

THE EASTERN QUESTION:

OR WHAT

THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT COMING EVENTS.

THE great political problem of the day is the solution of the Eastern difficulty, one which for many years has been puzzling the wisest and most sagacious politicians and statesmen in Europe. As yet, however, its ultimate settlement is as far off as ever. All eyes are anxiously directed to the east. What will happen next? is the eager question of many. Events happen so rapidly, and follow each other in such quick succession in these eastern lands that men are almost prepared for anything. A very general feeling of disquiet is abroad. That we are on the eve of great political and other changes of importance is clear to all reflecting persons.

What is coming? Who is coming? is pressed in fear on the hearts of thousands in these and other lands. A feeling of dread and insecurity seem to me to be more widely spread abroad than we are generally aware of. Are we not living in the period lying between the

sounding of the midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom, go ye out to meet him" (Matt. xxv.), and the arrival of the Bridegroom? This period is doubly characterised; *first*, by a general awakening on the part of the sleeping Church: "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps;" *second*, by a feeling of insecurity on the part of the foolish virgins, *i.e.*, those who had not (*oil*) the Holy Spirit, the seal of present salvation and earnest of glory to come (Eph. i. 13-14).

Our blessing, as Christians, is independent of times and circumstances, but because we are wondrously blest in Christ, who is Head and Centre, as man, of God's new creation, we can, in peace calmly survey the state of things around us; yea, and profit thereby. But from all the disquiet abroad, I pray the Lord to preserve His own, and that a solemn consideration of the coming future may be pressed in its present and practical value upon our hearts and lives (2 Peter i. 19). "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and *so much the more as ye SEE the day approaching*" (Heb. x. 24-25). May the Lord's beloved people hear His voice, "Be *still* and *know* that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Ps. xlv. 10).

I greatly fear for the soul that is occupied with "Questions," be they religious, moral, or political. Moreover, a Christian dabbling in politics is, to say the least of it, utterly false to his "heavenly calling." "For our conversation (*country*—see Alford) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. iii. 20). The cross has impressed the stamp of death on everything beneath the sun. Solemn lesson! May we lay it to heart. But, on the other hand, indifference to the doings of our God is to be deplored. That is a fine word that is written of the children of Issachar: "They had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chron. xii. 32). Prophetic truth, when studied in God's presence, leads to deep and deepening seriousness of spirit. It enables one also to estimate at their true value, passing events which bulk so largely in the minds and thoughts of the mass, and assumes undue importance in the souls even of God's people. I cannot conceive of anything more thoroughly selfish than a Christian heart caring only for those portions of divine truth which bear directly upon individual blessing; after all its selfishness which outwits itself, for God has bound up the believer's blessing with the glory of Christ. There are earthly glories as well as heavenly ones, all linked

up with God's beloved Son. He is the "Prince of the kings of the earth," and in that *very character* presented to the affections of the Church (Rev. i. 5). Well, the East will be the scene, mainly, where that part of His earthly glory will be manifested.

Let us turn, then, dear Christian reader, from the daily and oftentimes unreliable records of events, to the blessed pages of the Word of God, which affords full, positive, and divine instruction upon the great Eastern Question.

The complete dissolution of the Turkish Empire may be regarded as a certain though still future event. All the efforts of diplomacy and war must signally fail in preserving for any length of time the integrity of the Mohammedan Empire. Apart altogether from the sure signs of decay—of her speedy downfall, in her corrupt and vitiated institutions, in her cruel persecutions of her Christian subjects, in the maladministration of her provinces, in the corruption of her Governors and Judges, in the bribery and extortion practised in every department of the state, in the bankrupt condition of the country spite of British aid and treasure, and in the general discontent amongst her educated and other classes—the dismemberment of Turkey is absolutely certain to the student of the Prophetic Word.

Let us transport ourselves to Palestine and make our stand-point Jerusalem—which *was*, is *not*, but *will soon be* God's earthly centre. In deep reverence of spirit let us turn to our Bibles, noting a few points in the great book of Gentile prophecy—Daniel, chap. xi. The first 35 verses of that chapter have had a past and typical fulfilment in the history of the Syrian and Egyptian kingdoms created on the break-up of the Grecian Empire—the “leopard” of chap. vii. 6, and the “brass” part of the great image, chap. ii. 39. A simple reference to our atlas will establish the identity of the kings of the north and of the south with the kingdoms founded by Alexander's successors in these parts, and whose doings are here so circumstantially and graphically detailed ; they lie due north and south of Palestine. The territory formerly occupied by these kings, as also Canaan itself, may be regarded as at present under Turkish rule or sovereignty ; Egypt or the south only nominally so. Now let us return to our chapter, carefully comparing verse 40 with verse 1 of chap. xii. Does not that expression, “the time of the *end*,” carry us forward to a point not yet reached—to that interesting moment when Michael—the prince of power—will act on behalf of Israel, and when the full blessing and deliverance of Daniel's people will be enjoyed at the close of the

great tribulation—"the time of Jacob's trouble?" The dismemberment then of the Turkish power, and the consequent establishment of independent kingdoms north and south of Immanuel's land, must not be regarded as probabilities contingent on the chances of war, but are certain although as yet future events.

Now, I apprehend that from verse 36 to the end of the chapter you have the *future* history of these kingdoms to be revived in connection with Judah, then returned to her land. This is an important point, since, if true, it fixes with precision and definiteness past fulfilment from future. A few remarks upon this may assist the reader. Chapters x., xi., and xii. constitute but one vision, and the concluding one of the Book. Moreover, the vision in its full bearing refers to the latter days of Daniel's people—the Jews (chap. x. 14). But what stamps with certainty the futurity of the events narrated in these chapters is, that the time of trial and the deliverance of Judah (chap. xii.) is referred to by our Lord in His great prophetic discourse (Matt. xxiv., xxv.) as *then future*, the deliverance being effected by the personal coming of the Son of Man. Compare the language of Dan. xii. 1 with Matt. xxiv. 21; also verse 11 of the Prophet with verse 15 of the Evangelist. Now, it is to be noted in our chapter, that the Holy land is

the great subject of contention between the kings of the north and of the south ; it *was* so, and soon it *will be*. As yet little attention is being given to Jerusalem, soon to arise from among the dust, and be a "crown of glory" amongst the nations, but ere long all eyes will be turned to Palestine, and exclusive attention directed to that city over which the Saviour wept, and where His precious blood was shed.

I conceive, therefore, that the first great effect of an eastern war, either now or again (for come it will), will be the establishment of the kingdoms I have named ; Canaan also, and the consequent return of the Jews. Then the land which the Lord God careth for, on which His eyes rest "perpetually," will become all important, and the possession of it, the object of ambition by the surrounding powers. The first 35 verses have had an incomplete fulfilment, for at "the time of the *end* shall be the vision." The interesting and minute history of the Ptolemies (south), and the Seleucidæ (north), is given in connection with Palestine and her people. Their wars, their friendships, their family alliances, their state policy, are a simple matter of history, and are circumstantially related *here*, as in profane history ; only this is prophetic ; God's blessed Word records what will *be* ; history notes what has *been*. But, like all prophecy, the doings of

these kings are typical of what will transpire at the close of the age. The culminating point of all prophecy is the Lord's second return from heaven, with all His saints, to reign. Now, from verse 36 to the end of the chapter, we leave what is past and typical for what is distinctly future. Hence from that verse (36), history cannot furnish a fulfilment; the events narrated are not yet written in its pages. Now, in this second part of our chapter, we read of three kings; in the former part, of two only; either one or other possessing the Holy land. What, then, is the clear conclusion? Simply, that from the time that Rome, the "fourth beast dreadful and terrible" of chap. vii. 7, and the "iron" and "clay" of the image of chap ii. 33, assumed the mastery of the world, annexing as part of its dominions the kingdoms of Syria, Egypt, and Judea, a long interval of nigh 2000 years has taken place, during which there is no tracing of the world's history in the sacred pages.

How is this interesting interval spoken of and regarded in Scripture? It is known in the Epistles as the day of grace—of God's long-suffering towards a guilty world. It is the time during which God is bearing testimony to His risen and glorified Son, and in course of which He is gathering by His Spirit, His Grace, and His Word, a people *out of*

the world—co-heirs with His beloved Son. The close of this period is unrevealed; it has nothing to say to “times and seasons.” The translation of the saints to the meeting in the “air” (1 Thess. iv. 17) with their adorable Lord and Saviour may take place at any moment, and thus close God’s present actings in grace; then the course of earthly dealing will be resumed, and Judah become as before, all-important in taking up the broken threads of the world’s history.

You will observe that a person styled “the king” is abruptly introduced into the history in verse 36, and further that he is the object of attack both by the northern and southern kings (verse 40). Who is this personage? That he is of Jewish extraction is evident from verse 37; “neither shall he regard the God of his fathers”—fitting language as expressive of Jewish traditional religion; Gentiles are spoken of as being “*without* God in the world” (Eph. ii. 12). And, it is added, “nor the desire of women,” that is the Messiah, the object of desire by godly women of old. This king then is the “Antichrist”—a title only found in John’s epistles, and used as the expression of his religious or rather anti-religious character. “The king” is his designation in connection with the people and land of Judea. We have thus three kings distinctly pointed out. (1.) The King of the North. (2.)

The King of the South. (3.) "The King" who reigns *in* Jerusalem.

The King of the North more generally termed in the Jewish prophets "The Assyrian" (Isa. x. 24; xiv. 25; Micah v. 5), appears to be the political enemy of restored Judah and the leader of the confederated nations north and east of the Holy land; "Come," say they, "and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (Ps. lxxxiii. 4). We talk much of Antichrist because, I suppose, of his connection with apostate Christendom at the close of the age; but the Prophets say little of him compared to what they do of "The Assyrian"—the cruel oppressor and determined enemy of Israel in the closing days. "The king" or Antichrist is *in* the land accepted by the mass of the people according to the Lord's prediction (John v. 43) "if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." "The Assyrian" or northern king, on the contrary, comes *against* the land and people. Chap. viii., of our Prophet Daniel, furnishes us with further particulars respecting this power—the first who directly meddled with Israel, and her last enemy to come. You will never be clear as to the prophetic future, unless you very clearly distinguish "the little horn" of chap. vii., from "the little horn" of

chap. viii. They are totally distinct powers; the former commanding in the *West*; and the latter *North* and *East*, but both in connection with Judah. The "horn" of chap. vii. heads the revived Roman empire, makes an alliance with the apostate nation (chap. ix. 27) while persecuting the God-fearing remnant; whereas the "horn" of chap. viii., arising out of the fragments of Alexander's empire, heads the confederated nations and peoples outside the limits of the Roman earth, having the destruction of the people (Israel) and possession of the land (Canaan) as their objects. The geographical position of this "little horn"—whom we regard as identical with "the King of the North" and "The Assyrian"—may be gathered from verse 9, chap. viii. He occupies the territory north of Palestine, and pushes his conquests south, east, and toward "the pleasant land" (Judea) which he invades, overrunning the whole country, destroying the people, as also their ecclesiastical and civil rulers (verses 10, 24). Fully allowing for a past and partial fulfilment in the awful deeds of cruelty and impiety attributed in history to Antiochus Epiphanes, who actually contemplated the destruction of the whole nation, the full accomplishment of this prophetic chapter must be sought for at the end of the age (verse 19 with chap. x. of Isaiah).

This fierce and crafty enemy of the Jews is not an independent potentate; "his power shall be mighty, but *not by his own power*" (verse 24); that is, his power is a delegated one. Who will be his chief? To whom does he owe his power? Ezekiel, chapters xxxviii. and xxxix., answers our questions, besides adding many particulars of real and abiding interest. Read especially verses 8, 11, 12, 14-16 of chap. xxxviii., and answer—Could any save a deeply-prejudiced mind entertain the slightest doubt as to the *time* when these nations will gather against Israel? Has Immanuel's land been recovered from the sword of her oppressors? Are not her streets still trod by the haughty eastern Gentile, and her people yet scattered amongst the nations? Are not her mountains laid waste, and her cities in ruins? But those two chapters present the reversal of all this. How the Jews are to be restored by the help of a certain commercial nation, and then left a prey to the Gentiles, is told us within the brief compass of seven verses—Isaiah xviii.; while the return of Israel—or the ten tribes—is the subject of chap. xx. of Ezekiel.

The Prophet of visions tells us of many peoples and nations (Persia, &c.) coming down "like a cloud to cover the land." The unwall'd towns and villages of Judea will be a tempting bait to the neighbouring nations, while

the world's wealth—more markedly *then* than even now—will be centralised in the Jew, and thus awaken the cupidity of the powers (chap. xxxviii. 10-13). Alas! little do they dream that the Judean mountains will become their graves, and that *their* wealth will swell the treasures gathered in Immanuel's land (chap. xxxix). The chosen leader of this expedition against Israel is Gog. But who is Gog? The answer is at hand. The reference is to the vast and growing power of Russia—the outcome of the warlike Slavonic tribes of ancient origin, descended from Japheth, eldest son of Noah (Gen. x. 2). The two capitals of European and Asiatic Russia are named in the first verses of the two chapters. "Meshech" (Moscow), formerly capital city and seat of government of European Russia, and "Tubal" (Tobolsk), chief city of Siberia, are not only thus early designated, but Russia itself is named, and that, too, centuries before she was known as such. The words in the beginning of our chapters "the chief Prince of Meshech and Tubal"—should read, "Prince of *Rosh*, Meshech, and Tubal." Such is the Greek version of the Old Testament, so largely quoted from, and referred to, by our Lord and the New Testament writers. Gog is a symbolic term for the head of all the Russias; Magog, also symbolic, is his land. Now let us read verse 17 of chap. xxxviii.,

“Thus saith the Lord God : Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by My servants the Prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them ?” This being said of Gog, emperor of all the Russias, has led many to suppose that Gog and the Assyrian are one. I think, however, that Daniel viii. 24 decides that point. The northern king of fierce countenance acts as the vicegerent of another and more powerful chief. The separate identity of Gog, and the Assyrian—or King of the North—is to me plain enough,—they are closely allied, however. The relation of these powers to each other is similar to that which exists between the “beast” of Rev. xiii. (verses 1-7), namely, the Roman power, and Antichrist (verses 11-17). The King of the North, or Assyrian, is upheld by the power of Gog (Russia); while Antichrist rules in the power of the Latin empire. What is said by the Prophet of the captivity to Gog is attributed by the Prophets of Israel to the Assyrian. This need present no difficulty, because the latter acts in the power of the former. Take one passage from the most comprehensive of the Prophets (Isaiah x. 5-34), as showing *who* God would bring against His guilty and apostate people, as a scourge in His hand : “O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger. I will send him against an hypo-

critical nation, and against the people of My, wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." This treading down of the Jewish people we have attributed to "the little horn" of Dan. viii., the same personage as the Assyrian. There will be several invasions of Judea under the leadership of the Assyrian; but the last attack, conducted on a large scale, and by Gog in person, is the one referred to by Ezekiel, and which will take place when the Lord is actually reigning with His risen and glorified saints over the earth. The utter defeat of this mighty expedition against Judea; the awful destruction of the "mighty army"; the burning of the weapons of war for seven years—so vast the quantity of the warlike implements—Jehovah's hand in judgment reaching Magog (Russia), the centre of this terrible outburst of hate against Israel, as also the near and distant isles; the effect of these awful judgments and marked deliverance of Israel, upon the heathen, and upon His (Jehovah's) people, are powerfully told us in these chapters.

I take it, then, that Russia is destined to become master in Asia. Already her vast empire stretches over half of Europe and nigh the whole of northern Asia. Her dominions compose about a seventh of the habit-

able earth. It is very well known that the Russian policy is one of steady aggression, not in Europe but in Asia, and that she has long coveted sole mastery in the east. That she will succeed in her designs, and yet hold India in her grasp, and commanding the powers north of Palestine (the Lebanon mountains), and east (the Euphrates) is to me plain enough.

Let us now briefly glance at the results of the collapse of the Turkish empire—results surely foretold in the Word of God. The blessed Lord is calling His “friends” around Himself, making known to us “*all things*” that He has heard of His Father (John xv. 15). At any moment of time, *unrevealed* in the Scriptures of truth, and quite independent of political changes in the east, or elsewhere, the translation of the saints to meet the Lord in the “air” may take place. My reader, if you are a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed One who suffered may come *now* and fetch you to Himself. Would you be glad to see Him? Are your loins girded, your lamp trimmed, and your light burning? Canaan then will come into prominence. The complete independence of Egypt will be secured, and a kingdom equally distinct, established by Russian power and influence, will occupy the territory north of Palestine. The Roman empire

will be revived in a ten-kingdom form (Daniel vii.; Rev. xiii., xvii). The Antichrist will be settled as a king *in* Jerusalem (Dan. xi. 36) and will act in concert with the head of the fourth empire (Rev. xiii. 12-17). The Jews will have been restored to their land through the aid of a sea-faring nation, and for political purposes (Isa. xviii). When restored they will accept the false Messiah as their king, and through their civil and religious leaders, make a seven years' covenant with the Roman chief of the empire (Dan. ix. 27; Isa. xxviii. 14, 15). Their unholy compact will not stand, for spite of the help and protection afforded by the western powers, God will bring against His deeply guilty and apostate people the Assyrian who will be as a rod in Jehovah's hand in the scourging of the people; at the close of the Lord's indignation against Israel a remnant will have learned to "stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, *in truth*" (Isa. x. 20). Further, the Roman Prince will break the league formed with the people which guaranteed safety from their bitter enemy—the King of the North or Assyrian—(Isa. xxviii. 15), and gave them a seven years' freedom and quietness to worship and sacrifice to the God of their Fathers (Dan. ix. 27). Antichrist, aided by his chief, the head of the revived empire, will force idolatry upon Christendom (Rev. xiii.), and on the people of Judea (Dan. xi. 36-39).

The attempt to connect the Temple with idol worship in the midst of Daniel's *future* and unfulfilled week of seven years, and to suspend the daily and other sacrifices (Dan. ix. 27), is resisted by the God-fearing remnant of Judah, whose experiences, prayers, songs, confessions and trials, are detailed, at length especially in the Psalms, and also in the Prophets. The refusal of this remnant to worship "the beast" (Rev. xiii. 15), lets loose the rage and malice of Antichrist against these holy sufferers. Idolatry, or Death is the awful alternative. Many, forewarned by the Saviour will flee when they "shall see the abomination (idol) of desolation . . . stand in the holy place;" that is when a certain idol (for such is the meaning of abomination as used in Scripture, 1 Kings, xi. 5-7) is set up in a prominent part of the Temple, it is to be regarded as a signal for instant flight (Matt. xxiv. 15-20, with Dan. xii. 11).

Thus the Jews will be doubly oppressed; first, by the Antichrist in the land, and second, by the Assyrian who will come against them, enter their palaces, tread down the people as mire in the streets; capture Jerusalem, leading many into captivity, and committing the most frightful atrocities upon the inhabitants. This double oppression will continue three years and a-half, at the close of which the Lord Jesus Christ will

descend from heaven with all His saints, stand upon Mount Olivet—whose geographical position is so accurately described, that it cannot but be taken as a literal statement—and deliver His people. This second besieging of Jerusalem (Zech. xiv.) will not be successful as was the first. The personal intervention of Christ on behalf of His earthly people, at the critical moment, when they are about to fall a prey to their enemies, is marked by signs of a striking and miraculous character. The Mount of Olives will cleave in two—thus a great gap or valley will be formed, into which the remnant at least will flee for safety. The Lord will Himself thus close the great Eastern Question in a baptism of blood, Judah assisting in the work (verse 14). The nations of the west are not, I conceive, directly involved in this awful struggle at Jerusalem. The Emperor of the west, with his ten vassal kings will be rather the friend and would-be protector of restored Judah, politically. The peoples composing the Roman earth—if not those of a wider area—will express their hatred to Christ personally. A solemn future and terrible end are set before these lands of Christendom (Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 11-21). The Gentiles, north and east from Palestine are those outside the Roman empire, and are the nations gathered against Jerusalem (Zech. xii., xiv). The

doom of the nations is peculiar, being regulated according to their guilt—thus the north and eastern peoples are destroyed in a special manner: Israel assisting in the work of judgment. Greece also will take part in the coming struggle, but will be most thoroughly vanquished by the sons of Zion (Zech. ix. 13). The apostate nations of the west will rise against the Lamb and His *heavenly* saints, and accordingly they have a terrible doom meted out to them. The three chief agents of Satan's power and wickedness are cast into the lake of fire. (1.) The Beast, head of the apostate civil power—under whose representative Christ was crucified—the fourth or Latin empire; (2.) "The false prophet," "Antichrist," "Man of sin," the second beast of Rev. xiii. 11. These two, heading the civil and ecclesiastical apostasies, and acting in concert, are united in the same doom: "these *both* were cast *alive* into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. xix. 20); (3.) The Assyrian, Israel's cruel enemy in the coming days (Isa. xxx. 31-33).

The enemies of Israel, spared from judgment, will be converted and employed as missionaries amongst the near and distant heathen; "they shall declare My glory among the heathen," and instead of expressed hatred to the Israelite any more, theirs will be the willing service of love in gathering to Judea those left

in distant countries (Isa. lxvi., verses 19-21). The long-standing enmity between north and south will also be completely removed. There shall be an highway from Egypt through Canaan to Assyria trod in peace and quietness by the traveller. The Egyptians and Assyrians who most cordially detested each other and anciently strove for the mastery of the world, at the expense of the other's ruin, will unite in happy service, and bury for ever their mutual distrust and hatred. God will unite them in blessing with His earthly people, saying, "Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance" (Isa. xix. 23-25). Egypt comes in for special notice, now "the basest of kingdoms," and the once haughty power who so sorely oppressed Israel at the commencement of her history. That ancient kingdom will yet become the scene of civil commotion; an intestine war will drain the country of its strength. God will give the people a king in retributive justice for their cruel treatment of His people in ancient times; another Pharaoh will be raised up and rule the country and people with rigour and cruelty. Their favourite river—the only means of vegetation to the country will be dried up and general desolation ensue. The strength and wisdom of her counsellors and people will utterly fail. But God

never forgets what is done to His Beloved Son. Egypt opened her friendly shores and received the child Jesus when His own people sought His life (Matt. ii. 13-15). Egypt knew not what she did, neither did Moses when he identified himself with the afflicted Hebrews ; but which centuries afterwards the Holy Ghost writes down as "the reproach of Christ" (Heb. xi. 26). Egypt then will share very specially in the blessing of millennial days—on the ground of sovereign grace *alone*—the basis surely of all blessing to man—but first she must learn the lesson that "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." The oppressor is in turn oppressed. In their deep affliction the Egyptians will "cry to the Lord because of the oppressors, and He shall send them a Saviour and a Great One, and He shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation ; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord and perform it. And the Lord shall smite Egypt ; He shall smite and heal it, and they shall return even to the Lord, and He shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them." (Isa. xix.) "My people," will be the blessed expression of favour into which the Egyptians will be called in the coming days of glory on earth.

Palestine, too, will be considerably enlarged, according to the limits assigned to Abram (Gen. xv. 18); stretching from the Nile on the west to the head of the Persian Gulf where the Euphrates empties itself on the east; it will necessarily embrace those parts of Africa and Asia between these points. Other changes of a physical and geographical character will take place. The nations may squabble about their commercial interests in the Suez Canal, but God has decreed the utter destruction of the tongue of the Egyptian Sea (Isa. xi. 15); thus, the link formed by man, through the desert, connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean will be destroyed. The seven streams of the Nile will also be smitten by the hand of judgment (Isa. xi. 15-16). However could the remnants of His people traverse their land "*in shoes*" (see margin) save by the accomplishment of these things? Other events of a like nature will take place, such as the drying up of the Euphrates—which will be literally accomplished—so as to facilitate the march of armies into Canaan. That famous river forming the eastern boundary of the Roman conquests, and the eastern limit of Palestine, 1500 miles long, must greatly hinder the gathering of the nations to the great battle of Armageddon. But God will remove the barrier, "that the way of the kings *from* the east

might be prepared" (Rev. xvi. 12). In and about Judea God will gather the nations and kingdoms, to pour upon them His indignation and fierce anger (Zeph. iii. 8).

We do not venture to predict the issue of the present events now transpiring in the East. We are content to wait calmly upon God for the accomplishment of His blessed word. "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." May our hearts be kept quiet while they wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ—our blessed hope, and one altogether independent of prophetic and other events. The blessed reign of our Lord for one thousand years over the earth (Rev. xx. 4-6) is near at hand. Those glorious times foretold by prophets, and sung and harped by bards, groaned for by creation, and yearned after by Israel are coming. *They are nigh at hand.* Our hope, however, is Jesus Himself.

Blessed Lord! prepare Thy Saints to meet Thee in the air.

W. S.

NOTE.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL.

SOMETIME ago, in travelling, I got into conversation with an intelligent Roman Catholic Priest. He was evidently a man of observation and culture. Soon the conversation turned upon the state of the Jews in foreign lands, and I asked my friend, who had travelled extensively, if he could account for the amount of unbelief so prevalent amongst that people.

"Oh yes," he said, "I can. Many of the Jews treat their own scriptures with contempt, and are practically Atheists or Deists, because they believe that the God of their fathers has failed them—has been untrue to His word."

"Indeed!" I answered, greatly surprised; "how do they make that out?"

"Well," he replied, "they speak of a prophecy in Daniel of seventy weeks, at the close of which their Messiah would come, and bring in a period of blessing and glory for them—delivering them, and establishing them in their own land as the head amongst the nations; now the *70 weeks of years have run out long since*, and their blessing is as far off as ever. Hence, they doubt their own scriptures; and, further, say their fathers' God has failed them."

"What a striking confirmation of God's word," I replied, for "even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart."

The truth is, that the mass of Jews and Christians are alike in the reading and understanding of this celebrated prophecy. The mistake lies in not perceiving that the last or 70th week is yet *future*, and that a long interval of time—one which has lasted for nigh 2000 years—occurs between the close of the 69th week and the opening of the 70th. I do not say this to save, if possible, the credit of the word of God; it needs not the rude hand of men to prop up its foundations or help to establish its imperishable and everlasting truths; nor is it an *attempt* to get out of a difficulty, but the prophecy itself clearly teaches a gap or interval between the last two weeks.

We will transcribe the words of the prophecy in full (Daniel ix. 24-27).

"Seventy weeks are determined upon *thy* people (the *Jews*) and upon *thy* holy city (*Jerusalem*) 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. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; (that was the work of the Romans under Titus), and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war

desolations are determined. And he (the Roman Prince *to come*) shall confirm the ("a" covenant with many ("*the many*" that is the mass of the people) for one week (*seven* years): and in the midst of the week he (the Roman Prince) shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations (idolatry) he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

Who does this prophecy refer to—to Christians or Jews? To the latter undoubtedly. Daniel's people and city, that is the Jews and Jerusalem, are the subjects of the prophecy.

Are the weeks periods of days or years? All competent Hebraists, I believe, hold that the "week" simply denotes "seven"—of days, years, or periods, must be learned from the context; the word itself does not determine. Says the learned Tregelles, "I retain the word 'week' for convenience sake, and not as implying seven days to be the import of the Hebrew word." That they are weeks of years is, I think, evident on the surface of the prophecy. But now, another important inquiry meets us. When did the 70 weeks or 490 years commence? We are informed that it was "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build *Jerusalem*." Now, in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we meet with several decrees, but only *one* in reference to the building of Jerusalem; the others refer to the *Temple*. This commandment or decree will be found recorded in the last historical book of the Old Testament—Nehemiah, chapter ii.

The whole period is divided into three parts :—(1) Seven weeks or 49 years ; (2) Sixty-two weeks or 434 years ; (3) One week or seven years. Why are they thus divided ? Because we have three great events connected with these periods. The rebuilding of the city occupied 49 years ; then, *from* the time that the city was built till the coming of Messiah, was 434 years ; or, counting both periods *from* the commencement of the prophecy (Neh. ii.) a time of 483 years ; then follows, to complete the whole number—seven years, in which the Prince of the Roman people will be in league with the unbelieving and apostate part of the nation. Observe, very carefully, that “*after*” the building of the city, and “*after*” Messiah had come—a period of 483 years—certain events come in *before* the 70th week runs its course. What are these events ? They are plainly noted in verse 26 ; Messiah cut off ; Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans, and a time of desolation “determined” upon the city and people. The course then of the 70 weeks was interrupted by certain events happening between the 69th and the 70th. The whole ran on consecutively till the 69th, then comes a break, in which amongst other things a lengthened period of desolation is determined upon Judea. During this long desolation upon God’s ancient people, the Church is being called out. Israel has been judicially set aside as God’s witness on the earth, and the Gentile now called in (Rom. xi.) When the Church is fully gathered, Christ will come from heaven and take

His bride, first to His Father's house, afterwards to His kingdom and glory. Thus the long interval between these weeks is doubly characterised (1.) by Jerusalem's desolation *still going on*; (2.) by the calling out of the Church, also *going on*. When the interval closes, the 70th week, or closing seven years will commence with the Prince—whose people, the Romans, destroyed Jerusalem in the year 70—making a league with the apostate nation then restored to their land owning the Antichrist as their prophet and king. The relation of this future week to the revived Roman empire in its ten-kingdom form, and to Christendom and Judaism is unfolded in chapters vi.-xix. of the Apocalypse.

As to days signifying years in the prophetic Scriptures, I am convinced that such is not the case. In general, the days of Daniel and of the Revelation must be understood literally. Should my reader desire fuller light upon this point, I would counsel him to procure "Elements of Prophecy,"* by W. Kelly, where the matter is discussed at length. Tregelles, in his "Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel," has a lengthy note disproving the year-day theory. Mr. Kelly's work, however, is the one we would specially commend to the reader.

* Morrish : Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row, London.

By W. S.

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