously as it draws nearer every day? It is what we are taught in the Scriptures to expect, soon after the removal of the Church to heaven, in Revelation vi. 1-6. It may *begin*, for aught we know, even before this; but we are not taught to look for *any event* before the coming of the Lord.

Do we not see an unprecedented democratic power, under the various forms of Anarchy, Nihilism, Socialism, Communism, &c., rising up from the lower strata of society, and becoming by its defiant and insolent attitude an element of serious weakness, disturbance, and disorganisation in every nation? This is just what we are to look for, at the "time of the end," in the "MIRY CLAY" which appears in the feet and toes of the great image of Daniel ii. 41-43, and which unmistakably marks the close of the "Times of the Gentiles," and consequently the conclusion of this dispensation.

Do we not also see scepticism and infidelity coming more boldly forward than ever in its hydra-headed forms of Atheism,

Rationalism, Agnosticism, Positivism, Secularism, &c., combined with numerous subtle forms of heresy, and numbering among its advocates and teachers some of the ablest and most highly educated scholars of this nineteenth century?

This too we are taught in the Word of God to expect in the closing scenes of this age. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. iii. 3, 4). "There should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts" (Jude 18). "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, . . . ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith" (2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 7, 8).

Then, again, do we not see Spiritism in its various forms of Theosophy, Buddhism, the mystic sciences, &c., asserting itself in the most astounding and positive manner, and counting as its deluded votaries many among the higher circles of society?

This also we have been taught to expect: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2); the old Egyptian abominations of Jannes and Jambres revived again (2 Tim. iii. 8).

And, further, is not the whole religious world in a state of unprecedented commotion, like the ocean in a boisterous storm, fiercely agitated by all manner of wild theories, false doctrines, heresies, down-grades, sacerdotalism, superstition, and ritualism; while many of the professed teachers of the Christian religion—high in popular favour and largely followed—are actually undermining its foundation truths? "Even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that

bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pet. ii. 1). "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. iii. 13, and Jude 4, 11-13). "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts xx. 30).

The events that are transpiring around us are the fore-shadowings of these unclean spirits of devils, which are to go forth more energetically later on "unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. xvi. 14).

The foregoing are some of the dark shadows now being cast on the earth, telling of coming events, and pointing to still more terrible evils that shall arise in the great tribulation (after the Church is translated), and they ought to be regarded by all who consider these things as significant signs of the approaching end; when the "Stone" shall smite the great image on the feet, and destroy all these powers of evil, to establish in lieu thereof a kingdom in righteousness.

It should be distinctly remembered that I do not point to these things as signs of the coming Rapture, inasmuch as no events are spoken of in Scripture as occurring before that. But many things are foretold as happening before the second stage of the Lord's coming, and it is to these I have been directing attention. At the same time, we cannot but conclude that, if the judgment of the nations be near at hand, the Rapture must be *still nearer*, because it is to take place some few years at least before this judgment, as repeatedly pointed out in our previous remarks.

On the other hand, we may perhaps point to one incidental and cheering indication of the near approach of the great crisis,—the coming of the Lord *for* His saints,—in the fact that so many now, as compared with the number some years ago, fully believe in the personal and pre-millennial coming of the Lord, and are earnestly teaching it in their sermons, lectures, and writings. Surely we may conclude that the Spirit of God is laying this precious truth more and more on the hearts of His saints as the time draws near. For this every believer should be truly thankful, and be led to pray that God may be graciously pleased to deeply impress this

"blessed hope" on the hearts of Christians all over the world, as a preparation for that transcendent day. It is indeed cheering to hear so many joining in the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom;" and it is hoped that the perusal of this little book, through the Divine blessing, may help in some measure to add many more to that happy number.

While dwelling, as we have been, on the terrible judgments that are to fall ere long upon the ungodly and rebellious of this poor world, what joy and consolation it is for all true Christians to be able to look above and beyond the dark storms that are soon to descend upon the earth, to that bright and glorious morning (the brightest and happiest that has ever dawned) for the saints of God when they shall hear the blessed Lord calling them to Himself—in a voice that shall thrill millions of hearts—to be changed in a moment, *transformed into His own celestial image, and caught up to meet Him in the skies, so to be for ever in His glorious presence!* No tongue or pen could ever describe the bliss and glory of that bright day.

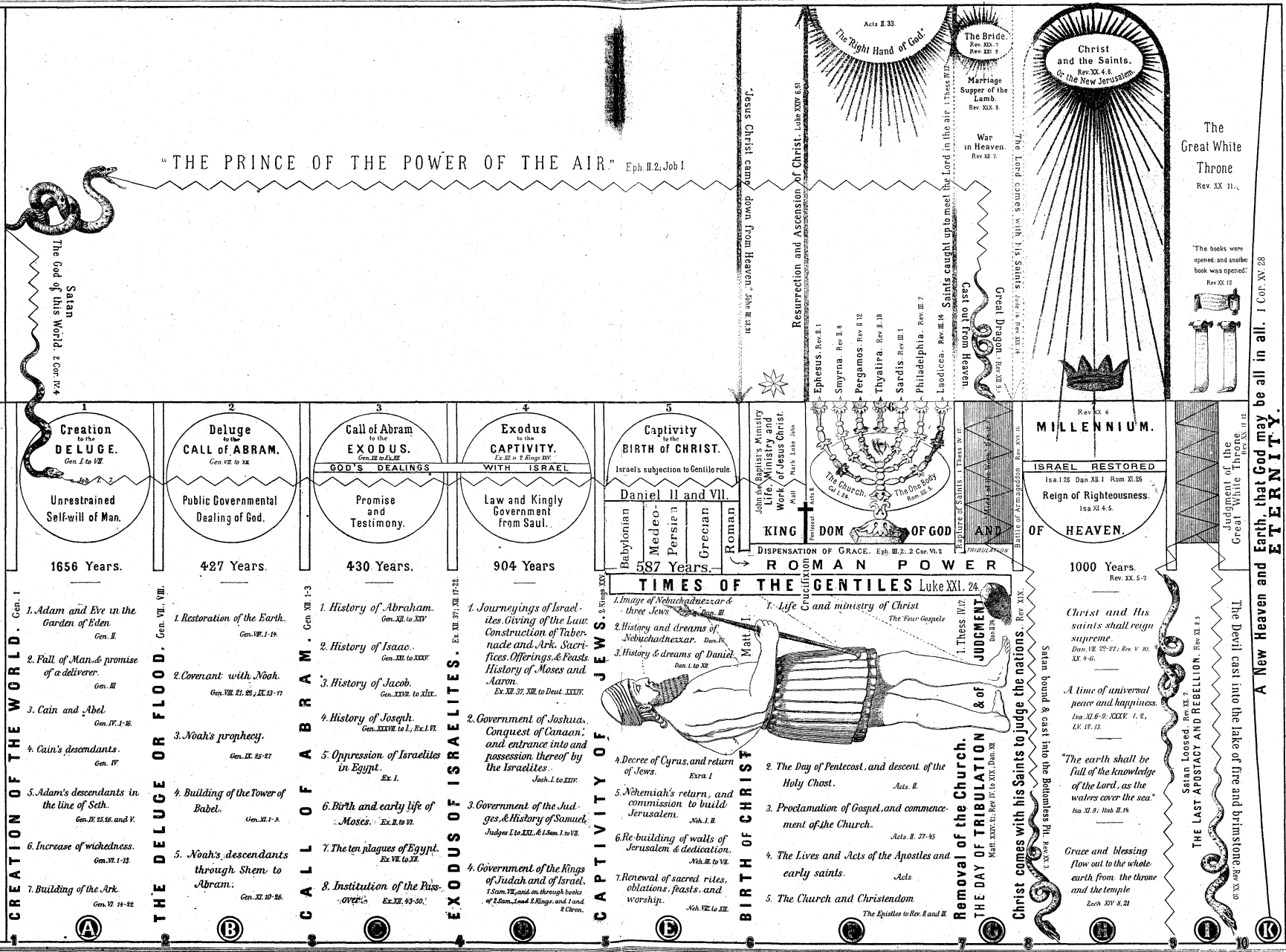
In view of all this, we ought to be found in the attitude of daily and hourly waiting and watching for our beloved Master's return, ever bearing in mind His own loving words on the eve of His departure from these earthly scenes, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord. . . . Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching" (John xiv. 3; Mark xiii. 33-37; Luke xii. 35, 36, 37).

If our hearts are thus truly in the current of His gracious thoughts, we shall be ready—as all believers ought to be—to respond to His last words in the book of Revelation, "Surely I come quickly," "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

# THE EPOCHS AND DISPENSATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

The HEAVEN or HEAVENLIES.

THE EARTH.



# SEVENTY WEEKS

DANIEL IX. 24-27.

Are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city,

Times of the Gentiles. Kingdoms.	PERSIAN.	GRECIAN.	ROMAN.	Time.
	The twentieth year of <b>Artaxerxes.</b> NEHEMIAH ii. 1	7	49	Going forth of the command- ment to restore Jerusalem. B.C. 454
	Wars of Maccabees.	62	434	The building of Jerusalem
	After threescore & two weeks			shall Messiah be cut off. A.D. 29
	And the people of the prince that	A long INTERVAL or undefined period of time.		shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. LUKE xxi. 20-24. 483
	And he (the Roman prince) shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.	1	7	In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the obla- tion to cease.
	<b>CREAT TRIBULATION.</b>			Seven Years

## JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS.

Matt. xxv.; Rev. xix.

### NOTES.

1. The 70 weeks (shewn by the red band in centre) are divided into three periods; viz.,  
7+62+1=70 weeks, which are weeks of years;  
thus: 49+434+7=490 years; and these years extend prophetically from the command to restore Jerusalem by Artaxerxes in the 20th year of his reign (Neh. ii.) to the Millennium.

2. **FIRST PERIOD.**  
7 weeks or 49 years. The building of Jerusalem.

**SECOND PERIOD.**  
62 weeks or 434 years. From building to Messiah cut off.

An undefined Interval.

**THIRD PERIOD.**  
1 week or 7 years. Covenant of prince that shall come.

70

490

To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

## MILLENNIUM.

3. The long interval after Christ's crucifixion is the Christian dispensation, which still continues, and will continue until Christ comes to take up the Church to heaven.

4. When the last week, or 7 years, is to commence Scripture does not definitely say; but it will probably be soon after the Church is removed, and then God will resume His direct dealings with Israel as a nation.

These 7 years will be the most terrible time of tribulation that the world has ever known; while the last half (or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years) will be the "Great Tribulation" (Matt. xxiv. 21) the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" (Jer. xxx. 7), when the (Roman) prince shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and set up the abomination of desolation in the holy place.

5. The greater part of the Book of Revelation is taken up with the events of these notable years, when the judgments of the Seals, Trumpets, and Vials will be executed; i.e., from Chap. vi. to Chap. xix. inclusive.

# PALESTINE.

Ezek. 47 & 48

ENGLISH MILES  
5 10 20 30

