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AIDS
TO
PROPHETIC INQUIRY.

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A I D S

TO

PROPHETIC ENQUIRY.

BY

B. W. NEWTON.

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REMARKS ON THE PROPHETIC STATEMENTS OF MR. FLEMING.

UPWARDS of twenty years have now passed since circumstances, into the special character of which it is not necessary to enter, awakened among many, both in this country and abroad, an anxious desire to understand the prophetic parts of Scripture. It resulted in not a few being thoroughly and abidingly convinced, that whilst the Scriptures teem with predictions of blessing both to Israel and to the nations, previous to the dissolution of the present heavens and earth, yet that the period in which these promised blessings are to be dispensed is one materially different from that in which the Church of God is now suffering ; and that the great event which is to close this present dispensation and introduce the promised age of blessing is the appearing in glory of the great God our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

I feel assured that I shall carry with me the feelings of every heart that has learned to expect the personal return of the Lord Jesus, when I say that they esteem it now as one of the most precious of the truths of God—at once the object of their hope and the subject of their testimony ; and I shall not in vain ask them to discountenance the circulation of any writings that tend to destroy the expectation of the Lord's return, or to throw any veil over the interpretation of those parts of Scripture that are connected therewith.

It grieves me to be obliged to number among such writings the work of Mr. Fleming, lately republished

and now extensively circulated. We almost instinctively feel a reverence for those who (though they may have been mistaken) have written and acted in the fear of God. This, however, must not deter us from openly exposing their errors, being persuaded of this, that they themselves, if they could now speak, would not ask that any thing they have said or done contrary to Christ and his truth should be spared. Their earnest desire would be that every thing which through them may be acting prejudicially on the Church of God, might be frustrated in its results. And that must be prejudicial to the Church of God which either subverts any of the great substantive facts that He has revealed, or which presents those facts in different order and connexion from that in which He has been pleased to set them in his word.

To those then who expect the pre-millennial advent of the Lord Jesus (and to such principally I now write) it is sufficient to say that the Book we are considering denies that Advent to be personal. On this ground only I might ask that its claim should be rejected, for it claims to be regarded as a true exposition of the prophetic testimonies of God. *As such* it must utterly be rejected. All who have learned to wait for God's Son from heaven, will feel too distinctly the solemn force of the concluding part of the nineteenth of Revelation, to admit of its being explained away on the ground of symbols or figurative language, or on any other ground. To such the quotation of the passage which I cite at the foot of this page would be sufficient to secure their condemnation of the work.*

* "Seeing I have but slightly touched upon the millenium or the thousand years reign of the saints on earth, I shall desire you to think a little further on this, as the greatest event that is to happen before the end of the world. I dare not indeed expatiate upon this vast subject; only I shall suggest a few things concerning it. The first is, that this is to begin immediately after the total and final destruction of Rome papal, in or about

There are, however, a few other points to which I would desire briefly to direct their attention.

One of the great objects of God in giving enlarged acquaintance with the Scripture, especially prophetic Scripture, is to bring into his Church a more distinct recognition of the principles which throughout this dispensation should have characterised his people, and marked them as distinct both from Israel and from the nations. The leading nations of the earth, up to the very end of the present dispensation, are symbolized in the Scripture by fierce beasts which know not Christ nor subjection to his laws,—and Israel is left to grope in judicial blindness and sin; but in contrast with both, the people of God stand peculiar in their principles and testimonies, commanded indeed to fight, but to fight only with spiritual weapons—holding both the shield and the sword, yet entering no path unsuited to those whose feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

Such, while the Apostles lived, were the principles and the position of the children of God. Such *ought* they to have been throughout the dispensation. But they soon abandoned this position, and mingling with the nations, learned their ways; and now as the latter days are closing in, God, whose word we have neglected, seeks, in mercy, to awaken us from our slumber, and to lead us back to that sure word of prophecy which marks the course of these nations, and their evil end. Many have read in the light of that word the history and the doom both of Israel and the nations, and have seen the necessity of seeking to recover those principles which give a characteristic separateness to the children of God.

the year 2000; and that therefore Christ himself will have the honour of destroying that formidable enemy, by a new and remarkable appearance of himself, as I said before. But, secondly, we must not imagine *that this appearance of Christ will be a personal one,*" &c.—*Fleming*, pp. 39, 93.

Any book, therefore, especially any book on Prophecy which counterworks this end; any book which tends to rivet the principles which have so long and so ruinously sunk the Church into identification with the nations and deprived it of its peculiar testimonies, is most earnestly to be deprecated at a moment like the present. The principles of this book did not and could not raise Mr. Fleming into dissociation from the nations or their ways. On the contrary, his principles (and it was their necessary result) led him to ask that their swords should be unsheathed for the maintenance or protection of the truths of God. A war between France and England was the immediate result of the influence he exerted over the monarch of the day. This was the practical result of his prophetic principles. How indeed could it be otherwise? For if angels coming forth with golden vials from the temple of God, and "clothed in linen pure and bright," are symbols really employed by God to designate the struggles and victories of Protestant over Popish nations, who would not desire to set such agency in action—who would not long to be engaged in conflicts worthy of being represented by symbols such as these?

But it is not so. They who are commanded to follow Him, who, "when He was reviled, reviled not again," are not commissioned to wield the sword of destruction. If any thing could have justified its use by a disciple, it would have been the hour when Jesus was betrayed. But if even the defence of his sacred Person did not justify it—if even then it was said, "Put up thy sword within its sheath, for they that take the sword shall perish by the sword;" how much more does it become us to allow it to continue sheathed till it shall please another, wiser and more mighty than we—Himself to take hold on judgment and to terminate the age in which it has pleased Him to appoint that truth should suffer. The very distinctive feature

of the Church at present is meek and patient suffering. How then ought we to shrink from the principles of a system which destroys our apprehension of the Church's present calling—recognizes not the distinction as drawn in Scripture between the coming dispensation, in which truth is to triumph, and the present in which it is appointed to suffer, and conceives that the sword of the earthly potentate is the fitting instrument whereby Christ's people are to be made to conquer.

But even if we could persuade ourselves to glory in those evil and cruel wars by which, after the true power and vigour of the Reformation had departed, the Protestant kingdoms fought for mastery; if we could deceive ourselves into the belief that the agency of those guilty kingdoms so contending with the Papacy may fitly be represented by holy angels clothed in white, and that their triumphs were celebrated with thanksgivings in heaven; even if there were nothing in all this to shock us—if angels so clothed in white could fitly represent the agencies of England, and Holland, and Sweden contending with the Pope, shall we likewise say that these same holy symbols are employed also to designate that agency which in 1793 overthrew the throne of the French monarchs, and is now, in 1848, destroying, as is supposed, the authority of the Pope? This we must believe, if we receive the interpretations of Mr. Fleming. The triumphs of revolutionists and infidels must be the triumphs of Christ and of his truth.

I have no desire to shield Popery or its abominations. A system which solemnly and deliberately pronounces those who teach the blessed doctrine of justification by faith and the imputed righteousness of Christ, to be accursed, must be itself accursed.* (Gal. i.) But shall we, because we see the wickedness of Po-

* Conc. Trid. Canon IX. Si quis dixerit solâ fide impium justificari, ita ut intelligat nihil aliud requiri, quod ad justifica-

perly hallow, as it were, and pronounce blessed, the even greater abominations of those agents of Satan who were permitted of God to overthrow the monarchy of France? or shall we consider the triumph of those who are now introducing the principles of infidel liberalism into the government of Rome to be indeed the victory of God's truth over the lie of Satan? If it be so—if the agencies of such men as Voltaire and

tionis gratiam consequendam co-operetur, et nullâ ex parte necesse esse eum suæ voluntatis motu præparari atque disponi, anathema sit.

“If any one shall say that an ungodly person is justified by faith only, so as to understand that nothing else is required to co-operate to the attainment of the grace of justification, and that it is in no respect necessary that he should be disposed and prepared by the motion of his own will, let him be accursed.”

Canon XI. *Si quis dixerit homines justificari vel solâ imputatione justitiæ Christi, vel solâ peccatorum remissione, exclusâ gratiâ et caritate, quæ in cordibus eorum per Spiritum Sanctum diffundatur atque illis inhæreat, aut etiam gratiam quâ justificamur esse tantum favorem Dei, anathema sit.*

“If any one shall say that men are justified, either by the mere imputation of the righteousness of Christ or by the mere remission of sins, to the exclusion of grace and love, to be diffused in their hearts by the Holy Spirit and to inhere in them, or moreover that the grace by which we are justified is only the favour of God, let him be accursed.”

Canon XII. *Si quis dixerit fidem justificantem nihil aliud esse quam fiduciam divinæ misericordiæ, peccata remittentis propter Christum, vel eam fiduciam solam esse, quâ justificamur, anathema sit.*

“If any one shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than reliance on the divine mercy remitting sin for Christ's sake, or that that by which we are justified is reliance, and reliance only, let him be accursed.”

Condemnation for the rejection of these the cardinal doctrines of our faith rests equally on that system known as Tractarianism in this country. I mention this lest, because I maintain, as they do, that Antichrist is a secular person yet to arise, it should be supposed that I do not recognize the evil of their soul-destroying system.

Robespierre—if liberalism and infidelity are to be thus regarded—if these agencies are to be symbolised by angels of white, and rejoiced over in heaven, then indeed we may abandon all hope of distinguishing between light and darkness, evil and good, the actings of God, and the actings of Satan. We may say that evil and good have exchanged places one with the other, or that all has been commingled in hopeless undistinguishable confusion.

The analogy of the past would little teach us, that that which overthrows evil must itself be good. Jerusalem was overthrown for its iniquity, but were the nations that trampled it down blessed? Were they not, on the contrary, stronger and more obdurate in evil even than that which they overthrew? Scripture and facts alike teach us that it has been the order of God to allow evil to punish evil, and then to permit the evil that punishes to exalt itself and to wax stronger in iniquity than that which it has supplanted. And thus there has ever been an onward progress of evil, a strengthening and consolidation of iniquity—and prophetic Scripture declares that it shall be thus even to the end. But God has appointed that end, and this it is the especial subject of the Revelation to declare. The object of the Revelation is not to trace the steps by which the evil of this present dispensation gradually advances. Its object is not the history of evil in its progress but in its doom. It describes not *the growth* of the great and flourishing tree of Gentile greatness, but the manner in which, *after it has attained that growth*, it will be smitten and cut down, and that by no mere human hand. The Revelation is not the history of the gradual progress of evil. It does not detail the steps by which one system of evil supersedes another, and then flourishes more abundantly than that which it has supplanted. But it reveals the form which the evil of this dispensation will exhibit, when it has attained the maturity of its growth—and

the manner in which God will at first chasten, and at last send his Son utterly to destroy that which has thus been allowed to ripen. This, however, has not been recognized by Mr. Fleming. He has read the Revelation as if it were the history of the *gradual* growth of evil and of its gradual subjugation by providential means. And even that evil he has sought in one small section of the prophetic earth, as if there were no evil against which God prophecies excepting Popery.*

And what has been the actual practical result of this system of interpretation? Has it placed the testimonies of the Revelation in firm and solemn opposition to the wickedness of these latter days? Has it put the sword of the Spirit into the hands of the Church for warfare against Satan, and enabled them to testify against (*ἐπὶ*) peoples, and nations, and tongues, and many kings? No! it has done exactly the reverse. It has enabled the world and some of the worst in the world to seize on these most solemn of the testimonies of God, and to use them not merely as a palliation or defence, but even as a sanction for the

* By the prophetic earth, I mean the part included within the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire embraced most important countries in the East; Syria for example, and Greece and Egypt. Its eastern division was more important even than the western. Yet by some strange carelessness, the western only has been regarded by modern interpreters of prophecy, and the east forgotten. The seventh Chapter of Daniel speaks of the ten horns which represent the last ten kingdoms, into which the Roman territories are finally to be divided, as seen on a monster which is allowed to represent *all* not *part* of the Roman Empire. And the second chapter of Daniel does not place the ten toes which represent the same ten kingdoms on *one* only of the feet of the image. Five were found on each foot. We shall finally see the present convulsions in Europe terminate in the development of ten kingdoms, five in the eastern and five in the western branch of the Roman Empire. It is manifest that Popery has never prevailed in the eastern branch of the Roman Empire—but Antichristianism will.

darkest deeds of their iniquity. At the time of the Revolution of 1793, Mr. Fleming's book was republished, both in America and in England, and used by the liberal party of the day in justification of their views touching the occurrences in France. Doubtless it well suited them to be told, that the revolutionists of Paris were symbolized by angels of God. But when we remember what the liberalism of that moment was, how truly it answered to the fearful picture which the Apostles draw, we may well tremble to think of the delusion which has made even the Book of the Revelation to testify on their behalf. The Apostles speak of those who despise government, presumptuous are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption, (2 Pet. ii. 10.) Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities; yet Michael the archangel, when, contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said "the Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally as brute beasts in those things they corrupt themselves," (Jude 8—10.) Such is God's description of the insubjection of the latter days. Such the iniquity which the book before us has been quoted to defend.

And now let us turn from the moral effects produced by this work to the system of interpretation adopted in it. It teaches (and in this indeed it is not singular) that "days" in prophetic Scripture do not mean "*days*" but "*years*," on which assertion the whole of this system is based.

As this assertion is so important and affects so vitally every thought that we can form in connexion with the whole scope of prophetic enquiry, it becomes very needful to examine most carefully into the ground on which it is made. It would seem at first sight very strange, very contrary to the simplicity of Scripture that God should use the word "*day*" when really He means not "*day*" but "*year*." What then are the grounds on which it is asserted that He does so?

The arguments used by Mr. Fleming, are as follow : He refers first to Exodus xxiii. 10—12. "Six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof. But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still, that the poor of thy people may eat ; and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat * * * * Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day, thou shalt rest, that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed."

These are the verses which Mr. Fleming quotes in support of his theory, that a day means a year. But surely if there be any passage in which day means day and year means year, it is this : for every one knows that Israel were commanded to keep every seventh year as a sabbatical year, and every seventh day, as a sabbatical day ; and every seventh day they *did* keep, and no one among them ever dreamed of its meaning any thing else than a day.

The second argument is, that after the spies of Israel had searched the land for forty days, they were punished by wandering in the wilderness for forty years. Is day here put for year? Did they not search the land for forty literal days, and were they not punished for forty literal years? No passage could prove more convincingly that day means day and that year means year.

Again, he quotes a similar passage in Ezekiel, (Ch. iv.) Ezekiel is commanded to lie on his side for

forty days, typically to bear the punishment of sins which Judah had committed for forty years. Did not Ezekiel lie on his side for forty literal days, and did not Judah sin for forty literal years? Ezekiel would surely have considered it a strange thing, if he had been told, that God had said indeed that he was to lie on his side forty days, but that He really meant forty years. It must have been so if day be put for year. Did Ezekiel so think or so act?

Mr. Fleming adds, "Nay, our Saviour himself speaks in this dialect, when He calls the years of his ministry 'days,' saying, 'I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.'" But Mr. Fleming in saying this seems to have forgotten two things—first, that these words were spoken at the time when He wept over Jerusalem, and left it for the last time just three literal days before his death, whereas, on Mr. Fleming's theory, they ought to have been spoken during the first year of his ministry; secondly, he has forgotten that the duration of our Lord's ministry was not three years, but three years and a half. Each, therefore, of these arguments proves exactly the reverse of that which it is adduced to sustain.*

The next and last argument derived from Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, appears to an English

* Mr. Fleming adds also, "The seven years of Nebuchadnezzar's lycanthropy is called indefinitely *days* or *times*." But this is not true. The seven years of Nebuchadnezzar's madness is never called "days." The Hebrew word for *days* is יָמִים and the Chaldee word for *times* is קִדְרֵי. It is the same word that is used in the seventh chapter, where the power of Antichrist is said to be for a time, times, and dividing of time, *i. e.* for three years and half a year, or 42 months, or 1260 days. Now, if three times and a half mean, as Mr. Fleming asserts, 1260 years, then Nebuchadnezzar's madness must last double that time, for it is said to be for seven times, which would be equal, on Mr. Fleming's principle, to 2520 years, and consequently, since he, *i. e.* Nebuchadnezzar, lived only about 600 years before the Christian era, his madness must be continuing still.

ear more plausible. But it also fails equally in proving the point intended. It appears more plausible to an English ear, because we are not accustomed to apply the word "*week*," (a word which our translators have chosen as their rendering of the Hebrew expression,) to any period longer than seven days. We are not accustomed to say a *week* of weeks, or a *week* of months, or a *week* of years. We confine the expression to a seven of days. In Hebrew, however, it is otherwise. The word which our translators have rendered by week, means simply what the Greeks would call a "hebdomad," *i. e.* a septenary number, or a number consisting of seven. The word "*hebdomad*" stands in the same relation to *seven*, that "*decad*" does to *ten*, or our English word "*dozen*" to *twelve*. As therefore we can say a dozen of days, or a dozen of months, or a dozen of years, so we can say, a hebdomad of days, (*i. e.* seven days,) or a hebdomad of months, (*i. e.* seven months,) or a hebdomad of years, (*i. e.* seven years.)

Now supposing that in the prophecy before us it had been said, "Seventy dozen of *days* are to be fulfilled," and it was afterwards found that the prophecy really meant seventy dozens of *years*, then indeed it might be said that "*day*" meant *year*, and the point would be unquestionably proved. But if the word day was not mentioned at all, and the prophecy simply said, "Seventy dozens are to be fulfilled," then we should say that the prophecy was ambiguous—that it might mean dozens of days, or of months, or of years, and that we must endeavour by other means to discover which of these was intended. And if on examination we found that *days* should be supplied, we should supply days, and interpret them as days; or if *months*, we should insert months, and interpret them as months; or if *years*, we should insert years, and interpret them as years. In either case, day would mean day, and month, month, and year, year. It would

simply be a question of which should be inserted. There would be no question respecting their meaning when inserted.

Thus is it in this prophecy of Daniel. It is not said, "Seventy hebdomads *of days* are appointed;" it is merely said, "Seventy hebdomads are appointed." Consequently, seeing that the word "day" does not exist in the passage, that which does not exist cannot be put for any thing nor mean any thing, and there is an end of the question.

Such, then, are the reasons given for this strange imagination, reasons of which it may be fairly said, that they are no reasons at all, and therefore it follows that the whole superstructure built on such a foundation utterly falls.

And if it be asked, how it can have happened that Mr. Fleming's predictions have in certain cases been verified by the event, I reply, where is there any instance of such verification? The verification of a Scripture prophecy is the fulfilment of it in that sense in which God has spoken it. Where then has any prophecy of the Scripture been fulfilled at the time and by the circumstances spoken of by Mr. Fleming as about to fulfil it? Have circumstances which he has predicted fulfilled one prophecy of the Word of God? We may safely answer, No!

Let us take for example his prediction respecting the present year, 1848, in which he supposes the 1260 days will end by the weakening of the Papacy under the pouring out of the fifth vial. Now supposing that 1260 days mean 1260 years, which they do not;—and supposing the Beast symbolized the Papacy, which it does not;—and supposing the previous vials had been poured out, which they have not;—yet even then will any one venture to affirm that Rome has in this year begun to be full of darkness, in the sense meant in the Scripture, and that they have begun to gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of Heaven,

because of their pains and their woes? Revelry and rejoicing, because of conquest and deliverance, is far more likely to resound from one end of Italy to the other. Where then is there any fulfilment in this? But again, his prediction is that the 1260 days are to conclude in 1848 by the Papacy being *weakened*, not *abolished*. He denies that it can be *abolished*. Now it is impossible that this prediction can be fulfilled, either in this year or any other year. It is a prediction that secures its own frustration. For whenever the period of 1260 concludes, (and, as regards the present point, it is immaterial whether it be a period of days or years,) whenever it ends, the reign of evil ends. The dominance, not merely of Popery, but of every other evil system in the earth, will then utterly and for ever end. The night will have passed, and the morning without clouds will have arisen—it will have dawned with its unchangeable light of blessing on a reconciled and recovered earth. His prediction, therefore, seeing that it consists of two parts necessarily incompatible with each other, secures its own frustration. If the Papacy is only to be weakened, and not abolished, then his prediction respecting the termination of the 1260 days is falsified—for they cannot terminate until all evil terminates. If, on the other hand, the period of 1260 were now to end, then his prediction respecting the Papacy being weakened merely, and not abolished, would be falsified—for it would be abolished, and not weakened.

Whether the Papacy be really weakened by that which is now occurring at Rome, is a question on which I express no opinion. Facts may possibly prove that it is rather being strengthened. But however this may be, we may with all certainty affirm, that the events now happening at Rome are no more the fulfilment of the passage above quoted in the Revelation, than the conversion of Constantine was the fulfilment of the solemn words that follow the opening of the

sixth seal. He who can persuade himself to believe that a vision such as that in which "the sun was seen to become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind, and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places, and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and said 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; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"—he who can persuade himself that a vision like this has been accomplished in such an event as the nominal conversion of the Roman Empire, will certainly find little difficulty in making any part of the Word of God accommodate itself to any prediction that he may please to utter. Such interpretations of the Word of God will accommodate themselves to any thing and mean any thing. Mr. Fleming has accepted this interpretation of the sixth seal. It is not wonderful, therefore, that such a system of interpretation adopted throughout the Revelation as a whole, should open a door sufficiently wide for every kind of prediction and supposed fulfilment. But there is in all this no accomplishment of the Word of God.

To take another example, viz. his conjecture respecting the fulfilment of the fourth vial, in the abasement of popish countries throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and especially by the overthrow of the French monarchy in 1793. Whatever may be thought of this as a conjecture, it has no title to be regarded as any fulfilment of Scripture prophecy. The words of the Scripture are these, "And the

fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire, and men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues, and they repented not to give Him glory." Now, even if we were to admit that the sun represents a number of popish monarchs and kingdoms, from our James II. to Louis XVI. of France, how is it that increased power given to the sun indicates increased weakness in those whom that sun is said to represent? If these kings and kingdoms are symbolized by the sun in this passage, we ought to have seen them and all popish kings and kingdoms greatly increased in power, and beginning to scorch others,—I suppose, Protestants,—for they could hardly be supposed to scorch themselves. This surely must have been the interpretation—the Papists must have been strengthened, not weakened; yet for some unexplained reason, Mr. Fleming suddenly reverses the symbol, and says that the strengthening of the sun indicates the weakening of the Papists, whom that very sun is said to represent. Is this fulfilment of prophecy?

But again, when James II. was driven from England, or when Louis XVI. fell, or during the intervening centuries, were men so scorched with fire and great heat, or did they in an especial manner, because of their special plagues, blaspheme God? The fall of James II. is looked on in England as the dawn of liberty and prosperity, and the fall of the French monarchy is looked at in France as issuing in the most glorious period of their history under the empire. And as to Papists, their joy and self-congratulation at the supposed advance of their system, both in France, England, and the colonies, has been certainly very unlike the wail of torment or despair.

It would be easy to accumulate instances of similar inconsistencies of interpretation. We might ask, if the ten-horned beast of Revelation xiii. represents the

Papacy, how it happens that there are within the sphere of its influence unconverted men who are not Papists? for it is written, that all shall worship the beast whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that has been slain. Have all wicked men worshipped the Pope? We might ask how, if the ten-horned beast represent the Pope, who is ecclesiastical, *another* beast, ecclesiastical in character, is in the same chapter (Rev. xiii.) said to minister in his presence, and what the image is which speaks, and is worshipped, and commands that whosoever will not worship it should be killed? Has the world ever yet seen such an image? We might ask how a beast, which wears throughout the whole of the 1260 days the crowns of *all* the kingdoms of the Roman world, can represent the Pope, who has never worn these crowns? and how, if the harlot represents the Papacy, can she be destroyed by the ten horns of the beast, (Rev. xvii. 16, 17,) who is supposed to represent the Pope? How is it that during the whole of the 1260 days, the beast is represented as having authority in the holy city, even "the city where our Lord was crucified," (see Rev. xi. 7, 8,) whereas the Pope has never exercised authority in Jerusalem at all? How can it be, that all who shall worship the beast or receive his mark are certainly doomed to everlasting wrath, (Rev. xiv. 9,) whereas it is possible for Papists to believe and be saved? Many a question of this kind might be multiplied, difficult indeed to be answered by those who seem to speak as if all evil were concentrated in the Pope alone.

God does not think so. He sees in the corrupt churches of the East, in Mahomedanism, in Judaism, and in worldly or infidel Protestantism, evil as great, and, in the latter instance, greater than in Popery itself; and He has not delineated in his Word the final climax of evil, without including in that delineation

tion all the channels of evil which unite in that final meeting point. The Old Testament, in many of its prophecies, describes the same period as that of which the Revelation treats, that is to say, the period which immediately precedes the appearing of the Lord. It speaks abundantly of the antichristianism of Israel in Jerusalem, and of the antichristianism of the great Gentile nations (the nations of the Roman earth) at the closing hour. Does the Revelation contradict these testimonies of the Old Testament Scriptures, or is it silent respecting these great events of the latter day, which are to knit the east and the west together in a confederacy of evil, the like to which has never yet been seen—silent, therefore, respecting the very events which give to the period of which the Revelation professes to treat its most distinguishing and characteristic features? It must be silent about these things if it only speaks of Popery, for neither the Jews nor half of the Gentile nations are Papists, and therefore never could be included in the warnings respecting the beast nor his image, if Popery be that which is designated thereby.

And is this really to be the tendency of our teaching? Are we to teach the Jew, the Mahomedan, the Protestant infidel that he is in no danger of the greatest of all delusions and the most fearful of all judgments that have as yet visited the earth?—an hour which is said by the Lord Jesus himself to be an hour of temptation that shall come on all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth, (Rev. iii. 10.) Are we to teach them that Popery so concentrates all evil, that they who are not Papists are safe from the fearful denunciations of the closing book of the Scripture? Are we thus to nullify the Word of God—to turn the course of the sword of the Spirit, and to blunt its edge?

This no doubt is the desire of Satan. To lead into such vagueness of thought and interpretation as takes

all definiteness from the symbols and expressions of Scripture—to confine the most solemn of its warnings and denunciations within a circle too narrow to include half of those for whom they are intended—to persuade us that that is past which is not only future but near, and so to hide from men the gulph which is yawning almost before their feet—this no doubt is one of the chief anxieties of the great enemy of souls. And he has fearfully succeeded. He has succeeded in perverting, when he has not been able to hide, the very light which is set to guide us through the night until the day-star arise.

No one, I suppose, who believes in the personal existence of Satan will doubt that he is able to tempt and to put evil thoughts into the heart. And if able on other subjects to deceive, he is able also to lead into wrong interpretations of the Word of God. He is acquainted with the facts that Scripture reveals as about to be, and he is frequently himself permitted (as when he was allowed to afflict Job) to conduct the train of circumstances which is to lead on the series of events to their appointed issue. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that, after having turned our minds into a wrong channel of thought, he should suggest such anticipations as should receive confirmation from the events which he knows are about to happen.

If, for example, we could now be persuaded to believe that the pouring out of the sixth vial on the river Euphrates indicates the weakening of the Turkish power, and that the way of the kings from the East being prepared refers to the return of Israel to their own land, and that the solemn reference to the appearing of the Lord is to be understood figuratively, and refers not to his personal advent, but some other manifestation of his power,—if we could be persuaded into such false expositions of the Word of God, we should find in events which are soon about to occur an apparent verification of our interpretations. It is true

that an apparent weakening of the Turkish power will take place by the separation of Syria from Turkey just as Egypt and Greece have been separated, and that might be esteemed the action of the vial on the Euphrates; it is true that Israel will return in unbelief to their own land, and that might be regarded as the return of the kings of the East; and the false prosperity which for a season will attend them after their return might easily be represented as the figurative coming of the Lord. We might even venture to predict the periods (for they are not far off) when these things are likely to be, and yet all would be delusion. The events are not *the* events which God has intended to indicate, and the very fulfilment of our anticipations would only lead into deeper darkness as to the real meaning of his word. Is it otherwise in the case before us?

There are many other grave and serious objections that might be urged against this work. It might be shown how entirely it fails in *rightly dividing* the Scriptures. It is really written as if God had made no distinctions in his word between the Jews, the Gentile nations, and the Church. The history of Christianity is confounded with that of the Gentile nations and the coming prospects of Israel, both when they return to their land in unbelief, and also after they are restored under the blessing of the Lord; all that they are to be in sin, and all that they are to be in millennial blessedness appears to have been unnoticed and unknown. And yet Israel is the very centre of the earthly arrangements of God—the turning point on which his dispensations hinge.

But I have said enough. He who, after considering the practical effects of this work, its failure in the very first principles of prophetic interpretation, and above all its rejection of the personal advent of the LORD, can yet consent to regard it with complacency, will be little affected by any accumulation of further evidence.

But I trust, that many will escape the snare ; and that the very publication of this book may tend to excite an enquiry that may end in the attainment of truth. The very perplexities in which this subject has been so industriously involved may teach us its importance, for in a world like this, that which is most precious is likely to be most hidden. But if there be a little patience—a little honest perseverance in using the Scripture, these mists of darkness will disappear, and truth will be seen in the clearness and simplicity which might be supposed to belong to a subject which the Word of GOD professes to REVEAL. “ His testimonies are sure, making wise the simple.”

ON ZECHARIAH XII. XIII. .

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

ENQUIRY into prophetic Scripture is often regarded as hopeless, because of its difficulty. The very word—prophecy—has almost become synonymous with obscurity, in the thoughts of many, and doubtless our want of simplicity in writing and speaking on prophetic subjects, has greatly tended to increase the general impression, that the revelations of God respecting the future are involved in impenetrable darkness. There are few in whose minds this thought does not linger. And yet a moment's reflection would teach us that that cannot be darkness which God has declared to be light—"a light shining in a dark place, whereunto we do well to take heed:" nor is it possible that two thirds of Scripture (for nearly two thirds consist of prophecy) should be so hopelessly entangled and obscure, as to be practically a "sealed book," unavailable, therefore, for purposes of guidance or of instruction. It is far more likely that we, through our carelessness and mistakes, have perplexed subjects which, as revealed by God, are simple and clear.

It is not difficult to discover some of these our errors. "Right *division* of the word of truth" is insisted on in Scripture itself as necessary to its just exposition. But in this we have greatly failed.

Take for an example the different periods in man's history of which the Scripture treats. It treats of *five* very distinct periods. The first is that of man's brief continuance in Paradise—the second extends from Paradise to the flood—the third, from the flood to the second coming of the Lord—the fourth is the millennial period—and the fifth the new heavens and new earth wherein righteousness *dwelleth*.*

Now suppose that we fail in rightly distinguishing these periods one from the other ; suppose we were to apply to human life now, the principles that would have been true of man in Paradise, who is there that would not see the folly and danger of the mistake ? But the error is scarcely less, when we confuse the coming dispensation, *i.e.* the millennial with the present. To confound a period in which Satan is to be bound—Israel converted and made a national witness for God—nations converted and learning war no more—Christ and his truth supreme ; to confound such a period with one that is carefully and designedly marked in the Word of God by characteristics the very opposite to these, is an error scarcely less delusive than to suppose that man is now in Paradise. Yet this mistake has been continually made in the exposition of Scripture.

But again, subdivisions of some of these periods is also necessary. In the third, for example, which is that in which we are now living, the history, first, of the Jews—secondly, of those Gentile nations which were raised into supremacy when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem—and, thirdly, of Christianity, or the profes-

* The third period has this extended duration, because in it the Lord has never interfered so as to stop as He did at the flood and as He will again do at his return, the onward progress of human counsels. One generation has added to the results of another—link has been added to link in the mighty chain ; but the chain has not yet been snapped by the hand of God, nor will it be till the hour of his return. "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed."

sing Church, is given in the Scripture as the history of three distinct classes. But suppose we were to confound these classes, and were to assign to the Church parts of Scripture which belong only to the Jews, or which perhaps belong to the Gentile nations in their character of nations, how great must be the confusion. Yet this has habitually been done.

The history of the Jews as a separate people commenced with the call of Abraham. From that moment on to the time when "they shall look on Him whom they pierced" and believe, they have in the Scripture a distinct history of their own. It is by interpreting, therefore, of Judah and Jerusalem prophecies which are avowedly written of Judah and Jerusalem, that one great source of perplexity is avoided.

Again, when Jerusalem and its throne, soon after the time of Solomon, were punished because of transgression, and deprived of the supremacy which under that monarch Jerusalem was exercising in the earth, Nebuchadnezzar and certain Gentile nations, his successors, were raised up by God, for the double purpose of "treading down" Jerusalem and of holding that supreme power of government in the earth of which Jerusalem had been deprived. In the hands of the Gentiles that power still continues: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The history of these nations (and they are now all comprised within the scope of what was once the Roman empire) is given in Daniel and similar parts of Scripture. Their history is to be distinguished both from that of the Jews and from that of the professing Church. They have a distinct, separate history of their own. But this distinction has been often utterly neglected.

Christianity also has a history of its own. Founded by the ministry of our Lord and his Apostles, it has a prophetic history appropriated to itself. But instead of this thread being preserved in its distinctness, as it

is in the Scripture, it has been confused sometimes with that of the Jews and sometimes with that of the Gentile nations.

These are some and not unimportant causes of the perplexity so often complained of. But surely a little care would suffice to rectify such errors. Let a chapter which pertains to Jerusalem be read as pertaining to Jerusalem, and see whether the light so gained, though it be little, will not be *clear*.

It is for this reason that I have selected the concluding chapters of Zechariah. Whatever difference of judgment may exist as to the exposition of particular expressions or verses, I can scarcely conceive that any will candidly consider these chapters, without being constrained to allow that the Jews are to be, as a nation, converted; that they will be, at the time of their conversion in their own land and city; that consequently they must have returned there when in unbelief; that they are punished, after their return, by the instrumentality of Gentile nations again gathered in siege against their city; that these nations are *there*, that is to say, in the land of Israel, destroyed; and that they are destroyed by the personal intervention and manifestation of the Lord, on behalf of Israel.

These are events of no trifling moment. If they be true, if they can be definitively learned from these simple chapters, if they can be regarded as established facts, we shall have gained no unimportant light. These facts will be to us as land-marks. They will steadily guide us in our subsequent enquiries; and we may safely say, that nothing can be true that contradicts them.

ON ZECHARIAH XII. AND XIII.

THE twelfth chapter of Zechariah is one of peculiar simplicity. It treats, indeed, of the *future*, but its statements are so plain, that instruction could not be given more simply by the most direct historic narrative of the past. It commences by the Jehovah of Israel declaring his title to almighty and creative power. At the period of which this chapter treats, that title will have been denied. One will have arisen in the midst of Israel, of whom it is written, that "he will do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done."* (Daniel xi. 36.) Multitudes, both in Israel and among the nations, will have followed him, owned him, and concurred in saying both of Jehovah and his Anointed, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." It will be a time of abounding blasphemy; and therefore many of those parts of

* It is important to notice the expression, "till the indignation be accomplished," *i. e.* God's indignation against Jerusalem. It is a period frequently referred to in Daniel, called sometimes, "end of the indignation," as in chap. viii. 19. The occurrence of these words identifies these passages in Daniel, *as to time*, with the chapter in Zechariah we are considering—for that also treats of the last end of the indignation against Jerusalem.

Scripture that pertain to this period peculiarly bear testimony to the governmental and creative power of God. "The burthen of the word of Jehovah for Israel, saith Jehovah, which stretcheth forth the heavens and layeth the foundations of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him."

This, his power, which He has so long used against Israel because of their sins, He will now be about to put forth on their behalf. *That* is the special subject of this chapter. It speaks of Jerusalem as surrounded by unnumbered hosts of nations, who, surprised doubtless, and enraged at the rebellion of this oft-conquered city, are expecting again to make it their easy prey. But the appointed hour will have come for the God of Israel to interfere. "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the peoples round about." "I will make Jerusalem a burthensome stone for all the peoples;* all that burthen themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the nations of the earth be gathered together against it."

These words sufficiently indicate the mighty strength and multitude of these nations that will then be congregated against that apparently devoted city. The gathering of these hosts is not unfrequently referred to in the Scripture, and always in language calculated to impress the mind with the peculiar magnitude of the power to be displayed in this last great effort of man under Satan. In the Revelation, for example, (ch. xvi. 14,) it is said that "spirits of devils working miracles shall go forth to gather the kings of the whole world† to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

* "Peoples," not people, is the right translation throughout these chapters. "Peoples" in the plural always appropriates the expression to Gentiles.

† That is, the Roman world, [οικουμενη,] orbis terrarum. Compare Luke ii. 1. The words, "of the earth," are an interpolation, and should be omitted. See Tregelles' Version of the Revelation, printed by Bagster, a book that should be possessed by all who desire to read the Revelation carefully.

Joel also speaks of the same mighty confederation: "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 ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye Gentiles, and gather yourselves together round about." (Joel iii. 9—12.) And what will Jerusalem appear in their sight? It will be even as nothing. The tribe of Judah, too, will be with these nations fighting *against* Jerusalem,* so that it will indeed be to that chastened city a day of weakness and of bringing low.

But Jerusalem is not to be forsaken for ever. It is the place which Jehovah hath chosen to set his name there. He has even said that his eyes and his heart are there perpetually. The nations may be allowed to trample on it for a season—but they are strange nations to Him, ever symbolized in Scripture by wild and evil monsters—nations uncalled by his name, who, just at that very moment, will have said—"Let us

* That is, that part of Judah which will be dwelling in Judæa, without the walls of Jerusalem. The literal translation of the second verse is as follows. It is given almost correctly in the margin of our Bibles. "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the peoples round about, and also against Judah shall it (or He) be in the siege against Jerusalem." Whether we take "it" as referring to the cup of trembling, or "He" as referring to Jehovah, the general sense will be the same. It is obvious, not only from this verse, but from all the rest of the chapter, that Judah is regarded as in the camp of the enemy. They will not, like the inhabitants of Jerusalem, be defended by walls, and therefore terror, probably, will cause them to unite with these Gentile hosts. The dreadfulness of these hosts is remarkably described in Joel ii. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; a great people and a strong, there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations."

break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us." *We* have especial need to remember this, for they are the very nations among whom we dwell. All the nations of the Roman earth from England to the Euphrates (for the gathering is said to be from the whole, *οικουμενη*) will have sent the flower of their strength to Armageddon. The horsemen of western Europe, and of the Euphratean countries in unnumbered squadrons will be there, and against them, (for these apparently are the pride of their glory) against them first, Jehovah will direct his hand. "In that day I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness, and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the peoples with blindness." It will be literally true. Astonishment and blindness will fall on every horse—madness on every rider. This will commence the ruin of those doomed nations. But with Judah it will be otherwise. Judah will indeed be in the midst of these Gentile hosts, and like them will stand in siege against Jerusalem. But at the very moment when He thus smites these hosts of the alien, He "opens his eyes upon the house of Judah," and their hearts are touched with repentance. The sight of the maddened hosts around them, combined with the sense of their own marvellous exemption from the same well-deserved infliction, will probably be the means whereby their hearts are softened into repentance—but these means would have been in vain, their hearts would have been proof against every mercy, and against every terror, if his eyes and his power had not been directed towards them in grace and pardoning love. He will open his eyes upon the house of Judah, and their hearts will be softened.

The first evidence of the repentance of Judah is, that they recognize Jerusalem to be indeed the City of God. "The governors of Judah shall say in their heart, the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of Hosts their God." And as their hearts

utter these words—as soon as they seek their strength in those with whom God is, then they are strengthened. “In that day I will make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the peoples round about on the right hand and on the left; and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.” Judah shall be as the torch, and the nations as the sheaf, and they shall be consumed as stubble before the fire. It will be as the day of Midian again, and Jerusalem shall be delivered.

It is grace, sovereign unmerited grace, that will work this deliverance; and therefore Judah, even they who had been in confederation with the foe, will be delivered *first*. “The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah *FIRST*, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.” He knows the tendency of the human heart to exalt itself, even at the expense of others, and will therefore provide that no such manifestation of evil should mar the excellency of that day of mercy. It will be true that Judah will be found in a place more rebellious and more evil than that of Jerusalem; lest therefore Jerusalem and her people should seek to despise or taunt their brethren, grace, which reaches even to the uttermost, saves the most evil *first*, and thus Judah is strengthened even before Jerusalem, that so every heart might be comforted, every thought of pride silenced.

But Jerusalem and her people will in their turn be strengthened also, and that with no ordinary strength. They shall be so strengthened, that he that is feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. The house of David shall be as God, for the Son of David, even the Lord Jesus in his glory, shall then assume the headship of David’s house. He will appear

in his glory as God. "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives," his saints surrounding Him. "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." (Zech. xiv. 5.) He will come to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. No marvel therefore that *they* should be strengthened with whom He connects himself in salvation, or that *they* should be destroyed who are gathered against Jerusalem and its King.

It will be an hour of triumph to Israel, such as they never before have known—greater than when they quitted Egypt—greater than when they entered the land and the walls of Jericho fell down. But great as their triumph will be, great as will have been their individual might, (for he that is feeble among them will be as David,) yet when they return from their victory, this, their glorious day of triumph, will end in self-abasement and in tears. On former occasions, when "Jeshurun had been made to ride on the high places of the earth, he had waxed fat and kicked; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." But it will never be so again. He who had come to conquer their foes, had come also to subdue their hearts. He will pour upon them the Spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon Him whom they pierced: for He will stand before them, as another Joseph in the midst of his astonished brethren, and they shall mourn for Him as one who mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. He will desire that they should mourn. Finally, indeed, He will dry their tears: but mourning is first to have its course. "In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem. The land shall mourn, every family apart." It will still be true that the contrite in heart and the poor in spirit are alone blessed. And seeing that this rescued and forgiven people are destined for power, and are to be made

“princes throughout all the earth,” and nations are to be regulated by them, it is needful that they who are to be entrusted with such power should themselves first be well broken in spirit; for what more terrible than power wielded by the proud, unbroken spirit of man.

Their day of conquest, therefore, ends in mourning. But grace will accomplish its work. Their subdued souls shall be brought into a full acquaintance with the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. 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. They will not only be sprinkled and forgiven through the blood of the Lamb, but they will understand also the reason and ground of their forgiveness, and like ourselves (who in this forestal their blessings) will be able to say that their garments are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Although regenerate, their flesh will yet remain, and in the flesh “good doth not dwell.” They will need, therefore, from day to day, refreshment and consolation in the remembrance of that blood once offered, which cleanseth from all sin. The Holy Spirit will abundantly be poured upon them, both that they might know the things that have been freely given to them of God, and also that they might be heralds of his salvation to the dark heathen world. They will be sent to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off which have not heard his fame, nor seen his glory, and they shall declare his glory among the Gentiles.” (Isaiah lxvi. 19.)

Their own land also will need cleansing, and it will gradually be cleansed. Many an unclean spirit will have been acting there; many a lying prophet will have prophesied; but then the hand of the Lord will be turned upon them in grace, to purge away the evil. And if any should venture yet to prophecy in the name of the Lord falsely, even his own parents who begat

him, will be willing, rather than the Lord should be dishonoured, to resign their son to punishment, or even to death. "His father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord, and his father and mother shall thrust him through when he prophesieth." The claims of nature and of natural love were once dominant in Israel. But they will cease to be so; then grace will have turned the course of the heart's deepest feelings, and they will refuse to flow, save only for God. And the prophets themselves, even they who have worn a rough garment to deceive—they who have purchased influence by self-imposed austerities—they too shall be reached, for grace is able to save, even to the uttermost; they shall be reached and changed, and the desire even of distinction shall cease to sway their spirits. The dignity of office will be surrendered by their repentant hearts; each will say, "I am no prophet, but only a husbandman—one who was taught to keep cattle from my youth:" and he will willingly fall back into the sphere from which Satan, and not God, had raised him. He will bear also and be willing to acknowledge the tokens of his former shame, and confess to the wounds which his deception had earned, even from the hands of his friends. Here, indeed, is an instance of the subduing, sanctifying power of grace. It is hard to resign what we have prized, but harder still, after the resignation, meekly to bear the tokens of the shame. But there will be power of grace in Israel then, and it seems to be the object of this passage to record the completeness of its triumph over the hearts and ways of God's recovered people.

And if it be asked how such grace could be shown to such a people—how those so distant in evil should suddenly receive such deliverance, and not deliverance merely, but strength; and how, after being so strengthened, they should be endowed with such riches of in-

ward grace, the answer is this—that long before, there had been One of whom Jehovah had said, “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.” That sword has awaked—the Shepherd has been smitten, and therefore this power of grace can be extended even towards that people who had rejoiced to see the sword do its work of destruction, and rejoiced at beholding the scattering of the flock. It is on the atonement once made, that these marvellous actings of grace towards Israel are *grounded*; and hence this reference to the smiting of the Shepherd, after the detail of the blessings that have flowed from his sacrifice.

When the sword awoke against the Shepherd, the sheep were indeed scattered. All the disciples were terrified, forsook him, and fled. Yet the Lord remembered them in grace and turned his gentle hand upon the little ones. Here is our present blessing—the blessing of the feeblest who believe. In the land of Israel, there is desolation, and a still severer doom stands yet pronounced against it. “It shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die.” But whilst the action of destructive judgment is thus towards Israel, there are some from among the Gentiles, and a few from among Israel, who believe on his name, and on them his hand is turned to guide, to strengthen, and to feed. And so it will be till the last of these sheep shall have been gathered in, and then He will remember Israel again, and though he will bring fires upon them, even fires that shall burn unto destruction against all but a remnant; yet that remnant, though it be but a third, shall be spared and blessed; “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 upon my name, and I will hear them; I will say it is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God.”

ON ZECHARIAH XIV.

I MAY now safely appeal to any who have seriously weighed the evidence of the preceding chapters, and ask them to say whether certain great substantive facts touching the future are not conclusively proved by them? It is proved that vast Gentile nations will again be gathered in siege against Jerusalem; that these hosts are in the land of Israel destroyed; that the Heads of Israel in Jerusalem are delivered and also converted; that consequently they must have returned to their land and city unconverted; and that they are delivered and converted by the personal manifestation of the Lord. These and other such events are ever recorded as the great characteristic features of that period which is termed in Scripture "the end of this age."

There is only one of these facts that I can suppose as at all likely to be questioned, and that is the personal manifestation of the Lord. If the words, "they shall look upon me whom they pierced," and again, "in that day the house of David shall be as God," are not considered conclusive, yet surely the fourteenth chapter, which we are now about to consider, must remove all ambiguity. "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 on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."

It is thus that one part of Scripture confirms and renders more definite the testimony of another. But the fourteenth of Zechariah is not merely confirmatory. It repeats, indeed, many of the statements that former chapters had made, but it enlarges also, and adds new features.

In the twelfth chapter our minds have been exclusively directed to the interference of the Lord *on behalf of* Jerusalem. In that chapter destruction is spoken of as being not against *her*, but against her enemies; and if it were not for the concluding words of the thirteenth, we might have almost supposed that no outpouring of judgment on Jerusalem, either immediately preceded or accompanied the day of her final visitation. But the fourteenth chapter supplies this deficiency. It leads us back to a period immediately preceding that with which the twelfth chapter opens, and speaks of a blow that had just been allowed to fall on Jerusalem by means of these very nations whose destruction the self-same chapter records. It is with this that the fourteenth chapter commences: "Behold a day cometh for Jehovah,* and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee, for 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."

Such will be in part the instrumentality by which the Lord, even up to the very end, continues to punish that city: "Thee only have I known of all the inhabitants of the earth, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities." The Scriptures again and again speak of the wasting destruction that shall fall upon Israel until only a "remnant" of them shall be left. "Though

* It is not the same expression as "the day of the Lord." When the latter expression is used, it always, I believe, denotes THE day in which Jehovah personally interferes, and does not include a prolonged period preceding.

thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet (only) a remnant of them shall return, the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness; for the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption even determined in the midst of all the land." (Isaiah x. 22.) The assault and triumph of these Gentile nations will be one of the means by which this "decreed consumption" shall be wrought.

The nations will be allowed quietly to complete their capture, and even to carry half of the people into captivity. But after they have thus accomplished their purpose, and think themselves secure of the subjection of their foe, suddenly, for some untold reason, Jerusalem again dares and excites their enmity, and again they gather together against her; but it is for the last time. The appointed hour for the interference of the Lord will have come, and He will accomplish that which He has promised, in the twelfth chapter and in the second verse of the chapter we are considering. "He will 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."

But Israel as a whole will be little prepared for this sudden visitation. They, as well as the nations, will be overtaken by it as by a snare. Ye shall flee—yea, ye shall flee like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. "Enemies," "adversaries," and "hypocrites" are spoken of as in the midst of Israel, even up to the hour of its final visitation. "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Isa. xxxiii. 14.) "Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies; and I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin. And

I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning ; afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness, and the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." (Isa. i. 24—28.)

The day of Jerusalem's deliverance is ever spoken of in the Scriptures as a day also of consuming judgment, so that only a remnant will be left ; but that remnant, when delivered and strengthened, is delivered and strengthened *as a nation*. They are rescued, not as individuals merely, but nationally. "A nation shall be born in a day ;" "A small one shall become a strong nation ;" "*Israel* shall do valiantly"—are all texts referring to this period of their history, and speak of them as corporately and nationally delivered.

And as regards the means of their deliverance. It is said, that "the Lord shall 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." Can language be more simply definite than this ? We believe, unless indeed we reject all the past testimonies of the Word of God, that there have been occasions of old when He has interfered in visible, almighty power on behalf of Israel, and delivered them. He divided the sea ; He caused the walls of Jericho to fall down ; He fought for them against the kings of Canaan ; He descended on Sinai in their sight, when Sinai trembled and was shaken ; and He has said "*yet once more* I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." And if we believe that Jesus is Jehovah, and that his feet have already stood upon the Mount of Olives—that thence He departed from the earth when the angels said, "This same Jesus shall so come even as ye have seen Him go ;"—why should we doubt that He will also stand there in glory ? why should we

doubt what is so plainly written, that the Mount of Olives shall tremble and cleave, and bear witness thus to the presence of God? "Jehovah, my God, shall come, and all the saints with thee." They will be with Him, because they will meet Him in the air, and return so as to surround Him and be with Him when He is thus revealed with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance.

It will be a day the most momentous of all days in the earth's history. It will not destroy the earth, for it is said immediately afterwards, that "the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one:" neither will it destroy Jerusalem, for it is said, (ver. 10,) "Jerusalem shall be lifted up and inhabited in her place;" and again, "Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." Many a heathen nation also will be spared, as we find from Isaiah.* But it will be a day the like to which has never been. "Alas! for that day is great, it is even the time of Jacob's trouble," (Jer. xxx.,) but he shall be saved out of it. It is emphatically called in the Old Testament, THE day of the Lord.

"It shall be one day known unto the Lord, not day nor night." It shall not be day, for all the natural sources of light shall be withdrawn: "the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." (Joel ii.) On the earth, therefore, blackness of darkness will rest, such as was on the face of the waters before the Spirit of God moved thereon—before God said, "Let there be light." But in the midst of this abyss of darkness, there will suddenly be displayed

* See Isaiah lxvi. 19. "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."

the light of a glory too terrible for human eyes to behold. He will come in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels. Saints, also, as well as angels, in all the brightness of their unearthly glory, will surround Him in myriads unnumbered. "A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up his enemies round about." "His lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw, and trembled." (Ps. xcvi. 3, 4.)

But it shall be only *one* day. The covenant with Noah forbids that this awful interruption of the course of nature should extend beyond *one* day: "While the earth lasteth, day and night shall not cease." Therefore night shall again resume its wonted course. The tempest of wrath shall have rolled over Israel and the earth, and will have wrought its work. "It will have destroyed them that destroy the earth." The evening shall return with light, pure, serene, and blessed. The stars will again shine peacefully, and a delivered earth wait for the arising of a morning without clouds.

We can, in part, conceive the feelings with which the spared remnant of Israel will behold the light of that evening—the evening which is to introduce the new order of God. They have been described in the twelfth chapter as subdued, contrite, and mourning. And no marvel: carried as they will have been by a power that they knew not through such a day of terror—strengthened for the Lord in it, and left at last in a scene of tranquil blessing, received from the hands of One whom they had despised, but to whom they had now learned to say, "My Lord, and my God;"—it would be strange indeed if they should not, whilst numbering such mercies, be bowed in contrition of spirit. And when they shall at last be comforted, and the Spirit be poured out upon them from on high—when the knowledge of their own past history, of the world's history, and of the Church's history,

will all be opened to them in the light of God—then, like so many Pauls, monuments of sovereign grace, they shall go forth to the dark places of the earth, rich in experience and in the knowledge of God, and from them shall flow rivers of living water.

We read in many parts of the Scripture, that the land of Israel will in that day teem with evidences of the miraculous power of God in dispensing blessings. On the sides of Zion for example, the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, shall be seen together, and a little child shall lead them. Nothing shall hurt or destroy throughout God's holy mountain. These will be sights that no one will deny to be in themselves excellent and blessed. But they are types also—living types, speaking of higher blessings—for they indicate the peace, and harmony, and love that shall pervade all hearts and all peoples whom the power of Zion shall effectually reach. And if God has appointed that the spiritual influence of which I have spoken above, should go forth from his forgiven and privileged nation in Jerusalem, we might expect to find some outward type of this, its relation. And accordingly, a type is given in the perennial flow of those streams, which, going forth from the sanctuary in Jerusalem, shall heal waters, which, like the Dead Sea, have been accursed—and spread life and refreshment in the midst of desolation. "It shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go forth from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea, in summer and winter shall it be." Ezekiel, in vision, saw them issue forth as a river that he could not pass over, for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. "And he said unto me, Son of Man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side, and on the other. Then said he unto me, These

waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea, which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed ; and it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live," &c. (Ezekiel xlvii. 6.)

No one, I suppose, who reads Ezekiel, especially his reference to Engedi and Eneglaim, will doubt the literality of the fact. Yet we should not, on that account, forget the more blessed spiritual relation of Zion and Jerusalem, which this fact symbolizes—when “out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

National supremacy, *i.e.* supremacy in the control and regulation of nations as well as supremacy in religious truth, will attach to Jerusalem then. Diffusion of truth, such truth as saves and enlightens individual souls, will, doubtless, be the most important function of that favoured city. It will be diffused partly by the service of its people, severally—partly, by its own corporate testimony. Individually, the saints in Israel will not be deprived of that which is the joy and comfort of the saints now, even to preach and to teach the Lord Jesus Christ, and to cherish others with that same kind of care with which the Apostle once sought to nurture the Churches—“gentle among them, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.” Jerusalem will doubtless esteem it her highest calling to be the pillar and ground of the truth, the golden candlestick fed with golden oil. (See Zech. iv.) But as the chief of nations also, it will exercise authoritative control over the earth, a control most blessed in its exercise, because exerted for and in subordination to TRUTH. Then at last there will be no contrariety, no collision between the ministration of God’s truth and the sovereignty of the Throne ; for He who sits upon the Throne as the King of kings, will also be the Priest of the Most High God. He will sit as a Priest upon his Throne,

He will be the true Melchizedek, King of Righteousness, and King of Peace, but Priest also of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth.

The supremacy, therefore, of Jerusalem and its King, the nations will be required to recognise. One prescribed test of their obedience will be their coming up to Jerusalem year by year to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

The Feast of Tabernacles was the most joyful of all the feasts of Israel. Throughout it they are commanded to dwell in booths, in remembrance of the time when they knew the sorrows of journeying through a waste and howling wilderness. But the wilderness will no longer be around them. They will be in the land of their long promised blessing: the joy of all lands. "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken—neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." (Isa. lxii. 4.) And seeing that nothing so much as contrast gives liveliness to our apprehensions, nothing so much heightens joy as the remembrance of sorrow past, there will be brought before the recollections of Israel, by the booths in which they sojourn, the features of a former scene that will stand in strange but blessed contrast with their then present and abiding joy. Around them will be the ingathered riches of their land; pledges and tokens of their being recipients not only of spiritual, but also of all natural blessings from the hand of the Lord their God. "Thou shalt observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine, and thou shalt rejoice in this feast . . . because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice." (Deut. xvi.) And in that day they will rejoice: "when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the Gentiles, the Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." (Psalm cxxvi. 1—3.)

There seems a peculiar suitability in the Gentiles being called to witness this great feast of the joy of Israel. They had been the witnesses of its desolation—many of them had been instrumental in causing that desolation. As fierce and cruel monsters they had devoured God's heritage; they had trodden it down, and exulted in its degradation. But now they will be gathered to behold its glory and its joy. "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isa. lx.) But they shall not merely behold, they shall also share the blessings of Israel. Grace will lead even to this; for grace loves to widen the streams of its goodness. And therefore, when we read of Israel's blessings, we read also of the Gentiles being called on to give thanks. "Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people." "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains." (Isa. xlii. 10, 11.) These and such like passages plainly show that the inhabitants of the world at large are called to share in the joy of Israel in that day.*

* The Feast of Tabernacles was the only one of the feasts of Israel that had an eighth day. (Lev. xxiii. 39.) The eighth, being the day after the Sabbath—the day on which the Lord rose from the dead, is always typical of resurrection-life in the new creation. Israel, in the millennium, will be reminded by it, that their final rest is not in the fair scene of prosperity which is then spread around them. They will look beyond, even to the

Yet, in the midst of all this prosperity, and glory, and joy, Jerusalem will remain holy. Their heart shall not become uplifted, nor their tongue haughty. Other nations, even while the hand of the Lord is pouring blessings upon them, will be discontented and disobey. Some will refuse to go up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and will receive, therefore, the due chastisement for their rebellion. But it shall not be so with Israel. The same grace that has given them

new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. In the millennium Israel will be yet in the flesh, and "in the flesh good doth not dwell." "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit." It baits and allures away from God and his ways, even where Satan is not, to stimulate its enmity. Their bodies also will be unredeemed, and the earth, though renovated, will not be *new*. The Lord will not yet have said, "Behold, I make all things new." Restraint of moral evil, or repression of natural decay, through the power of God in redemption, is blessed—yet it is very different from a condition in which there is nothing to be repressed, because all is good. This last condition will not pertain to Israel and the nations of the millennium, until the millennial earth and heavens have passed away, and no place been found for them.

In the millennium certain distinctions connected with the flesh, and which have no place in resurrection, will still continue—such, for example, as those between male and female—Jew and Gentile. In the millennium, the Gentiles, though entirely one with the Jews in all *spiritual* privileges, (for in the new creation there is no difference between Jew or Greek, male or female,) yet, as to national position, will stand in a secondary place. The first dominion will come to the daughter of Jerusalem. (Micah iv. 8.) This seems, therefore, to be another reason why the Gentiles should come up to celebrate that feast to which the eighth day was added; for it spoke both to Israel and to them of a future and more blessed hour, when there should be perfect co-equality in heavenly blessing.

That typical ordinances, such as the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, are not inconsistent with true spiritual religion, is proved by the appointment of two typical rites now—baptism and the Lord's Supper. If such types do not militate against spiritual worship in the Church, much less need the Feast of Tabernacles be objected to, seeing that it is so peculiarly connected with the *national* order of God's government.

their unequalled blessings, will have also subdued their hearts, to know and to fear the Lord their God. The prayer which they had offered will have been heard. They had said: "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of Man, whom thou madest strong for thyself. *So will we not go back from thee.*" (Ps. lxxx. 17, 18.) And they will not go back from Him: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses holiness unto the Lord"—that is, the whole external character of life (for that it is which is exhibited in the streets of a city) shall bear in all its parts, throughout all its detail, the impress of holiness unto the Lord. Religious life and fellowship shall be holy also; for the pots in the Lord's house, vessels which of old the priests had so often defiled, shall be like the bowls before the altar—holy. Private and domestic life shall be hallowed too; for "every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts, and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein; and in that day there shall be no more the Trafficker in the house of the Lord of hosts."*

* The word which I have translated "Trafficker," is the same as Canaanite. It seems to be an allusion to that which had given its characteristic feature to the closing period of the Times of the Gentiles, viz. mercantile power. See Zechariah v.—vision of the Ephah—and the whole of the eighteenth of Revelation.

FUTURITY OF THE MANIFESTATION OF ANTI-CHRIST.—HIS CONNECTION WITH JERUSALEM.

THERE are few things more necessary in prophetic enquiry, than to mark carefully the place which Jerusalem occupies in the dispensational arrangements of God. The chapters which we have just been considering in Zechariah, sufficiently manifest the importance of that city. A city on behalf of which the Lord will visibly interfere, and which he will so marvelously strengthen—a city that is to be so marked by holiness, and destined to be the centre whence light and truth are to be diffused over all nations, must be important in the sight of God, in proportion as He values that truth, and the spread of the knowledge of His own holy name. Ethiopia shall not stretch out her hands unto God until Israel shall first have become white as the snow in Salmon. (See Psalm lxxviii.) The ends of the earth will not fear Him, until after He has lifted up the light of his countenance on Israel. Jehovah (I quote the words of one of Israel's Psalms, lxxvii,) "Jehovah shall bless us, and (*i. e.* after that) all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

Early after the flood there were great developments of energy in many Gentile nations. Assyria under Nimrod, and Egypt under the Pharaohs, displayed no little intelligence and strength. But Egypt was rebuked and Assyria was restrained, until it had been fully proved whether Jerusalem was worthy of pre-

eminence in the earth. No Gentile empire was allowed to rise into supremacy—all were held, as it were, in check, until Israel and Jerusalem had been sufficiently tried, and manifested their unworthiness. This is one instance in which the dealings of God with the nations were made dependent on the condition of Jerusalem.

And when Israel and its kings had by transgression lost their blessings, and the glory of the reign of Solomon had faded away, the supremacy, which was taken from them, was given to certain Gentile nations, who were successively to arise and bear rule in the earth during the whole period of Israel's rejection. The first of these was the Chaldean empire under Nebuchadnezzar. The period termed by our Lord the "Times of the Gentiles," commences with the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. It is a period coincident, from its beginning to its close, with the treading down of Jerusalem. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles till the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Nebuchadnezzar, therefore, and the Gentile empires that have succeeded him, have only received their pre-eminence in consequence of Jerusalem's sin; and the reason why they were endowed with that pre-eminence was that they might chasten Jerusalem; and when they shall have fulfilled that purpose, they shall themselves be set aside and be made, because of their own evil, like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. In this we have another evidence that the earthly dispensations of God revolve around Jerusalem as their centre.

We find another example of this in the method which it has pleased God to adopt in giving the prophetic history of these nations. As soon as they arose, prophets were commissioned, but especially Daniel, to delineate their course. We might perhaps have expected that their history would have been given minutely and consecutively from its beginning to its close. But instead of this, it is only given in its connection with

Jerusalem ; and as soon as Jerusalem was crushed by the Romans, and ceased to retain a national position in the earth, all detailed history of the Gentile Empires is suspended. Many a personage most important in the world's history has since arisen. Charlemagne has lived, and Napoleon—many a monarch and many a conqueror—battles have been fought, kingdoms raised and kingdoms subverted—yet Scripture passes silently over all these things, however great in the annals of the Gentiles, because Jerusalem has nationally ceased to be. Eighteen hundred years ago, the detail of Gentile history was suspended—it is suspended still, nor will it be resumed until Jerusalem re-assumes a national position. Then the history of the Gentiles is again minutely given ; and the glory and dominion of their last great King described. He is found to be especially connected with Jerusalem and the land. “He is to glorify himself on Zion, (Isaiah xiv. 13. Daniel xi. 45,) and to be broken and trodden under foot in the land, and on the mountains of Israel.” (Isaiah xiv. 24—27.)

That the Jews whilst yet unconverted will go back to their land, and there re-assume a national standing, has been already proved from the concluding chapters of Zechariah ; for if, as those chapters teach, they are nationally converted *when in their city*, they must of course have returned to it when unconverted. Nor would any one who contemplates their present circumstances in the mere light of human probability, esteem that return to be unlikely. Their land is, as it were, waiting for them unoccupied. It is still a goodly land, and as forming the great link of connection between western Europe and the East, it is peculiarly adapted for an intellectual, enterprising, and wealthy people whose idol is commercial gain. The Gentile nations also, who used to persecute, have begun to favour them. Many, says the prophet Daniel, when speaking of this period, “many shall cleave to them with flatteries.”

(Chap. xi. 34.) They speak of them as an ancient people—a people wise in their generation and energetic—useful therefore, and even necessary for purposes of national advancement and prosperity. What wonder, then, that the combined influences arising from these things should soon lead them back to their city, and that the blindness of the present hour should be ready to mistake that return for their restoration under the hand of the Lord in blessing?

The condition of their land when they return is just such as might be expected from their character. “Replenished from the east, their land will be full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots; their land is also full of idols.” (Isa. ii.) Such will be the aspect of their land; and as to themselves, pride and haughtiness, the loftiness of the cedar of Lebanon, and the stiff sturdiness of the oak of Bashan will be their characteristics, even till the day of the Lord shall come. There is an awful passage in Ezekiel that speaks of this their return, chap. xxii. 19—22.) “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Because ye are all become dross, behold therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem, as they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.”

The last great king that is to arise among the Gentiles—one who is called in Daniel emphatically, “THE King,” (xi. 36,) and “THE Prince that shall come,” is one of the chief instruments by which the judgments of the Divine hand will reach that evil people.

As the history of this person is so important, and leads us to the very climax both of Jewish and Gentile iniquity, it is needful that the statements of Scripture respecting him should, in outline at least, be familiar to our minds. If his rise be future, it behoves us to *know* that it is future. My present object therefore will be to quote such passages as prove his futurity and describe his actings in relation to Jerusalem. The first chapters to which I refer shall be the eighth and the concluding part of the eleventh of Daniel.

The subject of the book of Daniel as a whole is the indignation of God directed through the Gentiles upon Jerusalem; but the vision of the eighth chapter is expressly said to relate *to the end of that indignation*. "Understand, O son of man, for *at the time of the end* shall be the vision." (Verse 17.) . . . "And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in *the last end of the indignation*, for at the time appointed the end shall be." (Verse 19.) No words can be more express than these. Unless therefore we are prepared to say that the indignation against Jerusalem has terminated, and the time of blessing, both on Israel and the nations, come; we must admit that the king described in this chapter has not yet arisen. Facts prove that no such person is at present acting in the earth; and he cannot have finished his course and be no more, for in that case Jerusalem would have been forgiven.

The criteria supplied in this chapter, to which this person when he does arise, must answer, are as follow:

I. He is to arise from the eastern branch of the Roman Empire, viz. from one of the four parts into which the empire of Alexander the Great was divided, (see verses 8 and 9, also 21, 22, 23;) *i. e.* he must arise either from Greece, Egypt, Syria, or Turkey.*

* Two of these are excluded by the eleventh chapter, viz. Egypt and Syria; for he is there said to conflict with the kings

II. When he comes to Jerusalem, he finds the daily sacrifice offered there, and after a time he causes it to cease. (See verses 11 and 12.)

III. He arises when the transgressors are come to the full. (Verse 23.)

IV. He acts during the last end of the indignation against Israel. (Verses 17 and 19.)

V. He stands up not only against Jehovah as Jehovah, but also against the Prince of princes, *i. e.* against the Lord Jesus, the Messiah of Israel. (Verse 25.)

VI. He is broken without hand, *i. e.* by no human instrumentality, but immediately by the Lord.

It is scarcely needful to say that no one has yet arisen in whom these characteristics unite. Neither Mahomet, nor the Pope, nor Antiochus Epiphanes answer thereunto.* And if further evidence of the futurity of this person be required, it is found abundantly in the end of the eleventh chapter. That chapter, after mentioning in the 33rd verse the captivity of the Jews under the Romans, rapidly, and in accordance with the principle to which I have referred, passes on

of both these countries, and to overthrow them. (Verse 40.) Greece, therefore, and Turkey alone remain. Of these two, I have little hesitation in selecting Greece as the place of his origin, for in the Revelation he is represented by the leopard, which is the beast that in Daniel vii. symbolizes Greece, and it is also said, "I will raise up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece." (Zech. ix. 13.)

* Mahomet and the Pope may be said to answer to none. Mahomet arose from Arabia, which, according to God's covenant with Ishmael, has always remained independent of the four great empires that have successively arisen, and was never incorporated with either. Antiochus is by far the most remarkable forerunner of Antichrist that has yet arisen. He did act in Jerusalem and profane the temple, (see first chapter of first book of Maccabees;) but he did not exist in "the last end of the indignation," nor when "the transgressors had come to the full;" nor did he "stand up against the Prince of princes," for Christ had not then been manifested; nor was he "broken without hand."

to the time of the end, and renews its detailed history as soon as he who is emphatically termed "THE King" appears upon the scene. "THE King shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and *shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished, for that that is determined shall be done.*"* And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain, (*i. e.* Mount Zion;) yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. And at THAT time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and it 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 (Daniel's people—Israel) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt; and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Ch. xii. 1, 2, 3.) Are all these things fulfilled? Has there been one who has prospered till the indignation has been accomplished? Has all that has been determined been done? Has any one, after having thus glorified himself on Zion, been destroyed, and that at the time of Israel's deliverance and the resurrection of the saints? Is Israel delivered? Are the saints raised and shining as the brightness of the firmament? All these things

* The words "prosper till the indignation be accomplished," identifies this king with the king of the eighth chapter; the speaking against the God of gods, as well as the period, identifies him with the little horn of the seventh chapter; and the words, "that is determined shall be done," identifies the description with that of the last verse of the ninth chapter, and with the tenth chapter of Isaiah, ver. 22, 23.

must have come to pass if the prophecy respecting this wicked king has been accomplished.

Every other part of Scripture that mentions him confirms these conclusions. In the seventh chapter, for example, he is described under the symbol of a "horn that had eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things," ver. 10. In him the power of all the ten kingdoms of the Roman world is so concentrated—all are so linked with him in his blasphemies, (for all the ten kings agree and give their kingdom unto him till the words of God shall be fulfilled, (Rev. xvii. 13 and 17;) there is therefore such a unity of evil, that the stroke which is called forth by him falls equally on them, and they and he are together destroyed. "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame." (Dan. vii. 11.) Is there any one at present who concentrates in his own person all the authority of the whole Roman world? Is there any one who thus rules from England to the Euphrates, and within that sphere is persecuting and wearing out the saints of God? At present there is none such; he is yet to arise. But when he does arise, he will not pass away until the Ancient of days shall sit, and judgment shall be given to the saints of the high places (עֲלִיּוֹתַיִם) and the time comes for the saints to possess the kingdom. (See verses 21, 22.) How all this confirms the oft-repeated statement that he exists "in the last end of the indignation;" for the indignation will indeed have ceased when the time comes for the saints to possess the kingdom.

There is only one passage more that I will quote from Daniel. It is in the last verse of the ninth chapter. "And he (*i. e.* the Prince that shall come) shall confirm a covenant with many for one hebdomad (of years,) and in the midst of the hebdomad he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and on the idolatrous

pinnacle shall be the Desolator, even until the consummation, and that determined is poured upon the Desolator." The power of the Desolator, *i. e.* this same wicked king and his idolatrous worship, are here again stated as continuing *till the consummation*—in other words, "until the end of the indignation."*

This passage in Daniel is important, not only because of the remarkable character of the events predicted in it, but also because of its connection with Isaiah. The last clause of the ninth of Daniel is a virtual quotation of the twenty-third verse of the tenth of Isaiah.†

The commencement of the tenth of Isaiah, is a description of the iniquity that will prevail in Israel in the latter day. "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed, to turn aside the needy from judg-

* For remarks on the word I have translated hebdomad, see page 13.

I have rendered this passage as literally as possible. "Pinnacle of abominations or idols" is a Hebraism for "idolatrous pinnacle." It would seem as if the Idol of Antichrist, mentioned in the thirteenth of Revelation (verse 14), were to be placed on the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem. The Hebrew word for pinnacle answers 'as nearly as possible to the Greek *πτερύγιον*, where our Lord was placed by Satan. (Matt. iv. 5.)

This wicked king, here called "the Prince that shall come," and the Desolator, will flatter Israel at first and make a covenant with many of them for seven years, in the midst of which period he will break his covenant, and for the latter half, *i. e.* 1260 days, set up his own idolatrous worship, and become their persecutor.

† In the Hebrew this connection is clearly seen.

כִּי כָלָה וְנִחְרָצָה אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּבָאִית עֲשָׂה

For a consummation, and that determined, the Lord Jehovah of hosts maketh. (Isaiah x. 23.)

וְעַד-כָּלָה וְנִחְרָצָה

Even until the consummation and that determined. (Daniel ix. 27.)

ment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless. And what will ye do in the day of visitation and in the desolation that shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help, and where will ye leave your glory?"

The chapter then proceeds to describe the last great Head of the Gentiles who shall be used as the rod in God's hand against Israel. "I will send him against an hypocritical nation (*i. e.* Israel) 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." (Ver. 6.)

But when the Lord shall have sufficiently fulfilled his purposes against Israel by means of this haughty and evil king, He will at last judge him. "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria and the glory of his high looks, for he saith, by the strength of my hand I have done it and by my wisdom; for I am prudent," &c. "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness, and under his glory He shall kindle a burning, like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His Holy One for a flame, and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers (*i. e.* all his defences) in one day; and shall consume the glory of his forest and of his fruitful field, both soul and body; and they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob shall no more again stay upon him that smote them, but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the

remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God: for though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet (only) a remnant of them shall return; the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness: for the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption even determined in the midst of all the land."

In the fourteenth of Isaiah also, we find the triumphant song of the delivered remnant of Israel, when they celebrate the fall of this last great oppressor. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations; for thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation (Zion) in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. . . . The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand; that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it, and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"

It is needless to multiply quotations. The rise of such a king—his connection with Jerusalem, at the closing period of its history in this present age—his being the last of the long series of Gentile kings, of whom Nebuchadnezzar was the first—his dominion over all the ten kingdoms, eastern and western, of the Roman world—the secular and non-ecclesiastical character of his power: all these things are written so plainly, that it is difficult to see how any doubt can exist upon a subject so simply revealed.

Nor are the statements of the New Testament discordant with the Old. It would be impossible that Daniel and the Revelation should both describe the period which immediately precedes the appearing of the Lord, and should speak of the same ten kingdoms, and of the same city, Jerusalem, without mentioning the one great fact of that period—the manifestation and reign of this great instrument of Satan.

Accordingly we find the Revelation describing him in close accordance with Daniel, and using in some instances almost the very same expressions. The following are examples :

Daniel. . “ He shall speak great words against the Most High.” (vii. 25.)

Revelation. “ Speaking great things and blasphemies.” (xiii. 5.)

Daniel. . “ He made war with the saints, and prevailed. (viii. 21.)

Revelation. “ He made war with the saints, and overcame.” (xiii. 7.)

Daniel. . “ They shall be given into his hands for a time, times, and a half ;” *i. e.* 1260 days. (vii. 25.)

Revelation. “ He continues forty and two months ;” *i. e.* 1260 days. (xiii. 5.)

Even if the thirteenth of the Revelation were the only chapter that described this monarch, we might be certain that he had not yet appeared. He is described as a Beast having ten horns crowned. Now suppose we were to admit that the ten kingdoms or kings represented by these horns were developed—which they are not—yet, even then, who is there that is now wearing the diadems either of the whole or the half of the Roman earth? Whenever such a one does arise, he will exist unto the end. He concludes the age.

Who is there that is now "making war with the saints and overcoming them," either in the whole or in the half of the Roman world?

Who is there that is worshipped by every one whose name is not written in the Lamb's book of life?

Who is there that is so distinctively secular in his character—so distinctively a king—as to have standing in his presence, one who acts as an ecclesiastical minister on his behalf, and gathers around the King, or rather around the Image of the King, the worship of all over whom he reigns? Where is there any such image or any such worship now? When has fire been made to come down from heaven in the sight of men, (ver. 13,) or when has an image been miraculously made to speak? (ver. 15.) When the Scripture states that God will send strong delusion, and permit Satan to work "deceiving miracles," it means what it says; and inasmuch as some of those miracles are mentioned, and such miracles have never yet been seen, it remains that the time is future.

The countries once included within the Roman empire are those which are to be placed finally under the headship of this great instrument of Satan. We cannot wonder that they should be judicially visited by such an infliction, or that "strong delusion should be sent on them to believe a lie," when we remember how great their responsibilities and privileges have been. It is in these countries that the light of revelation, first through Israel, and afterwards through the Christian Church, has most peculiarly shone. In them Christ and his Apostles personally ministered. Supremacy also in the earth, and therefore responsibility as to its control, has, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar to the present hour, been held by these nations. Here arts and civilization have chiefly flourished, and the influence thus acquired, religiously and secularly, has stamped a character on the world. And what has that character been? It would be vain to argue, if conscience does not rightly answer that question.

In considering the present condition of these nations, two things may be discerned. In the first place, religious or ecclesiastical influences, hitherto dominant, are being so counterbalanced by the introduction of other influences, as to be deprived of that exclusive pre-eminence which in former ages they have possessed. At Constantinople, for example, and in Egypt, many principles are being introduced which are taking from Mahomedanism exclusive dominance there. The dominance of popery, in countries where it was formerly supreme, is being checked by other influences. In our own country, the partial spread of popery, as well as of latitudinarianism and infidelity, is taking from Protestantism the exclusive position which it once occupied here. All this makes it the more easy for the secular power throughout these countries to establish itself in the place of exclusive sovereignty.

But secondly, the governments themselves are becoming or have become the mere servants of the will of the people. Formerly, they professed to have a will and a judgment of their own, and to rule according to that judgment. Now, they seek to embody the will of society, in other words, to embody and carry out the will of the people whom they profess to govern, but whom in reality they serve. And if Judaism be found among those people, Judaism must be honoured. The temple must be maintained for Juggernaut, and the mosque builded for Mahomet. The priests of Rome must be educated and sustained—Socinianism, patronized or endowed—for society has a right to think for itself. The mind of society is that which it is the object of government to express. God, it is supposed, has not revealed his will, or revealed it so obscurely that it cannot be understood. It cannot be determined whether it be sinful or not sinful to worship idols. Who can tell whether Mahomet and Socinus, and the Jewish teacher, may not all be right, and Christ be unworthy of worship as the Son of the living God?

At all events, whatever be right or whatever be wrong, the mind of society must be expressed,—and the government, seeing that it owes to society its creation and its authorization, is the fit organ for its expression. Such are the growing principles of the present hour. But God has not vacated the throne of His glory—He may for a season “be still and refrain Himself,” but He has not forgotten the preciousness of His truth, nor the glory of the name of His Son, nor forsaken the prosecution of the plans of His own eternal wisdom. He will surely visit abominations such as these.

That such principles are most grateful to the tastes and dispositions of the natural heart cannot be doubted. When adopted therefore by governors, it becomes more easy for the authority they desire to be reached and retained. A system wisely framed in accordance with these principles will doubtless prevail, even before Antichrist is revealed;* and false religious systems, whether Jewish or Mahomedan or nominally Christian, (Popery, I doubt not will be among the foremost,) will willingly bow to it and become its handmaids. They will sell themselves to be the channels of its influence, and will thus add to their own intrinsic evil the guilt of being the pillars of this form of concentrated ungodliness.

Antichrist himself, when he first arises, will adopt and sustain this system. But as soon as he has sufficient power, as soon as the ten kings agree to give all their power to him (see Rev. xvii.) he will turn on

* That system is symbolised by the Harlot of the xviith of Revelation—the woman in the Ephah of Zech. v. For further observations on this subject I would refer to a former work of mine entitled “Thoughts on the Apocalypse,” or to an extract from it on the xiiiith, xviith, and xviiiith chapters, published separately, with a prophetic map. Both these works may be obtained at Messrs. Nisbet and Co., or at Campbell’s, Holborn, (opposite Gray’s Inn Lane.)

it, utterly destroy it, and become himself supreme. He will be the last centre of all governmental authority in the Roman earth, and all shall wonder after and worship him, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. The liberty of the mind of man and all the other boasts of latitudinarianism will vanish then. One will have come in his own name, and God will allow him to enforce the power of that name, and Jew and Gentile alike will bow beneath his power throughout all the appointed sphere. They will own him as their Lord, and worship him as their God.

Such are the prospects of the nations in the midst of which we dwell. The tide of circumstances is setting rapidly towards this last great gathering point of evil. It is an hour therefore when we peculiarly need watchfulness and wisdom to judge every principle and every system simply by the Word of God. God's truths and God's principles remain unchanged. He has revealed them, and revealed them plainly, by his holy apostles and prophets, and blessed are they who cleave to them and seek to walk according to these testimonies. In the midst of the Antichristian darkness of the closing hour, there are some who will keep and testify to truth. They are mentioned in the Revelation, as those who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus; and even in heaven their faithfulness is remembered with praise and with thanksgiving, "as having overcome because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and not having loved their lives unto the death." (Rev. xii.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF ANTICHRIST IN THE WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.

I. *His moral characteristics are these.*

- Isaiah xiv. 14. . He shall say in his heart, I will be
like the Most High.
- Dan. viii. 25. . He shall stand up against the Prince
of princes.
- Dan. xi. 36. . He shall exalt himself above every
god.
- 2 Thess. ii. 4. . He shall exalt himself "above all that
is called God."
- 2 Thess. ii. 4. . He shall show himself that he is God.
- 1 John ii. 22. . He shall deny both the Father and
the Son.
- Rev. xiii. 6. . He shall open his mouth in blasphemy
against God.
- Rev. xvii. 3. . He shall be full of names of blasphemy.

II. *The extent of his power.*

- Isaiah xiv. 16. . He shall make the earth to tremble,
and shall shake kingdoms.
- Isaiah xiv. 17. . He shall make the world as a wilder-
ness.
- Dan. vii. 25. . Times and laws shall be given into
his hand.
- Dan. viii. 9. . He shall wax exceeding great.
- Dan. viii. 24. . His power shall be mighty. . . . He
shall destroy wonderfully.

- Dan. xi. 36. . He shall do according to his will.
 Dan. xi. 40. . He shall enter into the countries and
 overflow.
 Dan. xi. 42. . He shall stretch forth his hand upon
 the countries.
 2 Thess. ii. 9. . His coming shall be with all power.
 Rev. xiii. 7. . Power shall be given him over all kin-
 dreds, and tongues, and nations.
 Rev. xvii. 13. . The ten kings shall give their strength
 and power unto him.

III. *His power will be supported by miracles.*

- 2 Thess. ii. 9. . His coming shall be after the working
 of Satan, with all power, and signs,
 and lying wonders.
 Rev. xiii. 12. . He that ministereth in his presence
 shall do great wonders, so that he
 shall make fire come down from
 heaven on the earth, in the sight of
 men, and shall deceive them that
 dwell upon the earth by means of
 these miracles which he shall have
 power to do.
 Rev. xiii. 15. . He shall have power to give life unto
 the image of the beast, that the image
 of the beast should speak, and cause
 that as many as would not worship
 the image of the beast should be
 killed.

IV. *His reception on the earth.*

- Rev. xiii. 8. . All that dwell upon the earth shall
 worship him whose names are not
 written in the Lamb's book of life.
 Rev. xiii. 15. . Whosoever will not worship the image
 of the beast shall be killed.

- Rev. xvii. 8. . All whose names are not written in
the book of life shall wonder.
John v. 43. . If another shall come in his own name,
him ye will receive.

V. *The place of his manifestation in blasphemy.*

- Isaiah xiv. 13. . He will sit on the mount of the congrega-
tion, on the sides of the north.
Dan. viii. 11. . He will take away the daily sacrifice.
Dan. xi. 45. . He will plant the tabernacles of his
palace on the glorious holy moun-
tain.
2 Thess. ii. 4. . He will sit in the temple of God.

VI. *He is named—*

- Isaiah xiv. 12. . "Lucifer," as blasphemously assuming
Christ's character of "the morning
star."
Isaiah xiv. 4. . "The King of Babylon."
Isaiah x. 5. . "Asshur," or "Assyria," as being king
over that country.
Dan. vii. 20. . "The Horn that has eyes," as denoting
intelligence and strength.
Isaiah xxx. 33. . "THE KING," for whom Tophet is
prepared.

These are his principal names in the Old Testament, where he is always referred to in connection with the Jews. In the New Testament he is called, in contrast to the holiness which is the Church's character, the Man of Sin, or the Wicked One. In Isaiah also he is called the Wicked One—"By the breath of his lips He (the Lord) shall slay the Wicked One." Isaiah xi., (quoted in 2 Thess. ii.) In John he is called "the Antichrist," in his special character of opposition to

Christ. In the Revelation he is called the Beast, as denoting his moral estimate in the sight of Heaven.

VII. *He will be destroyed by no mere human agency.*

Dan. viii. 25. . He shall be broken without hand.

Isa. xi. 4. . The Lord with the breath of his lips
 shall slay the wicked one.

2 Thess. ii. 8. The Lord shall consume him with the breath of his lips, and with the brightness of his coming.

Rev. xix. 15, 20. When He cometh forth who shall tread the wine-press of wrath, the Beast is taken, and cast alive into the lake of fire.

The following connections may also be found useful:

I. *Between Daniel, chap. viii. and chap. ix.*

viii. 25. . By peace he shall destroy many.

ix. 27. . Hē (the Prince that shall come) shall confirm the covenant with many.

viii. 11. . He shall take away the daily sacrifice.

ix. 27. . He shall cause the sacrifice to cease.

viii. 19. . He shall prosper in the latter end of the indignation.

ix. 27. till that determined is poured on the
desolator.

II. *Between chap. viii. and chap. xi.*

viii. 9. . He waxes great towards the pleasant land.

xi. 41. . He enters into the glorious land.

viii. 17. . At the time of the ⁹end shall be the vision.

xi. 40, 41. At the time of the end shall he enter.

viii. 19, 24. He prospers in the last end of the indig-
nation.

- ix. 36. . He shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.

Between chap. vii. and chap. xi.

- vii. 25. . He shall speak great words against the Most High.
 xi. 36. . He shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods.
 vii. 25. . He shall change times and laws.
 xi. 37, 38. He shall not regard the God of his fathers, but honour another.
 vii. 22. . He shall continue until the saints possess the kingdom.
 xi. 36. . He shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.

EXTRACTS FROM IRENÆUS, JEROME, CYRIL,
&c. RESPECTING ANTICHRIST.

IN giving the following extracts from the Fathers, I scarcely need say that I do not quote them as having authority. The writings of the Fathers stand strangely and sorrowfully contrasted with those of the Prophets and Apostles. The rays of light in them are few and far between; the simplicity of the Gospel lost—the inventions of men substituted for the commandments of God. Christianity, however, had not at that time become professedly *identified with* the Gentile nations. Hence probably it was, that the Fathers continued to apply the prophecies of Daniel and the New Testament with much clearness to the condition of the Roman nations. They had then no temptation to regard the nations as of the Church; and therefore, long after other lines of truth became obliterated, the early Christian writers retained, as the following extracts show, the expectation of the rise of Antichrist as the last Head of Gentile power. They taught also the personal Advent of the Lord Jesus as the cause of his destruction.

I may also add, that I do not give these extracts as containing *precisely* my own sentiments. With their general bearing I agree. I have, I believe, translated as literally as possible.

Irenæus.

John the disciple of the Lord has spoken yet more plainly concerning the concluding period (of this age)

and concerning these ten kings who are existent in it, among whom that empire which now reigns over the world will be divided.

Irenæus.

And Daniel expressly says, that the toes of that image which was seen by Nebuchadnezzar, upon which came a stone cut out without hands, represent the conclusion of the fourth empire, and as he himself says,the ten toes, these are ten kings among whom the kingdom will be divided.

Cyril.

But this afore-mentioned Antichrist comes when the times of the sovereignty of the Romans shall be fulfilled, and the concluding events of the world draw nigh. Ten kings of the Romans arise at the same time, in different places perhaps, but reigning at the same period. But after these, the Antichrist is the eleventh, having by his magic and evil skill violently possessed himself of the Roman power. Three of those who have reigned before him, he will subdue—the other seven he will hold in subjection to himself. At first, he assumes a character of gentleness (as if a wise and understanding person) pretending both to moderation and philanthropy, deceiving both by lying miracles and prodigies, which come from his magical deceptions, the Jews, as if he were the expected Messiah. Afterwards, he will addict himself to every kind of evil, cruelty, and excess, so as to surpass all who have been unjust and impious before him, having a bloody and relentless and pitiless mind, and full of wily devices against all, but especially against us Christians. But after having dared such things for three years and six months, he will be annihilated by the second glorious coming from heaven of the Only be-

gotten Son of God, even Him who is our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, the true Messiah, who having destroyed Antichrist by the Spirit of his mouth, will deliver him to the fire of Gehenna.

*Apostolic Constitutions.**

For in the latter days false prophets shall be multiplied and corrupters of the Word—and then shall appear the world-deceiver, the enemy of the truth, the patron of falsehood, whom the Lord Jesus shall destroy with the Spirit of his mouth, even He who by his lips shall destroy the wicked one. . . . At that time the Lord shall come and all the saints with Him to condemn the world-deceiving Devil, and to assign to each according to his doing.

Jerome.

“A time” signifies *a year*; “Times,” according to the customary usage of the language of the Hebrews (who, as well as the Greeks, have a dual number) represent *two years*, but “half a time” signifies *six months*—during which the saints are to be permitted to fall under the power of Antichrist, in order that the Jews may be condemned, who, refusing to believe the truth, have believed a lie. Concerning which time our Saviour also speaks in the Gospel, “Unless those days were shortened there should no flesh be saved.”

Jerome, writing to Porphyry respecting Daniel xi.

But we and those with us interpret these things better and more rightly, viz. that Antichrist is about to do these things at the end of the world—a person who is about to arise from a low people, that is, the

* A compilation from earlier writings.

Jewish nation ; and he will be so low and contemptible, that the royal dignity is not given to him, and it is by treachery and deception that he obtains the rule, so that the strength of the warlike Roman people will be overthrown and trampled into the dust by him ; and this he will do because he will pretend himself to be the Prince of the Covenant, *i. e.* of the Law and Covenant of God. And he will enter into the richest cities, and will do what his fathers have not done, neither his fathers' fathers ; for no one of the Jews, except Antichrist, has ever reigned over the whole world. And he will enter into a plan in order to oppose and overthrow the most fixed thoughts of the saints, and for a time will be master of every thing, whilst the will of God shall permit him to do these things.

Jerome.

But those who are with us (*i. e.* Christians) referring these things also to Antichrist, say, that he is first about to fight against the King of the South, *i. e.* Egypt—and afterwards will overcome the Lybians and Ethiopians—which three, out of the ten horns we have just before read of, are crushed—and that he will come into the land of Israel, and that many, either cities or provinces, will surrender to him.

Theodoret.

But these things by no means suit Antiochus, for he conquered neither the Lybians nor the Ethiopians, nor even Egypt itself. For in obedience to the injunction of the Romans he turned back. So that hence we get the meaning of the three horns which the little horn overthrew : for here we find that he will overthrow and bring into subjection to himself three very great nations, viz. Egypt and Ethiopia and Lybia, held, as seems probable, under the power of three kings.

Jerome.

And he exalts himself above all that is called God, and above the gods of all the nations.

Jerome.

That day shall not come, says the Apostle, except there come a falling away (which is in Greek called an Apostasy) first, so as for all the nations which are subject to the Roman yoke to recede from them, and for him to be revealed, *i.e.* manifested, whom all the words of the prophets afore-announce—the man of sin, in whom is the fountain of all sins.

Cyril on 2 Thess. ii.

What temple is this? He means the destroyed temple of the Jews. Let it not be supposed to be that in which we are. Why do we say this? In order that we may not be supposed to favour ourselves. For if he comes to the Jews as Messiah, and wishes to be worshipped by the Jews, in order that he may the better deceive them, he will diligently set about building the temple, thus causing it to be believed that he is that one of the family of David, who should build the temple originally reared by Solomon.

John Damascene.

But he (Antichrist) shall come into the temple of God, not ours, but the ancient one, that of the Jews—for he will come not to us but to the Jews.

Gregory Nazianzen.

With respect to the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, they say that the temple in

Jerusalem will be built by and by—Antichrist being about to be believed by the Jews to be the Messiah, and being about to establish himself and to be acknowledged as the king of the whole civilized world—(*οικουμενη*—the Roman world.) But he shall come for the desolation of the world: for it is “the abomination of desolation.”

Sulpitius Severus.

But when we enquired of him concerning the end of the age, he said to us, “that the Empire of the East should be seized on by Antichrist, who shall occupy Jerusalem as the seat and head of his kingdom—that by him the city and temple should be repaired.”

Cyril.

And who is this or of what character of working? Declare to us, O Paul. He answers: his coming is after the working of Satan, in all power and miracles and prodigies of falsehood—intimating this, that Satan uses this person as an instrument, acting in his own person through him.

Jerome.

And behold, he says, there were in that horn eyes, as the eyes of a man. Let us not think him (as the opinion of some is) to be either the Devil or a demon, but a human individual in whom all Satan will dwell bodily.

THOUGHTS ON MATTHEW XXIV.

FROM all that has been said in the preceding chapters, it is obvious that the great leading events of "the end of this age" (Matt. xiii. 40.) have been revealed very plainly in the Old Testament prophets. They have spoken of the final visitation on Jerusalem—of the destruction of the Gentile power now paramount in the earth—of the manifestation of the Messiah of Israel in glory—and of the forgiveness and restitution of Jerusalem. Consequently, these events must have been familiar to the expectations of all who knew what God had spoken through the prophets of Israel.

When, therefore, the disciples of the Lord Jesus stood around Him, as He was quitting for the last time the gates of Jerusalem, and heard Him speak of the desolation that was about to come upon that city and its temple, it was most natural that their thoughts should instantly revert to the testimonies of the prophets respecting the closing events of the age—that they should think of what Daniel and Zechariah had written respecting the "last end of the indignation," and imagine that the Lord was speaking respecting that same final hour of visitation. How could they have thought otherwise, with the knowledge they then possessed? Hence, as soon as He had spoken of the desolation of the temple, they instantly said, "Master, when shall these things be?"—that is, when shall this destruction of which thou hast spoken fall upon this

temple?—and, “what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?”

They instantly connected (and herein lay their error) the destruction of the temple with the end of the age, and with the manifestation of the Lord in glory. They imagined that when his prediction respecting the overthrow of the temple should be accomplished, He would appear in his glory and terminate the indignation against Jerusalem, by the destruction both of its Gentile oppressors and of his own adversaries in Israel. It was this error that the Lord Jesus in the succeeding prophecy sought to correct. He had no desire to lessen in their souls their apprehension of those great events which are yet to occur at the end of the age. He did not wish that they should forget one word which the prophets had spoken respecting that all-important crisis in the history of Israel and of men; but He *did* desire to correct their mistake as to the *time* of his appearing, and to enlarge their knowledge respecting the circumstances that were first to come to pass.

The history of the present dispensation—the dispensation in which we live—was that of which the disciples were chiefly ignorant. They imagined that the time of suffering and reproach for the servants of God was nearly concluded, and that the kingdom of God was about immediately to APPEAR. They were uninstructed in the history of Christianity through the long eighteen hundred years which have since witnessed its rise and its corruption. The long absence of their Master from the earth—the character of the service in which they were about to be employed, in gathering together the Church of God—and all the attendant sorrows, were as yet unknown to them. Of the corruptions of professing Christianity, and how it would combine both with Judaism and national Gentilism in giving birth to the antichristian abominations of the latter day—of all this they knew nothing. They

thought that the evil generation then around them was almost immediately to pass away from before the presence of their Master, manifested as the King of Israel in his glory, and that it was to be succeeded by that new generation who should "know the Lord," whom men should call "priests of the Lord, and ministers of their God."

Accordingly, the first object of the Lord Jesus in this prophecy was to instruct them as to the character of the period in which they themselves were about to serve and to suffer. He knew that wars were about to come upon the land of Israel, to result in a more entire desolation of Jerusalem than any that yet had been. He knew that the sorrows thus about to come would in many respects resemble those more terrible calamities which are to conclude the age, and that his disciples, if not forewarned, would be likely to regard these early sorrows (especially when Satan had raised up false Christs around them) as signs of the near approach of the end. Against this He guards them. He tells them to beware of considering these things as signs of the end: "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass. BUT THE END IS NOT YET."

It would indeed have been joy to the disciples, if these events had ushered in the end. They would have rested from their labours, and received their crown of life, and been numbered among those "saints of the high places," to whom, it had been said in Daniel, "the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, should be given." "Creation would have been freed from the bondage of corruption, and all the trees of the wood have clapped their hands." "Nation would have ceased to rise up

against nation, neither would they have learned war any more." "The Lord would have opened his hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing." "Truth would have sprung out of the earth, and righteousness have looked down from heaven."

But how different was the scene about to be opened. Christianity, first to appear in Jerusalem, and to be rejected—like another Naomi, driven from the land of its birth, was to go down and complete a sorrowful sojourn among the Gentiles, there to lose its manhood and its strength. The nations unreached by its gracious testimony were to continue fierce monsters, devouring one another. "Nation," said our Lord, "shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." The relation of God to the earth, instead of being one of millennial peace, was to be a relation of judgment. He would be obliged, because of iniquity, to send the earthquake, the pestilence, and the famine. "There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places." The relation of the nations to the Church was to be one of fierce and destructive persecution. "They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all the Gentiles (*τῶν ἐθνῶν*) for my name's sake." And in the midst of these trials the energy of the Church itself would decay; evil would arise in its own bosom, and because iniquity should abound, the love of the greater part, (*τῶν πολλῶν*) even of real saints, would wax cold; and it would be found a hard thing to hold fast unto the end. "He that ENDURETH to the end, the same shall be saved."

Such is the picture drawn by our Lord himself of the dispensation in which we live. And how truly has it been verified! Yet this is the picture which we Gentile Christians have ventured to reverse. "Wise in our own conceits," we have not only borne false witness to Israel, and quenched the prophecies which speak of the judgments coming on them, and of the succeeding

glory, but we have perverted also the prophecies which speak of our own corruptions. We have said that there has been and shall be, both in the Churches and in the world, progress of light and increase of blessing, and neither the most obvious facts nor the plainest testimonies of Scripture have availed to awaken us from the delusive dream. We turn to the countries where St. Paul and the Apostles first spread the light of Christianity, and we behold black, settled darkness; we look upon the western nations of Europe, and we see worldliness—idolatry—infidelity; we look to the condition of real Christianity, we discern unsettlement—discord—love waxing cold; and yet many still persist in saying that progress is being made—progress according to Christ and to God. But the Lord does not say so. He has said, “As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed.” (Matt. xxiv. 37.) “This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come.” “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.” (1 Tim. iii. 1, 13.) Such is the picture drawn by the Word of God, and verified by each day’s experience. Nevertheless, in the midst of all this ruin, “the Gospel shall be preached for a witness”—(observe the word, *for a witness*,)—throughout all the world, (*οικουμένη*,) and then shall the END come.

Here the first division of this prophecy concludes. The Lord had given a brief and rapid statement of the general character of events throughout the dispensation, up to the time of the END. It is usual in Scripture to give general descriptions first. They are given first, and extend over the whole of the period spoken of, and then the same or part of the same ground is traced again with more particularity of detail. Accordingly, the next division of this chapter, extending from the 15th to the 28th inclusive, is as specific as the former part had been general. It refers to a period yet future—the period termed in Daniel “the time of

the end"—when Jerusalem shall again be inhabited by her own people, and the iniquity of Israel, of the Gentiles, and of a large portion of professing Christianity be gathered round a common centre of apostasy in the worship of Antichrist in Jerusalem.

And here we arrive at that part of the prophecy in which the words of our Lord agree with those of Daniel and the Prophets of the Old Testament. He had indeed added new things; for a scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven should bring out of his treasures things *new* and *old*. He had given the moral history of the lengthened period in which we live—a period respecting which the Old Testament affords no detail—and now, in proceeding to speak of the hour which immediately precedes his appearing, He would necessarily dwell on those events which form the great theme of the Old Testament prophecy when treating of the time of the end.

I have already referred in the previous papers to the testimony of Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah, respecting that "time of the end." We have seen that they all speak of Israel, unconverted, being nationally in Jerusalem at the time when the Lord appears. We have seen that they speak of the temple as existing—of its being profaned, and the Idol of the Desolator being set there—and that it is said by Daniel to be "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time." And these are the very things of which the Lord Jesus speaks. He speaks of the Idol (for abomination is in Hebrew the same word as Idol) being set in the Holy Place. He speaks of the time of trouble such as never was. His words are in fact a quotation of the words of Daniel. The words in Daniel are, "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time." (Ch. xii. 1.) The words in Matthew are, "There shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning

of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." (Ver. 22.)

It seems wonderful that any doubt should ever have arisen as to the *futurity* of all that is recorded in this part of the prophecy—that is from verse 15 to 28 inclusive. There cannot be two *unequalled* seasons of tribulation, and therefore the reference by our Lord to the words of Daniel just quoted, would be alone sufficient to prove that the period of which He speaks is *future* still. For who doubts the futurity of the words as found in Daniel? They are there expressly connected, first—with the destruction of that wicked king, who, after "planting the tabernacles of his palace in the glorious holy mountain, comes to his end, and none shall help him," (Dan. xi. 45 ;) secondly—with the deliverance and forgiveness of Daniel's people, Israel; thirdly—with the resurrection of the saints. It is the time when the "wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Unless, therefore, we can say that Antichrist *has* glorified himself in Zion and been destroyed, and that Israel *has been* forgiven, and that all the sleeping saints *have been* raised, we must admit that the time of unequalled tribulation spoken of in Daniel is yet future; and if future in Daniel, it must be future likewise when spoken of by our Lord; for, as I have already said, there cannot be two *unequalled* periods of woe.

But again, even if the reference to the words of Daniel were not conclusive, (which it is, and therefore no other argument *need* be added,) yet a careful examination of the words of our Lord, as recorded in Matthew, would sufficiently prove the same thing. For his mention of the unequalled season of tribulation is his reply to the enquiry of his disciples respecting the sign of his coming. They had asked, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?"

In the first part of the prophecy He tells them of certain events which are *not* the sign of his coming, (ver. 6,) but in this second part of his prophecy, He speaks of this unequalled season of tribulation *as being* the great constituted sign. IMMEDIATELY—(no word can be more emphatic; it is the emphatic word of the chapter,)—immediately, after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.” And seeing that there is at this present moment no *such* season of tribulation,—a tribulation such as never was,—resting either upon Jew or Gentile—that the Jews are being relieved even of their lighter pressures, and that they are “to be holpen with a little help, and that many will cleave to them with flatteries,” (Dan. xi. 34,) it follows that the unequalled season of sorrow to be *immediately* followed by the appearing of the Lord, must be future.

Nor would the argument be less conclusive, if founded simply on the words “abomination of desolation.” Since our Lord spake these words no idol has ever been set in the sanctuary at Jerusalem. The Romans, even if they had desired it (which they did not) would have been unable to do so; for during the capture of the city, the temple was burnt by a fire-brand accidentally thrown by a Roman soldier, though Titus exerted himself to the utmost to stop the flames. The sanctuary therefore was destroyed, and it has never since been restored, and therefore neither Roman, nor Saracen, nor Turk would have been able (even if they had desired it) to plant an Idol there.*

But this argument becomes even more conclusive when connected with the words of Daniel—and it must

* It is remarkable that the Romans are referred to in Daniel as “*destroying* the city and sanctuary,” (chap. ix. 26,) but not as planting the abomination.

be so connected, because our Lord himself says, “when ye see the abomination of desolation, *spoken of by Daniel the Prophet.*” (Ver. 15.)

There are three passages of Daniel which speak of an Idol in connection with the temple of Jerusalem. A King, named Antiochus Epiphanes, who lived about a hundred and sixty-eight years *before* our Lord, placed an idol in the temple of God at Jerusalem, and caused it to be worshipped there. This is referred to in the 31st verse of Daniel xi. where it is said that this king and they who are with him, shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. But seeing that this was done more than a century and a half before our Lord was born, the *prophecy* of our Lord in Matthew can have no reference thereto. It was a fact accomplished, and therefore incapable of being predicted.*

The other two passages in Daniel in which the

* The history of Antiochus is important, as being evidently intended to foreshadow the actings of the last great Gentile persecutor in Jerusalem. The first chapter of the first of Maccabees, which is perfectly authentic, should be read throughout. It gives a vivid impression of what the future scene in Jerusalem is to be. Antiochus is there said to have “set up the abomination of desolation,” and “sacrifice was offered upon the idol altar which was upon the altar of God.”

“Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred and forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Judah on every side—and burnt incense at the doors of their houses and in the streets. And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they had found, they burnt them with fire. And wheresoever was found with any the book of the Testament, or if any consented to the law, the king’s commandment was that they should put him to death. Thus did they by their authority to the Israelites every month, to as many as were found in the cities. Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar which was upon the altar of God. At which time, according to the commandment, they put to death certain women that had caused their children to be circumcised; and they hanged their infants about their

"abomination of desolation" is mentioned, refer to a time which is still future. The first of these is Daniel ix. 27, of which the literal translation is as follows: "And upon the pinnacle of abominations (*i.e.*) upon the idolatrous pinnacle) shall be the Desolator, even until the consummation and that determined be poured upon the Desolator." In the preceding paper, I have remarked on this passage, and on the force of the words "consummation" and "that determined."— Unless therefore we can prove that the close of Jewish desolation has been already reached, and that all that is determined has been poured upon their last great Gentile enemy, it follows that the setting up of the abomination of desolation is an event yet to be accomplished.

The other place in which the abomination of desolation is mentioned, is in the 11th verse of the xiith chapter. This must be future, because the completed period of Jewish blessing is mentioned as occurring 1335 days after it has been set up. Since therefore the words of our Lord in Matthew cannot refer to Antiochus, who lived 160 years before the Lord Jesus came, they must be quoted from one of the other passages, and both these are future and belong to the close of Jewish desolation.

And can we, after all that we have read in Isaiah and in Daniel respecting the history of Antichrist and of Israel in the latter day, doubt respecting the meaning of the passage before us? Are not the Jews to return to Jerusalem in unbelief? Will they not rebuild their temple? Are they not quite ready to welcome

necks, and rifled their houses and slew them that had circumcised them." Maccabees I.

These things had occurred not very long before the Lord Jesus was born. They were fresh in the remembrance of Israel. They well understood what "abomination of desolation" meant. When the Lord therefore used that expression, it was one which the disciples found little difficulty in apprehending.

any one who shall come to them, glorious in this world's glory, and to make him their staff whereon to lean? They would *not* receive Jesus of Nazareth, their King. They saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him; but when another shall come to them (as this great messenger of Satan will) in his own name, him they will receive. (John v. 43.) We read in the Revelation of his glory, for he is to wear the ten diadems of the Roman world—we read also of his image and of its being worshipped. How then can we doubt that the abomination of desolation will indeed stand in the holy place, and that Antichrist will be worshipped there. He as God shall sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thess. ii. 4.)

It is possible that our own eyes may behold these things—for the time is at hand. But however this may be, there will be some “holding the faith of Jesus,” who will be in Jerusalem at that hour. They may tarry there until then, but as soon as this consummation of blasphemy takes place, they are commanded instantly to depart. They are commanded to flee, not because of man, not because of Antichrist, but because the Lord God of Israel—He who will have been so long outraged and contemned—will at last begin to put forth his long restrained power, and will bring upon that land and city “the tribulation such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same hour.” His chastening hand will rest with overwhelming fury on Israel then: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.” (Amos iii. 2.) “Except these days should be shortened no flesh should be saved, but for the elect’s sake these days shall be shortened.” (Ver. 22.) There is a remnant, even in Israel, whom grace will preserve.

The merciful loving-kindness of the Lord Jesus desires that his people—even all who believe in his name—should be withdrawn from the sphere on which the weight of this sore tribulation is to fall. He directs

them, therefore, to quit Judæa and Jerusalem ; and, as if to show the minuteness of his care, he directs them to pray that things may be so ordered as that neither local circumstances nor the inclemency of winter may impede their way. "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day." (Ver. 20.) He will not cease to number the hairs of the head of his people : themselves, their families, their children will still be the subjects of his solicitude and care. On a former occasion,* when the days of vengeance first began to close in upon Jerusalem, his people were commanded to flee (see Luke xxi. 21,) and they did flee, and a Pella was provided for them. So will it be again in the yet deeper season of coming woe. The circumstances may be different, the tribulation more intense, faith perhaps weaker : but there will be the same everlasting arm of power—the same heart of faithfulness—and the Church shall, however faint, come up at last out of the wilderness leaning on her beloved.

"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 twentieth verse of Luke xxi., which has commonly been confounded with the fifteenth of Matthew xxiv., has no connection with it whatsoever. More than eighteen centuries separate the two verses. Luke speaks of "Jerusalem being compassed with armies," *i. e.* the Roman armies under Titus, and then details the sufferings and the scattering of the Jews which have since followed :—Matthew speaks of no armies—but of the abomination being set up by one who is in possession of the city in which he quietly perpetrates this evil. The early Christians, in obedience to the command in Luke, did quit Jerusalem when they saw the Roman armies collecting against it ; but it would be too late to flee from armies when they had already captured the city and were in quiet possession of the Temple. Accordingly in Matthew, the reason of the flight is the coming judgments of God—not the siege of armies. Luke speaks of the past—the central part of Matthew xxiv. of the coming tribulation on Jerusalem.

the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the land (*πασαι αι φυλαι της γης*) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from one end of heaven to the other." (Ver. 29—32.)

These words require little comment. They teach what indeed all Scripture teaches—that Israel, as a whole, will be unprepared for his coming. All the tribes of the land shall wail at Him, even so, Amen! (Rev. i.) The signs in the heavens—the darkening of the sun, and moon, and stars—the shaking of heaven and earth are always mentioned as the accompaniments of the hour of his appearing. "But now He hath promised, saying, yet once more and I shake not the earth only but also heaven." (Heb. xii. 26.) I may here refer to the remarks I have already made on the fourteenth of Zechariah in confirmation of these things.

The age was not to end—the generation then present was not to pass away, until all these things had first been fulfilled. The individuals indeed then living and acting were to die. Herod and Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas, were to sink into the grave—but they were to be succeeded by others, like themselves, who would still maintain the same moral character of the generation, and make it, in the estimate of God, one unchanged evil generation, even to the end. Neither in the ordinary arrangements of men, nor in the Scripture, are corporate bodies supposed to die. They may be abolished, but as long as they are permitted to remain, their existence and action corporately is certainly irrespective of the presence or absence of the individuals of whom they may have been originally composed. They have a corporate identity, unaffected by mere

circumstantial variations. The generation, therefore, that rejected the Lord is still considered to live—and it will not pass away and be succeeded by that new generation, which shall know the Lord, “from the least of them even to the greatest of them,” (Jer. xxxi. 34,) until the things of which the Lord has here spoken have been fulfilled.*

It is not my desire at present to dwell on the practical consequences that may flow from these things—my object chiefly is to awaken attention to the facts of this prophecy—especially to the great future facts which mark the character of the dispensation at its close. It can scarcely surprise any who mark what is now passing in the world to be told that the present convulsions will at last terminate in establishing a tenfold division of territory among the countries once reigned over by Rome—that similarity of institutions and laws will prevail throughout the countries thus divided, and that

* The contrast between the generation which is to continue till the end of the age, and the *new* millennial generation, is sustained throughout the Scripture. The thought of “newness” is so marked, that in the Psalms the millennial generation is even called “a people that shall be created.” “This shall be written for the generation to come, and the people that shall be created shall praise the Lord.” (Psalm cii. 18.) The lxvth of Isaiah is almost equally distinct. “And ye (that is, you who compose the old generation) shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.”

The same corporate sense attaches to words in other parts of this prophecy. When our Lord quitted the gates of Jerusalem, and saw certain persons before Him who stood as the representatives of Israel nationally, He said, “Ye shall not see me till ye shall say, Blessed,” &c. They have not yet said this, so that “ye,” in its *corporate* sense, has already extended over more than 1800 years. So also it was said to the Apostles, who were the representatives of Christians, “When ye shall see the abomination of desolation.” Personally they never lived to see it, but those whom they represented will. So also St. Paul says, “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord.” He knew that he was to die. It is the corporate “we.”

infidelity will reign in their midst. He must be blind indeed who discerns not already its rising floods. It is difficult to understand how any one, judging even from present appearances, can doubt that iniquity will prevail over the most civilized and influential nations of the earth, and that of them it may be peculiarly said, "as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed."

But whilst such is and will be the condition of the nations, there is a relation to Christ that may be held in the midst of them, which can be owned by Him even in these days of weakness as according with his will. "Who then is that faithful and wise servant whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season?" There may be households—gatherings of the family of faith, having over them wise and faithful servants, dispensing to each his portion of meat in due season: with such may we desire to be—whether teaching or taught, it is the position that the Lord has pronounced blessed. Association in the name of the Lord Jesus when its principles are not self-devised and arbitrary, but the principles of His revealed will, stand in such contrast with the confederated evil of the latter day that it cannot be valueless in the sight of Him who does not "despise the day of small things." That the general condition of real Christianity throughout the whole earth will be one of slumber at the close, is too plainly taught in the parable of the virgins to admit of question. "Even the wise virgins slumber." But because Christianity as a whole slumbers, therefore we as individuals are exhorted to watch and to trade with our talents—not believing that our Master is austere or hard, gathering where He has not strawed—but that his grace is such, that the least act done to the feeblest of his believing people for his name's sake shall be owned by Him, even when He shall sit upon the throne of his glory, as if done to himself. It will

stimulate us to trade on with our talent when we remember that we are serving One who so estimates and so acknowledges what any thing but grace would scorn. If the close of this dispensation settles down into a night of deep darkness, the more precious any light that even glimmers in the midst of the gloom.

ON LUKE XXI.

It may seem scarcely needful, after reading the enlarged and specific prophecy in the twenty-fourth of Matthew, to dwell on the more brief and general statements in the gospel of Luke. The prophecy in Luke has been commonly considered to be a mere repetition, in a more general form, of the instructions in Matthew; and attempts have frequently been made to represent them as strictly parallel in structure.

But there are seldom, if ever, mere re-statements in Scripture. It is true, indeed, that when two different passages record the same facts or deliver like precepts, there must be a substantial similarity between them. But even then the addition of new circumstances, or an altered arrangement in the order of instruction, or even a change in the form of expression, may mark a character of difference important to be recognized in a careful exposition of the word of God. Passages strictly parallel are seldom if ever found.

So is it in the chapter before us. There is, of course, a substantial agreement with the prophecy in Matthew. The events which were immediately to follow our Lord's departure from the earth—and also the signs—signs in the sun and moon and stars, which are to usher in His return, are spoken of almost in the same language both in Matthew and Luke. But in treating of the intervening period, there is

a marked difference. The great event recorded in Luke respecting Jerusalem, is, its destruction by the Roman armies. He speaks also of the events connected with that destruction, in their relation both to the disciples and to the Jews. But in Matthew, all this is so slightly touched on that it may be almost said to be passed over in silence.* In Luke, on the other hand, the great event which Matthew records respecting the latter day history of Jerusalem is not mentioned. Nothing is said respecting the "abomination of desolation," and merely a general reference made to the Times of the Gentiles being concluded by distress, terror, and signs from heaven. The two prophecies therefore are not identical. It is by reading them separately, and then uniting their instructions, that we learn respecting the past and coming sorrows of Jerusalem: and with the past and future history of Je-

* The only reference to this event in the prophetic part of Matthew xxiv. is in the sixth verse, where the Lord speaks of those wars which were to follow his departure from the earth, but which were NOT signs of the end of the age.

It is quite in consistency with the character of Matthew's gospel, to dwell on the last Antichristian abominations in Jerusalem and pass over in comparative silence its past destruction: for the gospel of Matthew is specially concerned with the history of Christianity and its corruptions. After stating the rejection of the Lord by Israel and the setting aside of Israel corporately, (see close of ch. xii.) it speaks in a number of prophetic parables (see chapters xiii. and xxv, also ch. xxii.) of the history of Christianity and its corporate failure. And inasmuch as the past destruction of Jerusalem was *not* caused by Christianity or its corruptions, we should not expect that much would be said respecting it—but seeing that Antichristianism is to spring out of the very bosom of professing Christianity, and absorb into itself the iniquities of Gentiles and Jews in Jerusalem as a centre, we might expect that an event so intimately connected with the history of the professing Church would be very distinctly referred to in Matthew.

Besides this, it may be given as a general rule that every thing that is "*corporate*" in character is found in Matthew—that which is individual in Luke.

rusalem, so many threads of Jewish and Christian and national Gentile history are blended, that we may almost say that to know the two periods and the events therewith connected, is to know the dispensation in which we live as to its most important and characteristic features from its beginning to its close.

The prophetic part of the xxist chapter of Luke commences with the eighth verse. The eighth and ninth verses form the first division of the chapter. They are as follow: "Take heed that ye be not deceived, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and the time draweth near, go ye not therefore after them. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified, for these things must first come to pass, but the end is not immediate," (*οκ ευθως.*) These verses are closely parallel to the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses of Matthew xxiv, and speak of events which immediately succeeded the Lord's departure from the earth, events which were *not* to be mistaken for signs of the end. "The end is not immediate." Accordingly the troubles in Judæa came; Jerusalem was taken, its Temple destroyed, its people scattered, and eighteen hundred years have since passed, but the end is not yet come.

The tenth and eleventh verses form the next division of the chapter. "Then said He unto them, nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines and pestilences and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." These verses describe the relation of God to the earth during all the long period of Jerusalem's punishment until the Times of the Gentiles shall have been fulfilled. Instead of its being a millennial relation of peace—wars, pestilences, and famines are from time to time to be spread over the earth, throughout this lengthened period, to be followed at the close by fearful sights and signs from heaven.

These fearful sights and signs from heaven have

never yet been. As yet, though the earth has been visited by many a convulsion, the heavens have remained in their tranquillity. "The sun has not yet been turned into blackness nor the moon into blood." The still peacefulness of the firmament as the stars nightly resume their course, has often stood in strange contrast to the unquiet restlessness of the scene below. But an hour is coming when the heavens also shall be shaken. "Yet once more I shake not the earth only but also heaven," and then the end shall come.*

Having thus predicted the woes that were about to be sent upon Judæa, and also the more general chastisements upon the nations, which extend throughout

* These signs are again referred to in the concluding part of this prophecy, (verse 25) where our Lord, after re-tracing the same period as is gone over in verses 10, 11, and re-tracing it with specific reference to the capture of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews, again speaks of the time of the end, and refers to these signs in the heavens—saying, "there shall be signs in the sun and moon and in the stars."

Some have imagined that signs of this kind were seen at the past siege of Jerusalem, and have referred to Josephus in verification of their statement. But in the first place our Lord does not, either in this or in the corresponding passage of Matthew, speak of the commencement but of the close of the "days of vengeance." He is expressly speaking of the period when the Times of the Gentiles are fulfilled: the same period that is called in Daniel "the last end of the indignation."

Moreover all parts of Scripture which speak of these signs in the heavens, speak of the period as one of universal dismay and terror over the face of the whole earth; "men's hearts failing them for fear," &c. It was any thing rather than this throughout the world generally when the Romans took Jerusalem.

Nor does Josephus himself record any thing that is worthy of being considered "signs in the sun and moon and stars." The pretended prodigies recorded apparently on the report of others, are as follow.

First, a star resembling a sword, which is said to have stood over the city, and a comet which lasted a year.

Secondly, a light bright as day shone around the altar and holy place at the ninth hour of the night for half an hour.

Thirdly, a heifer, as she was led by the High Priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple.

Fourthly, the brazen gate of the inner court of the temple,

the dispensation, the prophecy, in its next division, from the twelfth to the nineteenth verse inclusive, proceeds to speak of the early condition of the Church. "But before all these (*i.e.* before the wars that are to desolate Jerusalem shall commence) they shall lay their hands upon you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before what ye shall answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends, and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls."

These words describe the early condition of Christianity, when the Church in Pentecostal power, first

when firmly fastened, opened of its own accord, and could not be shut again without great difficulty.

Fifthly, on one occasion, before sunset, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armour were seen running about among the clouds and surrounding cities.

Lastly, the priests, when going by night into the inner court of the temple, said they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and afterward a sound as of a multitude, saying, Let us remove hence.

Such are the statements of Josephus, not one of which, it should be remembered, is confirmed by Tacitus, who gives an account of the siege, nor by any other historian. The habit of the Romans apparently was, to invent stories of the kind to terrify the besieged into the belief that they were forsaken by their gods. (See Livy, *passim*.) But whatever may be thought respecting these statements, it is manifest that they cannot be fulfillments either of Matthew or of Luke. Matthew says, "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." Luke says, "There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of *nations* (not Jews merely) with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring."

took its place as God's witness in the earth. It witnessed of truth and of grace. It testified remission of sins through the blood of the cross, even amongst those on whom chiefly rested the guilt of the rejection and death of the Lord Jesus. "Men and brethren, through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and through Him, all who believe are justified from all things." Such was the character of their testimony even among those who had been his betrayers and murderers. Before any of the threatened chastisements were sent, either on the land of Israel or on the nations, this message was first to be given. It *was* given and it was rejected. The governors of Jerusalem and of the nations heard and scorned it, and at length began to persecute and destroy those who bore it. James, Stephen, and others sealed their testimony with their blood, and then in well-deserved retribution the days of vengeance began to settle in upon Jerusalem, and nothing but turbulence and sorrow has prevailed throughout the earth ever since. Nor can it be otherwise, for the destinies of the nations are bound up with the destinies of Jerusalem. "The Deliverer must come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob," before the earth or the nations thereof can know tranquillity or rest.

We do not find in these words of Luke any intimation, as in Matthew, of the corruption and failure of Christianity. We do not find it said, that iniquity shall abound or love wax cold. At the time when the "abomination of desolation" shall be set up, it will be so. Indeed it is so already. But before Jerusalem was compassed by the Roman armies, it was *not* so. The Church was retaining its position. Even the Gentile Churches were still worthy of being represented by candlesticks of gold; and the Church remembered the words of the Lord, that though hated of all men and put to death, there should not a hair of their head perish—that their hope was in resurrection; and in patience they possessed their souls.

The "days of vengeance" began to settle in upon Jerusalem as soon as the Roman armies were gathered together against it. These days of vengeance are continuing still, and will continue until all that has been written against Jerusalem and her people shall have been fulfilled. "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out, and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days, for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 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."

The disciples obeyed these directions. They saw Jerusalem compassed with armies, and they fled. A refuge was provided for them in a little city named Pella; and their history remains as a memorial of the faithfulness and care of God—useful, doubtless, and encouraging to those who will again, at an hour yet future, be called on to quit Jerusalem, when a greater tribulation will fall upon it—a tribulation not caused by Roman armies, but by the more direct and terrible inflictions of God's own outstretched hand. But this will not be until the Times of the Gentiles are nigh being fulfilled. Not more than twelve hundred and sixty days will pass between the setting the abomination of desolation in the Holy Place, and the conclusion of the Times of the Gentiles—when the Lord Jesus shall come.

The intimation of their conclusion will 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 that are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory."* Such are the signs that will at last effectually break in upon the world's slumber. No one will doubt that it is the intervention of God, for the heavens—the earth—the seas, are alike spoken of as convulsed under his hand, and men's hearts fail them for fear. The cry will then at length go forth throughout the slumbering Church, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" No heart will doubt it, because every eye will discern the signs of his approach.

And it is then that the believer is told to look up, and lift up his head. "When these things begin to come to pass," *i. e.* as soon as these signs appear, "then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." The blood of redemption will have been marked upon their door-posts and doors, and it will not fail of its efficacy then: "When I see the blood, I will pass over."

The saints will have remained long enough upon the earth to behold the signs and to see the general convulsion of nature begin; but before the Lord comes to the earth to inflict the appointed blow—before any of his wrath is poured out—they will be caught up to meet Him in the air, and to be for ever with Him. They will be "counted worthy to escape those things that are to come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

* It is not said *ye*, but *they* shall see. The saints will not see the Lord coming to the earth, for they will be caught up to meet Him in the air. They will however see the signs which precede his coming. "When YE shall see these things begin to come to pass," &c. The signs are not spoken of as things to be escaped from, for they will harm no one—they are but signs; but the judgments poured out by the Lord when He comes will be destructive to those on whom they fall. From these therefore all believers will be delivered, by being taken into the air before they are inflicted.

And in order that it may be so, we are commanded to watch and pray, and *that*, in the midst of circumstances where surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life so weigh upon the hearts of those professing the name of Jesus, that even believers themselves are exhorted to beware. Is this picture untrue? Is professing Christianity free from being overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life? Is it in no danger of that day coming upon it unawares? As a snare shall it come on all those who are "*settled*" (*καθημενοις*, not *κατοικεσι*,) on the face of the whole earth.

"Settled" or "*seated*" is a word of moral import. They who ate the flesh of the paschal lamb in haste, because they were in the midst of a land devoted to judgment, were commanded to "*stand*" with their shoes on their feet—their staves in their hand. They were as sojourners who were about to be taken away to the promised land of their inheritance, and therefore both their hopes and their fears prevented them from resting in the land of judgment—for they hoped for their inheritance, and they feared because of the doom of the Egyptian. May we remember them—the simplicity of the means of their salvation in the blood of the Lamb, and the triumph of the hour of their deliverance. "They kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them;" and they were not touched, but God undertook for them, and guided them by his strength into his holy habitation. And so shall it be with the feeblest of those who have washed their garments and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. "Blessed are they who wash their garments that they may have title to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city." "His blood cleanseth from all sin."



