



JERUSALEM:

The Coming Metropolis of the Earth.

By J. T. MAWSON.

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THE COMING

METROPOLIS OF THE EARTH.

Her Sins, Sorrows, and Saviour.

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“Thou art stricken, dethroned and lowly,
Bereft of a home on earth,
Yet still to our hearts thou art holy,
Thou land of Messiah's birth !
He sprang from thy chosen of daughters,
His star o'er thy hills arose,
He bathed in thy soft-flowing waters,
And wept o'er thy coming woes.”

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“ God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform ;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain ;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.”

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CHAPTER I.

The significance of the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Turk, and the British Declaration.—God working behind the scenes, and the fulfilment of His Word.—The withdrawal of Russia.—The Secret Treaty.—God's pledge to Abraham.

BIG events are crowding so bewilderingly one upon another in these extraordinary days, that the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Turk seems ancient history, yet no event of the war has made a more powerful appeal to the imagination of the civilized world ; and rightly so, for we believe that it will yet be seen that no event will have so far-reaching a result as this ; and whether statesmen wish it or not, Jerusalem and the Jews must take a foremost place in world politics. The growing importance of the Jewish question, not only in Allied countries, but also in the Central Empires, is the most remarkable sign of the times. It is to be *the* question, and Belgium, Serbia, Ireland, and all the rest must eventually take a secondary place.

But what makes General Allenby's success so epoch-making is the declaration made by Mr. A. J. Balfour, on behalf of the British Government, in a letter to Baron Rothschild,

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which runs as follows : " The Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing will be done that may prejudice the civil or religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.' "

The French Government has also indicated its full approval of this policy, as the following press notice shows : " M. Sokolow, representing the Zionist organizations, was this morning received by Mons. Pichon, Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was happy to inform him that there is complete agreement between the French and English Governments in all matters which concern the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.' "

This development, which has set all Jewry rejoicing, clearly shows the direction in which the tide is flowing, and it has its significance in regard to a larger issue than the struggle to the death between democracy and autocracy ; it means something more than the making of the world " a safe place for democracy," or the " self-determination " of all nationalities ; it points beyond these to the establishment of Christ's kingdom on the earth, and to the universal disarmament

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and consequent peace for all nations that shall follow. It is plainly set forth in the sure Word of prophecy that the reign of righteousness that shall bring to an end the sore travail of this groaning creation will be inaugurated by the personal presence of the Lord Jesus in this world, that Jerusalem will be the metropolis of His earth-wide kingdom, and that the children of Jacob must be gathered into the land given to their fathers ; they must be there as a nation, with their national life restored, before these things can be. And the British policy in regard to the question brings the first step towards the final goal fairly upon the horizon, and shows clearly that God is working behind the scenes for the fulfilment of His own intentions. And the whole world has taken notice of it, reminding us forcibly of the striking prophecy of Isaiah xviii. (of which we shall have more to say) : “ All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when He lifteth up an ensign on the mountains ; and when He bloweth a trumpet, hear ye ” (verse 3). “ In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto ; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the

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rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion " (verse 7).

The withdrawal of Russia from the Allied cause is probably looked upon as the worst set-back that the Allies have sustained since the war began, and by it no doubt victory has been long delayed. But let us look at it from the standpoint of the fulfilment of the Word of God in regard to the Jews, and see if we may not learn something from it in the light of that.

The Bolsheviks have published a memorandum in which is summarized the secret agreement entered into by Great Britain, France, and Russia in 1916. In this agreement Palestine occupies a considerable place, but the hopes of the Jewish nation in regard to it do not seem to have been considered. Great Britain was to secure the two most important and strategical points of Haifa on the Red Sea and Acre on the Mediterranean, but for the rest it was agreed, according to the report of the British Palestine Committee, that, " with a view of securing the *religious* interests of the Entente powers, Palestine, with the holy places, is separated from Turkish territory, and subjected to a special regime to be determined by an agreement between Russia, France, and England."

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But had victory come to the Entente with Russia in it, and this agreement had been put into force, Jewish hopes in regard to Jerusalem and Palestine would certainly have been thwarted. Meanwhile, however, Czardom has fallen, anarchy has taken the place of autocracy in Russia, and those who claim power in that distressed country have repudiated this agreement, so that it will undoubtedly drop out of the Allied aims, and in its place there has sprung up the British declaration—one of the wisest it has ever made—that, as soon as they are able they will establish in Palestine a national home for the Jews ; and the sooner the better. So that the fall of Czardom and the withdrawal of Russia from the conflict have their part in bringing nearer the fulfilment of God's Word in regard to this people and their land, without which His kingdom cannot come. In this we ought to discern the hand of God.

At a great meeting of Jews in America, it was said by one of their chief rabbis that they had full cause for joy, for though this declaration was only "a scrap of paper," it was written in English. And that was certainly a tribute to Britain's loyalty to her pledged word. But the declaration that the Jews shall have that land has been written

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in a more ancient and glorious language, and pledged to them by a greater and more faithful Power ; it has been written in Hebrew by the Holy Spirit, and pledged to them by God the Almighty, who cannot lie. " For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. . . . For verily men swear by the greater. . . . Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath ; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation " (Heb. vi. 13-18).

CHAPTER II.

Israel's future foreshadowed in her early annals.—
The King of Salem and God's purpose.—Adoni-zedec,
Antichrist.—Adoni-bezek, The Great Tribulation.
—David takes the city, Zion.

BEFORE considering what the Word has to say as to the things to come, let us cast our thoughts back and learn how the future of Jerusalem is mirrored in its early annals as given to us in the Scriptures, and learn also that God cannot be thwarted in the fulfilment of His purposes, no matter how long they may be delayed by the opposition of Satan and the unbelief of men.

Genesis xiv. King of Salem and God's Purpose.

Arguments have been advanced to prove that Salem, of which Melchizedek was king, was not Jerusalem, but Psalm lxxvi. settles this question for us. And the discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets in Egypt, in 1892, gives confirmation of this. Professor Nicol, D.D., says of these : " The letters of the Governor of Jerusalem to the Egyptian King are specially interesting. For from them we learn that Jerusalem, long before

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the days of David or Joshua, and as far back as Abraham, had established itself among the hills of Canaan as a city of strength and importance, of sanctity and renown. Ebed-Tob, the governor, says of himself to his liege lord : ' I am no prince, I am a deputy of my lord the king, I am the one who brings tribute to the king. Neither my father nor my mother, but the strong hand of the king, established me over my father's territory.' The name Uru-salem in the tablets speaks of ' the city of peace,' and thus recalls Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the most high God in Abraham's day.' Genesis xiv. then is the first allusion to the city in the Scriptures, and there we see God's purpose as to its great destiny. And this has been God's way from the beginning ; He shows to His people what His intention is, and faith holds on to that no matter how long of fulfilment His purpose may be.

Melchizedek appears as the priest of the Most High God, who is possessor of heaven and earth, and in whose hands lies the final disposal of all things. He appears to refresh and gladden and bless Abram after his victorious fight with the kings in the valley of Shaveh, and in this, his dramatic and only appearance in the Word, he stands out as a beautiful foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus

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Christ as the great royal Priest. Righteousness and peace are to be the two great characteristics of the coming Kingdom of Christ. He is to be King of Righteousness and King of Salem—Peace, and God's purpose is to set Him as His King in Zion. It is also written of Him : " The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek " (Ps. cx.). And again : " Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord : even he shall build the temple of the Lord ; and he shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon his throne ; and HE SHALL BE A PRIEST UPON HIS THRONE ; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both " (Zech. vi. 12, 13). And again : " . . . The prince of peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this " (Isa. ix. 6, 7). Christ is the King who shall reign in righteousness, and Jerusalem, the city of sin and sorrow, shall be Salem, His tabernacle, from which peace shall flow to

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the uttermost bounds of His domain. He will bring forth the bread and wine of divine blessing to comfort and invigorate and gladden that distressed yet godly remnant that shall endure through the great tribulation, and whose faith shall gain for them the victory over all their enemies (Matt. xxiv. 13 ; Zeph. iii. 12, 13). And then will they respond to the challenge : " Sing, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O Israel ; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. . . . The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee ; thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not. . . . The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty ; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy ; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing " (Zeph. iii. 14-17). And then shall the words be true : " Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge " (Ps. xlviii. 1-3).

This city is to be the centre as well as the joy of the whole earth, and all nations shall go up year by year to it, to worship

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the King, the Lord of hosts (Zech. xiv. 17). Wonderful indeed is the future of Jerusalem, wonderful because the Lord has chosen to place His Name there.

Joshua x.

Adoni-zedec—Antichrist.

The second mention of the city occurs in Joshua x., and there we learn that an implacable foe to God's purpose and people had established himself there. And this king, Adoni-zedec, became the leader of a confederation of kings, the sworn foes of any who were not the foes of God's people. He sets forth that opposition to the will of God which grew strong in Jerusalem and took complete possession of it when the Son of God, who came in His Father's name, was led forth bearing His cross to Golgotha. This opposition will be personified in Antichrist, who shall come in his own name, and shall yet reign at Jerusalem. He will be inspired by Satan to persecute and endeavour to exterminate God's elect (Rev. xiii. 15 ; Matt. xxiv. 22), and then finally to fight against the Lamb in order to hold the city against Him (Rev. xix. 19, 20). But in standing up against the King of kings he shall be cast alive into the lake of fire.

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And just as Joshua made the captains of his army put their feet upon the necks of Adonizedec and his allies, so will the Lord give His saints complete victory over Antichrist and all their enemies, and will lead them, as the true Joshua, into the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Judges i. 5, 6, 7.

The Harvest of Tribulation.

In Judges i. 5-9 we have a further mention of the city, and here we learn the third outstanding fact in the history of Jerusalem and its people, namely, that in them has been and will yet be exemplified that stern law, "What a man soweth, that shall he also reap," and that while infinite and continuous blessing lies in the path of obedience to God, yet He is a consuming fire, and it is a fearful thing to fall into His hands, for He must punish disobedience and sin. We read that "Adoni-bezek fled ; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes." Such treatment of a fallen foe seems both unchivalrous and cruel, but the reason of it is not hidden from us ; as he had served others so was he served. He immediately acknowledges the

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justice of his punishment, saying, "Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me." And in that state of self-judgment and submission to God's just judgment he is brought to Jerusalem.

In no city in the world has this law of sowing and reaping operated so inexorably as in Jerusalem; her history since she became the city of David is one long record of it. But for the greatest of all her crimes she has yet to suffer. She rejected her Messiah, spat in His face, delivered Him to the pagan power, cried, "His blood be on us and on our children," and held high festival when He was crucified as a malefactor. That generation reaped a fearful harvest from this sowing, for according to Josephus 1,100,000 perished during the siege of Titus in A.D. 70, and the temple and its precincts "were so thoroughly levelled and dug up that no one visiting it would believe it had ever been inhabited." But the harvest of that crime has not been fully reaped. The woes through which the city has passed will be exceeded in the time of Jacob's trouble, until it will seem as though none would survive. But those sufferings will bring the nation to repentance before God,

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they will cry to Him for deliverance, and not till then shall the terrible entail be broken. Their Messiah will appear for their deliverance, and when they look upon Him whom they had pierced, their sorrow will be deep and real, and they will acknowledge the justice of their punishment, and the Lord will comfort them and lead them, a repentant and restored people, into Jerusalem, a redeemed and restored city (Zech. xii, 10-14 ; xiii. 1 ; xiv. 1-4 ; Isa. lii. 9).

2 Samuel v.

David takes the city—Zion.

In 2 Samuel v. Jerusalem emerges from the unimportant place that it had occupied in Israel and becomes the great centre and pride of the nation ; but for this the God-appointed king had to appear, and he it was who subdued it completely for the first time, and called it Zion.

But when David went up into the city as king, it was not the first time that he had been there. 1 Samuel xvii. tells us that when he overthrew Goliath in the valley of Elah, he took the head of that terrible foe and brought it to Jerusalem. Evidently he understood God's thoughts about that city,

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and that he was the one who was to make it God's dwelling-place and throne in Israel. Consequently he took the trophy of the great victory which marked him out publicly as the king, and placed it in the city of God's choice.

The Jebusites had held the city since the entrance of Israel into the land. They were descendants of the accursed Canaan, and their name means "trodden down." May they not represent man in his unregenerate condition, whether Jew or Gentile, who remains "blind and lame" in spite of all advantages, even those advantages that the law gives? May they not represent for us the state of man, under the yoke of sin and trodden down by Satan, needing to be born again, needing the grace of God ministered from the throne of which Zion speaks? We are persuaded that this is the lesson we are to learn herefrom.

It was David the king who took possession of Zion. But the blind and the lame that were in it were abhorred by him; the grace that could deliver such from their bondage was not in him, for he was but a figure of the true King. The manifestation of delivering grace awaits the coming of "great David's greater Son." He has already come, and as He walked in His temple, Zion's true but

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unrecognized King, "THE BLIND AND THE LAME CAME TO HIM, and He healed them" (Matt. xxi. 14). And when His kingdom shall be established in Zion, "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, and the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6).

David was the rejected and suffering man of God's choice, and afterwards the warrior and victorious king, and the turning of the city of the Jebusites into Zion by him tells of how the once suffering and rejected Christ, soon to come forth as the warrior King, will establish Israel in blessing, not on the ground of law, but on the principle of grace ; that is, instead of their blessing depending as of old upon their faithfulness, they will draw everything through Christ from God. " And this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord ; I will put My laws into their minds and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people : and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I

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remember no more " (Heb. viii. 10-12). There we get what Zion will mean to Israel.

David, who in figure established Zion, prepared for the building within it of the temple of God, that in the people's worship there might ascend to God a suited response to His grace to them, and it is a point of deepest interest to note that the spot chosen for God's house, the spot from which peace offerings and burnt offerings ascended to God from the altar that David built, was the threshing floor of a Jebusite, Araunah by name. He had two names—Araunah, which means "Jah is firm," and Ornan, which means "strong." And it was at the threshing floor of this Jebusite that the sword of judgment was arrested. Was he one of those weak Jebusites who had become strong in the sense of Jehovah's firmness and faithfulness to His own word and name? It would seem so. Indeed, in the knowledge of God he seems to have been for the moment greater than David, for it is recorded of him, "All these things did Araunah, AS A KING, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept thee " (2 Sam. xxiv. 23). It is a pity that David spoilt the beauty and grace of that by insisting upon paying for all he got.

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But it will be in the sense of God's faithfulness, the firmness of Jehovah to His own Word, that Jerusalem will be established, and that the people will draw near to Him in His holy temple. Psalm lxxxix. gives us a most beautiful unfolding of God's covenant with David and His faithfulness to it, and when Salem becomes His tabernacle and His dwelling-place Zion, Jerusalem and all Israel will say : " Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen."

CHAPTER III.

God's ways with Israel.—The City and the King.—
Their failure and sins.—The rejection of the Messiah.
—The destruction of the city.—The fulfilment of the
Word of God.

IT may help us further, before taking up the future, to trace out God's ways with this people since the time when He pledged His word to their father Abraham, when He called him out from Ur and separated him from the idolatry of the Chaldees. The twelfth and twenty-second chapters of Genesis give us the covenant that God made with him and the oath wherewith He confirmed it. But before God's promises and purposes could be fulfilled in regard to Abraham's seed, there were four things necessary : a COUNTRY in which they could develop, not under a " culture " of their " self-determination," but under God's own culture ; a CITY whose firm foundation should be righteousness, and from which could be administered the peace-giving laws of God ; a TEMPLE in which they could approach their God and Blessor in responsive worship ; and a KING who could give them protection from every outward foe, and who could lead them as a shepherd in the paths of

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righteousness, and harmonize every phase of their national and domestic life into one glorious whole for a pattern to the nations and for the glory of God. The country is Canaan, the city is Zion, the plans and specifications of the temple have been issued, **AND THE KING IS JESUS.** And to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The people themselves were not only to be a chosen people, but a redeemed people, and the paschal lamb in Egypt signified this. It was a type of the Lamb of God, by whose blood alone can men be redeemed. These people had to owe their position to God's sovereign choice, their life to the blood of the lamb, and their deliverance from their oppressors to the power of God. And so He brought them out of bondage, and led and maintained them miraculously in the wilderness.

"A cloudy pillar marked the road,
And screened them from the heat;
From the hard rock the water flowed,
And manna was their meat."

He sent them into the land to possess it and to destroy the inhabitants of it. And here the critic of God's Word, and the caviller at His ways, steps up and charges Him with cruelty and injustice. But they are superficial thinkers and dishonest judges ;

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they jump to conclusions without examining the evidence. God kept the people to whom He had apportioned that land in the fiery furnace of Egypt, in His patience with the wicked inhabitants of Canaan for four hundred years, and did not proceed to execute His judgment upon their horrible transgression of all His laws until the cup of their iniquity was full. In Lev. xviii. 25 the condition of the land is described and the reason for God's way given. "The land is defiled: therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the *land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.*" Thus was God's judgment of them justified.

He gave Israel the *country*, and then a *king* when He raised up David from amongst the people, to be their shepherd, and David subdued the Jebusite and captured the *city*, and there made preparation for the building of the *temple* that was reared resplendent by Solomon his son.

Here, then, were the four things necessary for the development of these people according to God; but these were only temporary, until the time for the true King to appear, and by them the people were to be tested in order to see how far they would, of their own volition, live in accordance with God's will for them. The conditions could not

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have been more favourable : all their enemies were subdued ; the land flowed with milk and honey ; the wealth of Jerusalem was so vast that silver was of no more account than the stones of the street ; the fear of them fell upon all nations, and the kings of the whole earth sent or came up to Jerusalem to hear the wisdom of their king, " for his wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt, for he was wiser than all men." " So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom, and all the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart." We learn, too, how far he had advanced in the knowledge of God by his address to the people and his prayer to God at the dedication of the temple ; and greater and better than all, " THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE HOUSE OF THE LORD."

Here Jerusalem reached her ancient zenith, but the glory soon began to wane, and that splendid king led the people down a steep road, gathering into his kingdom apes and peacocks, strange women and idols, indicating the folly, vanity, corruption, and heathen abominations into which they descended. How discouraging this would be if we had no

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hope save in man's "self-determination"; but the Scriptures help us, and from them we learn that the blessing that God has purposed shall flow out to all nations from Zion can only come through the One who is greater than Solomon, and that one CHRIST. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, *which is Christ*" (Gal. iii. 16).

Israel and Jerusalem travelled fast on the downward road upon which Solomon started them. They "were mingled among the heathen and learned their works. And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood" (Ps. cvi. 35-38). Each of those nations of Canaan, that they ought to have driven out, had its own special god—a demon (Deut. xxxii. 17; 1 Cor. x. 20), in connection with which was some special abomination, for these powers of darkness which inspired this awful idolatry worked upon the basest passions of men. But when Israel and Jerusalem departed from God, they did not choose one idol and one

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abomination only ; they took in all and every one. And these evil powers behind the idols, these demons, who seemed to have been satisfied hitherto each of them to hold one nation in thrall, now were all eager to exercise their malign influence over God's people, and to establish their authority in His metropolis ; and the people, alas, were willing, and so every nameless abomination found a home amongst them, until their transgressions became more horrible than those of the nations that occupied the land before them.

“ Lord ! Thou didst love Jerusalem—
Once she was all Thy own ;
Her love Thy fairest heritage,
Her power Thy glory's throne ;
Till evil came and blighted
Thy long-loved olive-tree,
And Salem's shrines were lighted
For other gods than Thee ! ”

How vividly the prophet Ezekiel brings all this out !

The consequence was that the wrath of the Lord was “ kindled against His people, insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance. And He gave them into the hand of the heathen, and they that hated them ruled over them. Their enemies also oppressed them ; and they were brought into subjection under their hand ” (Ps. cvi. 40-42). Less than 500 years after the crown of all Israel

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had been placed upon David's brow, the sovereignty passed from his house and was given to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and the "Times of the Gentiles" began, and the Jews became of subject race. But did God forsake them? No.

"He, caring for the vineyard of His choosing,
Sent them His prophets till the day was
done;
Bore with their churls, their wrath, and their
refusing,
Gave them at last the glory of His Son."

What a moment that was when the star stood over Bethlehem, pointing to the spot where the young child lay, and guiding the Eastern wise men with their gifts to EMMANUEL! But all Jerusalem, that ought to have thrilled with gladness at the advent of their King, was troubled when they heard of it. The city had thrown off the abominations of the heathen, but so proud were its leaders that they would not recognize in that lowly Babe their great Messiah. And when He presented Himself to them, fulfilling the words of the prophet Zechariah, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, . . . Behold thy King cometh unto thee . . . lowly, and riding upon an ass," they asked contemptuously, "Who is this?" He gave them the opportunity of facing and answering

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that all-important question, when He said to them, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" Readily they answered, "The Son of David." Then came the final question, for which they had no answer, and which exposed their blindness. "He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then called Him Lord, how is He his Son?" This surely was the test question, for them and for us, and for all mankind. He was David's Lord—the eternal God; He was David's son—a Man. Unfathomed and unfathomable mystery! The revelation of God for the salvation of Israel and the blessing of the world! But that salvation and blessing were postponed because they would neither own nor have Him. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, but it knew Him not. He came to His own, but His own received Him not. When they saw Him they hated Him, and said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill Him." And "we will not have this man to reign over us."

Jerusalem, the beloved city, over which He had wept, cried, "Away with Him," and held high festival when her blood-

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stained hands had nailed her suffering Messiah to a cursed cross. Yes, that generation, more privileged than any that had gone before, crowned the centuries of Jerusalem's lawlessness by this foulest of all deeds, in the presence of which the sun shrank into darkness and the earth trembled with dismay.

But that deed, which showed man's utter and awful hatred against God, was taken by God to be the manifestation of the fulness of His love to men, and there upon that cross, on that "green hill far away," love—divine, all-conquering, eternal—celebrated its triumph. The glory of that cross shall fill the whole of that land and the universe also, for only through it can the promised blessing come to Israel and the world.

The last time Zion saw Him was when He hung dead, amid all those circumstances of deepest shame, with a crown of thorns bound upon His sacred brow, and over His head this superscription written: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

"Then sank the star of Solyma,
Then pass'd her glory's day,
Like heath that in the wilderness
The wild wind whirls away!"

The chief priests and the Pharisees took counsel to put Jesus to death, because, said they, "If we let Him thus alone . . . the

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Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.''' To get rid of Him they pretended loyalty to the Roman Cæsar ; but their hypocrisy recoiled upon their guilty heads, and the very thing that they feared happened to them thirty-six years after they had expressed that fear. Upon the anniversary of that fateful Passover, when they cried after their Messiah, " Away with Him ! crucify Him ! " practically the whole nation was again gathered at Jerusalem when Titus besieged the city. The Romans, exasperated by the useless obstinacy of the defence, burned and destroyed without remorse the city and its temple to ashes. The foundations of the sacred edifice were ploughed up by the Roman soldiers ; thus, without knowing what they did, they literally fulfilled the Lord's words, that " There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.''' It is computed that more than a million perished in the siege. The aged and infirm of those left alive in the city were killed, and the rest were sent, some to the mines in Egypt, some to grace the triumph of Titus at Rome, others were scattered to various parts of the empire. They were offered for sale, we are told, until no man would buy them, again literally fulfilling the words, " Ye have sold

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yourselves for naught.'' But it was not until the reign of Hadrian, A.D. 135, that the people who had regathered in the ruined city were finally dispersed. For two years the insurgent Jews held out against the Romans, fighting with the courage of despair. But worn out by famine and disease, they were compelled to yield. Their historians say that "the Romans waded to their horses' bridles in blood, which flowed with the fury of a mountain torrent "; 580,000 are said to have fallen by the sword, while the number of victims from other causes was countless.

"Go (said the Lord), ye conquerors;
Steep in her blood your swords,
And raze to earth her battlements,
For they are not the Lord's.
Tell Zion's mournful daughter,
O'er kindred bones she'll tread,
And Hinnom's vale of slaughter
Shall hide but half her dead!"

Hadrian determined at once to obliterate Jerusalem as a city, the ruins that Titus had left were razed to the ground, and again was the ploughshare passed over them "as a sign of perpetual desolation," according to the desolater, but fulfilling the prophecy of Micah uttered nine centuries before, "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps,

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and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest '' (Micah iii. 12).

Several attempts were made to rebuild the temple, which all failed ; the last by the apostate Julian, when an earthquake, a whirlwind, and a fiery eruption compelled the workmen to abandon their labour.

Since then Jerusalem has been, according to the Lord's own words, " trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled '' (Luke xxi. 24). Zion and her people fell, and,

" . . . The crown of glory
Was struck from her rebel brow,
And with feet all wounded and gory
She wanders an exile now."

" The harp of Judah peals no more
On Zion's awful hill,"

What a confirmation of the Word of God has the subsequent history of that nation been ! More than 3000 years ago Moses warned them that if they rebelled against God's will they would " become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee '' (Deut. xxviii. 37). And the closing words of his warning are so descriptive of their long travail, and so moving, that they can scarce be read without tears. We quote them to show how true is the prophetic Word.

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“ And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you ; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought ; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other ; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest : but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind : and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee ; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shall have none assurance of thy life : in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even ! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning ! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see ” (Deut. xxviii. 63-67).

There is no need for us to recount the awful persecutions through which these people have passed in every country of Europe, but mostly in Russia. Nor has the war made any difference to them in this respect ; for if American reports are true,

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whole communities, large towns of thousands of inhabitants on the western frontier of Russia, were massacred at the time of the Russian retreats before the Central Powers. Like the bush that Moses saw in the desert, they have been continually burnt with fire but are not consumed, and though scattered for all these centuries in all countries they are absorbed by none. They are the miracle of the ages, one of the greatest concrete proofs of the infallibility of the Word of God and of the justice of His governmental ways. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

And has God forgotten them? And are His promises made to their fathers to fail? Never.

Hear what the sure Word of God declares :
" And so all Israel shall be saved : as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob : for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes : but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief : even so have

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these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been His counsellor ? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen.''
(Rom. xi.).

“Her future shall outshine her chequer'd past,
Her strength revive, that bent before the blast,
And—like the olive—flourish and increase,
The emblem and the guarantee of peace.”

CHAPTER IV.

God's word to Israel shall be fulfilled in spite of the ambitious projects of would-be world rulers.—Jewish longings for Jerusalem.—The Zionist Movement.—The Vision of the Dry Bones.—The University —The Palestine Committee.—The prospect.

JERUSALEM, that has been trodden down by the Gentiles for long centuries, and has been of little account in world politics since the Dispersion, is now emerging from its obscurity and unimportance. Other cities have arisen and grown rich and haughty, rivalling one another for world supremacy in power, commerce, and pleasure; but their days are numbered, and they must soon yield the palm in all that is truly great to Jerusalem, for *Jerusalem is the City*. And as surely as she fell because of her iniquity, so surely shall she arise again in the mercy and glory of the Lord; for He will fulfil His Word: "*This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her*" (Ezek. v. 5); "*Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion . . . the city of the great King*" (Psa. xlviii. 2).

It matters little how audacious and arrogant the ambition of would-be world rulers may be, or how vast their preparations

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for world conquest, or extraordinary their apparent success in the struggle towards their goal ; all lies finally in God's hand, and "*when He divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel : for the Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance*" (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9). This word still stands good, and shall be established speedily when God resumes His special dealings with His people and the earth, after His Church has been caught up to heaven.

The longing for Jerusalem and the land of their fathers has never died out of the Jewish breast during the long centuries of their exile, and in this they stand out as a miracle amongst the nations. Other peoples have been driven out of the lands of their birth, and have sought a refuge in other lands and have been absorbed by the nations with whom they have gone to dwell almost at once ; but the Jews, having neither king, country, nor flag, have maintained their identity unmarred, and are as distinct from all other peoples to-day as when in the judgment of God and in the fulfilment of His Word they were driven out of Canaan. But they have never lost sight of the fact that

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Canaan is theirs, and their passionate love for it, and hopes in regard to it, find eloquent expression in their literature and liturgy. Take for example these stanzas from *An Ode to Zion*.

“Art thou not, Zion, fain
To send forth greetings from thy sacred rock
Unto thy captive train,
Who greet thee as the remnants of thy flock?
Take thou on every side,
East, west, and south, and north, their greetings
multiplied.
Sadly he greets thee still,
The prisoner of hope who, day and night,
Sheds ceaseless tears, like dew on Hermon's hill.
Would that they fell upon thy mountain height!

“Perfect in beauty, Zion, how in thee
Do love and grace unite!
The souls of thy companions tenderly
Turn unto thee; thy joy was their delight,
And weeping they lament thy ruin now.
In distant exile, for thy sacred height
They long, and towards thy gates in prayer they
bow.”

As to their liturgy, this one note dominates the whole of it.

When a Jewish child is circumcised they say, “For Thy salvation I have waited, O Lord; I have hoped, O Lord, for Thy salvation,” and men pray that God “may send us His Anointed, walking in His integrity, to give tidings of consolation to the people that is one, though dispersed and scattered amongst the nations.”

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At a Jewish wedding the prayer is uttered that "soon may there be heard in the cities of Judæa and in the streets of Jerusalem the voice of joy and gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride, the jubilant voice of the bridegrooms from their canopies and of the youths from their feasts of song." When a Jew dies and is buried his children pray that God "will rebuild the city of Jerusalem and establish His temple in the midst thereof."

When a Jewish lad is confirmed he is reminded that God "has planted eternal life in the Jewish people," and he prays that "He may have mercy upon Zion, for it is the home of our life, and that He may save her that is grieved in spirit speedily even in our days."

Thus in all the important stages of the pilgrimage of the Jew through life the consciousness of the exile from Palestine and the assurance of the return to Palestine are brought before him and insisted upon. But it is not merely at the important stages. The prayers throughout the day, the prayers for every festive occasion, are prayers for the Jewish restoration.

In spite of this constant ache of the Jewish heart for their sacred land, none sought it until in recent years there sprang up in

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Russia a movement which resulted in an organization being formed called "The Lovers of Zion," which had for its object the colonizing of Palestine with Jews chiefly of Russia. The Zionist movement with its larger aspirations has unified and made articulate Jewish sentiment the world over. Its great object is to secure Palestine as the home of the nation. It is not the only movement afoot with the same object in view, but it is the greatest and most expressive of the hopes of Jewry. There can be no doubt but that in it is seen the fulfilment of the first part of Ezekiel's vision of the Dry Bones (chap. xxxvii.). For centuries the nation has been

". . . stricken, dethroned and lowly,
And bereft of a home on earth."

Their bones were very dry, and their hope was lost, and they were cut off from their parts (ver. 11). But God has not forgotten them. He has said, "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (ver. 12). God's clock seems to be about to strike the hour when this word shall be made good to them. As in the vision, bone is coming to bone and flesh and sinews are coming upon them, the unity of this people is appearing, and they are speaking out their demands in no uncertain

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voice. The second part of the vision, in which the nation is seen throbbing with life towards God, will not be fulfilled yet, not until they have travelled the road of Jacob's sorrow, which will bring them to full repentance for the rejection of their Messiah.

The first Zionist Congress was held in 1897, when the Jewish flag was raised, and Theodor Herzl, of Vienna, declared that the only solution of the Jewish question was the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. This declaration thrilled Jewry, and the enthusiasm it aroused can be felt in their rallying songs. As in the following :—

“ My brothers, my brothers ! O wandering, aimless
hordes !
A clarion from Zion is speaking for the Lord !
The thundering heavens command : Arise a mighty
band,
With heart and voice make now the choice—
And straightway seek your land.”

Organizations were formed all over the world. The awakening was a national one, and of intense feeling. But as long as the Turk held the land there seemed small hope of the realization of this great object, and especially so as the then British policy was the maintenance of the Turkish Empire in Asia intact. Colonies elsewhere were tried, notably in Argentina, but though millions were spent on these schemes they came to

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nothing. At the 1903 Congress, Dr. Herzl announced that the British Government had offered to send a commission to inquire into the practicability of establishing an autonomous Jewish state in the East African Protectorate. But the project was dropped at a subsequent Congress; nothing but the land of their fathers would satisfy their national hopes.

Large numbers of Jews, chiefly from Russia and Roumania, helped by their richer compatriots, settled in Palestine, and considerable progress was made in colonizing and the cultivation of the land. The fields waved golden in the summer breezes, the grapes hung plenteous in the glorious sun, and the olives yielded their precious oil. But the war came, and many of these immigrants fled the country or were banished; the land was laid waste and those who were left upon it were reduced to the direst straits, and Zionism seemed to be set back many years.

But now has come General Allenby's victory and the British declaration that "His Majesty's Government viewed with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object."

Early in February this year (1918), a Con-

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gress of the English Zionist Federation was held in London, and it was then stated that before the war negotiations had been opened for the securing of a site upon the Mount of Olives for the building of a Jewish University. The war compelled the suspension of the negotiations, but so keen were these Zionists in the matter, that the very day after Jerusalem was occupied by the British the negotiations were resumed and had now been brought to a successful conclusion. "Not tarrying for peace, but within the sound of the guns, Jewry asks His Majesty's Government to permit full investigation into the feasibility of the scheme for founding a Jewish University in Palestine, and should military and political exigencies permit, to take steps for the initiation of the undertaking. The British reply of God speed is at once a tribute to the petitioned and the petitioner" (Extract from *Palestine*). Losing no time in the matter, the Government authorized the Zionist Federation to send a commission to Palestine, and appointed a capable officer to join it.

The spirit of the Jews themselves, and the energy with which they are seizing the opportunity and pushing the enterprise, is amazing. Already large sums of money are being subscribed towards it by Jews in

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American cities. The English members of the Zionist Commission are already at work in Jerusalem, the Chairman of the Commission having been received by His Majesty the King prior to leaving these shores, showing the great importance that the British Government attaches to the work. The following is an excerpt from *Palestine* :

“The Commission will include, in addition to representatives from English Jewry, representatives of Russian, American, and French Jewry. It goes out armed with the highest and the warmest recommendations to the British authorities in Palestine ; it is assured in advance of the sympathy and assistance of the Imperial authorities. . . .

“Its task is to lay the foundations and to commence the superstructure of a Jewish Palestine as far as may be achieved during the war. . . .

“Those who walk about Jewry note an exaltation, the consciousness of a miracle manifest and mighty, the joy of being caught up in one of the great tides of Divine purpose. ‘Happy is the man who saw it’ is the refrain of a beautiful Hebrew hymn describing the glories of the Temple and the Jewish national life. Happy is the man who

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has lived to see these days and to share in these mighty labours. The same wave of feeling and expectation is flooding with particular force through the Jewish life of Palestine, which already is seeking to adjust itself and to adapt itself to its new liberties, its greater responsibility, and its loftier future."

On April 6th a great gathering of 500 enthusiastic Jews assembled on the site of the proposed University to welcome the Zionist Commission, and Dr. Weizmann gave an address in Hebrew which gave rise to great enthusiasm.

The very definite action on the part of the British Government seems to mark it out as "the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia," spoken of in Isaiah xviii. It has been pointed out that the "Woe" at the commencement of the chapter should be "Ah," and that it is an exclamation of compassion. The land in question is evidently a maritime nation, and one that has sheltered the Jews; for "the shadowing with wings" indicates this—it is a well-known figure in Scripture. No land has given such a refuge to these downtrodden people as England has, and now she is taking them especially under her

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wing, and that with the view of putting them into Palestine. But whatever is done in this way, and whoever does it, all the inhabitants of the earth shall see it (ver. 3) ; it is to be a matter of international politics, probably one of the chief questions at the settlement when the war ceases. And so the loud timbrel is being sounded as though the long travail of Jacob's children would now end in perfect peace ; in reality this is but the prelude to the darkest chapter in their history, and Jerusalem has yet to know her darkest hour.

That the work will go forward cannot be questioned. The university, the sanhedrim, the temple, the daily sacrifice, will all become facts. The Jews themselves may be only thinking of securing their ancient land as their true national home, and the Allied Nations, in giving it to them, if and when they are able, may only have in view the safeguarding of their interests in the future, or the righting the wrongs of a downtrodden and defenceless people ; but God is behind it, His hand is most surely moving events to that glorious moment when He shall declare to all rulers and peoples : " I HAVE SET MY KING UPON MY HOLY HILL OF ZION " (Ps. ii.).

While the Christian rejoices in this, yet

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the thought of the way it must be brought about causes him sadness of heart. Like the little book that the seer had to eat, which was sweet as honey in his mouth, but was bitter in his belly (Rev. x. 9, 10); so is the thought of the end of God's ways sweet to the taste and glorious to contemplate, but the consideration of the waywardness and blindness of men that make judgment a necessity before that end can be reached, gives sorrow to the heart. It is "with joy and sorrow mingling" that we look ahead, and so enter somewhat into the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke x. 17, 24; xix. 41-44).

Everything will appear most promising at first, for the bud will be perfect and the sour grape ripening in the flower, when God shall "cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks and take away and cut down the branches, and they shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer on them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them (Isa. xviii. 5, 6). In these vivid sentences is described "the great tribulation" through which Israel must pass ere they reach the blessing and rest of Messiah's kingdom. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

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But why must this unspeakable sorrow come upon them? Because they will go into the land proud and unbroken; they will glory in the WISDOM of the professors who will be installed at their university, and the legislators who will frame their constitution; and in the RICHES of the great financiers of their race which will be poured out freely to make Palestine great; and in the MIGHT of whatever power or powers support and protect them; and not of such material as this will God build up His kingdom, for "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

No flesh shall glory in God's presence. But these proud leaders of this proud race will take their own way. They will seek the honour that comes from each other and not that which comes from God; consequently, as they refused their true Messiah who came to men in His Father's name, so they will receive another, who shall come in his own name (John v. 43, 44). And he,

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the devil-inspired Antichrist, will be the plague, until there is left of them but a poor and afflicted people, who cry, "Some trust in horses, and some trust in chariots, but we will trust in the name of the Lord. . . . Save, Lord : let the King hear us when we call " (Ps. xx.).

CHAPTER V.

When shall these things be?—Israel cut out of the Olive Tree.—The Gospel to gather the Church out of the World.—The unworldly character and destiny of the Church.—That Blessed Hope.

“ *T*ELL us, when shall these things be ? ”
was the question that the disciples put eagerly and anxiously to the Lord, and that question is still being asked, and some, heedless of the Lord’s words to those same disciples, “ It is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power ” (Acts i. 7), have attempted to answer the question, with the sad result that they have brought the prophetic Word into much discredit. Some who have made such attempts have been great deceivers, like the late “ Pastor ” Russell ; others have been deceived, like some of the poor dupes of the strange “ Tongues ” movement, who boldly declared that Christ would come in September, 1917. But why do people make these mistakes ? Simply because they do not understand the unique character of this present dispensation. They do not understand that we live in a parenthesis, and times and seasons do not belong to us who are being called out of the world by a heavenly calling, and that

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our hope is to be taken out of the world at any moment by the coming of the Lord to raise the sleeping saints and to change the living. When this event takes place, times and seasons, which belong entirely to Israel and their land, will come into their own again, and what is called "the last week" of the seventy, which the angel told Daniel were "determined upon thy people and upon the holy city," will commence. This means that there are about seven years of Israel's history in Jerusalem to be fulfilled before the Lord comes to them (see Dan. ix. 20-27), but these seven years will not commence until the Church is taken out of the world.

It is necessary then that a chapter should be devoted to the character of this present period, and what the work is that the Holy Ghost is doing now in the world. When Israel rejected and crucified her Messiah, she was broken off from God's olive tree and cast away for the time being, until, as Romans xi. tells us, "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." The fulness of the Gentiles is the Church, which does and will yet occupy a unique and most highly privileged place in God's purpose and ways. The Gospel of the grace of God, which has been preached since the Holy Spirit came

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down from a risen and ascended Christ, has for its great object the gathering out of a people from amongst the Gentiles.

We have met Christians who have been rudely shaken in these cruel days. They had hoped and believed that the Gospel was sent into the world for its conversion, and that it was about to accomplish its mission; but now the world seems less converted than ever in its sad and sinful history, and in consequence they feel that the Gospel has proved a failure, and they are perplexed and depressed thereat.

We must maintain with our utmost powers that the Gospel is *for* all the world, and that whosoever amongst its one thousand five hundred millions believes in the Son of God, who is its most blessed theme, receives eternal life and is brought into God's family. But while the blessing is for all, for every individual that hears the most wondrous Gospel offer, we are nowhere told that God sent it to convert the world. He knew from the beginning that men would not receive the truth in the love of it, and so, instead of converting the world, the Gospel calls *out of the world* those that obey it.

It is by the Gospel that the members of Christ's body are secured, and this body is the Church, the *ekklesia*, which means, that

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which is called out. The Lord Jesus told His disciples that He had chosen them "*out of the world*" (John xv. 19). Simon Peter declared, "how God did visit the Gentiles, *to take out of them* a people for His name" (Acts xv. 14). And the new song in heaven is, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood *out of every* kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. v. 9).

The Church is to meet the Lord with rapture as the heavenly Bridegroom; the world out of which the Church is taken will meet Him with terror as its judge. When He comes in the latter character, "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn" (Matt. xxiv. 30); "all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7). They will say "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?" (Rev. vi. 16, 17). Solemn, indeed, it is to contemplate this; nevertheless it ought not to shake our faith in the Gospel. Instead, the state of things in the world, ripening as it is for this judgment, ought to strengthen our confidence in the Word of God, for it is all plainly predicted there.

We fear that not all Christians realize

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what we might call the anti-worldly place and character of the Church of God to which they all belong. And yet no note is struck more definitely and constantly in the New Testament than this. Without this knowledge we cannot rightly divide the word of truth, and we shall confuse and confound those things that refer to Israel and the earth and those that belong to those who are blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3).

HEAR WHAT PAUL SAYS : " Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father " (Gal. i. 4). And he closes that same Epistle by this moving declaration, " God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world " (chap. vi. 14).

HEAR WHAT JAMES SAYS : " Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God " (chap. iv. 4).

HEAR WHAT JOHN SAYS : " Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him " (1 John ii. 15).

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HEAR WHAT THE LORD HIMSELF HAS SAID : “ I have given them Thy Word ; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world ” (John xvii. 14).

We have been made “ partakers of the heavenly calling ” (Heb. iii. 1). And God “ according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us ” (1 Peter i. 3, 4). How deeply the consideration of such statements of God’s Word should affect us, and how gladly we ought to take up our anti-worldly place and character. And yet while being unworldly, we are not to be unpractical or regardless of our obligations in this life. God in His providence has set us in certain relationships : we are husbands or wives, parents or children, masters or servants, and all of us are subjects of the State, and we must, in the fear of God, fulfil all the obligations that these relationships impose upon us, and yet in them all and through them all maintain our heavenly character and be constantly
LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE
AND GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE
GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS
CHRIST.

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What is that blessed hope ?

It is not the improvement of the world, for "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. iii. 13).

It is not the conversion of the world by the Gospel, for the Lord Himself asked the question, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth ?" (Luke xviii. 8). And when He does come back to the earth He will not be welcomed by glad and enraptured multitudes, but "all tribes of the earth shall mourn" (Matt. xxiv. 30), "and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7).

It is not universal revival of divine life and energy in the Church, for "the love of many shall wax cold," and "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim. iv. 3), but they shall have "a form of godliness but denying the power" (2 Tim. iii. 5).

"That blessed hope" is not centred in either the world or the Church ; it does not draw its inspiration from anything on the earth ; it turns the eye to heaven, and amid the encircling gloom below the light of it glows with increasing splendour before the soul. It is centred in Christ—"THE LORD JESUS CHRIST OUR HOPE" (1 Tim. i. 1).

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It is the hourly expectation of seeing Him and being with Him and like Him. But it is not through death and the grave that we look for the goal of this "blessed hope." Multitudes have travelled that way, and they shall as surely triumph in the glad realization of this hope as we that are alive and remain. But it is not through death and the grave that we are told to look for it. The way of its fulfilment is most definitely and clearly described in 1 Thessalonians iv. 15 to end :

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

And these words of the Lord are confirmed to us by a glorious passage in the resurrection chapter (1 Cor. xv. 51-57) :

"Behold, I show you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump : for the trumpet shall sound, and

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the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Unless we are prepared to argue that words do not mean what they stand for, we must believe that the moment is coming when the dead in Christ shall arise, and with them millions of people—the whole of the blood-bought Church—will be caught up from the earth, and without dying will meet the Lord in the air, to be for ever with Him. They will disappear suddenly and completely from every place, position, and pursuit in which the world has known them, to be seen no more until they return with Christ to reign over the earth.

That this appears an impossibility to the human comprehension of things we admit, and we are quite prepared to hear the scoffer contend that the law of gravitation would

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prevent it. But by the word of the Lord it is revealed to us, and faith lays hold of that and says, "*With men it is impossible, but not with God* ; for with God all things are possible." And what says the Word ? "*The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout.*" The shout of the Lord is mightier than the law of gravitation. Notice how this comes out in Philippians iii. 20, 21 :

"*For our conversation is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.*"

The power that will bring this marvellous thing to pass is that power by which He will subdue all things unto Himself, until from His throne to the uttermost bounds of His infinite universe every force in every realm within it obeys His will. The power that was put forth when He rose from the dead ; the power that has quickened us and delivered our soul from the bondage of sin ; this is the power of His working.

The law of gravitation did not prevent the translation of Enoch ; it did not hold Elijah when the time had come for God to take him up ; it did not prevent the ascension of our most blessed Lord. How

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could it ? for He is the Creator of every law, and the power by which He went up is the power that will catch us up when He descends from heaven with that wonderful shout of triumph and of pent-up love for His Church. We know not the hour when this shall be. But waiting and watching we should be, we must be, for His last word to us upon the sacred pages is, " Surely, I come quickly."

Not until this great event takes place will the way be cleared for the things that are shortly to come to pass. And when it does, the Christian will view them not as being in them, but above them in the security and peace of the presence of the Lord.

CHAPTER VI.

The Lamb that was slain takes the Book of Judgments from the hand of God.—The Man-Child who will rule the earth with a rod of iron.—Satan cast out of heaven by the Archangel Michael.—He purposes to exterminate the godly remnant of the Jews.

WE must now consider two great events which are to take place, not on earth but in heaven, but which have earth directly in view, and especially the destiny of Israel as the centre of it. The first is given in Rev. v., where the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, takes the Book of God's purposes in regard to the earth and Israel and Jerusalem, to open the seals of it, that all written therein might come to pass. And the second in Rev. xii., where Satan is cast out of heaven, and determines in his wrath to exterminate the Jews and so frustrate God's plans.

From Revelation iv. onward, the Church of God is no longer on earth, but in heaven, and so above all that is to happen in the way of judgment on the earth. The intelligent reader of Scripture will recognize a very definite change in the way God is presented to us in this chapter. He is not here spoken of as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which precious name He is known

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to the Church, the saints with the heavenly calling. But He is addressed as Lord God Almighty, names in which He revealed Himself of old to people with an earthly calling, and which declared His faithfulness to them. This plainly indicates that His dealings with the earth are about to recommence, the *calling out* of His heavenly saints being completed. Again, the ascription of worship at the end of the chapter is : “*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power : for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.*” The earth belongs to God, for He made it, but men since the Fall have refused the claims of God both over it and themselves, and the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus was the casting out of the Heir, that it all might be theirs. But God is about to take up His rights and make the earth such as He can have pleasure in. How this is to be done, and who will do it, comes out in chapter v.

That the Revelation is largely a book of symbols will be understood by all our readers. Some of these symbols are difficult to interpret, others are exceedingly plain ; we shall only deal with the latter,—such, indeed, as have special reference to our subject.

The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root

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of David, takes the Book from God. It is plain that whatever the results of the opening of this seven-sealed book may be, they have Israel specially in view, for the titles of the Lord here given are distinctly Jewish titles. His labours of love for His Assembly are completed, He has presented her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. v. 25, 27), and He turns His attention now to earth and to those judgments that shall prepare the way for His kingdom in it ; but He does so as the One who is to bear David's sceptre, and the One who made a sure covenant with David—David's Son and David's Lord.

We gain little from our study of the Word if we do not gain some fuller knowledge of Himself ; consequently we will consider Him. In other days and in other circumstances He opened a book. We read the story in Luke iv. He stood up, the meek and lowly Jesus, in the synagogue of Nazareth, in which He had often sat as a boy, and the Book of the Prophet Esaias was given to Him. He turned to chap. lxi. and read those beautiful words : “ The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor ; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach

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deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." He ceased to read in the middle of a sentence, and put a full stop where in our Old Testament we have only a comma. Why did He do that? The completion of the sentence is, "And the day of vengeance of our God." He was then and there to open the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of grace, the year of blessing, and to postpone the day of vengeance until that year had run its course. That year has extended until now. In order to open it, and tell the tale of grace, He had to be the Man of Sorrows while He lived and the Sacrifice for sin when He died. He voluntarily became both, Blessed be His name! and the grace of God is now in full revelation.

But the Jews did not want the grace of God, nor Him who brought it to them. It is true they marvelled at His words. They sounded in their ears like sweetest music; but when He showed them how grace worked, that it reached out to the poor and hopeless Gentile and passed by the smug, self-satisfied, self-righteous religionist, they were filled with rage and took Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, to cast Him down headlong. They

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rejected Him and the grace of God, and that is why they wander strangers in every land to-day, and they will never know peace and rest until they receive them on the ground of the grace that He whom they rejected brought into the world.

When He takes the book of Revelation v. the year of grace will have run to its close and the first hour of the day of vengeance of our God will have struck. He will complete the sentence then.

Notice the blessed character of our God. If it is a question of grace, it is a year ; if it is a question of judgment, it is a day. If it is a question of grace, our God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish (2 Peter iii. 9) ; if it is a question of judgment, He says, " A short work will the Lord make in the earth " (Rom. ix. 28).

The day of vengeance has the final blessing of Israel in view. This is plain from Isa. lxi., for following the words " the day of vengeance of our God," we read, " to comfort those that mourn." Who will the mourners be when this day of vengeance comes ? They will be the godly remnant of the Jews in Jerusalem and the land of Canaan, as the following verses show : " To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them

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beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.

“ And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

“ And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

“ But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord ; men shall call you the ministers of our God : ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.”

Think of the majesty of the One who takes the book from the hand of God. He is the Lion of the tribe of Juda. Juda is the royal tribe. The lion symbolizes strength and royalty. All royalty belongs to Christ ; as the Son of David according to the flesh, He will be invested with all that royalty means in God's thoughts, and men shall see in Him what a true King is. He presented Himself once for their acceptance when He entered Jerusalem “ meek and riding on an ass.” And the world rejected Him then—Jew and Gentile alike ; but when He appears as the

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Lion of the tribe of Juda, He will break the nations in pieces as a potter's vessel.

But He is also the Root of David, the One from whom every promise made to David proceeded, and the One in whom is the life and force to fulfil the promises He has made. He is the One who made "an everlasting covenant with David, ordered in all things and sure" (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). He is the One of whom David said, "Thou art great, O Lord God : for there is none like Thee . . . and now, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as Thou hast said, and let Thy name be magnified for ever" (2 Sam. vii.).

John looked to see the Lion of whom the elder spoke, but it was the Lamb that was slain that he saw appear in the midst of the throne. John knew Him well. He it was who heard, "Behold the Lamb of God," and followed Him (John i). He had leaned on His breast at the last Supper, and had stood beside His cross when He was slain for our sins. He sees Him now exalted from the degradation of the cross and the darkness of the grave to the throne ; sees Him no longer in the place of sacrifice where He was bruised for our iniquities, but enthroned amidst the splendours of the

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glory of God. He sees Him there as the centre of heaven's admiration, and the object of its worship; for when He takes the book all heaven breaks forth into the rapture of the new song, "*Thou art worthy to take the book.*" The One who Himself endured the judgment of God in order to redeem men from it, is the only One who can judge the world in righteousness. Judgment has been put into His hands, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father (John v.). The Lamb that was slain is the Lion who must reign.

But John tells us more about the Lamb. He has seven horns and seven eyes. Horns in Scripture symbolize power, and eyes discrimination and wisdom. Seven is the number that stands for perfection. The Lamb will be perfect in power and perfect in wisdom. He is this in the day of grace for the salvation of men, for "Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 24). But He will also be the power and wisdom of God in the day of vengeance. He will slay the rebellious with the rod of His mouth with such power that no weapon lifted against Him shall prosper; but He will do it with such absolute righteousness and discrimination that not one stroke will fall where it ought not, and not one

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voice in the universe will be able to charge Him with folly or injustice.

The second great act in these coming events is the casting of the devil out of heaven (Rev. xii.). The Lord on the throne of judgment has the ultimate blessing of Israel in view, and the devil's intention—having failed to keep the Church out of heaven by his subtlety and accusations—is the ultimate destruction of Israel ; so that what the Lord Jesus Christ is going to bring about, the devil is determined, if he can, to frustrate.

The woman that brings forth the Man Child is undoubtedly Israel. She is clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars about her head. What a constellation of glories are hers ! These celestial bodies set forth rule and direction for the earth. " God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night ; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years : and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth : and it was so " (Gen. i. 14, 15). And God's thought for Israel is that she shall be invested with this glory. Thence the Man Child that is to rule the earth with a rod of iron is the

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Son of David, born of the chosen daughter of Israel, He is the Son of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. The 2nd Psalm speaks of Him in this character. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Christ is the Man Child, and when the time came for His delivery, when He came into the world, the great red dragon stood ready to devour Him. The great red dragon is the Roman Empire that is to play such a terrible part in the days that are coming, *energized by Satan*. Herod, the king of Judea by the appointment of the Roman senate, and maintained on his throne by the Roman power, sent his soldiers to slay all the children of Bethlehem, in the hope of slaying the Man Child. We know very well how God outwitted the enemy, and the Lord was taken down into Egypt and there preserved until Herod's death.

Again, at the crucifixion the devil hoped to destroy the Lord, and the Roman power gave its sanction to, and carried out that terrible deed, and set its seal upon the sepulchre to keep the Lord within it. But the power of Satan was overthrown and death was defeated ; Cæsar's seal was broken and the Lord rose up from the dead and was caught up into heaven, to sit at

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God's right hand until His enemies be made His footstool. His Church, which is to share His reign with Him, will also be caught up (Rev. ii. 26, 27 ; 1 Thess. iv.).

Then there is war in heaven. Michael, the chief angel of God's hosts, and his angels, fight with the devil and his angels, and the devil prevails not but is cast out of heaven. This is not the heaven of heavens, but the firmament. Satan is spoken of as the prince of the power of the air (Eph. ii. 2). We read of the principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high, or heavenly, places. Satan's seat of authority is now above the earth, and from thence he moves behind the world's politics, for he is its prince (John xii. 31 ; xiv. 30), and behind all its false religion, for he is its god (2 Cor. iv. 4). But our chapter tells us that he will be cast down from this place of power and authority, for it has to be given to the Church—the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 9-27).

It is of exceeding interest to see that it is Michael the archangel that casts Satan out of heaven, for he is the great spiritual prince that stands up for Israel (see Dan. x. 21 ; xii. 1), and this emphasizes the fact that at the time that this chapter speaks God is moving by mighty angelic power on behalf

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of His people. It would seem that if Satan could exterminate the seed of Jacob he would be able to hold the earth against the Lord. Hence, on being cast out of heaven he is wroth with the woman (Israel), and pours a flood of water out of his mouth to destroy her. Many floods of water (persecutions) have poured out of the devil's mouth to destroy the Jews, but this will be the most terrible of all, it is "Jacob's trouble," called "the great tribulation." But God outwits the devil and protects His own. The earth swallows up the flood; there is some special intervention of God to neutralize the wrath of the devil and men against His people, and for His elect's sake the days of the tribulation are shortened (Matt. xxiv. 22). Great wings of an eagle are given to her, and she is carried into the wilderness. The wings of the eagle are figurative of the power of God (Exod. xix. 4) ; and the wilderness is a place where there are no resources but in God. The figure indicates that by God's power and through God's resources alone will they be preserved.

Finally, the devil's wrath is directed against the *remnant* of the woman's seed. This remnant is those in the midst of the Jews who have faith in God, and who will be awakened to the fact that Jesus is their

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Messiah. They will read the Scriptures in a new way and keep them as the commandments of God, and they will have the testimony of Jesus, and will look for His return to earth, and will form the nucleus of His kingdom when He does come.

What rage will fill the devil when he sees, in spite of all his efforts of subtlety and violence, that the seed of God is indestructible, and that it is showing itself afresh in these people, and that all his efforts to destroy it only make it flourish the more. In this remnant we have fulfilled Isa. vi. 13 : “ But yet it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and be eaten [or browsed] ; as a teil tree and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast off their leaves ; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.”

CHAPTER VII.

The Rise of the Head of the World-Empire.—His coadjutor, Antichrist.—The Super-spiritualist.—He deceives the leaders of the Jewish nation.—The Great Tribulation.—The Two Witnesses.—The Testimony of Jesus.—His Missionary servants.—The Mark of the Beast.—A warning.—The Remnant.

CONSEQUENT upon Satan's being cast out of the heavens, he will find two men who will readily become the instruments of his will. Of these two we read particularly in Rev. xiii. The first Beast of that chapter will be the great Imperialist, the head of the league of ten nations, whose kings shall agree to give their power to him (Rev. xvii.). His metropolis will be Rome, and from that centre he will wield an authority that will be almost world-wide in its extent. The second Beast we believe to be Antichrist. These two extraordinary persons will not only be exalted and obeyed by their fellow-men—both Gentile and Jew—but Satan will give his power and subtlety to them, and they will become the most sinister figures in history, the consummation of all that fallen men admire, and the personification of sin against God, the Almighty. These two men

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will be firmly allied, and in all matters of public policy will act as one, for they will act under the direct influence and direction of Satan. Much has been written on these two men and the part they will play, and it has often been pointed out that, with the devil as the spirit of evil controlling and inspiring them, they will be a counterfeit trinity, an imitation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This we believe to be true, and suggest that as Christ came to reveal what God is, and to bring worshippers to Him (John iv. 23, 24), so Antichrist will come, proclaiming the greatness of the Beast, blasphemously deifying him, and calling upon all to worship him. And as the Holy Ghost pervaded the whole life and testimony of the Lord Jesus, and enlightens and indwells all who receive that testimony, so Satan will be the mighty power that energizes his agents and darkens the minds of men in this coming awful delusion ; he will deceive all who have not obeyed the truth.

Both these men will exercise a malign influence upon the fortunes of the Jews, but Antichrist will be chiefly associated with them. Beside Rev. xiii. 7-18, he is also the subject of 2 Thess. ii. 8-10, and Dan. ix. 36-39, and of other Scriptures. He will not only be *Antichrist*, deceiving

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the Jew, but *the false prophet*, deceiving apostate Christendom ; and *the man of sin*, exalting himself against God, and *the wilful king*, defiant of every law of God and man, a law unto himself. Through him Satan will manifest his subtlety, for he will not at once show himself as a dragon. He is evidently a Jew, for Daniel speaks of "the God of his fathers," referring of course to God as known in Israel ; and he will have the seat of his authority at Jerusalem, as Dan. xi. 40 proves. He will come in his own name as the Lord predicted, and they will receive him (John v. 23). He will appear to them as a lamb (Rev. xiii. 11), representing himself as their Messiah in imitation of Christ. But when he speaks his true character is revealed, for he speaks as a dragon ; he is Satan's mouthpiece. He will be the great pretender and will deceive the nation. He will also be the super-spiritist, giving marvellous occult demonstrations. He will bring fire down from heaven in the sight of men, and give life to an image that he will cause to be made to his great ally. Here will be the climax of Spiritism, which is really demonism, that has been so popularized of late by such men as Sir O. Lodge and Sir C. Doyle. The war, too, robbing thousands of those dearer to

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them than life itself, has given Satan an opportunity which, in the sinister administration of the kingdom of darkness, he has not been slow to seize, and many have been lured into the miserable delusion of Spiritism, believing that by it they will be able to hold converse with those whom they feel that they cannot surrender, when in reality it is with spirits of divination [demons] that they are in contact (Acts xvi. 16). Now it is with despicable and mean demons that Spiritist mediums have communication, then it will be with Satan himself that the false prophet will have dealings ; consequently his ability to delude will be correspondingly greater, and those who refuse to receive the truth in the love of it, truth so freely preached to all to-day, will follow him and his dread ally to their doom, doubtless acclaiming them as the great liberators of mankind from God's yoke.

It will probably be under his guidance that the leaders of the Jews will make a covenant with the Beast, for he will confirm a covenant with them for one week—a week of years, i.e. seven years (Dan. ix. 27). And these great men, “the scornful men that rule this people at Jerusalem” (Isa. xxviii.), believing themselves secure in such a powerful alliance, will treat with contempt

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all the warnings of God's Word and witnesses. Nay, they will be so deceived as to believe that these powerful personages are greater than God, for they will boast that they "have made a covenant with death and are in agreement with hell." They will say, "Peace and safety," scorning the Word of God which says, "There is no peace for the wicked." It will be then that on the surface everything will appear most prosperous, and that the sorrows of Jacob are at an end; "but they will heal the hurt of the daughter of My people but slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace" (Jer. vi. 14); and the crooked walls of the nation will but be daubed with untempered mortar, "because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace, and there was no peace" (Ezek. xiii. 10). It will be then that they will begin to rejoice that at last they have reached a place of rest for their weary feet; but they will find their bed too short for them to stretch themselves, and the covering too narrow to wrap about themselves. Neither rest nor covering shall be theirs (Isa. xxviii. 20).

In the midst of the week of years the covenant that the haughty ruler of the Ten-kingdomed Empire will make with the Jews will be treated by him as "a scrap of paper,"

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to be torn and spurned according to his imperious will. For, being the devil's tool, it will be evident to him that if he is to hold world dominion against the rightful Heir to it, he must destroy those at least who, of the Jewish nation, are faithful to Him, and in this necessity he will not scruple to break all international laws and covenants. Then will begin "Jacob's trouble," "the forty and two months," during which the Beast will continue (Rev. xiii. 5), and the holy city be trodden under foot by the Gentiles (Rev. xi. 2); the time, times and half a time (three and a half years) (Rev. xii. 14) during which God will preserve a remnant of the nation alive, as He preserved Israel of old in the wilderness, and the Hebrew youths in the furnace of fire heated seven times. It will be during this period that Matt. xxiv. 4-24 will be fulfilled, and the nation that crucified her Messiah will receive double for all her sins (Isa. xl. 2).

It may appear strange that all this sorrow still lies ahead of this people, but it will come upon them because they will still harden their hearts against the voice of God, as they have done ever since they were a nation, and their moral and spiritual condition will be worse than ever it has been before. This is described by the Lord in

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a parable in Matt. xii. 43-45. The nation is there likened to the man out of whom the unclean spirit (idolatry) had been cast, but who, finding no rest, because refusing to seek for it in the right direction, takes to himself seven other spirits, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. "Even so," said the Lord, "shall it be also unto this wicked generation." The city of Jerusalem is described in Rev. xi. as "the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom [corruption] and Egypt [bondage and the world], where also our Lord was crucified."

But in the midst of the wickedness and apostasy of the city, God will raise up His witnesses, and they will testify for Him until the closing days of the tribulation. God will give His power to them and they will perform mighty miracles in the city, as did Moses and Elijah before them, bearing witness to an unwilling people and an angry world that God is *the God of the earth*. This witness that they will bear in Jerusalem, and the plagues with which they will smite the earth, will rouse against them the wrath of the Beast who rules the great empire, and he will slay them, though not before their witness is finished. And in the street of that city where their Lord was crucified, their dead bodies will lie unburied for three

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days and a half. Three years and a half did the Lord bear witness to the Jews and the world of the boundless grace of God, telling out fully that God is love ; for three years and a half these witnesses will declare His justice and the certainty of His wrath against all unrighteousness. But the wooings of love and the warnings of judgment draw out alike the most bitter hatred. The slaying of these witnesses, which will be a direct challenge to God to do His worst, will fill the earth with rejoicing, for the deluded followers of the Beast and Antichrist will believe that their leaders are greater than God, since He did not preserve His witnesses from their power ; but the joy will be short-lived, for God will intervene and the spirit of life from God will enter into His faithful martyrs, and they will ascend to heaven in a cloud in the sight of their enemies. How vain is it for men to fight against the God who raiseth the dead. At that time God's long-suffering with men will be all but exhausted, and He will answer their challenge by an act of power and wrath that shall fill them with fear. A mighty earthquake will shake their city, bringing down in ruins those parts of it which will be their greatest boast, and slaying seven thousand of the chiefest men (Rev. xi.).

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Of the remnant we read, "They were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven." It is thought that this does not indicate any true work of God in this remnant, but it is evident that these stand out in striking contrast to those who blaspheme God because of His judgments in Rev. xvi. And while it is true that they do not recognize God as "*the God of the earth,*" which was the testimony of the two witnesses, as it is, indeed, of the whole of the book of Revelation, yet they recognize His supreme power in the appalling event of their time, and this appears to be a true awakening. One thing is certain, that there will emerge during this period a remnant who will glorify God, and who will be filled with an unconquerable zeal for His Word and the testimony of Jesus; these will become His messengers throughout the towns and villages of the land, and far afield to the uttermost parts of the earth, proclaiming the coming kingdom. They will go forth as sheep amongst wolves, and from city to city fierce persecution will follow them, but the Spirit of their Father will be with them, speaking through them; and though hated of all men for Christ's sake, they will endure unto the end, and before they have gone over all the cities of Israel

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the Son of man will come (Matt. x. 16-23). Here and there they will find open doors and ready ears for the message they carry, and not a cup of cold water given to one of these heroes of Christ will lose its reward (Matt. x).

The testimony of Jesus will divide the world then as it has never done before, for the time will have gone by for the mixture of false and real, as we now see it, and all men will receive these messengers of God or the mark of the Beast; those who do the former may be slain, suffer martyrdom, but they will have part in the first resurrection, and live and reign with Christ a thousand years; but whether they survive the persecutions and live to welcome the Lord when He comes, or die for their faith, they will enter into the joy of their Lord. Those who receive the mark of the Beast will rejoice for a brief day in their independence of God but will be destroyed by the King of kings at His coming; the fowls of the air will be filled with their flesh (Rev. xix. 21), and they will be cast finally into hell fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. xxv.).

A word of warning is needed at this point. A popular author has sent forth two books entitled, "In the Twinkling of an Eye" and "The Mark of the Beast," in which the

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reader is invited to believe that those who refuse, or neglect the Lord Jesus, as now preached in the Gospel of the grace of God, will have the opportunity of repentance then, and of refusing to receive the mark of the Beast. While saying nothing of the impiety of weaving fictitious tales about so solemn a theme, I have no hesitation in declaring that such teaching is pernicious and the devil is behind it. It is not the truth, even though the author of the books is a Christian man. I am sorry to say that I have met those who were deluded by these very books into putting off the great question of their relations with Christ. 2 Thess. ii. 9-12 leaves no question as to the doom of those who refuse the Gospel now: "*Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved . . . God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*"

Many passages other than Matt. x. and xxiv., already quoted, and Mark xiii., describe this period of trouble for the Jews. In Dan. xii. 1 we read: "*There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time,*" but to Daniel was given the assurance that not all his people would perish in it, for the

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passage goes on to say, "*And at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*" In Jer. xxx. 7 we read : "*Alas ! for the day is great, so that none is like it : it is even the time of Jacob's trouble.*" But again the assurance of final deliverance is given to cheer the faith of those who are real among them, "*but he shall be saved out of it.*"

Psalm xlv. describes in vivid language the experiences of this remnant during this time. "Thou hast given us," say they, "like sheep appointed for meat . . . Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death. . . . Yea, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord ? arise, cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face and forgettest our affliction and our oppression ? For our soul is bowed down in the dust : our belly cleaveth to the earth. Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercy's sake."

During this time they will lose much of that which they hold dear. The form of religion will be taken from them, for the Beast, in abolishing all religion on earth but the worship of himself and his image, will take away the daily sacrifice at the Temple,

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and the abomination of desolation will be set up in the holy place.

This act will be the crowning act of blasphemy and usurpation of God's rights on the part of man. In other places and at other times images to men and heathen gods have been set up in places dedicated to them, but here will be the image of a man claiming to be above all that is called God, and sitting in the temple of God declaring himself to be God. This will be the signal to the godly amongst the Jews that the hour of their deliverance has come, and that the fierceness of God's wrath will be no longer restrained, and they will, according to the Lord's words, "flee to the mountains" (Matt. xxiv. ; Mark xiii.).

CHAPTER VIII.

Jerusalem, a burdensome stone for all people.—The invasion of the land by the King of the South.—The King of the North.—The spiritual principalities behind the nations.—The gathering of the kings for the Battle of Armageddon.—A trinity of evil, and the frogs that go out of their mouths.—The great Battle.—The sudden appearance of the Lord.—The destruction of the Armies of the Roman Empire.—The deliverance of Israel.

WHILE the Imperial Beast and Antichrist persecute specially the godly remnant of the Jewish nation, the whole country and nation will be attacked by foes from the four quarters of the earth. God will “gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle” (Zech. xiv. 2), and He will make that city “a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut to pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.” (Zech. xii. 3). Jerusalem will be the centre of interest for the whole world; it will be the city desired by the kings of the whole earth, for it seems as though each of the great powers, or combination of powers, will seek it for themselves, rightly divining it to be the key city to world dominion. But behind the intentions of the kings is the fixed purpose of Satan,

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the dragon, to destroy the city utterly, and to annihilate the people, so that God's purposes in regard to it and them shall be frustrated. But God is behind and above every design of men and Satan, for there is nothing behind or above God ; His Word will stand and His purpose be brought to pass. He controls all things, and will bend the ambition of the kings and the malice of Satan to fulfil His will ; and so He it is that gathers these vast armies that He might make manifest His righteousness to all creatures. "The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth " (Isa. xxiii. 9), in the very land where His beloved Son was put to shame. As the moth circles about the candle flame, and falls at last burned and destroyed by that which held it in a strange fascination, so shall all these kings, when the eagerly-sought prize seems just within their grasp, be broken and cut to pieces by the judgment of the Lord.

There will be a simultaneous invasion of the land from south and north ; of this we read in Dan. xi. 40-45. We suggest that this double invasion will be possible because the protecting power will have been compelled to withdraw its support because of

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the revolution and anarchy which shall overspread Europe. That such a condition of things will come to pass is, we believe, plainly indicated by the fact that the Beast of Rev. xiii. arises out of the sea—the sea symbolizing the nations in a state of turbulence and anarchy such as Revelation vi. 4 describes. The King of the south, i.e., Egypt, will push against Antichrist, who will be the wilful king in Jerusalem. This would seem to indicate that England will no longer hold Egypt in her possession, for she could not be one of the ten kingdoms which are to form the Empire of the Beast, which will be closely allied to Antichrist, and at the same time be a party to an attack upon Jerusalem by Egypt. The King of the North will be the ruler of the northern part of Asia Minor, at present held by the Turk. If he is actually the Turk, it is not difficult to see the probability that, being driven out of Palestine now, he will watch for an opportunity of recovering that land, and the revolution in Europe will give him this opportunity. But as Turkey does not possess either the power or resources that the warlike King of the North seems to have, it has been thought that he, or whoever occupies this territory, will come under the rule of, or be allied to Russia, or some other great

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power, such as Germany, and so will act upon the initiative and have the support of his greater ally. This may be so, but we see nothing in the passage to support the thought ; it gives the impression that whoever this King of the North may be, he acts with great decision, is a great military genius, consulting only his own ambitions, and acting independently of any other *political* power.

It is perfectly clear, however, that at a later date Asia Minor, as well as the whole of Persia, will come under the control of Russia (see Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.), but this refers to a time when the King of the North shall have perished.

It should be borne in mind that there exist great powers in the spiritual world—fallen beings that influence the nations and are entirely opposed to God's intentions as to the disposal of the kingdoms of this world. The greatest of these is Satan, but he is not the only one. Daniel x. speaks of one who is styled "the prince of the kingdom of Persia," who fought against God's messenger to Daniel, and prevented him from fulfilling his mission for twenty-one days, until Michael, who is spoken of as "the great prince which standeth for" the Jews, came to his aid. Another in the same chapter is

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called "the prince of Grecia." These references to those heads of spiritual principalities are illuminating, especially as they come into view in connection with the prophecies relating to the sorrows and final successes of Israel, and they help us to understand the fierce attacks that will be made upon Jerusalem.

During this Church period God is not directly dealing with nations as such, but gathering out of them individuals—a people for His Name. His work in this present period is not the putting of the earth in order, with Israel as the centre of it, and so these great spiritual princes, these fallen beings, may be more or less quiescent. But the moment is fast approaching when the Church will be completed; then God will begin to prepare the way for the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ. The gathering of the Jews into the Promised Land will point to this and awaken these powers to what God is about to do, and will stir up their rage, and especially those that influenced Israel's ancient enemies, and constantly sought to destroy them because they were God's people. They will see in it the portent of their final overthrow, and they will energize afresh those nations over which they have gained

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an ascendancy to attempt to prevent God's purposes by attacking His people the Jews. We know that Satan will give his power to the great head of the revived Roman Empire—the first Beast of Revelation xiii.—and it is probable that these lesser princes in the evil spiritual world will give their power to the various personages that shall appear before God's kingdom comes. This will easily account for nations otherwise weak suddenly displaying extraordinary energy and power. The supermen will be a reality during that period of violence and awful desolations, which will approximate in many respects to the condition of things in the days of Noah, when the flood came and took them all away.

The King of the North appears, from the prophecies that speak of him, to be specially energized by more than human power, for he comes like a whirlwind (Dan. xi. 40); he is “the overflowing scourge” (Isa. xxviii. 15); the land will be as the garden of Eden before him, but behind him as a desolate wilderness. God will use him first to destroy the King of the South, then to afflict the unrepentant Israel, and will finally destroy him: “*he shall come to his end, and none shall help him*” (Dan. xi. 45).

But from other directions will come

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invading armies, for the whole world will be given up to war. At that time will be fulfilled the word : “ *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 heathen, and gather yourselves together round about ; thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord* ” (Joel iii. 9-11).

This is the great universal proclamation of war that shall culminate in Armageddon. Every industry upon earth will be subordinated to war. Even agriculture, so necessary for the life of the nations, will yield to the war-spirit. The nations will have a common object at last. Senates, universities, laboratories, factories, and foundries will unite, brain and brawn, capital and labour will combine to equip the mighty armies for the great fight. Medical boards and exemption certificates for the unfit will be non-existent ; for such will be the war-spirit that the weak will declare that they are strong, in order to take part, as they will suppose, in the war that shall end all war, and establish the unified will of man in world-supremacy.

But what will so definitely and terribly

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cast the nations into this war fury is told us in Rev. xvi. 13-15: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Satan and his two chief ministers on earth form a trinity of evil, and so work and speak that they succeed in subjugating mankind to their purpose. They will form an alliance such as the world has never seen before, a definite combination of the forces of mankind in rebellion against God, and of the powers of darkness—a human-Satanic alliance. This, except when the Lord said, "This is your hour and the power of darkness," has hitherto been impossible, for God has restrained it, and no man has appeared great enough to be so fully empowered by Satan to fulfil this part. To the Lord Jesus in the wilderness Satan showed all the kingdoms of the earth in a moment of time, and the glory of them, and offered to give

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them all to Him if He would but fall down and worship him ; but the prize had no attraction for the Lord, and He kept the place of perfect subjection to God, owning His supremacy alone, and worshipping Him, and refusing to receive anything from any hand but God's hand, and in consequence the kingdoms of the earth are to be given to Him by His Father (Ps. ii.). Since then men have arisen who have aspired to world dominion and laid fair lands in desolation in the pursuit of their ambitions, the greatest of all being Napoleon, who approximated to the coming great superman above others ; but then the time had not come for this culmination of all evil,—the Church was still on earth, the Holy Ghost still restraining ; Satan still had his seat of authority in the heavens, and he could not then transfer his full power to a man, and even Napoleon was not big enough to receive it. Nevertheless, from the beginning the forces of evil have been gathering volume, and only await the opening of the flood-gates to carry mankind upon their black and defiant onrush, " the great push " against the throne of Almighty God.

The frogs going forth from the mouths of this trinity of evil evidently symbolize words, actually the doctrine of demons. There will

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be a world-wide propaganda, of which the press may well be the instrument, with the purpose of relieving men of any remaining vestige of the fear of God, so that they will be prepared to take up arms definitely against Him. And these doctrines from the mouths of the three will be found in reality to be one, THE LIE of which 2 Thess. ii. speaks, which all those will believe who have refused the truth. What is it that goes forth from the mouth of Satan? That surely which came out of it at the beginning, when first he lied to the parents of the human race, and tempted them to act according to their own "self-determination," telling them, "YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE."

To do their own will in defiance of God and to fear no dire consequences such as God has given warning—such we believe to be that which goes out of the mouth of the dragon.

The Beast will be the political and military superman, and that which goes out of his mouth will be consistent with his character. He will show the way to the realization of the ambitions of men, his will be the doctrine of "will to power." The hell-born teachings of the German professors, that meekness, gentleness, kindness, and love, and "the teachings of the Nazarene," are only

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fit for a slave-race, and the only virtues are ruthlessness and power, will all be surpassed and demonstrated by him until all the world will wonder after him, saying, "Who is like unto the Beast, and who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. xiii. 4).

Out of the mouth of the false prophet, or Antichrist, will come the doctrine of the deity of man. He will say that all should worship the Beast and his image, and will proclaim a universal massacre of all who refuse (Rev. xiii.); he will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that sitting in the temple of God he will show that he is God (2 Thess. ii. 4); he will exalt himself and magnify himself above every god (Dan. xi. 36). "Man, and not God, is supreme in the world" is the doctrine that he will proclaim.

The dissemination of these teachings by Satanic power will result in the armies of the world being gathered into Palestine. The Euphrates will be dried up, that the way of "the Kings of the East" might be prepared (Rev. xvi. 12). If Rev. ix. 6-19 has this same invasion in view, as seems probable, we must conclude that four great nations will be leagued together in an attack upon the West; the number of the army of horsemen being two hundred

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thousand thousand, signifying a countless host. This army of invasion will destroy without mercy wherever it goes, until it is brought at last into the land of Palestine for the great final battle. The armies of Europe will be gathered together also under the leadership of the Beast and the False Prophet, for "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have all one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb" (Rev. xvii. 12-14). The King of the North, after his victory over the King of the South, will pitch his camp between the holy mountain and the sea (Dan. xi. 45).

Whatever ambitions or policies are in the first instance responsible for the massing of these greatest armies ever seen in the world's history, their final purpose will be to fight against God and the Lamb, and the result of such a contest can have only one conclusion. In former days the boastful Assyrian gathered his forces against Jerusalem to destroy it, but was met by the righteous judgment of God, and the end of his power has been graphically told in a well-known poem :—

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" Like leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host, with their banners, at sunset were seen ;
Like leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

.

And the might of the Gentiles, unsmote by the
sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

So shall it also be with these mighty armies.

The Seer describes in apocalyptic symbol in Rev. xiv. 14, 20, what will take place. The Son of Man appears sitting upon a cloud of glory with a golden crown upon His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. "And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth ; and the earth was reaped . . . and the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." Literally the whole extent of the land of Palestine, from Dan to Beersheba.

The fate of the Western army and its leaders is given in solemn language in Rev. xix., where the Lord appears as King of kings and Lord of lords, the position presumptuously assumed by the Beast. There He comes forth in righteousness to judge and make war. And He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And John says : "*And I*

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saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth : and all the fowls were filled with their flesh ” (Rev. xix. 19-21).

Nor does Satan himself escape ; he, the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, the instigator of this whole campaign against God, is bound with a strong chain and cast into the bottomless pit, that he should deceive the nations no more for a thousand years—throughout the millennial reign of Christ. And he will be finally cast into the lake of fire, not to reign there in kingly majesty, but to be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev. xx. 10).

The destruction of the other armies gathered at that time is given in Joel ii. 20 ; iii. 9-16 ; Zech. xii. ; xiv. 3. A later attack will be delivered by the vast armies of a confederacy from the north, under the leadership

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of Gog (Ezek. xxxviii). This must not be confounded with the great rising up of nations at the close of the millennium in Rev. xx. 7-9. Here Gog and Magog is evidently Russia, for we learn that the "chief prince" should read prince of Rosh, and he is also prince of Méshech (Moscow), and Tubal (Tobolsk), the ancient and probable future capitals of European and Asiatic Russia. The greatest of modern persecutors of the Jews will be the last to come under the righteous wrath of the Messiah, and their overthrow will be signal and complete. Seven months will Israel be occupied in burying their dead bodies, and their weapons of war will supply Israel with fuel for the space of seven years (Ezek. xxxix.). Again are the fowls of the air called together to eat the flesh of multitudes (Ezek. xxxix. 17, 22).

The deliverance of Jerusalem, before the destruction of these vast armies, or in conjunction with their destruction, is given in Zechariah xiv. The feet of the Lord shall stand upon the Mount of Olives, and the mountain shall cleave in the midst, and there shall be a great valley, and to and through that great valley will the godly Jews flee from their foes. Just as in the ancient days, the Lord smote the sea and made the waters a way for His ransomed

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to pass through out of the reach of the oppressor, so will He smite the mountain and cause a way of escape to be made for them when they are again threatened with extermination. This passage explains for us why in Matt. xxiv. 16 the disciples of the Lord are told to flee to the mountains when they shall see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place (an image in the temple). And it also shows the connection between the Lord's ascension to heaven and His coming back again as given in Acts i. To the very spot from which He left the earth His feet will return, and as He left His disciples looking after Him as He went into heaven, so will He find the remnant of His people gazing into heaven looking for His return, and unto these who look for Him shall He appear unto salvation (Heb. ix. 28). " This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). " AND THE LORD SHALL BE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH ; IN THAT DAY SHALL THERE BE ONE LORD, AND HIS NAME ONE " (Zech. xiv. 9).

CHAPTER IX.

The People—The Land—The City—The King.

The People.

“*H*OW beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ! ” (Isa. lii. 7).

Such to the persecuted Jews will be the feet of “THIS SAME JESUS” when they stand again upon the Mount of Olives. And as these “poor and afflicted people” behold the wounds in them and in the hands that will be uplifted to bless them, they will ask, “What are these wounds ? ” Then as the full truth of what He once suffered for them dawns upon them, they will say, “We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. *But He was wounded for OUR transgressions, He was bruised for OUR iniquities : the chastisement of OUR peace was upon Him ; and with His stripes WE are healed* ” (Isa. liii. 5). And there shall be poured out upon them the spirit of grace and supplication, as they look upon Him

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whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. This repentance will be deep and individual (Zech. xii. 10-14).

Then the second part of Ezekiel's vision of the Dry Bones will be fulfilled, for the breath of God will come upon them. He will pour out His Spirit upon them, and they will live, a nation born in a day.

In that day God will give to them a new heart and put a new spirit within them, and they will be ashamed of all their doings, wherein they have transgressed against God ; and He will take out of the midst of them all that are proud and haughty because of God's holy mountain. And God will leave in the midst of the city and land those that trust in the name of the Lord. These shall not do iniquity nor speak lies, and they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid (Zeph. iii. 11-13). These shall be a third part of the nation only—for two-thirds of it shall not survive the awful testing through which the great tribulation will put them, but these shall come out of it as refined silver, and as gold that is tried, and, saith the Lord, " They shall call upon My name, and I will hear them : I will say, It is My people : and they shall say, The

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Lord is my God " (Zech. xiii. 9). And again God says : *" For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof : and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old "* (Amos ix. 9-11).

Then the new covenant will be established with them, and God will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will He remember no more, because of that once-for-all and perfect offering of the body of Jesus upon the cross. They will not only be a repentant people, but a joyful people also, for then will be fulfilled the word of the Lord : *" Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice ; with the voice together shall they sing : for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem : for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem "* (Isa. lii. 8, 9).

They will be a blessed people and a blessing to others also. The blessings of the Song of Moses shall be fulfilled to them on the

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sure basis of the atonement that Christ Jesus made for them on the cross of Calvary. The Lord will make them the head of the nations and not the tail, they shall be above and not beneath (Deut. xxxviii. 13). " And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men " (Micah v. 7).

What joy it will give the Lord when He is able at last to gather His people again, for we must not forget that they are precious to Him. It was of Israel that He said, " I have loved thee with an everlasting love : therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee " (Jer. xxxi. 3). Again He said, " Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands : thy walls are continually before me " (Isa. xlix. 15, 16). That is, Israel has an unalienable place in His heart, and all the works of His hands in regard to this world have them in view. It was over Jerusalem and its people that the Lord wept in the days of His flesh, saying, " If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace " ;

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and again, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not." And when He does gather them, the word shall be fulfilled which says, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied" (Isa. liii.). He will rest in His love and will rejoice over them with singing (Zeph. iii.).

The Land.

"The wilderness, and the solitary place, shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. . . . And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. xxxv. 1, 2, 10).

This whole chapter is full of beauty; it tells us of the effect of the shining of the glory of the Lord upon the land. The blind shall see, the deaf shall hear, the lame shall leap for gladness, and dumb lips shall sing

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the praise of the Lord, and sorrow and sighing, part of sin's sad brood, shall flee away. No need then for vast irrigation schemes to make the land a fruitful place, for fountains of water shall break forth in the most barren of places ; the very desert shall become fragrant with roses, the howling wilderness shall rejoice, the full ripe grapes shall hang plentiful from the fruitful vines, the fields shall wave golden in the summer sun, the olives shall yield their precious oil, the flocks shall feed without fold or fear upon the verdant hills, and everything that hath breath shall sing the triumph of the great Deliverer. The prosperity and the joy will be there because the glory of the Lord and the excellency of God will be there, and all the people shall walk in the highway of His holiness. There shall be no vessels to dishonour in the land ; everything the people handle will be used for the glory of God, and this will be the spring of all the joy. All sorrow springs from the presence of sin in the world ; then they shall prove how good and acceptable is the will of God in contrast to the sinful will of men.

The City and the Temple.

" But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord

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shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills ; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob ; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths : for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off ; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more ” (Micah iv. 1, 2, 3).

The city according to God's mind is the place where His house is established and from which goes forth His law. It is the seat of administration and the centre from which blessing flows. The law will go forth from Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and the effect of it will be world-wide. Not only shall Israel dwell peacefully in the fruitful land, but the nations shall beat their instruments of destruction into implements of production, the voice of the drill-sergeant shall cease in the earth, and they shall learn war no more.

That age of peace shall be *an agricultural age* ; men will go back to the land, and

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God's primal purpose for man upon the earth shall come into effect (Gen. ii. 15), and forge and anvil shall no longer groan and toll the death of millions, but shall ring out their gladness in unison with the songs of the field and vineyard.

Micah iv. 4 tells us further that "*They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree ; and none shall make them afraid : for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.*"

Every man will have his own holding, whether large or small we do not know ; but this at least is evident from the passage, each will be contented with that which is given to him. Not that *his heart will be satisfied* with his earthly possession ; nothing here below can satisfy the heart. Alexander the Great conquered and possessed the world, and then wept like a disappointed baby because there were no more worlds to conquer. But if earthly possessions cannot satisfy, God can ; and when Christ reigns supreme, He will not only fill the earth with peace, but fill the hearts of men with satisfaction, for He will fill their hearts with the love of God. So we read for this present time " Godliness with contentment is great gain " (1 Tim. vi. 6). No godless man is contented, no matter how vast his possessions ; but

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when God becomes our exceeding great reward we at once become contented with our lot. So in that age shall men find their joy in God, whose loving-kindness will be plainly told in the sway of Christ the King.

"And none shall make them afraid," but *"ye shall call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig tree"* (Zech. iii. 10). And "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

They will sleep in peace at night when the day's glad work is done, and locks and bolts and bars and watch-dogs will be needed no more, for where all are contented none will want to steal. And none will keep what he possesses for himself alone, for each will love his neighbour as himself. All rivalry will have disappeared from the lives of men, except the rivalry of love. The skilful agriculturist and vine dresser will not boast that the fruit of his labours are finer than his neighbour's, but he will place all his skill at his neighbour's disposal until the yield from his land is as rich as his own. Happy state, resulting from the righteous and beneficent sway of the One whom men crowned with thorns and put upon a cross.

The temple will be magnificent in its dimensions, and surpassingly splendid in its construction. If we rightly compute the

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measurements given by Ezekiel (xl.-xliii.) it, with its courtyard, will cover the whole site of the present city of Jerusalem. It will be the great palace of peace and the place of prayer. To it will gather all nations to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire of Him, for His glory will fill it, and from it there will flow waters of blessing which will carry healing and fertility wherever they flow. These will not be bound by winter frosts or dried by summer suns, for they will spring up fresh and free from God's dwelling-place, and will be a perennial witness to all peoples that God is the source of all good, and that nothing but blessing can flow forth from the city which is the metropolis of the Lord, who is "King over all the earth," "the one Lord, and His name One" (Zech. xiv. 9 ; Ezek. xlvii.).

Jerusalem will be the great garden city, and all that are left of those nations that sought to destroy it will go up to it year by year to behold its joy and beauty and to worship its King (Zech. xiv. 16). And they will learn that where God is there is contentment, for there will be "no complaining in the streets" (Ps. cxliv. 14). Truth, holiness, kindness, freedom, health and happiness shall also characterize it, in which the old

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and young shall share alike, for “ Thus saith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem : and Jerusalem shall be called a city of TRUTH ; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the HOLY mountain. . . . There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. AND THE STREETS OF THE CITY SHALL BE FULL OF BOYS AND GIRLS PLAYING IN THE STREETS THEREOF ” (Zech. viii. 3, 4, 5).

The King.

But neither people, land nor city could be anything other than they had ever been in the past were it not for the King who will lead the people in paths of righteousness and harmonize everything within His realm for the glory of God. The King is Jesus. Of Him has God said; “ *I have laid help upon One that is mighty ; I have exalted One chosen out of the people* ” (Ps. lxxxix. 19). He will be God’s chosen and anointed King, but He will also be the people’s King, for He has been chosen out of the people to fill the universal throne. There are two things that men are not able to harmonize—an absolute monarchy and the freedom and

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welfare of the people, and so autocracy and democracy are locked in mortal strife ; but when Jesus reigns the complete blessing of the people will be centred in and secured by His absolute throne. " With righteousness," we read, " shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth " (Isa. xi. 4). He knows the struggles and the burdens of the poor, for He was born of one of Zion's poorest daughters, though of the Royal House of Judah. So poor was His mother that the only place she could secure for His holy birth was a stable where cattle were housed. He grew up amid circumstances of poverty ; laboured hard with His reputed father at the carpenter's bench to supply the needs of the household of which He was a member. He lived, a poor man without a home, and suffered hunger, thirst, and weariness. He was no mere philanthropist or patron of the poor, paying sympathetic visits to their mean dwellings and when weary of their sordid surroundings retiring to the comforts of some lordly home. No ; He was one of the poor Himself ; He shared their struggles, their sorrows, their woes. He felt the scorn of the haughty rich, the tyranny of the grinding oppressor, and all the inequalities that this selfish world lays upon the shoulders

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of the weak and defenceless, and when He wears the crown and sways the sceptre He will not forget. He qualified for kingly power during those years of suffering, and when He reigns the poor shall rejoice. No more shall mothers wear that anxious look that comes from constant scheming how to fill the children's mouths, for He says, "*I will satisfy her poor with bread*" (Ps. cxxxii. 15). "The mountains shall bring peace to the people. . . . He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. . . . He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their souls from deceit and violence" (Ps. lxxii.). Every sorrow found its centre in His heart when He was here, every wrong shall be righted when He returns.

The great characteristic of the King's reign will be righteousness. Of Him it is said, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity," and a sceptre of righteousness will be the sceptre of His kingdom, and the effect of righteousness shall be peace, universal and unbroken peace. No more shall anxious mothers toss and sigh on

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sleepless beds for sons who stand foot to foot with death on land and sea, for, "*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them*" (Isa. xi.).

Not only will all outward hostility between men be abandoned, but the passions that give rise to that hostility will be subdued and quelled, for the wolf and the leopard and the young lion represent uncontrolled passions of men ; these animals will no doubt cease to be beasts of prey, but a greater change, because moral instead of physical, will take place in men, and this we are taught by the figure used, *a little child shall be the leader*.

It is an interesting fact that in Matthew's Gospel, in which the Lord Jesus is presented as the King, there is more about the little child than in any of the others, and we are told there, that to become as a little child is the *sine qua non* for entrance into His kingdom (Matt. xviii.). Those who compose that kingdom will be meek, lowly, gentle, unobtrusive, and dependent. So used are we to kingdoms set up and maintained by violence and force, that such a kingdom as this is almost unthinkable, and yet this will

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be the character of the kingdom in which Christ is supreme.

It is a worldly maxim that "the weak go to the wall," and unless a man has grit enough to stand up for his rights he must suffer, and the men who are great and applauded are they who unscrupulously force themselves into the front of the stage, men of ambition and will-power, who carry their designs into effect regardless of the consequences to others.

Who are they who occupy the greatest space in this world's histories? Not the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus—they have no place in them; nor yet the men who have laboured for the good of their fellows—their names are mostly forgotten; but the mighty conquerors, the men who have marched through seas of blood to the goal of their ambitions, and have founded dynasties upon the tears of widows and orphans. To the Napoleons of the world have men paid their greatest tributes and raised their most costly monuments.

It is not the little child that leads now; but this is to be completely changed, for the coming kingdom will take its character from the King, and He is meek and lowly in heart.

There is given a most beautiful description

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of the King and His kingdom in the last words of David (2 Sam. xxiii. 1-4).

“The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to Me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God : and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.”

The whole earth and everything that hath breath will respond to His life-giving and blessed presence. The prayer of the centuries, “Thy kingdom come,” shall be answered, the groanings of creation shall be transformed into joyful laughter. Heaven will be in direct communication with earth and at its service, for the angels of God from an opened heaven shall ascend and descend upon the Son of man, and everything that hath breath will praise the Lord.

“His name shall endure for ever : His name shall be continued as long as the sun : and men shall be blessed in Him : all nations shall call Him blessed.

“AND BLESSED BE HIS GLORIOUS NAME FOR EVER : AND LET THE WHOLE EARTH BE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY ; AMEN, AND AMEN.”—Ps. lxxii. 17, 19.

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