

THE COMING ONE

A·B·SIMPSON



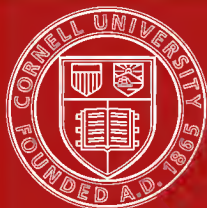
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THE COMING ONE

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CHAPTER I.

THE POINT OF VIEW.

"Grace be unto you and peace from Him which is, which was, and which is to come" ("the coming One").—
Rev. i. 4.

DID the Lord Jesus Christ complete His work on earth during His first advent and leave to secondary agents and spiritual influences the finishing of His great plan of redemption; or did He simply accomplish the first stage of that great work and is He coming back again in person some day to this old earth to complete that glorious plan? This, in a word, is a statement of the question that has passed into theological discussion as the pre-millennial and post-millennial coming of the Lord.

I. THE POINT OF VIEW, THE OBJECTIONS.

In the first place let us look at the objections which are made by many to the doctrine of the pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus, and then turn to the positive side.

NOT DEATH.

There are some who believe that the promises of Christ's Coming are all fulfilled in the death of

His saints ; that at death the coming of the Lord is practically realized by each one of us individually. It is enough to say that there is the widest contrast between death and the Lord's Coming rightly understood. Death separates us from our friends ; the Lord's Coming re-unites us to our friends. Death brings us to be with the Lord ; the Lord's Coming brings the Lord to be with us. Death is the curse of sin ; the Lord's Coming cancels the curse forevermore. Perhaps a single passage in the New Testament is a sufficient inspired proof that in the mind of Christ and the Holy Spirit these are wholly diverse and the one cannot be the fulfilment of the other. In speaking to Peter and John before His ascension the Lord told Peter by what death he should die. The evangelist interprets His words to Peter as "signifying by what death he should glorify God." Immediately afterwards He said about John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Then went abroad this saying among the disciples that he should not die," clearly showing that the coming of Christ was the very opposite of dying. "Tarry till I come," implied that perhaps he should not die at all. The idea of comparing death with the Lord's Coming is wholly

contrary to the thought that was in the mind of the Lord.

In speaking to the Thessalonians about their friends who had passed on, the apostle does not comfort them by saying, "You ought to be very glad because the Lord has come for them." On the contrary, he says, "You ought to be comforted because some day the Lord is coming for them." Surely, this is scarcely worth an argument. The Lord means something very much more than death when He speaks of His return.

NOT THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

Some apply it to the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in the year 70, shortly after the Lord's ascension. Now, it would seem very strange to a patriotic Jew to be told that the thing that was to him the brightest and sweetest hope of his holy faith simply meant a tragedy of fire and blood that was to destroy the city and the temple that he loved, and plunge millions of his race in temporal and eternal ruin. To call that the Coming of the Lord, and the fulfilment of the blessed Hope surely would be a travesty on all consistent thought and all common sense. If no other reason were available, it

is enough to say that the destruction of Jerusalem occurred a quarter of a century before the book of Revelation was written, and the one theme of that book from first to last is, "Behold, I come."

NOT A SPIRITUAL INDWELLING.

There are many who apply the Lord's Coming to His personal visitation to the hearts of His people. "I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you." "My Father will come to him, and We will make Our abode with him." We have heard people say, "Oh, it is all very well for you to talk about the Lord's Coming, but He has come to us and we are satisfied." We wonder if He came to these people any more intimately than He came to John! We wonder if John the beloved did not have the Lord in his heart as deeply and delightfully as the most advanced modern saints! Yet it was John who said, "We shall be like Him when we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." Have these advanced saints got closer to Christ than Paul? Yet it was Paul who said, "We shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we

ever be with the Lord." The truth is the more intimately we have Christ in our hearts the more ardently will we long for His personal and visible return, for Christ in us is "the Hope of glory."

NOT A SPIRITUAL MILLENNIUM.

Others apply the promise of the Lord's Coming to the spread of the Gospel and the influence of the truth through the Church in all the world, bringing about a millennium of principles and spiritual progress. And this, they tell us, is the true millennium and the real Coming of the Lord, and some of them think that through the progress of modern civilization it is already nearly here, if it has not already come. Surely, that is not the Lord's idea. He tells us that when He comes, instead of men and women longing to welcome Him and bow at His feet in worship and service, there shall scarcely be "faith on the earth," and "As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be when the Son of man shall be revealed." They shall be busy about everything else but Him. They shall be finding their delight in everything else but in the prospect of His coming and His reign.

We have not space to trace the vision of the

Master as He tells us what the future of the Church is to be before His return. But certainly it is anything but a millennium, nor do we find much sign of a millennium even in our best Christian lands. The reports of the progress of Christianity tell of declining membership, declining contributions for missions, and the decline of faith on the part of the Church. The world will not be watching for Him, but "as a snare will it come upon all that dwell upon the earth." It will not be the climax of human progress, but it will be the catastrophe of all earthly pride.

FALSE SPIRITUALIZING.

There are many who tell us that the prophecies of the Old Testament have a special spiritual meaning, and that they refer to His inward reign in the hearts of Christians and through the principles of the Gospel in human society. There is a spiritualizing tendency which would blot out the literal Israel from the future history of the world, and appropriate all the promises Christ gave to them for ourselves. Do not wonder, therefore, that Israel has turned the tables upon us and has spiritualized all that the Old Testament prophets said about the first coming of

Christ. A section of the Church is spiritualizing all the Old Testament said about the Coming King and Israel is spiritualizing all the Bible has said about the Lamb of God. They take the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to mean the suffering nation of Israel and they are just as much justified in this as modern theological teachers are when they explain away the promises of Christ's glorious reign as mere spiritual imagery.

GOD HAS NOT FAILED.

Again they tell us it would be a great dishonor to the Holy Ghost to say that He was not adequate for the complete regeneration of human society; that if God does not through the present agencies in the Church and the world completely defeat the power of evil and make all things new, the Holy Ghost has failed and God has not been equal to the task of saving men. Perhaps that is the strongest argument that the post-millennialists use. No, they say, we believe God is equal to the task and before the Gospel has finished its work it is going to close every saloon, save every sinner, and make every desert to blossom as the rose. There is a good deal in this that is plausible at first sight, but if you

think a moment you will agree that if that was God's plan, if it was God's intention to take all evil out of the world in the present age, if it was God's intention to make everything pure, good and holy now, He has made an awful failure of it. We should be ashamed of the Gospel if that is the best that it can do. The awful conditions of human society to-day would be a frightful travesty of divine power and grace if that was all God meant to do. Therefore our answer is, God never meant to do this and never said He would. God said He was going to gather out of the nations "a people for His name," and the world would go on as it had gone on, and "the wicked would still do wickedly and none of the wicked would understand." When we thus understand His plan we shall not be discouraged, but we are in utter despair if we do not so understand it. Dr. Kellogg said that the first years of his life in India would have broken his heart because of the awful sway of heathenism and wickedness, and the scant rays of Gospel light after all that had been done, were it not for the Hope of His Coming. Thank God, He has not failed, and some glorious day we shall fully understand.

DIVINE REALITIES.

They tell us that this doctrine of the Lord's Return and the setting up of a glorious terrestrial millennium is too material, earthly and sensuous for spiritual minds. All these things are figures, and God is lifting our hearts and hopes to something more spiritual and less earthly. We are dealing with the physical and visible in this childhood age. But we are going to pass on to a higher realm where all will be purely spiritual.

That is the greatest heresy of the present day. It began with spiritualizing the story of creation and the result was the modern doctrine of Darwinian Evolution. The idea that Genesis is but an allegory was the beginning, and Christian Science is the climax, with its basic principle that there never was anything created, and everything there is is unreal. That is where false spiritualizing brings you.

The Liberal Theology goes further and says that Jesus was an idea, and there was no historical Christ, no cross, no resurrection; it was all an idea in the minds of mystics; if He did ever live and die His dust is still sleeping under the Syrian stars. That is what spiritualizing does.

It takes out of God's Book all reality and makes everything merely a dream as vague as the fooleries of Christian Science. Thank God He is real and we are real and Christ is real and the coming glory is real, and "This same Jesus shall so come again in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

II. THE PRE-MILLENNIAL POINT OF VIEW.

Is there positive proof that we may look for the Pre-millennial Coming of the Lord?

CHRIST HAS ALREADY COME.

The Lord has been here already, the Lord Jesus lived on this globe of ours literally, actually treading its material surface with His holy feet, and saturating its soil with His precious blood. He has been a citizen of this earth; why should it be thought a thing incredible that He should come back again to His old home? If He actually lived here once, why should He not actually come here again?

How simple that is! Here once He initiated His work. Why should He not come back and finish it? Here once He fought the battle. Why should He not come back and wear the crown of victory and see of the travail of His soul and

be satisfied? Here once He paid the fearful price, Why should He not come back to win the great reward? That is what He Himself says. He is "like a nobleman going to a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom, and return." There is nothing transcendent or novel about the glorious Son of God becoming a citizen of earth. He is a citizen of earth forevermore and has already lived among us here like other men.

HIS HUMANITY IS ETERNAL.

He did not merely in a transitory way touch the human family, but He became forever identified with the race of Adam, and He never can get away from His humanity. All that concerns our race concerns Him. He is a man to-day and He will be a man forever, and wherever man is to be, the Son of man will be also. So that Christ's relation to this old earth is a permanent relation and His kingdom is to be consummated here where it was first begun.

UNFULFILLED PROPHECIES.

Let us note that the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament have not been satisfied and

fulfilled. There is a double thread running through the warp and woof of ancient prophecy. There is the crimson line of the cross, but there is the golden thread of the coming glory. The Jews saw only the prophecies of the glory, and therefore when He appeared among them they were not prepared to recognize the lowly Nazarene, that rejected Man, as the fulfilment of the splendid ideal. They had good cause for it, to a certain extent, at least. The only trouble with them was that they were out of date. They had mixed the chronology. He was the King, but He was not yet enthroned. It was first the cross and then the crown; the Lamb of Calvary first and then the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Unless He comes again part of the prophetic Scriptures will be unrealized. It was necessary that He should fulfil the vision of the cross and it is just as necessary that He shall fulfil the vision of the King.

CHRIST'S OWN TESTIMONY.

The Lord Jesus Himself when He was on earth always left the impression that He was coming back again, actually, visibly, personally to His people. He repeatedly told them also that when

the Son of man should come He should sit on the throne of His glory and they should sit on thrones and receive rewards for their earthly sacrifice and sufferings. One particular event in the very middle of His career, the Transfiguration on the Mount, was an object lesson, a demonstration of this very thing, foreshadowing the fact that He who seemed so obscure was really to be unveiled some day in the great Apocalypse of the Advent and appear in glory. The risen dead were represented by Moses and the transfigured living by Elias. In Matthew xxiv. we have a detailed prophecy of the Lord's return. We have also the parables of the Talents, and the Pounds, the Marriage of the King's Son, the Ten Virgins, the Sheep and the Goats. These have no meaning unless the Lord is coming back again. All His teachings crystallized around two focal points, His cross and His advent.

HIS LAST MESSAGE.

In the next place, His very last message was on this specific subject. As He hovered in mid-air between earth and heaven, His parting word was sent back by two messengers, perhaps two glorified men, who stood by them and said, "Why

stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus shall so come again in like manner as ye have seen Him go up into heaven." Put these three S's together—Same—So—Seen, and you have a trinity of infallible proof. "This *same* Jesus shall *so* come as ye have *seen* Him go." He is the same and He will be the same then, and you will see Him and you will know He is the same. That is Christ's farewell message, and we know He means what He says.

TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES.

The apostolic testimony was always the same. Peter said at the very beginning of the Acts, "Whom the heavens must receive till the times of the restitution of all things." Therefore, when that is accomplished the heavens will not hold Him any more.

Paul proclaimed Him as the One who would be "the Judge of the living and the dead." In Romans he gives three chapters to the dispensational questions leading up to the day when a Deliverer shall come to Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. The First Epistle to the Corinthians reaches its climax in the magnificent fifteenth chapter, and the realities of that

glorious appearing. Second Corinthians tells us how "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Colossians tells us that "when He shall appear we shall appear with Him in glory." Thessalonians crystallizes around the doctrine of the Lord's Coming. Every chapter and every important paragraph finds its keynote in this blessed Hope. In Timothy Paul declares that this is his own personal hope, that he shall receive "the crown of righteousness" which the Lord is keeping not only for him but "for all that love His appearing." James bids us "Be patient * * * unto the coming of the Lord." Peter tells us it was the very meaning of the Transfiguration when they "were with Him in the holy mount." John in his epistles and the Apocalypse repeats the message of His glorious Advent and the importance of our constant preparation for it.

THE APOCALYPSE.

But the supreme and crowning evidence of the Lord's pre-millennial coming is the glorious book of Revelation. Two generations after Christ had ascended, after thousands of saints had been gathered home, after hundreds of churches had

been established on earth, after the spiritual facts and experiences of Christianity had been illustrated to the fullest extent, the Lord Himself came down as the last Messenger of inspired truth, and to John on Patmos He gave a glorious message of which the keynote and finale is this—"I am coming again." The first announcement in that Apocalypse is "Behold, He cometh with clouds," and the last farewell is, "Behold, I come quickly."

Shall we answer, "Even so, come Lord Jesus come quickly"?

CHAPTER II.

THE CHRISTIAN AGE.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. iii. 22).

WHAT is the prophetic pre-view of the present age from the resurrection of Christ down to His second advent? This inquiry will throw much light upon many of the points which we have already touched and make more clear, we trust, the utter unscripturalness of the post-millennial theory, or the prospect of a millennium without Christ.

THE CHURCH.

The Church belongs to the Christian age. It must be distinguished from Israel, God's Old Testament people. The Church is the Body of Christ, of which He is the Head, and the Building of which He is the Cornerstone. Therefore the Church could not exist before Christ's finished work and resurrection. "On this Rock (Himself)," He says, "will I build My Church." The Church is "built on the foundation of the apostles

and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." The real Church or Body of Christ is an invisible society, consisting of all who are born again and united to the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit and thus become partakers of His redemption and His life. The visible Church is the organized body of "those who profess and call themselves Christians." It is recognized in the New Testament as a divine organization, and yet, like every organization of imperfect human beings, it is also subject to imperfection and does not always correspond with the real spiritual body, truly united to Him. The Church therefore has its heresies, apostasies and unfaithful members, as well as its true followers of the Lord Jesus. With various forms of government and standards of doctrine it has existed throughout the Christian centuries and will exist until the Lord shall come. It is the representative of the Lord on earth and His witness to the world, and notwithstanding its imperfection it enjoys the presence of the Master and the gifts and graces of the Pentecostal Spirit. And the Lord is gathering one by one, through it, the members of His body from every land in every generation.

HER CALLING.

The witnessing of the Gospel to all nations is the business of the Church in the present age. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, and ye are witnesses of these things." "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." And again, "God at first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." These passages give a very explicit view of the special work of the Holy Ghost and the Church of Christ during the present age. We are to be witnesses of Christ among all nations, first to the Jew and then to the Gentile. We are to preach the Gospel among all nations, not with the expectation that all will be converted, but as a witness and an opportunity of salvation for every sinful man. Through us God is *visiting* the Gentiles, not to continue their day of opportunity without limit, but for a special time and purpose, that is, "to take out of them a peo-

ple for His name." He is sampling the families of men. He is gathering a kind of "first-fruits of His creatures" from every tribe and tongue. In a word, He is constituting the Bride of the Lamb of all the races and kindreds and tongues of earth. And when the glorious day of His Parousia shall come, there shall be "a great multitude of every kindred and nation and people and tongue before the throne and before the Lamb."

FAILURE OF THE CHURCH.

The Christian Age is not represented in the prophetic glimpses given by Christ and His apostles as an age of ideal moral or spiritual perfection. On the contrary, there are early intimations of error, declension and apostasy. We find these things beginning even in the apostolic age, and looking down to later times the Lord Jesus tells us, "Many shall be offended and shall betray one another and shall hate one another, and many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many; and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Even the ministers of Christ shall be like the evil servant who "shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants and

to eat and drink with the drunken." "As it was in the days of Noah and of Lot, so shall it be in that day," "Eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," and wholly absorbed in the world's pleasures and cares.

More explicitly does the apostle Paul in his letters to Timothy foretell the coming apostasy. "This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come. Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affections, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." And again, still more emphatically he tells us, "The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

Peter also in his second epistle forewarns us of the same conditions. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (II. Peter ii. 1-3). "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II. Peter iii. 3, 4).

Jude also forecasts the same. "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude 17-19).

Already the fulfilment of these ominous fore-warnings is manifest on every hand. The Church of the Apostles became the apostasy of Rome, and the Church of the Reformation appears in even greater danger of developing into the Laodicea of the Apocalypse, if not the Babylon of God's last and most terrible judgment.

PARABLES OF THE KINGDOM.

But the Lord Jesus has not left us mere fragments of prophetic foreshadowing, but has given us in the seven Parables of the Kingdom in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew a very distinct unfolding of the progress of Christianity from the Ascension to the Advent.

The disciples were looking for prosperity and popularity. They were delighted with the success of their Master, with His victory over disease, Satan, death and sin. What power could resist Him? They saw themselves already sitting with Him on the thrones of David's restored kingdom. The Lord knew better. He saw the dark scenes that were just before them and the centuries of suffering and seeming failure for the cause which He was establishing at such awful cost. It was necessary that they should un-

derstand it, should be disillusionized and should be sent forth as ministers of the New Testament with their eyes fully opened. It is a very dreadful thing to-day for the minister of the Gospel to go forth expecting a brilliant future, expecting the acclamations of the crowd, expecting the people to applaud him because he is true to Jesus Christ. It is necessary that the worker should understand that the kingdom of heaven always means the cross, the judgment hall, the minority with the Lord Jesus Christ, our rejected Master. This was what He taught them in this series of parables.

The parable of the Sower represents the planting of Christianity. Three parts of the seed are lost, but one-fourth is productive, and the increase is thirty, sixty, and one hundred fold.

They had to learn that most of their words seemed to fail, and there would be no response from the multitudes of hearts. From others the fruit would be transient and soon forgotten. From other it would be lost in the temptations of the world. Only part of it would come to perfection. That is the first lesson the worker has to learn.

The parable of the Tares represents the planting of error in the Church, the heresies, corrup-

tions and interminglings of evil men in the early Church as well as later times. Even the little that grew got mixed with Satan's seed. The disciples thought they could pull up the tares, but He said that in pulling up the tares they would pull up the wheat also. The people that are in the business of judging are not in the Lord's employ. "Let both grow together till harvest." Our dreams of a perfect Church are doomed to be disappointed. The devil worked while the Church was asleep, a work, alas, which we can ill eradicate by our discipline or denunciation, but must wait for much of it to be burned out at the great harvest time. Henceforth, the visible Church is a mixture of truth and error, good and evil.

Next, in the Mustard Seed we see the rapid growth of this mingled system covering the earth with its extensive shade, and lodging the fowls of heaven. Is not this most promising? Let us not be too sure. The fowls of the air who lodge in the branches have already a bad reputation from the first parable, as the destructive and mischievous intruders who picked up the good seed, and they would seem to be here the same ill brood of evil emissaries who find shelter in the great, proud, worldly and unhallowed Church of the age of Constantine and to-day.

This is made much more plain when we come to the fourth parable, the Leaven, which is God's uniform symbol of corruption; and when the woman is added to the picture it becomes a significant and unmistakable emblem of the great apostasy which sprang up in the sixth and seventh centuries and speedily permeated the whole Church with the leaven of the Papacy and all its kindred corruptions.

But was there no residuum of good left of all the apostolic sowing? Yes, the Hid Treasure and the Pearl represent the two sides of the elements of good in contrast with the two symbols of evil. The Treasure represents the pure and Scriptural elements surviving in the Church in the individuals—the many; the Pearl in their unity, as the one small, yet pure and heavenly jewel of the Lord amid the encompassing corruption. Both find their historical fulfilment in the faithful few who have ever existed in even the darkest ages of medieval corruption; the Albigenses and Paulicians, the Hussites and Moravians, the Waldenses and Vaudois, the Wycliffites and Huguenots, the Reformers and Covenanters, and the pure and true ones who have before and since dared to be faithful to God and His holy Word. There has

ever been a little flock, of which He says: "They shall be mine in the day when I make up My jewels." There are some who identify the Treasure with Israel, and the Pearl with the Church, the Bride of the Lamb. But this does not affect the dispensational bearing of the parables.

Thus have we seen the two sowings, the growth of the evil, the hidden remnant of the good; and we ask, perhaps, are they always to be thus confounded?

No, the parable of the Draw Net reveals to us the final separation. Angel hands will make it with impartial and unerring exactness, and they shall be consigned to their eternal states and places, the righteous to "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," the wicked to "the furnace of fire."

THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

Once more in the Seven Epistles to the churches of Asia, our Lord's last word to the present age, we have what appears to the most thoughtful expositors an historical panorama of the successive stages of visible Christianity from the vision of Patmos to the end of time.

The seven churches correspond to the seven

parables of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew. They teach the same lessons and unfold the same panorama and we may well meet the solemn conclusion which the Master does after He had delivered them, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," for that is the last message of the Holy Ghost to the modern church. It is not the ancient church, not the apostolic church; it is the church that was on earth two generations after the death of Jesus. Thousands had gone to heaven. Thousands of churches had been organized. And now at last the Lord comes down to earth again for a second visitation in person, and on the isle of Patmos He gives John a last revelation, a last outlook of the churches of the present age. The wisest expositors have almost uniformly united in recognizing in these seven epistles a panorama stretching down from the days of John to the last time, each of these churches representing a different age, and yet each of them continuing in spirit to the end and adding a new coloring to the whole picture. They seem to meet like a great stream flowing down through church history. It begins in the church at Ephesus. Then we see another tributary running into it, the church of Smyrna.

Then come Pergamos and Thyatira. Still later Sardis pours its dark waters. Then follows the bright crystal river of Philadelphia, and at last it ends in a great sluggish swamp, Laodicea, which lies hard by the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the gates of hell.

The church in Ephesus, orthodox, active, conservative and growing cold, represents the second generation of primitive Christians, already so far losing their first love that Paul and John both speak of this same Ephesian church as turning away from them.

The church in Smyrna is a suffering church, going through its ten days of tribulation and purchasing by blood and shame the martyr's crown. This corresponds to the age of persecution that came in the second and third centuries to recall the cold and formal Ephesus to her first love, during which a series of ten distinct persecutions swept the whole line with fire and blood, and carried countless martyrs into heaven.

The church in Pergamos is a different type. It dwells at Satan's seat, the dominion of the world. It is assailed by Balaam's wiles, the allurements of the world. It is the church of Constantine and the converted empire, the church suddenly exalt-

ed to imperial favor, wealth and power and corrupted by the world from its faithfulness and purity; until the smile of an emperor, the seat of honor at a banquet, the grand cathedral, the proud bishopric or patriarchate took the place of ancient simplicity and fidelity, and prepared the way for the next and deeper plunge.

Then comes Thyatira, "that woman Jezebel," the "depths of Satan," a true and vivid picture of the rise of Romanism and all its deep and devilish wiles and widespread domination over the Church of God from the sixth to the sixteenth century.

Sardis represents a yet darker eclipse, "a name to live, and thou art dead." It is the Dark Ages, the putrid corpse of Medieval Romanism.

And yet in both these churches there are a few exceptions; there is a holy seed; there are those in Thyatira that "have not known this doctrine," and there are "a few names even in Sardis that have not defiled their garments." These are the refugees of medieval times, the martyrs of Romanism, the witnesses for God before the Reformation, who suffered and died for the testimony of Jesus, to the number of countless millions.

Like a burst of sunrise comes the church in Philadelphia. It has "a little strength," but it is true. Especially does it honor God's "Word" and hold up Christ's "name." Can we mistake it? It is the Church of the Reformation, and its honored names shall forever be as pillars in the Temple of God, and share the glories of the New Jerusalem.

But there is one chapter more (would that we had not to write it). It is Laodicea, the church of wealth and pride, but so languid and lukewarm that the impatient Master is about to reject it as a nauseous offence. It is our modern Protestantism, boasting of its numbers, its works, its resources, while 149 out of every 150 of the human race are yet unsaved, while heathenism is increasing at the rate of two millions a year, and one sixtieth of one per cent. of our wealth is given for the Gospel, and one third is paid for whiskey and tobacco alone; while luxury, avarice and pleasure are sapping the springs of piety and morality, and culture leading thousands into scepticism; and the Master, in anger and concern, alternately pleads and warns, begs her to open the door and let Him in, threatens with rebukes and chastenings, and, with His hand on the very latch of Time, is about

to enter once more His temple and His world, and make His last awful Inquisition. And yet He pauses, and pointing to the Millennial Throne on which He is just about to sit down, He offers this glorious reward: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father upon His throne."

Such is the picture of the Church through the Christian age. "Have we understood all these things?" Have we seen any family photographs? Are we ready for the inspection of Him who walks amid the Seven Golden Lamps, and looks with eyes that are as a flame of fire? Are we in Ephesus, Laodicea or Pergamos, or worse, in Thyatira or Sardis? Or are we in suffering Smyrna, or humble, faithful Philadelphia? Thank God, the Seven Churches are not merely for brief and transient periods, but the spirit of each continues to the end. So there is a holy Philadelphia even amid an insipid Laodicea. May He find us with the little flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom!

CHAPTER III.

THE WORLD POWERS.

“When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel” (Deut. xxxii. 8).

“These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth: But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. . . . And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Dan. vii. 17, 18, 27).

THE plan of God embraces the political conditions of human history. “When the Most High divided the nations their inheritance, when He separated the saints of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel” (Deut. xxxii. 8). The Prophetic Scriptures contain a clear and distinct picture of national conditions throughout the ages and until the ushering in of the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Soon after the deluge, human ambition made its

first attempt to concentrate the race round one great metropolis of power and pride. The scene of this first attempt at imperial despotism afterwards became the seat of the world's first universal empire, namely, Babylon. But the tower of Babel was stricken by divine judgment and the nations scattered, and it was fifteen centuries before any one of them succeeded in attaining universal empire. The prophetic Scriptures really begin, so far as the nations are concerned, with the rise of this first great world power, Babylon.

There are a number of important points which we should clearly understand in order to follow intelligently these prophetic Scriptures.

PROPHETIC TIMES.

The first is the distinction between the times of the Gentiles and the times of the chosen people. In his solemn words of warning in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, Moses tells the people that if they disobey the Lord and walk contrary to Him, He will punish them "seven times" for their disobedience. This expression is repeated several times, until it is impossible to resist the conviction that it means much more than seven judgments, but must embrace a particular period of trial and

punishment whose duration is purposely expressed by this striking and significant phrase.

If this were the only place where the expression "seven times" is used, the above conclusion would not be so unavoidable, but we find the word "time" or "times" to be a standard measure of prophetic time, and in other prophecies we read again and again of a time, times, half a time, and even of seven times. A large and important class of prophetic interpreters has therefore come to the conclusion that a time is a fixed period and really means a year of three hundred and sixty days, according to the solar calendar; "times" mean two years of three hundred and sixty days, and seven times mean seven years of three hundred and sixty days, or 2,520 days altogether. The same interpreters have concluded on many satisfactory grounds that in this estimate of prophetic time a day is counted for a year, so that 2,520 days mean the same number of years. This is known as the Year Day theory of prophetic interpretation.

The fundamental argument for it is that in Daniel's prophecy in the ninth chapter of his book concerning the seventy weeks that should elapse until Messiah, we have four hundred and ninety

days, and if these days are to be interpreted as literal days, the whole prophecy becomes impossible and absurd. But if they are year days, and the time covers four hundred and ninety years, this exactly corresponds to the period that elapsed from Daniel's point of beginning to the coming of Christ. The evidence of this is so positive and unanswerable that without the strongest reason to the contrary it creates a precedent by which all other such prophetic measurements should be determined, unless there be in any particular case unquestionable proof that literal days are meant.

TIMES OF ISRAEL.

Without entering further into this argument, we will assume that the seven times of judgment that Moses was foreshadowing for Israel embraced a period of 2,520 years. We would naturally look for the beginning of that period in connection with the fall of the Jewish monarchy and the destruction of Jerusalem in the time of Nebuchadnezzar when Israel's independence as a nation virtually ceased and the chosen people went down for ages under the dominion of the Gentile nations. From that day the Jew has been down and the Gentile in the ascendancy and Jerusalem

has been trodden down by the Gentiles until this day.

TIMES OF THE GENTILES.

The Lord Jesus describes this period of Israel's down-treading as the "times of the Gentiles." The apostle Paul in Romans xi. 25 uses the same expression in the same connection. "I would not have you ignorant," he says, "lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part hath happened to Israel until the times of the Gentiles be come in." He implies what the Lord Jesus had also expressed in the passage quoted above, that when the times of the Gentiles shall have been fulfilled, then Israel's times will be resumed. Therefore he adds, "And so all Israel shall be saved, for there shall come out of Zion a Deliverer, who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

But there is another passage which has special reference to the times of the Gentiles and which gives their duration. And strangely enough, it is the same duration as the times of judgment pronounced against Israel. In other words, Israel is to have seven times of judgment and corresponding with these the Gentile nations are to

have seven times of dominion. When Israel is under the divine judgment the star of the Gentiles is in the ascendent; when the times of the Gentiles end then Israel's calling returns once more.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S VISION.

This prophetic picture is given in the fourth chapter of Daniel in another vision of Nebuchadnezzar's in which he saw the period of Gentile dominion represented under the figure of a tree, over which seven times or periods were to pass. This was interpreted by Daniel to mean primarily a season of madness in his own life, which was to continue for seven times or periods, during which he was to be degraded like the beasts of the field, and at the end of which he was to be restored to his reason and take his place again, not as a proud and vainglorious king, but as an humble worshipper of the great God, and recognize His dominion over all kings and kingdoms. Inasmuch, however, as Nebuchadnezzar was himself but a type of his kingdom, and the head of the kingdoms that were to follow, the ultimate fulfilment of this vision must be found in the whole history of the Gentile kingdoms. The bestial madness of Nebuchadnezzar represents just what Daniel's vision

of the four wild beasts represented—the cruel, selfish, brutal and earthly governments of the Gentile world, ruling over earth with a sort of madness, not as beneficent sovereigns, but as ferocious wild beasts, and destined in the purpose of God to continue their terrible control and their earthly character during seven great times or prophetic ages, 2,520 years, or seven times of 360 years each, and at the close of that great period to be restored from their gross and earthly madness by the coming of Christ, and to recognize Him as “King of kings and Lord of lords.”

We now come to the prophetic picture of the times of the Gentiles in detail. This is given by the prophet Daniel in three remarkable visions, in the second, seventh and eighth chapters. So remarkable are the details that it reads more like history than prophecy and its fulfilment is one of the strongest evidences of inspiration of the Bible, so that even secular writers have acknowledged the wonderful correspondence between the visions of Daniel and the facts of history.

THE IMAGE OF GENTILE POWER.

In the second chapter of his writings we find the first complete chart of the world's political

future, until the close of the present dispensation. It was given first to Nebuchadnezzar in a forgotten dream of his troubled sleep; then afterward revealed to Daniel and interpreted by him in the presence of the king. Under the figure of a great image in the form of a man, with head of gold, arms and breast of silver, loins of brass, legs of iron, and feet and toes of iron and clay, he beheld the symbols of the four great empires which in succession were to rule the world until the end, and the broken kingdoms to the number of ten which were to rise out of the last of the four empires and close the drama of the Gentile nations. The head of gold was declared to represent the splendid empire of which Nebuchadnezzar was himself the living head; the breast and arms of silver foreshadowed the Medo-Persian Empire, which was to conquer and subdue Babylon; the loins of brass prefigured the strong empire of Alexander and his successors; the legs of iron were the fitting type of the Roman power, with its all-subduing might; and the feet and toes of iron and clay represented the smaller kingdoms which were to rise out of the ruins of the Roman Empire and close the history of earth's governments.

The audacity of a captive daring to tell a despot like Nebuchadnezzar in the meridian of his glory, that his kingdom could ever fall, is the strongest evidence of the divinity of the message. The picture is marvelously true to the facts of history. Babylon was actually the first head of universal monarchy, having conquered Nineveh in the year 667 B.C., and holding the scepter of the world until her own fall before the Medo-Persians in 538. This second empire in turn swayed a still larger circle of dominion, until it was superseded by the Macedonian in 332, under Alexander. It in turn gradually fell before the Roman power, which had begun its career in the year 753 B.C., and absorbed all other nations, until at length the last independent remnant of the Macedonian Empire fell before it a little before the Christian era. Rome in turn divided into the Eastern and Western Empires, which successively fell before other invaders; the one in 476 A.D., the other in 1453; and was succeeded by a cluster of smaller kingdoms, which at all times since the fall of Rome, and especially at the present time, could truthfully be enumerated as ten, and singularly correspond to the toes upon the feet of the image. Great Britain, France,

Germany, Austria, Spain and Portugal, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Turkey, Russia, Italy, these ten kingdoms constitute what is left of the old Roman Empire.

Then moreover, we observe the materials composing the image in its several parts are singularly suggestive of these successive empires. Gold was the correct emblem of the magnificence of Babylon; silver of the luxurious elegance of Persia; brass, of the tremendous vigor of Macedonia; iron, of the colossal power of Rome, and clay of the brittle, fragile and heterogeneous and changing character of the later kingdoms. Moreover, we see a constant tendency to degeneration from Babylon downwards. This is especially marked in the matter of national unity. Babylon was a single power; Persia a double power; Macedonia divided into four kingdoms, and Rome terminated in ten, as we shall see from later prophetic visions. Even these ten seem to end at last in universal democracy.

THE STONE.

One more feature appears, and is the most strongly marked of all in this first vision: namely, a stone cut out without hands, which falls upon

the image, smiting it upon the toes, crushing them to powder and scattering them like chaff before the winds, while the stone becomes a great and permanent kingdom, filling all the earth and superseding all other forms of human government. This stone is distinctly declared to represent the Kingdom of Christ. Had it come in a different form, to blend with the materials of the image, or incorporate them into its substance; or had it even fallen upon the legs of iron, it might have been interpreted to mean the first coming of Christ, the Gospel Dispensation and the conversion of the world. But it comes in the very last stage of earth's nations, smiting the toes; and it comes not to coalesce, but to destroy; it must therefore mean the second advent of the Son of God at the close of time, and is a revelation of judgment and destruction towards the enemies of the Gospel; coming not to convert and purify, but to supersede the governments of earth, and to be a kingdom more enduring than all the kingdoms of the past.

THE WILD BEAST POWERS OF DANIEL VII.

But this is not the only vision which Daniel saw of earth's political future. A second series

of symbolic visions of the same great empires was given to him at a later period of his writings. In the former vision the powers of earth were represented from Nebuchadnezzar's standpoint as objects of magnificence, and under the symbols of earth's most precious and valued metals: but in the later visions, in the seventh chapter, which was Daniel's vision, not Nebuchadnezzar's, heaven beholds these forms of earthly power and pride under the repulsive images of terrible wild beasts. The first, representing the supremacy, majesty and rapid conquests of Babylon, is a winged lion, which, indeed, we find among the ruins of Babylon as one of the national emblems. The second, a ferocious bear, with three ribs in his teeth, represents the savage cruelty of Persia, that nation which could produce a Haman, and decree the massacre of the whole Jewish population in a single hour, and cast even Daniel to the den of lions, and which did devour and destroy three kingdoms as it rose to its pre-eminence. The third is a winged leopard, with four heads, representing the swiftness of Alexander's conquests, and the four kingdoms which succeeded him. The fourth is a monster of indescribable form and terror, with

teeth of iron, and heels that stamped in fury all other powers beneath its feet, representing the fourth great power, namely, the Roman, which crushed the world beneath its feet, which stamped out the independence of Judea and other nations, which crucified the Son of God, which captured and crushed Jerusalem, and which murdered in the first three centuries tens of millions of Christian martyrs. Then, corresponding to the ten toes in the former vision, there are also ten horns, rising out of the fourth beast, which undoubtedly represent the same ten kingdoms which we have already defined, and which succeeded after the fall of imperial Rome.

THE VISION OF DANIEL VIII.

In the eighth chapter of Daniel we have a third vision of two of the powers already described. The two empires thus portrayed are Persia and Macedonia. The first is represented by a ram, and the second by a he-goat, characterized by the notable horn between his eyes, representing Alexander the Great; this horn at length was broken and followed by the growth of four lesser horns, which represent the four kingdoms into which Alexander's empire divided. In the pro-

phetic vision the ram and he-goat meet in terrific and decisive conflict. The former is speedily worsted and stamped out of existence, and the second succeeds to the sway of his universal empire. This, of course, describes the fall of Persia before the Grecian conqueror. But the emphatic feature of the vision is the importance attached to one of these four horns and a Little Horn which grows out of it, and which in later days becomes a proud, presumptuous and oppressive power, especially in the eastern and southern portions of the world, as the Little Horn of the seventh chapter had been in the western and Roman world.

THE VISIONS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

In the book of Revelation we have a remarkable series of visions respecting the world powers in connection with the coming of Christ. These are found especially in chapters thirteen, seventeen and eighteen. In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation the beloved John beholds a vision strangely similar to Daniel's. It is the vision of the last of Daniel's beasts, with the addition, besides the ten horns, of seven terrific heads, and the further addition of the dragon in the background, as the real master and moving spirit of the whole pro-

cession of earth's powers and governments. The beast which John beheld was the same which Daniel had prefigured. Its seven heads were the seven successive forms of Roman government, and its last head the same apostasy which Daniel saw as a little horn, and which succeeded to the power of imperial Rome after the fall of the Western Empire. John beholds the same ten kingdoms, growing out of the Roman Beast.

LAST DAY DEMOCRACIES.

There are some peculiar features, however, in this and his subsequent visions which deserve to be noted. One of these is that in his first view of the horns there are crowns upon all their heads. In his later visions they are seen without their crowns. This, coupled with other expressions, such as "many waters," etc., seem to indicate that in the last days the governments of earth shall be democratic, and probably even anarchical and lawless, and that the world is rapidly rushing to an age of license, whose first symptoms are already only too apparent in the popular and Socialistic movements both of Europe and America.

ROME AND THE NATIONS.

Another feature in the visions of the Apocalypse is the relation of the nations to the great apostasy of Rome. They are represented in the first period of her career as sustaining this ecclesiastical system represented by the Woman on the scarlet colored beast, and united with her in unholy alliance; but later we see them hating her, ravaging her and resenting fiercely her long and arrogant dominancy over them. This also has been strangely true during the past ten centuries, and is being literally fulfilled in Europe to-day in such Roman Catholic countries as Italy, France and Portugal.

One more important feature of the national history of the future is very distinctly portrayed in the Apocalypse; namely, the relation of the nation to Christ and His cause, and the last great struggle between good and evil toward the close of the present age. The spirit of evil that rules in the powers of earth is to send forth a deluge of unhallowed influences, represented in the Apocalypse by three unclean spirits like frogs, which shall go forth to possess the minds and hearts of the kings and peoples of earth, with bitter and

wicked hatred of God, and to gather them together for the last great conflict against Christ and His cause. This is described as the war of Armageddon (Rev. xvi. 13 to 16). Here the proud and godless hosts of earth shall make their final stand against Christ and His people. It will be much more than a moral and spiritual struggle; it will be a literal battle against the Jewish nation and the Lamb of God. The result cannot be doubtful. The glorious appearing of the Son of God will end the conflict, and before His tribunal shall be gathered all nations for the judgment which is to determine their place of destiny during the Millennial age.

CHAPTER IV.

GOD'S PLAN FOR ISRAEL.

"When the Most High divided 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).

"The people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. xxxiii. 9).

THE existence and history of the Jewish nation is a stupendous monument of the truth of the Bible. The seed of Abraham is God's miracle in history. They dwell among the nations, "alone," among, but not of them; like oil in water, distinct and yet above the surface of the many peoples where they have been scattered.

I. THE CALLING AND MISSION OF ISRAEL.

We find a sketch of God's plan for Israel in the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of Romans. Paul pauses in his great treatise to give us three chapters of dispensational truth in which the Jew looms large in God's eternal plan. He says in the fourth verse of the ninth chapter, "To whom pertaineth the adoption, the sonship?" They are

the only nation that was ever called the sons of God. Socialism talks about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Christ tells us we are children of the devil until we are born from above. The Jews were as a nation, the sons of God. Israel was the first born to whom pertained the sonship and the glory which He gave to them under David and Solomon, and which He is going to give to them again. All the promises of God came through them. All our ethical standards come to us from them. "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen" (Rom. ix. 4, 5).

This, then, was the calling of the Jew. This was the high place God intended for them. First, they were to be the depositories of divine truth, to receive and distribute to the world the light of heaven. In the next place Israel was to be a witness for God among the nations and an object lesson showing God's relations with men, for through His dealing with them God has unfolded His principles of government over all nations. They were separated from association with the

ungodly world. They received the covenants. They gave us Jesus Christ, "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." All this we owe to Israel, a debt we never can repay. If it had not been for the Jew we would have had no Bible, no Christ, no covenants of promise.

The nation was called in the loins of Abraham, and was given to him in covenant as a literal posterity as numerous as the sand upon the seashore, accompanied by the promise of the land for "an everlasting possession." Abraham has a spiritual seed too, "as the stars of heaven." But God is not going to let them steal their brethren's earthly inheritance. We are the spiritual seed of Abraham, as believers in Christ, for Abraham is "the father of all them who believe." But in receiving our spiritual privileges let us not push out the Jew from his earthly inheritance. While ours is assured by the covenants of God, for him the same covenants are "without repentance" and cannot be abrogated.

God renewed His covenant with Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, and Solomon, in whom the kingdom rose to its highest earthly glory. We read in David's last words in II. Samuel xxiii. 5, "Although my house be not so with God; yet He

hath made me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." In the 89th Psalm this covenant is renewed and confirmed forever. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break nor alter the thing that has gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever and his throne as the sand before me."

We are taught very clearly in the Epistle to the Romans that God is not going to change this covenant, and even Israel's ill conduct has not dissolved it. They are being punished, but God will be true to His oath. So we read, "For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. . . . For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." "And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written; there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. xi. 26-29).

II. THE FAILURE AND REJECTION OF ISRAEL.

We find even Moses looking forward to this in his last warnings to them. For forty years they had to wander in the wilderness, and later for four hundred years after Joshua, they had again to be disciplined and punished. They had had a greater blessing and therefore they had a greater fall. Samuel was called to restore them in the great Reformation which he brought about. And David became their divinely appointed king and victorious leader in acquiring the promised kingdom. He extended his scepter over a vast area and the kingdom of Judah and Israel was not only the most powerful on earth, but worthy to be compared with any modern nation. Solomon succeeded to it, and for a time was worthy of his glorious throne, but Solomon's heart became corrupted by luxury and the influence of ungodly associates, and God had to send the severest judgments upon His people. After Solomon's death the division of the people by the rebellion of Jeroboam resulted in Solomon's son inheriting only two tribes, and the other ten became a separate monarchy under the northern kings with their capital at Samaria. These two kingdoms moved on side by side for several centuries, both sinking

deeper into idolatry, until at last the northern kingdom became so utterly apostate that God had to send upon it a terrific judgment that literally wiped it from the face of the earth. He sent the Assyrian to capture Samaria, and the land was given up to alien races, and from that day the world has been wondering what has become of the ten tribes of Israel. Apparently they have been utterly blotted from the pages of history.

For a few centuries longer the southern kingdom lingered with its story of sinning and repenting. A few kings tried to lift it back to the place where David and Solomon had left it; but at last they all failed. Then came another blow—the Babylonian captivity. God sent Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem and after a succession of calamities lasting nearly twenty years, the city was captured, the temple burned, and the people led away captive for seventy years.

God in his infinite mercy and faithfulness gave them another chance. Under Joshua, Ezra and Nehemiah they were restored to their land. Under the Maccabees they fought for their independence and flung off the yoke of their oppressor for a time; and when Jesus came there still was the form of a kingdom though the sovereign

was a dependent of Rome; but the scepter had not wholly "departed from Judah."

Then they rejected and crucified the Messiah. His tears and warnings were unavailing as He told them their house was "left unto them desolate," that the enemy should encamp about them, and capture their fair city, and that "Jerusalem should be trodden down" for centuries and Israel scattered among the nations.

ISRAEL'S PUNISHMENT.

Full soon the judgment fell. He gave them a short probation during the first few years of the apostles' ministry. He even sent Paul to them for a final appeal, and they rejected him, and at last he said, "We turn to the Gentiles; your blood be upon your own heads." Then the Roman eagles began to gather about the doomed city. It was besieged for two dreadful years, and at last fell after many preternatural signs of which Josephus, their own historian, has told us. The city was sacked and burned and ploughed over that the temple site might be obliterated. We can still see the inscription on the Arch of Titus, showing the Roman soldiers carrying the golden candlestick as a trophy of their triumph.

Forty years later another Jewish rebellion arose and they tried to throw off the Roman yoke; but they were not only subdued, but utterly crushed, and the Jew forbidden ever to look toward Jerusalem on penalty of death. Half a million were butchered by Trajan and Hadrian, and then their night of sorrow dragged its slow length through Mediæval centuries.

MEDIÆVAL CRUELTIES.

After Constantine's conversion and the establishment of Christianity through the empire, the Jew became the object of aversion and oppression. He was regarded as the murderer of Christ and treated as a criminal and outlaw. Eventually the Saracens joined the Christians in this common hatred to the poor Hebrew. In the eleventh century they were banished from England. In the same century began the crusade of the Holy War against the Jews, compelling them to be baptized or slain, and multitudes of Jews were murdered all over Germany. In the twelfth century they were banished from France and all their property confiscated. Under the reigns of Henry the Second, and Richard the First, in England, they suffered every kind of extortion and barbarity, and in the

reign of Edward the First they were again banished. King John and many of his successors tortured them until they confessed and yielded up their treasures. In the year of the discovery of America 800,000 Jews were driven from Spain amid every kind of privation and distress, not even knowing whither to turn their weary feet. Multitudes slew their own children to save them from horrors which were worse than death. In 1545, 5,000 Jews with all their effects and synagogues, were burned at Salonica. In Constantinople the Jews' quarter was burned, 3,000 houses destroyed, and \$60,000,000 of their property plundered. And so the sad and sickening story goes on. We cannot better sum it up than in these words.

THEIR OWN CONFESSION.

"A Jewish calendar, with a chronological table, forming 'a summary of Jewish history from the flood to the year 1860,' lies before us. We run the eye questioningly over its pages, and what do we find as we review the incidents of this second section of Jewish history there recorded? An unconscious acknowledgment from Jewish pens that every threat of judgment denounced against Is-

rael in case of continued rebellion and idolatry by Moses and the prophets has been fulfilled. An acknowledgment that ever since their fall before the power of Babylon, in the sixth century B.C., they have been in subjection to Gentile rulers; and that since A.D. 135 they have been dispersed among the nations; that their history has consisted of one long chain of great and sore calamity, interrupted only with brief gleams of passing prosperity. They have been exposed to innumerable evils of every kind; to famines and plagues; captivities and banishments without number, to social distress and degradation, to outlawry and the hatred of their Gentile neighbors, to false accusations and frequent massacres, to exactions and imposts almost exceeding belief, to pillage and torture, to the most painful forms of social ostracism and injustice; in a word, they have been so relentlessly crushed down by their Gentile masters that existence itself would have been crushed out of them long since but for the strange indestructibility with which, in the providence of God their race is endowed." Truly has it been said:—

"The wild bird hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind a country, Israel—but the grave."

THE OUTCAST NATION.

It is only within about one hundred years that the Jew has been allowed any sort of citizenship in any nation under heaven. The light is beginning at last to dawn, but oh, how little they realized what they meant when they said on that awful day, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Let Moses tell the prophetic story. "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 shalt 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."

That is all true of the Jew in Russia to-day. Five millions of them in that empire are confined

in a little section called the Pale. They dare not move out of their territory, except by special license, and that is only given occasionally to rich men. They are liable to assassination and outrage at any time. The past decade has given us the horrors of Kisheneff and similar records of oppression and wrong cover their history for nearly twenty centuries.

The only light in this sad picture is suggested by the story of two rabbis who were watching the ruins of Jerusalem one day as the foxes were running over the walls. The one wept and the other smiled. "Brother, why dost thou weep?" asked the smiling one. "I weep because I see the foxes running over the walls of the city of my fathers. Why dost thou smile?" "I smile because this is what God said should come to pass, and the word of promise is as true as the word of judgment, for He has also said, 'Jerusalem shall yet be the joy of the whole earth.'"

III. THEIR PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION.

A REMNANT.

God has said that though they be scattered like corn among all nations, yet shall not one grain be lost. Again He says that during this present age

a remnant shall be saved. While the nation has rejected Christ, yet there are some that believe in Him. "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved" (Rom. ix. 27). "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. xi. 5). A few have been accepting Christ all through the centuries. We are told by Jewish mission workers that there are at least fifty thousand Jewish converts to-day in the churches of Europe. That is very encouraging. Some of the most gifted Bible scholars, teachers and defenders of the Christian faith are Hebrews. Some of the most earnest and eloquent ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are of the Jewish race and of the Christian faith. Jewish mission work is not the principal work of the Church, but it is one of its commissions. "To the Jew first and also to the Greek." We must not let this work monopolize us. If we do we shall be disappointed. If we push the Jew beyond his true dispensational place, his head will get too big and he will spoil our work. We must remember that the spiritual Israel is "a remnant." This is not Israel's day, but God is saving some even

to-day, and we ought to be doing all we can to give them the Gospel.

THEIR RESTORATION.

Then there is the promise of their restoration. This is to be in two stages, first, national, and then spiritual. These two stages are represented by Ezekiel in the vision of the Dry Bones. "He caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley: and, lo, they were very dry. And He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live?" "Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold they say, Our bones are dry, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts."

But God promises to revive the nation and to bring them to the land of their fathers. "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves."

But that is all physical—there is no breath in them. "Then He said unto me, Prophecy unto these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones,

hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and ye shall live. . . . Then said He unto me, Prophecy unto the wind; prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army." This is the second stage of Israel's restoration, their restoration not only to their land, but to their Messiah. "And I shall put My Spirit in you and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord."

DELIVERANCE BEGUN.

God has begun these two stages of His work in the restoration of Israel. During the past two centuries every country in Europe has adopted measures leading to the enfranchisement of the Jew, except Russia and Turkey. In 1844 the Turkish empire was compelled to sign a decree giving permission for Jews and Christians and all others to enjoy religious liberty, and a little

later the right to own property in their land. This was just 2,300 years after the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C., the initial point of Daniel's prophecy, and thus a marked fulfilment of that prophecy.

In 1860 a Hebrew alliance was formed with some three thousand branches throughout the whole world for the purpose of uniting the Jews in demanding their civic and other social privileges. That to-day is one of the most powerful influences for the protection of the Jew. They did not yet dream of returning to their own land.

ZIONISM.

But in 1897 a most extraordinary movement was launched—Zionism—and ever since that society has been growing in numbers and influence. Max Nordau in addressing the delegates of the congress where Zionism was formed, said, "It seemed as if we were witnessing a miracle." The most extraordinary thing about this great event was that it corresponded exactly with another of Daniel's prophecies. God had said in Daniel xii. 8, the scattering of the Jewish people should cease after 1,260 years. Then they were to begin to unite and gather home. In the year 637 A.D., Omar, the victorious general of Moham-

med, captured the city of Jerusalem. From that time the Turk has been in dominion. As he entered the city the old Bishop Sophronius with tears and sobs, cried, "The abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, is set up." And sure enough it was. On the site of the temple of Solomon a mosque was reared for Mohammedan worship. Ever since Jerusalem has been trodden down by the Moslem and the holy people scattered and crushed under his iron heel. From 637, 1,260 years (Daniel's time, times, and half a time) reach the year 1897. And that was the year when the Zionist conference founded the great society whose watchword ever since has been, The Jew must be restored and Israel must again become a nation.

There is no need for comment on such a record. How long it will take Him to finish the restoration of Israel we cannot tell. But it has begun, that is the political resoration. The dry bones are coming together, but there is yet no breath. It is a political society without God.

THE COMING DELIVERER.

The Jews are going back, going back in unbelief, going back in national pride, but "they shall

look on Him whom they have pierced and shall mourn because of Him." "And in that day shall a fountain be opened to the house of Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness." "And there shall come out of Zion a Deliverer, and He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." The unbelieving Jews will behold Him when He comes to gather out His Church and Bride, and they shall catch a passing glimpse of the glory of His train, and they shall say, This is our Messiah, we have rejected Him, we have lost Him. And they shall mourn because of Him. And in the Tribulation which is to follow, two-thirds shall be destroyed, but one-third shall survive and shall come out on the other side in the Millennial morning and be the beginning of a new Jewish nation which is to last throughout the coming age of glory.

THE FINAL CONFLICT.

The last chapters of Zechariah and Daniel describe the awful conflict which is to come to them in the last hour of their sorrow, "The time of Jacob's trouble." The Son of God shall appear with His feet on Mount Olivet to deliver them from their adversaries and to set up a throne of

David again on the Millennial earth. The following eloquent passage may help us to realize the picture of that future age.

ISRAEL IN THE MILLENNIAL AGE.

“Beyond the immediate prospects in relation to the Jew and Palestine rises the glowing and glorious picture of the future of that people and land, as portrayed in Scripture and illuminated by a study of the physical conditions, and ethnographical surroundings involved. Placed at the junction of three continents, and at the gateway of commerce between the West and the East; possessed of tropical valleys, and snow-clad mountains, the land of the palm and the cedar, of the olive and the vine, holds forth its hands of promise to the wandering, exiled Jews. Carmel and Sharon covered in Spring with their roses, the fields of Bethlehem, and hills of Nazareth with their anemones, the plain of Esdraelon with its corn-fields, the Jordan valley with its luxuriant foliage, the wilds of Bashan with their pastures, all wait for the Jewish hands and homes which are yet to cultivate and occupy them. The long neglected Gulf of Akaba with its noble headlands projecting into the Red Sea, shall yet become a

highway of commerce to Southern Palestine. Ezion-geber, at the head of that gulf, will be connected by railway with the Dead Sea, the Jordan valley, and the Lake of Gennesareth. The waters of Merom, and sources of the Jordan shall be linked with the crowded streets of Damascus, and the snow-clad steeps of Hermon. The slopes of Lebanon will be populated, and the city of Antioch revived. Beyrout, already connected with the ports of the Mediterranean and with Damascus, shall be the gate of the highroad through the Euphrates valley to the Persian Gulf, India, and the East. Africa traversed with railways shall lie at the feet of Palestine, and Europe with its wealth of civilization shall flourish at its side.

“The Jews restored from all countries, and speaking all languages, shall be fitted for the work of evangelizing the world. Their marvelous commercial, political, and literary gifts shall come into fullest play. No more shall they be a despised and outcast people. The natural brethren, the blood relations of the King of Glory, shall take a foremost place among the nations. The sign of sorrow, the wail of grief shall be turned to the song of gladness, and the shout of praise. The voice of redeeming love and mercy shall swell

from innumerable multitudes. Jerusalem shall vibrate with its music, Carmel prolong its cadence and Lebanon echo back its strains. The song of angels shall awake again above the fields of Bethlehem; and heaven and earth unite their voices as never before in the anthem which shall celebrate the triumph of redeeming grace and mercy."

CHAPTER V.

THE GREAT APOSTASY.

IN the vision of the seventh chapter of Daniel, the figure that most impressed the mind of the prophet and held his spell-bound gaze, even after the other images had passed out of view, was not the winged lion, the devouring bear, the four-headed leopard, or even the strange and terrific monster with teeth of iron; nor was it the ten horns that grew out of its mighty head; but it was that other horn, the Little Horn that "came up and before whom three fell, even of that horn which had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows, which made war with the saints, and prevailed against them," and "he shall be diverse from the first and shall subdue three kings, and he shall speak great words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and they shall be given into his hands until a time and times, and the dividing of time; but the judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it unto the end."

If we have been right in our interpretation of the fourth beast and the horns as denoting Rome and the divided kingdoms that grew out of it, then it is evident that this other horn, which is thus prominently described, must be some power that arose simultaneously with the fall of Rome and the rise of these ten kingdoms; a power in some important sense diverse from them, and yet like them; a power that subverted three of the contemporary kingdoms; a power that became the persecutor of the saints of God; a power that was to last for 1,260 years; and a power that God was at the end to sit in judgment upon and gradually consume and destroy.

Is there anything in history that corresponds to this description? Rather, is there any possibility of mistaking the identity of the only figure that corresponds to this vivid prophetic-historical picture? Is this not a living photograph of the origin and progress of the Papal power as it has filled up the last thirteen centuries and made itself, as it was in Daniel's vision, the most marked and striking picture of mediæval and modern history?

Let us notice in detail the points of identity as given in Daniel's vision, and afterwards in the visions of Paul and John.

I. DANIEL'S PICTURE.

1. It was to be a horn out of the fourth beast. Now the Papacy sprang out of Rome. Its very roots are fastened in the seven hills. Its very cornerstone is Peter's ministry and primacy in Rome. The empire of the Popes succeeded to the empire of the Cæsars, and saved the city from obscurity and desolation. It could not arise in all its supremacy till Rome fell; and when the Western Empire was shattered the Popes inherited its authority and power over the Roman States.

2. It was to be an actual horn, a real State, a political power. And so the Papacy has been for more than twelve centuries. It has had a two-fold form as distinct as the offices of Moses and Aaron. It has been a temporal kingdom and an ecclesiastical body, priesthood and church. It is in the first of these aspects that Daniel views it, as a political power, an actual horn. It is only since 1870 that this form of its existence has passed away.

3. It was to be "*diverse*" from the other horns. It is not necessary to show how distinctively Rome has differed from all other States in its peculiar character and claims; professing to be a

divine government, combining both the civil and sacerdotal functions and assumptions. No other such government has ever existed, or ever wielded such tremendous power.

4. It was to arise after the other horns. And so the temporal power of the Papacy slowly took shape after the fall of Rome and the division of the Western Empire. And although it began about the sixth century, yet it was not fully consolidated until the time of Pepin, in the eighth century.

5. It was to subdue three kings. And so the Papacy literally did absorb and supersede successively, first Odoacer and the Heruli, secondly, the Ostrogoths, and thirdly, the Lombards.

6. It was to be a little horn. And accordingly the Paper States have ever been territorially small and limited in population: less, at the highest figure, than any of the kingdoms of Europe. In its palmiest days the territory of the Papal States did not exceed 16,000 square miles, and the population, 3,125,000. In 1865, a little before its fall, its population had been reduced to 700,000.

7. It was, however, to be a very powerful horn, "whose look was to be more stout than his fellows." Need we say that the Papacy has been at

times the most powerful government in Europe, and not only in assumption, but in reality has controlled the governments of the whole world?

8. It was to be an arrogant and pretentious horn, to have "a mouth speaking great things." The Papacy has surely fulfilled all this. It has ever claimed the right to rule the kingdoms and consciences of men. It made the mightiest potentates of Europe bow to its will and beg for its mercy. It forced the proudest emperor of Germany to do penance at its gates barefoot on the icy ground for three days at Canossa. There is not a nation within the limits of the Roman Empire that has not been humbled at its feet, and there is not a claim of arrogance and intolerance which it has not made. Its last assumption of infallibility has been the fitting crown of all preceding pretensions.

9. It was to be a blasphemous and impious power. "He shall speak great words against the Most High." Dr. Young translates it: "And words, as an adversary of the Most High it doth speak." Surely the Papacy has been the great adversary of the Most High. Surely its words have been Satan's most hostile and effectual

weapons for the perversion of truth and the subversion of souls.

10. It was to be a persecuting power; "it made war with the saints and prevailed against them." He "shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and they shall be given into his hand." Papal Rome has butchered at least fifty millions of the saints of God, tortured and tormented millions more, and "worn out" the people of God through all the long and weary centuries.

11. It was to "think to change times and laws." The Papacy has dictated the policy of European States, has been the great mistress of diplomacy and political intrigue, and has changed times by its great feasts and saints' days, and the famous Gregorian calendar, which we owe to one of the Popes.

12. It was to last "a time, times, and the dividing of time"; that is, three years and a half of days, or 1,260 years.

From the various points from which the rise of the Papacy may be lawfully measured, a period of 1,260 years, brings us to the most significant dates in the progress of its downfall. From the year 533, when Justinian established the supremacy of the Pope over the churches of the world,

1,260 solar years bring us to 1793, and the horrors of the French Revolution, which for a time shattered and almost annihilated the Papal power as well as the governments of Europe.

From the years 607-10, when the Emperor Phocas finally confirmed the supremacy of the Popes, 1,260 years bring us to the last stage in the fall of the temporal powers,—1867-70, when, after his last infatuated claim of infallibility, the Pope fell forever from his throne, and the little horn, as a political system, ceased to exist. At high noon on that eventful day His Holiness had arranged to read the Decree of Infallibility amid brilliant mirrors, arranged to reflect the splendor of his person from every side of the gorgeous chamber. But when the hour came the heavens were rent with thunder and tempest, and the sky overcast with clouds and storms. And ere the day had closed his fate was sealed, the fatal war between France and Germany was declared, and the course of events had begun which left him a prisoner in his palace, and a fallen King of Pride.

13. The destruction of this horn was not to be immediate, but gradual. First, the Ancient of Days, the Father, in His providential govern-

ment, was to come and sit in judgment upon it. Next, as describing a progressive picture, Daniel says: "I beheld—even till the beast was slain and its body given to the burning flame," or, as Dr. Young translates it, "I was seeing till that the beast is slain, and his body hath been destroyed and given to the burning fire." And again, in the twenty-sixth verse, the picture is still more vivid: "The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it unto the end." These are all successive steps. Dr. Young's literal translation brings out this feature yet more vividly: "And the Judge is seated, and his dominion they cause to pass away—to cut off and destroy—unto the end." It would seem that even after the dominion passes away from this horn, as it has now done, the process of cutting off and destroying must still go on to the full consummation, as it is even now doing. Rome did not rise in a moment, and it does not fall in an hour. Its first deathblow was the Reformation, its second the French Revolution, its third the fall of the temporal power in 1870. It is going on to the end, and soon its still deeper and more persistent spiritual life will be smitten "by

the spirit of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His coming.”

II. PAUL'S PICTURE.

In the second chapter of Second Thessalonians the apostle Paul has also given us an inspired picture of this same system of evil, under the name of “THE APOSTASY”: “That day shall not come except there come the falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, and the son of destruction who is opposing and raising himself up above all called God or worshipped, so that he in the sanctuary of God as God hath sat down, showing himself off that he is God. And now what is keeping down ye know for his being revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work, only he who is keeping down will hinder till he may be out of the way, and then shall be revealed the Lawless One, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the manifestation of His coming, even him whose coming is according to the working of the Adversary in all power of signs, and lying wonders, and in all deceitfulness of the unrighteousness in those perishing, because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.”

Here we are taught several additional facts concerning this same system of evil.

1. It was to be an Apostasy, "a falling away." It was not to be a system of infidelity, paganism, or open devilishness; but was to come out of the very bosom of Christianity, and was to be an Apostate Church. This is surely true of Romanism, which was once the pure Church of Justin and Jerome and Clement and Augustine.

2. It was to be hindered in its development for a while by some other power, but was even in the Apostles' day working in the Church, and was to break out without restraint when the hindering influence was removed.

Now the spirit of Romanism—that is ambition and ecclesiastical pride—was really working in the Apostolic Church. Paul had to rebuke it at Corinth, and John found it so bitter and strong at Ephesus that he was even debarred from his own church by Diotrephes, "who loved the pre-eminence."

But it could never ripen into a Papacy so long as an emperor sat on Cæsar's throne. A Pope and a Cæsar could not reign together. And therefore until Rome fell in 476 A.D. there was one "keeping down." But with the fall of Rome he

was taken out of the way. And very soon the patriarchal government of the Popes was recognized as the new sovereignty of Italy, and the way was prepared for the political supremacy of the Papacy.

3. It is described as a "mystery of iniquity," and a "lawless one."

Romanism is a system of mysteries. She has seven sacraments and secrets innumerable. Her confessional, her Jesuitical societies, her secret convocations and councils, her policy of intrigue and diplomacy, all justify this name given her in Revelation, "Mystery Babylon." And just as truly may she be called a system of lawlessness. Rome recognizes no authority above her. She claims supremacy to human laws and lawgivers, and the right to make the laws and control the law-makers. There is not a government on earth but has felt and resented this spirit, and this is the reason why her priests and people have been driven out of China, Corea, Japan, and other countries; they were regarded as enemies of the State and emissaries of sedition. There is no divine law which Papal indulgences and absolutions have not often put aside, and there is no form of iniquity which it has not harbored or con-

cealed. The wickedness, falsehood, duplicity, licentiousness, and corruption of the Papacy during the Middle Ages cannot easily be exaggerated. The Augustan age of Italian art was the age of most horrible priestly corruption, when the Italian Borgia rivalled the Roman Nero. The Protestant Reformation grew out of the abominations of Papal indulgences, which were simply a selling of purity and righteousness for priestly and Papal gain. The grosser revelations of the sins of the social and conventual system we do not enter upon, although this alone would sufficiently illustrate the fitness of the title "Man of Sin." Enough to know that the life, spirit, and tendency of Romanism is unholy and iniquitous, and that the races and countries where she has had her sway have become the most corrupt and immoral of all peoples.

4. It was to claim divine honors, "sitting in the sanctuary of God, showing himself off that he is God." The homage paid to the Pope is idolatrous and divine. The names he uses in his decrees are blasphemous. The usual formula once was, "our Lord God the Pope." The very character he assumes is that of the vicar or actual representative of Christ, clothed with

all His powers and dignities; and the last exhibition of his pretensions, the proclamation of his own infallibility amid gorgeous ceremonies, was indeed a literal "showing himself off that he is God." There is not one expression here too strong for the naked and repeated facts of ecclesiastical story.

5. His coming is declared to be "after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness." If ever the Devil had a masterpiece, it is the Papacy. His one desire ever has been to mimic God, and here He has had a splendid counterfeit. Nor have there been lacking the greatest power and the most signal and wonderful signs of superhuman origin. The miracles of the Papacy have been of two classes. Some of them are of "lying wonders," mere skillful pretensions. But some have been the results of real Satanic power and actual signs of superhuman working, as much as the predicted miracles of spiritualism. And then there is also "all deceivableness of unrighteousness,"—the evil that is made to look like good, the lie that is justified in the interests of the Church, the perversion of Scripture, the duplicity of Jesuitism, and the false

principles that underlie the whole life it teaches.

6. Its judgment is to come from two sources. The first is "the spirit of His mouth." Surely this denotes the Word of God, and truly this is the weapon with which he has been destroying Rome since the disenthralment of the Bible by Wickliffe five hundred years ago. There is a fine old cartoon in one of Wickliffe's Bibles. A little fire has broken out in the midst of a company of cardinals and priests. It is burning inside the covers of a Bible. It is spreading rapidly. They all gather round it and try to blow it out. There is His Holiness blowing till his cheeks are bursting, and scores of puffing priests and bishops. But the more they blow the more it burns, until at last they are compelled to fly to escape its consuming flame. So has the Bible been consuming Rome, and with a true instinct Rome has dreaded and suppressed the Bible.

7. But the final blow is to come from the "brightness of His coming," which shall consume and finally extinguish this mystery of sin. For that we wait. The first process has been long in progress, the last is near.

III. JOHN'S PICTURE.

This is chiefly contained in the 13th, 17th, and 18th chapters of Revelation.

1. It is described as "a wild beast, whose deadly wound was healed." The 13th chapter of Revelation begins with a picture of the same wild beast that Daniel saw in his fourth vision, the Roman beast with its ten horns. Only here it is seen with seven heads, and the seventh of these is the Papacy, the same power which in Daniel's vision was seen as a little horn, but really exercising all the power of the beast itself, and called the beast in the 11th verse of chapter vii. Here it is called a head, one of the seven heads of this monstrous beast. Six other heads had preceded it. These were the six different forms of government under which Rome has existed. These were: Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, Tribunes, Emperors. Five of these heads had fallen, the angel declares to St. John, and one, the Empire, was in existence at the time of the vision. The seventh had not yet come, and when it did it must continue for a little time, that is a considerable time. That was tantamount to saying, "It will last awhile when it comes" (xvii. 10).

Now John says that he saw one of these heads wounded to death. That refers to the fall of the empire under Romulus Augustulus, in the year 476. Then, indeed, it seemed as if the beast had received its deathblow. But "his deadly wound was healed." He had vitality enough in him to put forth another head, and it gave to the whole body a life and power which it never had possessed before.

How wonderfully this describes the rise of the Papacy out of the ruins of imperial Rome, and the revival it brought to the city that was about to sink to obscurity and ruins. Even Gibbon, the profane and infidel historian, describes this event almost like an interpreter of prophecy:

"Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the city had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honor and dominion.

"The empire having been overthrown, unless God had raised up the *Pontificate*, Rome, resuscitated and restored by none, would have become uninhabitable, and been a most foul habitation thenceforward of cattle; but in the *Pontificate* it revived as with a *second birth*."

And so once more the wild beast revived in another form. Rome became once more for twelve centuries the centre and metropolis of the world, and "all the world wondered after the Beast."

2. It is described later in the same chapter, under a second image, as "another beast with two horns as a lamb, but it spake as a dragon." This denotes another side of the Papacy, viz., its ecclesiastical and spiritual organization. The first beast represents its political and temporal power, the second its ecclesiastical. It is really two systems. It is both a Church and State, or rather was until 1870. It had a political existence as real as France or Germany, and much more pretentious. And it had an ecclesiastical system quite independent of its political government, and able to go on even if that were suspended, as indeed it has been going on since 1870. Now this is the system represented by the two-horned lamb, with the dragon tongue, innocent looking as a lamb, but speaking the devil's words, in its bulls and decretals, its indulgences, interdicts and anathemas.

3. These two phases and aspects of this system are combined in the picture of the 17th chapter, in which the spiritual and ecclesiastical as-

pect of the Papacy is represented as an abandoned woman, while the temporal power is denoted by the Beast on which she rides. This is the Apostate Church, supported by the arm and sword of earthly power, trampling down the consciences and rights and lives of all who oppose her despotic will.

A woman is many times used in the Scriptures as a type of evil. The prototype of this same evil power was the ancient Jezebel of Samaria. In Zechariah the emblem of corruption is a woman, sitting in an ephah and carried forth to Babylon (vss. 7, 11). In the parable of the leaven it is a woman who prefigures the spirit of corruption there symbolized. John wonders at this woman because he had seen the Church just before (ch. xii.) as a woman clothed with the sun. Alas! that so soon the Bride of Christ should seem like an harlot!

4. Once more in the same chapter, and more fully in the 18th, the same system of evil is described by yet another name—viz., **BABYLON**, or **MYSTERY OF BABYLON**—that is, not the real, but the mystical Babylon, corresponding in spirit and destiny, in pride, profligacy and destiny, to the ancient Queen of Empires. This name may refer

specially to the city of Rome as much as to the system of Romanism. We know this name was given by the early fathers to it, and even Peter is thought by many, in writing his epistle "from Babylon," to have really meant Rome. The fall of Babylon, in the 18th chapter, involves probably the destruction of the city of Rome.

5. The next feature of this system of evil is universal dominion. "Power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations." During the Middle Ages the power of Rome was universal, so far at least as the world was under the sway of any European State.

6. It was to be a blasphemous power. We cannot better interpret this than by quoting the following reference to the names and claims of the Roman Pontiff at various periods in the past:

"He claims a homage which even rivals that of Jehovah. Some of the titles which have been given to him are truly awful. Christopher Marcellus, in the fourth session of the fifth Lateran Council, called Pope Julius II. *another God upon earth*. In the sixth session of the same council, Leo. X. was called by Simon Bengnius *the Saviour that was to come*; and the same Pope, in the

next session of that council, was called *King of kings*.

7. It was to be worshipped. The word worship here applied both to the Beast and the Dragon. This worship of the Beast was really a worship of the Dragon. Papal worship is therefore devil worship. The word worshipped here means literally "*kissed*." The method of Papal worship is to kiss the great toe. And in St. Peter's the bronze statue said to represent St. Peter has had more than half of its toe literally kissed away. To make the description still more literal, it is said that this statue is not St. Peter at all, but just an old heathen JUPITER found at Rome, and dedicated to the great Apostle. If this be so, then their worship is truly to the Dragon, for all the gods of Greece and Rome were literally symbols of demon powers.

8. He was to do great wonders, and deceive them that dwelt on earth by those miracles that he should have power to do. This describes the miraculous claims of Romanism, and the false, deceptive character of some, as well as the undoubted supernatural reality of others.

9. He was to call fire down from heaven. This might well describe the anathemas of the Popes

which call fire down from heaven on all who provoke them.

10. He was to control the very buying and selling of all who refused his authority. How exactly this describes a Papal *interdict*, which the Pontiffs sometimes passed on refractory subjects, completely cutting them off from all human fellowship, and forbidding all persons to transact business with them.

11. The Beast is denoted by a numerical name—viz., SIX HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SIX. While there have been innumerable guesses at the meaning of this mystical number, no interpretation seems more reasonable than that of Irenæus, the Christian Father, that the word "*Lateinos*," by adding up the numerical value of each letter, spells the number 666. The word means "Latin," and it is specially applicable to Romanism, which is called Latin Christianity, and which since the year 663 has made the Latin language the vehicle of its teaching.

12. The Papal woman is clothed in scarlet, and the Beast she rides is also scarlet. We need not say that this is the chosen color of Rome, the Pontiffs' and the Bishops' robes, and all the great processions and fêtes, making this the distinct-

ively Papal color. It would seem as if the Lord had ordered that Rome should establish her own identity by her very face.

13. She was "decked with precious stones." Who has not wondered at the countless treasures of Roman altars? Let any one go through the famous St. Paul's of Rome, beyond the walls, and look at the altars presented by various European sovereigns, flashing with the splendors of jasper and sardonyx, and it will be strange if he does not leave with a sense of worldly show such as the most extravagant earthly entertainment could not rival, and with the thought of how much better these things could serve the Master if converted into Bibles and scattered through the world.

14. She was represented as a harlot committing fornication with the kings of the earth. The idea is, of course, the unholy union of the Papal Church and the governments of earth. This has been the story of European politics for twelve centuries. The Papacy has always leaned upon the sword. Her first decrees of universal supremacy she obtained from Roman emperors; her grants of territory came from Pepin and Charlemagne and the Princess Matilda; her butcheries

of Protestants were carried on by the hands of the Duke of Alva and the Catholic powers of Europe. Her last years were upheld by the bayonets of France and Austria, and her present attempt is to get control of the democracies of Europe and America.

15. She is represented as holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations. The very seal of Rome is a woman holding in her hand a golden cup with the inscription—“*Sedet super universam.*”

16. She is to be first supported by the kings of earth and then despoiled by them. “They shall hate the harlot and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire.” This is one of the most remarkable fulfillments of prophecy. The world has witnessed just this spectacle for nearly one hundred years. France, the eldest son of the Papacy, was the first to turn upon her. The French Revolution struck her the first terrible blow, and then Napoleon finished it, capturing and deposing the Pope himself. Then Italy finished what France began. Portugal has since followed suit. And to-day Cardinal Manning truly says, there is not a nation to stand up for the rights of the Church.

17. The same picture as Daniel gave marks her as a persecuting power. She is "drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus."

18. And the same duration is also assigned, as given by Daniel, "Power was given to continue forty and two months"; that is, 1,260 years.

19. The fall of Rome is described in the eighteenth chapter. This has not yet come. It would seem to indicate some sudden and terrific catastrophe coming "in one hour," and engulfing the City of Ages in a ruin like Sodom and Gomorrah. Ever since the days of the fathers it has been supposed that this will come through some great natural convulsion, and that Rome will go to its doom amid earthquake shock and fearful eruptions of fire and brimstone.

20. But before this comes it may yet have much to develop. Out of its mouth, along with the Dragon and False Prophet, are to go, and are going, "the unclean spirits, like frogs, which are the spirits of devils working miracles," which are to gather the kings of the earth to the last battle of the present age, the day of Armageddon.

It is to grow more distinctly and manifestly evil to the close. And its last head will be the devil himself. When Romanism falls then Satan in

person is to be the head of the old Roman beast, and lead the powers of earth once more against the Lamb. "The beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven and goeth into perdition."

This, then, is the Divine picture of the great Apostasy. To-day she is making her last desperate struggle. Let us not be deceived. Her kingdom is gone, but her life is not dead. Innumerable facts show her vitality. She is not going to be converted, but consumed. But there is a remnant in her bosom that God is calling forth. And our ministry preparatory to the end is to send forth the heralds of the Gospel among all her benighted votaries, and cry: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FALSE PROPHET.

“And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the South, and toward the East and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great even to the host of heaven, and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground and stamped upon them. . . . And by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgressions, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised and prospered” (Daniel viii. 9-12).

WE have seen that the seventh chapter of Daniel describes a little horn which was to rise in the West and become the most prominent figure in the last ages of Christendom.

In the very next chapter, however, he describes another little horn which was to rise in the East, out of the subdivisions of the Greek Empire, and become the most prominent figure in the subsequent history of the Jewish people. It is to this we turn our attention at this time.

It is noteworthy that the preceding chapters of Daniel, from the second to the seventh, are written in Chaldee; the picture of the world is written

in the world's language. But from the eighth chapter, where the powers that were to deal with the Jew are brought before us, the Hebrew language is employed.

This vision describes the fall of the Persian before the Macedonian Empire, the breaking asunder of Alexander himself, and the rise of four horns to succeed him. These are the four sections in which Alexander's empire was divided.

These were Central Asia, Greece, Egypt, and Syria. Out of one of these the little horn was to arise. That one was Syria. Its ancient kings, especially Antiochus Epiphanes, fulfilled in the most literal manner, as prototypes, all that is here predicted about the little horn, so far as he could in that early day. But we are distinctly told in the close of the vision, that it is, "for many days," and reaches out even to "twenty-three hundred years." Therefore, it could not have been fulfilled by Antiochus, except in anticipation, just as the destruction of Jerusalem was a fore-shadowing of the second coming of Christ.

Its complete fulfilment, we believe, is to be found only in the rise and progress of that widespread and long-continued system of iniquity and Satanic policy which has overspread the Eastern

world for centuries, just as Romanism has the West. We mean Mohammedanism. Shall we look at the points of resemblance as in the case of the other horn?

THE MOSLEM POWER—ITS RISE.

1. It was to rise out of one of the horns of Alexander's divided kingdom. In one sense Mohammedanism sways the whole region which came out of Alexander's empire. Greece, Egypt, Syria, and Central Asia have all been held by its despotic hand for many centuries, and its capital, Constantinople, was the last seat of the Greek Empire. But it seems more natural to think of it as the successor of the ancient Syrian kings, in the sovereignty of Syria and Palestine. One of the very first conquests of the Moslems was Damascus, and they may be more truly called the successors of the Syrian kings and the Greek Empire than any power on earth to-day.

A LITTLE HORN.

2. It was to be a little horn. Mohammedanism originated in Arabia. And when Mohammed began his career, that was the last land on earth

to seem likely to subdue one-half the world. There was scarcely a single independent prince in all the land. And even yet Arabia is a thinly populated and unimportant country, quite as much a little horn as the Papal States of Italy.

AN EASTERN POWER.

3. It was to wax exceeding great "towards the south and the east and the pleasant land." And these were exactly the directions of Moslem aggression. First it conquered Arabia, then it spread east towards Central Asia, subjugating Persia, Assyria, Babylonia, and Syria, and afterwards Palestine and Egypt. As centuries rolled on, its vast dominion became much wider, reaching over Northern Africa, Southern Europe, India, and much of Southern and Eastern Asia. It was indeed "exceeding great," and so terrific was its power and prestige that only the hand of God and the courage of Charles Martel saved the whole of Europe from being overrun.

CRUEL.

4. Its spirit is represented under the figure of "a king of fierce countenance." And so Moham-
medanism ever has been cruel as the grave. Its conquests were inexorable, and its awful alter-

native the Koran or the sword. Its soldiers have been called,

“That cruel, murderous crew,
To carnage and the Koran given;
Who think through unbelievers' blood
Lies the securest path to heaven.”

CRAFTY.

5. Special emphasis is given to its policy and craft. It does not need to be said that the Turk is a master of falsehood and deceit. He does not know how to keep treaties or good faith. His one weapon of statecraft is deceit.

HOSTILE TO CHRISTIANITY.

6. It was to attack Christianity, to magnify itself against the host of heaven, and to cast some of the stars down to the ground. This was terribly fulfilled in the first conquests of the Moslems. Their opponents were chiefly the Eastern Christians and the armies of the Greek Empire. Their victims received no quarter except by embracing the Koran, and multitudes of people and pastors perished in the awful tempest. When we remember that Syria, Palestine, Persia, Asia Minor, and North Africa were the very seats of

Eastern Christianity, and that it was in a generation almost wholly obliterated from all these regions, and we only find to-day a few scattered Nestorians, Armenians, and Copts, who have almost forgotten the very elements of Apostolic Christianity, we can realize how complete has been the desolation of this Oriental scourge.

7. It was to be "because of transgression" that God would thus suffer His cause and people to be spoiled and scourged. Oriental Christianity had become as thoroughly corrupt as the Roman Papacy. Image worship filled all the Greek churches, and Mohammed considered himself a real purifier of religion and destroyer of idolatry. And the latter he surely was, although he brought in a more terrible substitute.

THE OPPRESSOR OF ISRAEL.

8. It was especially to desolate the Holy Land—take away "the daily sacrifice and tread down the place of the sanctuary," and set up "the abomination of desolation." The word "sacrifice" does not occur in the Hebrew. It is simply "the daily" or "continual," and it may refer to worship as much as sacrifice. We know that in the year 637 Omar captured Jerusalem and immediately

set up the Mosque of Omar on the site of Solomon's Temple. The place of the sanctuary was indeed cast down, and the old Bishop went out of the city crying, "The abomination of desolation is set up." Since that time, for twelve hundred years, the Turk has been the desolator of Jerusalem and Judea. It was to recover the city of Jerusalem from this humiliation that the Crusades were undertaken. But the Turk still treads down the ancient land, and will till the seed of Abraham inherit it again.

ITS FALL.

9. This power was to "be broken without hand." And so the Moslem power has been breaking for two hundred years by the unseen hand of God, and all the fostering care of Europe cannot much longer keep the Turk alive.

ITS DURATION.

10. The time that should elapse from the initial date until the end of its oppression and the restoration of Jerusalem was to be 2,300 years.

The natural starting point of this date is the Decree of Artaxerxes "to restore and rebuild Jerusalem," the same point as the seventy weeks

are dated from. They are said to be "cut off" from the larger period of 2,300 years. That was 457 B.C. From this point 2,300 years bring us to 1844, the very date, when after more than a century of humiliation and disaster Turkey was compelled to pass the great Edict of Toleration, revoking the law which prohibited a Turkish subject from embracing Christianity under pain of death. It was the most marked stage in the destruction of the Desolator, and has been followed ever since by successive blows and judgments clearly foreshadowing the end of its power.

ITS SPIRITUAL STRENGTH.

The fall of Turkey does not involve the destruction of Mohammedanism any more than the fall of the temporal power has killed Romanism. Mohammedanism as a system is still intensely alive. From its great University in Cairo ten thousand students are ever going out as evangelists of Islam. It holds 175,000,000 of the human race yet under its thrall, and they are almost inaccessible to the light. Its followers are rapidly increasing every year. It will not be fully destroyed until His coming. Then the Beast and the False Prophet shall both be cast into the lake of fire.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAST DEVELOPMENT OF ANTICHRIST.

IS there to be in the closing stages of human history the appearance of a personal Antichrist, or are all the predictions of Scripture fulfilled in the great apostasies which we have already so fully described?

Too much has been made of the personal description of the Man of Sin and it is too hastily assumed from this description that he must be an individual man. The argument is not as forcible as it seems. In the vision of Nebuchadnezzar Daniel declares in interpreting it to him: "Thou art this head of gold." A literal interpretation would require that the vision must be fulfilled in the personal history of the king himself. We know, however, that it was fulfilled in the kingdom of Babylon, of which he was the head and representative. The individual ever passes; the office remains. Theoretically the king never dies, though the individual kings are constantly changing. In this sense then the Man of Sin

may well represent a great system of evil, the same system which is described in the same passage as "the Mystery of Iniquity."

And yet there is nothing to forbid a double interpretation of these prophecies, first in a system of evil lasting through long centuries, and then in one great leader in whom the whole system and perhaps all other systems of evil shall be headed up for the final conflict.

This is strongly suggested, if not distinctly taught in the remarkable passage in the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, where, "three unclean spirits like frogs" are represented as going forth from the three great leaders of the forces of evil, the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet, to gather the world of the ungodly for the last great conflict with Christ. Here it is evident that more than one system of evil is represented. Indeed, it is certain from the context that this is a combination of all the forms of existing evil, a great confederacy of opposition to the Lord and His servants. For such a combination there must certainly be a common leader, and a leader of uncommon brilliancy and capacity. This will require the supreme genius of human history, the great Super-man of whom all the

Pharaohs, Cæsars, Alexanders, and Napoleons have been the prototypes.

The various prophecies in Daniel, Thessalonians and Revelation throw some extraordinary flashlights upon the genius and ability of this personality. Indeed, it is difficult to believe that any mere human being can wholly fulfil the description. He is to be at once a great politician, a despotic ruler, and a supreme religious leader, combining the diplomacy, intellectual culture, ecclesiastical authority and military genius of the race. It would seem from the description given in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation that he is also to be the head of all industrial and commercial corporations and combinations, and that all business is to be carried on under direct license from him and all religious worship absolutely under his control and actually offered personally to himself.

We are not left without a very clear intimation of who this awful and mysterious personality will really be. In the seventeenth chapter of Revelation, from the 8th to the 11th verses, we have a remarkable description of the great system of evil which through the ages has cursed the world, down to its very latest development. It is a Wild

Beast with seven heads and ten horns. We have already seen in the previous visions these seven heads. The latest of them was shown to be that great system of iniquity which formed the subject of our last chapter. But here an eighth head is introduced which we have not seen before. It would appear, therefore, that after the seventh wicked head has accomplished its evil work, and just before its final destruction, this eighth head is to appear and become the leader of all the forces of evil which are now culminating in the last hours of time.

Furthermore, this last head is described as "Of the seven." That is, he has been intimately identified with each of the previous heads, although hitherto out of sight and working as a silent partner through his visible earthly representatives. Now, however, he openly assumes the leadership of his forces and gathers up in this final combination, which we have already described, all the elements of lawlessness and antagonism to God which had been his own subtle and devilish work throughout the ages. In short, this last leader is no other than Satan himself, who now appears upon the scene openly and visibly as the last Antichrist. His identification is perfectly certain

from the description given of him here: "He ascendeth out of the bottomless pit and goeth into perdition." There is only one who answers to this description. It is that one who is described repeatedly as the Dragon and that old Serpent, the Devil. Men may laugh at the idea of a personal devil as much as they like, and the very fact that they do laugh so loud is the best evidence of his skill and success, for his strategy is to hide his personality and persuade men that either there never was a devil or that the devil is dead, but some day they will be disillusioned. He will throw off his disguise and probably in human form will appear in his true colors and defy the Almighty Himself.

The great ambition of the Evil One has always been to mimic God and pose as the object of human homage, worship and obedience. There is nothing incredible in the idea that he should seek to copy the Lord Jesus Christ, even in His Incarnation. It would indeed be a piece of splendid strategy for him to manifest himself in the flesh even as the Lord Jesus has been manifest and to play the part of the Counterfeit and Rival of the Lamb of God to the very end of the chapter. Doubtless he will still seek to hide his Satanic

character and will seem to men to be the most wonderful and brilliant human genius that has ever represented the race of Adam, but behind him will be the super-resources of the great Archangel of the Underworld, that mighty being whom the Scriptures uniformly describe as only less than God Himself.

What an hour of darkness and crisis that last hour of the present dispensation will indeed be. The conflict is described in Revelation xvii. 13, 14. "These have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast; these shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings." The nineteenth chapter of Revelation continues this dramatic and awful picture: "And I saw the Beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse and against his army. And the Beast was taken and with him the False Prophet that had wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the Beast and them that worshipped his image. These were both taken alive and cast into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone. And I saw an angel come down from

heaven having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and shut him up and put a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed a little season."

Thus shall end, for a thousand years at least, the tragedy of time. How solemnly things are heading up for these final developments and this great consummation.

A volume has recently been published in England and America by Mr. Philip Mauro with the striking title, "The Number of Man." In this work the author develops with great ingenuity and intelligence the theory that all the political, social, religious, economic and intellectual conditions of our day are converging to one great final Combination or Corporation, which will control the politics, the business and the religion of the world at no distant date and fulfil literally the picture given in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation.

The author forcibly points out that this is the age of combinations and that everything is mov-

ing towards vast consolidations of capital, labor, and even religious work. Moreover, these various individual combinations are moving closer together towards a general corporation of corporations, the great Trust of Trusts. He shows forcibly and truly how Socialism is aiming to develop a religious element and is proclaiming the Religion of Humanity. In line with this the New Theologies of Mr. Campbell in England, and Newman Smythe and Dr. Gordon in America, are claiming kinship with Socialism and offering to it a new Theological Creed upon which all who believe in the religion of humanity can join. He shows how this movement has sprung up in Roman Catholic countries under the name of Modernism which is essentially one with the Socialistic and Liberal Movement in the churches. All these movements unite in demanding that business shall be under the control of the State and that the State shall have a religious basis on the broad lines already indicated.

Furthermore, it is easy to see that the religious trend to-day is steadily toward Liberalism, Compromise, Union, Fraternity, Universalism, the putting down of all the bars and the setting up of a platform so wide that the Protestant, the Ro-

man Catholic, the Jew and the Buddhist shall feel equally at home, provided they are only sincere in what they believe.

Surely the great Arch-leader has his organization almost ready for his personal advent. The great spectacle of the "solidarity of man" will soon be followed by the advent of the Super-Man. And when we remember that he is to be no less than Satan himself the program is complete and the world's most stupendous hour is at hand.

CHAPTER VIII,

THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

"Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of tribulation, which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly. Hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 10, 11).

"Watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke xxi. 36).

WHERE looms large and dark in the vista of prophecy a dreadful cloud upon the future of this world.

"Earth, what a sorrow lies before thee
None like it in the shadowy past,
The sharpest throes that ever tore thee
E'en tho' the briefest and the last."

Isaiah asked the watchman, "What of the night?" and the answer came, "The morning cometh and also the night." The last shadows blot out the dawn. Jeremiah cries, "Alas, alas, for the day is great; it is even the day of Jacob's trouble." And Jesus Christ tells us in His Olivet discourses

(Matt. xxiv. 21): "There shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days shall be shortened there should be no flesh saved, but for the elect's sake they shall be shortened."

ISRAEL'S DAY OF TROUBLE.

This dreadful hour of sorrow is to be specially severe upon Israel. We have already quoted Jeremiah's prophecy of Jacob's trouble, but he adds, "He shall be delivered out of it." Daniel in his last chapter reaches this closing vision of the Christian age (Dan. xii. 1): "There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time. And at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." That this time is the distant future is revealed by the next verse, "Many that are asleep in the dust shall awake." Zechariah more fully pictures this catastrophe, this furnace worse than the Egyptian bondage. "And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through

the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. xiii. 8). "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives" (Zech. xiv. 2, 3).

DISTRESS OF NATIONS.

But it shall not only be a day of trouble for Israel, but also for all the nations. In Luke's report of the Olivet address, we have this full account of the Tribulation. "There shall be upon the earth distress of nations" (Luke xxi. 25). This is an extremely intense word. It is more than distress. It is desperate distress, unparalleled distress, distress which leaves men at their wit's end, so that as John tells us in the vision of the Apocalypse, "In that day men shall desire

'death and shall not find it.' "Distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." We hear the mutterings already, the volcanic forces that are underlying our social, industrial and political life, and which might easily break forth at any moment but for the restraining providences which shall be removed in that tribulation time.

Let us look for a little at some of the causes of this dread condition of things that is coming upon the earth.

THE VINTAGE OF THE EARTH,

1. It will be the natural ripening of sin. It will be the human heart in its corruption and depravity and with all the added forces of modern development and culture reaching the highest possibilities of wickedness and misery. We have just such a picture as this in Revelation xiv. 18, this ripening of the vine of earth. "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe." We have a little account of the ripening of man's

unrestrained physical life in the early chapters of the Bible. We read in the beginning of Genesis that "there were giants in those days," that men developed the species by high breeding until through physical development, such as the scientists are telling you about to-day, they reached a condition of the very highest physical perfection. The women we are told, were beautiful women. The believers of that day, the descendants of the godly Seth, regardless of God's separating line, mingled with the world and "took them wives of all they chose." They married as they wanted to. They married without any thought of what God wanted, and thus mingled the seed contrary to God's prohibition. They developed a wonderful race of physical perfection, the highest types perhaps that humanity had developed even in that age when human life was still long and when the seeds of death had not fully wrought their fruit of mortality.

But what was the result? A race so corrupt morally that the earth was filled with violence and God had to send a deluge to wash away the pollution of their sins and crimes. A little later human wickedness developed into the fearful and unnatural vices of the Cities of the Plain, and God

had once more to burn out the stench of human wickedness, this time by a rain of fire.

AS THE DAYS OF NOAH.

The Lord Jesus has told us that moral conditions on earth at the time of His coming will be as in the days of Noah and Lot. Human nature will have reached not only its perfect physical development, but its highest intellectual and social culture, and man's capacity for wickedness will be at its maximum. The two special features suggested by the days of Noah and the days of Lot in the moral picture are violence and lust. We can already see the beginnings of these last developments in the lawlessness of our own age and the breaking away of modern society from all restraint in self-indulgence. We need only imagine these conditions at their height and earth would be again an Inferno like the scene which the angels met that awful night when they came down to the house of Lot to investigate the wickedness of Sodom.

SATANIC POWER.

2. It will be the result of Satanic power. The tribulation time will be Satan's "hour and power

of darkness." "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" (Rev. xvi. 13, 14). The frog suggests the night, and this will be the Night of the Ages. The frog suggests the pestilential swamp, and earth will be one deadly quagmire of moral putridity. The frog speaks with a dismal croak and the note of infidelity, materialism, spiritualism and atheism is one of gloom, depression and despair.

These three spirits are already beginning their dire work. The unclean spirit from the mouth of the dragon may well be recognized in the croakings of spiritualism, the frog from the mouth of the beast is busy in the swamp of socialism and anarchy, and the emissary of the false prophet is abroad in the varied forms of present fanaticism, materialism, Christian Science, Theosophy and even Religious Liberalism. Let all these things have unrestricted sway and we shall already be in the Great Tribulation.

OPPRESSION.

3. For the tribulation time will be the time when Antichrist shall reign and all the world shall be under the arbitrary and cruel sway of the last and worst form of human government represented by the Beast. Think for a moment of the condition of the Jews to-day in Russia under that oppressive government. Make it universal and earth would be a hell. Think of the excesses of socialism, the dynamiter, and the anarchist, and what more would be needed to constitute the Great Tribulation? Think of a world where no man could buy or sell or transact any kind of business without a license from this Super-man, as will be the case when the prophecy of Revelation xiii. 15-17 is fulfilled, and who would wish to live on earth in such an evil time?

DIVINE JUDGMENT.

4. The Tribulation will be the time of God's peculiar judgments upon this wicked world. Many believe that the trumpet woes of Revelation viii. 11 belong to this period. Certainly the awful picture of Revelation xiv. 9, 20, belongs to that time. "And the angel thrust in his sickle

into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth and thrust it into the great winepress of the wrath of God and the winepress was trodden without the city and blood came out of the winepress even unto the horses' bridles by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." At last will come the final conflict, "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon, and I saw the beast, 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. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. xvi. 16, xix. 20).

THE CHURCH REMOVED.

5. Again, the tribulation will be a time when the restraints of religion will be withdrawn from the world, the Church caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and human society without the presence and restraining influence of the followers of Christ. What a dreadful world this will be when the atmosphere of faith and love and prayer are at last withdrawn and the awful shadow of the

dragon's wing rests like a pall of despair upon every human heart. God grant that we may escape that dreadful day.

AFTER THE PAROUSIA.

The period of the great tribulation appears to be fixed by the words of Christ (Matt. xxiv. 29) "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of man coming with power and great glory." It will, therefore, precede the public manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ in His glorious Epiphany, and follow the Parousia of the Son of man when His Church shall be withdrawn to meet Him in the air and the holy dead shall be united with them in the first resurrection.

HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

Finally, how shall we escape this awful day? We cannot do better than read the Lord's last message in the third chapter of Revelation. "Be-

cause thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 10, 11). Those, therefore, that keep the word of His patience, that believe His word and live it, shall be numbered with His waiting Bride and shall be saved from this awful catastrophe. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? and I said unto Him, Sir, Thou knowest. And He said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. vii. 14, 15). In the Greek there is a definite article: "These are they which came out of *the* great tribulation." They escape it, they are caught up in His first coming and are before the throne and before the Lamb with white robes and palms in their hands. Israel must go through it because Israel did not know the Lord and will not know Him till He comes for His saints. Like Noah Israel will have to go through the deluge, but like Enoch, the saints

of God will be caught up before to meet Him in the air.

Another passage should be interpreted in the light of this truth, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (II. Peter ii. 9). The godly will be taken out of the tribulation, but the unjust will be reserved to go through it.

The passage in Luke xxi. 28 suggests that we may hope to escape from this time of trouble, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke xxi. 28). What things does He refer to? Distress of nations with perplexity, the tribulation terrors. Dr. Young translates this phrase, "Lift up your heads," "Bend yourselves back." Get ready for ascension, take the attitude of translation; you are going up before the storm comes down. "Lift up your heads, bend yourselves back, for your redemption draweth nigh." And then He adds, "Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come

upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke xxi. 34-36). That is, your place is up there with Him in the clouds, not down here in this earthly hell. Pray for that. Watch for that. Live for that,—“That ye may escape these things which shall come to pass and stand before the Son of man.”

TAKE NO CHANCES.

How shall we prepare, therefore, to escape? Take no chances. We read of five foolish virgins. They were virgins, and they were looking for the Bridegroom, but they did not enter in. What became of them? Were they lost? Impossible. But they had to stay in the outer darkness of the tribulation night. They did not go in to the marriage of the Lamb. Doubtless, later, they had their place, but it was a second place. Therefore, He says, “Watch, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

Someone asked Dr. A. J. Gordon if all believers should go up with the Lord when He came, or if only those that are walking with Him in

holiness and separation, and they quoted that passage in Revelation about the first fruits unto God and the Lamb, the holy ones in whose "mouth was found no guile, and they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." He was asked if only those will be caught up when He comes, and the others would wait, or should all the people of God be resurrected or translated. Dr. Gordon shook his head with a solemn, modest expression, and said, "I have not light enough to answer, but I would rather take no chances."

"I see that last red bloody sunset,
I see the dread Avenger's form,
I see the Armageddon onset,
But I shall be above the storm.

"There comes a moaning and a sighing,
There comes the tear-drop's heavy fall,
The thousand agonies of dying,
But I shall be beyond them all."

CHAPTER IX.

THE PAROUSIA.

“Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame” (Rev. xvi. 15).

THE two principal Greek words used to describe the second coming of the Lord Jesus are Parousia, and Epiphania. The first literally means presence, and the second appearing or manifestation. They have come to be recognized as describing the two aspects of the Lord's return, the first, at the beginning of the Tribulation, the second at its close, and at the commencement of His Millennial reign. The Parousia will be for His saints. It is the former we are to consider at this time.

Our text represents this coming as secret. “Behold I come as a thief.” The thief comes not to steal the house, and everything in it, but only to take away the treasures from it; and so the Lord's coming will not bring the dissolution of this world, or the removal of its inhabitants, but only the withdrawal of the little flock who shall

be found waiting for their Bridegroom. Furthermore, the thief does not send out a public announcement of his coming, nor allow the neighborhood to know about it, but the first public evidence of his visit is seen after he has gone. So the world will not know that the Lord has come until it wakes some morning to find that all the best people have disappeared. It is of this that the Master says, "One shall be taken and the other left."

There are several important transactions that will be connected with the Parousia of the Son of man

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

The principle of the resurrection is engraven upon the whole system of nature. The bulb of Spring, the dying and germinating seed, the evolution of the chrysalis and the butterfly all tell of life out of death. Chemistry continually illustrates the dissolution and reorganization of matter. Faraday drops a little silver vase in the presence of his audience into a basin. Immediately it is dissolved by the acid in the bowl, and he pours out the fluid to show that every fragment of the silver has disappeared. Then he

'drops into that bowl another chemical; in a moment the silver crystallizes at the bottom, and is put in a crucible, melted, and poured into a mould, and in a few minutes he holds up before his audience the silver vase reconstructed, and shining in brilliant whiteness. It has passed through the laboratory of science and the process of resurrection. Well might Faraday, the Christian lecturer, ask, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?"

PAUL'S TESTIMONY.

In the 15th chapter of I. Corinthians, Paul gives us his sublime argument for the resurrection.

First, he tells us that it will be a spiritual body. While the same essentially as the mortal form we laid in the dust, it will be incomparably more glorious. It will bear the same relation to our present body that the harvest field bears to the seed corn planted in it, or that the orange tree all glorious with fruit and flowers bears to the orange seed from which it sprang. To quote from another passage from the apostle Paul, the one is "the body of our humiliation," the other "the body of His glory."

Again the apostle tells us that there is a fixed order in the resurrection. "But every man in his own order," literally, his own rank. This refers to the question of precedence at a social procession. In this grandest of all processions every man will have his own proper rank, "Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end." In the front rank of the resurrection Christ Himself walks alone. In the second rank, they that are Christ's at His coming, follow. In the third company, like a band of captives bringing up the rear, "All the dead, small and great, shall stand before God." This latter company shall not arise until after a thousand years of Christ's Millennial reign.

Speaking of this first resurrection, the Lord Jesus uses the expression, "They that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the out-resurrection from among the dead." The Apostle Paul, in the third chapter of Philippians, also speaks of his great ambition, "If by any means I might attain unto the out-resurrection from among the dead." In the familiar passage in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle again tells us, "When the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout,—the dead in Christ

shall rise first." There is no reference to the wicked here, and there is no note of terror and judgment in all this comforting scene. It is a family gathering of the followers of the Lamb.

REVELATION XX.

But the most explicit passage relating to the resurrection is found in Revelation xx. 4-6. "And I saw thrones and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded, for the testimony of Jesus and for the Word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. Over these the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests unto God, and Christ shall reign with Him a thousand years."

There has been much discussion of this passage, and many attempts have been made to set aside its simple and literal force. We cannot find clearer or stronger language by which to express its force and vindicate its application to

the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Christ than the following quotation from Dean Alford. "I cannot consent to distort words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy on account of any considerations of difficulty or any risk of abuses in connection with the doctrine of the Millennium. Those who lived nearest the apostles, and the whole Church for three hundred years, understood them in the plain, literal sense; and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity casting aside the most cogent instance of consensus which the history of antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where two resurrections are mentioned, where certain of the dead lived again at the first, and the rest of the dead lived again only at the end of a specified period after the first—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean spiritual rising with Christ, while the second means literal rising from the grave, then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything. If the

first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second—which I suppose, none will be hardy enough to maintain—but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which, in common with the whole primitive Church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain and receive as an article of faith and hope.”

The Prophet Daniel appears to refer to these two resurrections in the 12th chapter and the second verse where he says, as translated by Tragelles, “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake; these (who awake) to everlasting life, and those (who do not awake) to shame and everlasting contempt.”

The resurrection of the wicked dead comes at the close of Christ’s Millennial reign. Then shall come what the Lord Jesus called “the resurrection of condemnation” when all the dead shall stand before God. John tells us further, “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to his works” (Rev. xx. 13).

THE TRANSLATION OF THE SAINTS.

Immediately following the resurrection of the

dead in Christ shall follow what is known as "the rapture of the Saints." The apostle Paul describes it in I. Thessalonians iv. 15 and 17. "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not precede them that are asleep, for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout and with the voice of the archangel and 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 (or in clouds) to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

THE HUMAN TOUCH.

How comforting to know that parted friends who separated at the grave-side ages before, will meet at His coming, and then shall go on together in loving recognition and glorious fellowship in the chariots of ascension, with ample time to renew the broken intimacies of the past as they ascend the skies, until at length the Master's presence shall burst upon their vision and they shall "be forever with the Lord."

TAKEN AND LEFT.

Enoch and Elijah represent these translated

ones. "Born out of due time" as foretypes of their future followers, they lead the glorious procession. A great multitude which no man can number will be waiting for that whispered summons that shall reach every longitude of the earth's surface at the same blissful moment. In one place it shall be midnight and two shall be sleeping together. "The one shall be taken and the other left." In another place farther East, it will be dawn, and two women in some Oriental village will be "grinding at the mill," and preparing their morning breakfast, and again "the one shall be taken and the other left." Still farther East, perhaps on the wheat fields of Russia, or the rice fields of Japan, "two men shall be in the field." Suddenly, the one shall have disappeared and upon the other will burst the fearful truth, the Lord has come and I am left behind.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.

The Parousia of Christ shall be followed by some beatific joy which the Lord Himself described as the Marriage of the King's Son. Throughout the Bible, the marriage bond runs like a golden thread, linking the scenes of the first Paradise with the glories of Paradise Re-

stored. While the figure has not always been worthy of its highest meaning because of the imperfection of human love, yet as little bits of broken glass can each reflect a whole sun, so our poor, imperfect earthly unions have in them the promise and prophecy of heaven.

We trace this golden thread through the story of Rebecah's wooing, the forty-fifth Psalm, and the Song of Solomon, as well as Paul's fine image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. But in the Book of Revelation this figure is clothed with still higher majesty and glory. There we see the Bride "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," and the heavenly procession as it follows the glorious Leader. There we see the home to which He brings her in the New Jerusalem. And there we see her beauty transcending all the gems of earth.

TWO CLASSES.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins in the 25th chapter of Matthew gives us a far-off vision of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and suggests with solemn warning the danger that some may miss their place in that blessed company. Surely there must be a difference between the saintly

souls that have been "washed and made white and tried," and the men and women who have found their happiness in the things of the world, and would not understand the Rapture of the Bridegroom's love. Are these earth-stained souls, even if saved at last, to have the same place as John of Patmos, and Bernard of Cluny, with Monica and Mary of Bethany? Surely, the question is enough to make us pause and ask our hearts if it is worth while to run the risk.

What would an earthly marriage be without love? Then what will heaven mean if we do not already know the betrothal of the heart to our Heavenly Bridegroom and the rapture of His love?

Have we seen Him in His beauty? Have we hearkened to His call? Have we been won by His love? And have we learned,

"For O the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet Him anywhere,
Can never rest on earth again.

"And they who see Him risen afar,
At God's right hand for sinful men,
Forgetful stand, of home and land,
Remembering fair Jerusalem."

CHAPTER X.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE SAINTS.

THERE are three judgments distinguished in the New Testament:

The judgment of the saints at the Lord's coming.

The judgment of the nations at the commencement of the Millennium (Matt. xxv.).

The judgment of the wicked at the close of the Millennium.

It is the first of these we are to consider now.

NOT CONDEMNATION.

It will not be a judgment of condemnation. They who are to take part in it have been already justified, and God has said: "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again." "He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall never come into condemnation (or judgment), but is passed out of death into life."

It will not be a judgment to decide the future destiny of the saints. That is decided by their sonship and saintship. The moment the believer passes from the earth he is with his Lord in rest and glory.

INSPECTION AND REWARD.

It will be a judgment only of reward and inspection.

It will be a vindication of them before all men against all charges and misunderstandings. "Therefore judge nothing before the time till the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God." This is very gracious. God will come to search out and bring to light the secret motives, the love that the world knew nothing of, and forgetting and hiding His children's faults, see and show only what He can praise.

It will be a judgment of inspection. Only that will stand which was put there by the Holy Ghost, which was the spirit and life of Jesus. All else will be dropped out, and that remain alone. The wood, hay, and stubble will burn up in the testing fire, and the gold and silver and precious

stones of God's own faith and love and holiness be left with intenser brightness.

It will bring to each one his and her just reward for service, according to the principles of righteousness and the measure and quality of service.

It will determine the future place and service of the saints in the Millennial kingdom. They are to be the rulers of the future age, and each one's position will be determined by his special character and adaptation.

In the great Empire of China every government post is filled not by political preferment, but as the result of competitive examinations. Education, therefore, can raise the poorest and humblest man to the highest office in the land. According to the standing of the students at the close of their annual competitive examinations, they are promoted to all grades, from a mayor to a mandarin. So, in the far higher application of this principle, the thrones and principalities of the Millennial age will be filled as the result of this inspection; and Christ will return to this earth with all His officers of state selected from the experience of a lifetime already spent amid the discipline of earth.

GRACE AND REWARD.

The principles on which the judgment will be based and made plain.

First note the distinction between salvation and reward. Salvation is altogether free, reward is bestowed for service rendered. Just as in a college course there are subjects which all must take, and honor classes which are entered only by those who specially compete for prizes; so in the kingdom of God all must repent, believe, and be born again, but all may not be heroes of faith, or service, or sacrifice, and all shall not wear garlands and crowns of glory. The laborers in the vineyard may represent the principle of the common salvation, the Parables of the Talents and Pounds the principle of rewards at the Lord's coming. Christ's words to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest *the gift of God,*" describe the former; his words just afterwards to the disciples refer to the reward: "He that reapeth *receiveth wages* and *gathereth fruit* unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." Here is the double reward for service, addressed to them, the servants, viz., wages, paid as they do the work, and a share in the fruit at harvest time. Again, the

striking passage in I. Corinthians ix. 24: "They that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize. I therefore run not uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest after I have preached the Gospel to others, I myself should be a castaway"; or, more correctly, "a disapproved competitor." It literally means one rejected at the end of the race as regards the prize—not finally lost, for such a thought never entered Paul's mind.

ACCORDING TO WORKS.

Again the reward is according to service rendered. It is in exact proportion not to the quantity always, but to the spirit and value. How finely this is brought out in the Parable of the Pounds. Five pounds multiplied bring five cities, and ten pounds improved bring ten cities. The doubling of one talent is as much rewarded as the doubling of five. The humblest worker, if fully faithful, is recompensed as fully as the most illustrious. "He that shall receive a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward, and he that shall receive a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." The service that was

in the heart to do, but for which we had no opportunity, will be rewarded, "according to what a man hath, and not what he hath not." Many a quiet heart will be brought out into the light of heaven as the true instrument of a blessing in which others, perhaps, had a more public part.

Some of the special recompenses are definitely described. There are wages and fruit for the reaper in life's harvest, and glories like the eternal stars for those that turn many to righteousness. There is "a crown of glory that fadeth not away" for the faithful minister. There is a crown of life for the man that bravely and truly stands in the battlefield of the life and endures the ordeal of temptation. These bitter strokes are fashioning our diadem for by-and-by. Then the suffering martyr shall find his blood drops crystallized into the rubies of a "crown of life." Then they who simply overcome shall receive a royal heritage with Christ Himself. And even they who could do little else than live and look for His appearing shall be recompensed with "a crown of righteousness." The one that has faithfully used his natural talents shall receive in proportion to his improvement of them (Matt. xxv.), and he who has multiplied and rightly employed

his spiritual privileges and enduements will be made a ruler over as many cities as the pounds he gained. The faithful and wise steward who took good care of his Lord's household here, and gave to his children a portion in season, will be made "ruler over all that he hath." And they who left all and followed Christ shall be recompensed a hundredfold more in that time in the things they sacrificed for Christ. Even the secret thought of service that never was expressed will be recognized and recompensed, and "every man have praise of God." Nor will our gifts to His treasury be lost. The generous millionaire and the self-denying widow will find all their gifts on deposit, at compound interest, and they will stand astonished at their colossal fortunes. Like the crowns of the Restoration time, forged out of the golden gifts of the captives in Babylon, their gold will be found hanging in diadems above their heads on heaven's pillars, inscribed with their names inwrought with His. Oh, then, no sacrifice will seem to have been too great, no gift too large, no love too warm, no enthusiasm too intense. Life's full significance will be unrolled, and our only regret will be that we cannot live it over again.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EPIPHANY AND MILLENNIAL REIGN.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. . . . And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. xx. 4).

THE coming of the Lord with His saints will follow the Tribulation and usher in the Millennium.

This was the earliest prophecy of the Advent. "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all."

This is the obvious order of the twentieth chapter of Revelation, where the thousand years follow the destruction of Antichrist, the binding of Satan and the first resurrection.

His Epiphany, unlike His Parousia, will be public and visible to all the world. This is what John saw when he cried, "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." This is what the Master meant when He testified, "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,

and then shall all kindreds of the earth mourn," and again, "When the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations."

Let us look at some of the events which will follow His glorious appearing.

Poets have seen the Golden Age afar as the mirage is seen upon the desert sky. Ancient seers have painted its glowing outlines in words and images they could not themselves understand; and living and dying patriarchs and saints have looked forward to it, with great desire, as to "a city that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God," and to "a better country, that is an heavenly."

Man has tried to make his own Millennium. Poetry has dreamed of it, and degraded it into a sensuous paradise. Patriots and optimists have drawn the vision of a golden age of liberty, equality, peace, and plenty, and seen only anarchy, license and misery arise at the touch of their deceptive wand. Moralists have toiled for purity, temperance, and virtue, and dreamed of a day when social reform will have blotted out the last plague spot from our cities, only to see wick-

edness, crime and the curse of alcohol and woman's shame increase with increasing civilization. And Christian reformers have expected a spiritual Millennium, in which the Gospel shall cover the myriad populations of earth, and make every land a holy, happy paradise of love and purity; but, alas! the lands that are most evangelized are sometimes the farthest from Millennial piety or purity; and were all the world to reach tomorrow the condition to which Christian lands have attained, in the three centuries since the Reformation, earth would still be a sight to break the heart of Him who died for us.

Nay, God has something better for His weary, hungry children than any of man's counterfeit Millenniums.

"There is a fount about to stream,
There is an age about to beam,
There is a midnight darkness turning into grey.
Men of faith and men of action, clear the way."

A WORLD WITHOUT SATAN.

This will be the first feature of the picture—a world without the devil; without his instigations, temptations, deceptions, and destructive activi-

ties. At the very beginning he shall be bound by a strong angel, and shut up in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, that he may deceive the nations no more until the thousand years are finished. No doubt Satan has got credit for much evil that man only is to blame for. But after all allowances are made, the vast aggregate of human sin and misery is due to his terrific power and the influence of the countless myrmidons of his kingdom who shall be cast out with him. Think of his awful delusions, his desperate possession of oppressed spirits, his wild and fearful ravages over the minds of the insane, his monstrous crimes, lusts, cruelties and deceptions, and then realize that all this shall be absent from that happy age, and you will begin to comprehend what a tangible reality the Millennium is to be.

AN AGE WITHOUT EVIL SYSTEMS.

Not only will Satan be cast out, but the great systems of evil through which he has governed men. These include first, the forms of human government which have oppressed the world since the days of Egypt; second, the forms of false religion that have worshipped Satan in the name of God, and sanctioned every enormity and evil

under the guise of good. Three especially of these have been the curse of the ages, viz.: Romanism, Mohammedanism, and Paganism. These shall be cast out. The first two shall be hurled into the abyss with Satan, the last shall be subdued by the diffusion of the Gospel in the Millennial age. What an incalculable sum of misery and sin has come into the world through false governments and false religions. What a brood of vices and curses has sprung from the corrupt Papacy and the vile Moslem. But these fountains shall no more defile the world. The worship of saints and martyrs, the mysteries of the confessional and the conventual life, the sealed Bible and the superstitious ritual of ten thousand altars shall no more insult heaven or deceive mankind. The sensual excesses, the despotic tyranny, the desolating cruelty, and the deadly nightshade of Mohammedanism will be lifted from earth's fairest regions, and the early home of the human family will become a second Eden. And over all the vaster fields of heathendom there shall ascend no more the smoke of cruel and unholy sacrifices, or be heard the cries of suffering and wrong, and the death-gasp of despair.

WICKEDNESS AND WAR ABOLISHED.

Not only will Satan and his chosen instruments be abolished, but the wickedness of the wicked shall come to an end, and the earth will be filled with righteousness and peace. "In His days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, for He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." We do not say that there shall be no sin left in human hearts during the Millennial age, but that open wickedness shall be suppressed and restrained under the holy and universal sway of Christ and His saints. The world will be evangelized and brought into subjugation to Christ, and, ostensibly at least, shall be righteous and obedient. Thrice happy day of peace and righteous-

ness; hasten thine appearing and bring the vision of waiting ages to this broken-hearted world.

“Down the dark future, through long generations,
The echoing sounds grow fainter, and then cease;
And like a bell with solemn loud vibrations,
I hear the voice of Christ again say, Peace,
Peace, and no longer from its brazen portals
The voice of War’s loud thunder shakes the skies;
But beautiful as songs of the immortals,
The holy melodies of love arise.”

THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD JESUS.

It shall, above all other glories, enjoy the personal, visible, and continual presence of Christ Himself, its glorious King. “The Lord shall be King over all the earth.” “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And with righteousness shall He judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.” “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo! I come, and I will dwell in

the midst of thee, saith the Lord." "Son of man, the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever." "And the name of the city from that day shall be The Lord is there." "The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ."

These two facts alone are enough to make a heaven: Satan absent, the Lord Jesus present. Earth will be again His residence. He shall be its benignant and glorious King. He shall be, no doubt, accessible and visible to His subjects, as Solomon of old. Once a year, Zechariah tells us, the nations shall come up to Jerusalem to worship and to see His blessed and glorious face. He shall be especially the friend of the lowly and the poor. "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 come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In His days shall the righteous flourish and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." To His risen and translated saints He shall be especially near. "They shall see His

face, and His name shall be in their foreheads." "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them to living fountains of waters." His majesty and glory will shed divine effulgence over all the earth. Brighter than the glory of the sunlight shall be the splendor of His presence. "The city had no need of the sun, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof." Then shall be fulfilled His dying prayer for us: "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given me, for Thou lovedst me from before the foundation of the world."

Some sweet day we'll see His face,
And we shall be satisfied;
Some sweet day in His embrace
We shall evermore abide.

GLORIFIED WITH HIM AND LIKE HIM.

Not only will we have the presence of the Lord Jesus, but our own state will be as glorious as His. We shall be like Him, and He shall say of us, "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We

are." We shall bear the image of His resurrection body. We shall have His marvelous beauty, and His mighty powers. Clothed in immortal youth and Divine energy, we shall know no pain or weakness; we shall feel our beings thrill with the pulses of His glorious life and the rapture and ecstasy of eternal health and strength. We shall rise superior to distance and matter, traversing space with the celerity of an angel's wing, and perhaps controlling matter with the resistless hand of His own power, and permitted to share His own creative might and authority. But, more glorious still, our spiritual and intellectual nature shall be conformed to His likeness. We shall be holy as He is holy. We shall reflect His very face and beauty. We shall "shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of our Father." We shall know even as also we are known." We shall see all things with His eyes. We shall love as the flaming seraphim, and rejoice with all the transports of heavenly blessedness.

All that He has shall be mine,
All that He is I shall be,
Robed in His glory divine,
I shall be even as He.

The home of the glorified saints during the Millennial age shall be the New Jerusalem. As nearly as we can judge from the later description of the New Jerusalem after the Millennium, it would seem to be a city in the skies, of exceeding glory, just above the earth and in constant communion with it.

In this higher region, the children of the resurrection shall dwell with Christ, their Lord and King, and thence shall go forth to administer the government of the world below them. Their life shall thus be different from the nations of the human family who shall still succeed each other during all this age. There will thus be two races, viz., the Immortal ones who are reigning with Christ in the heavenly city, and the Children of Mortality, who still remain in their successive generations upon the earth. The state of the former shall be immeasurably superior. The latter may, perhaps, be translated one by one and exalted to it, like Enoch, as they faithfully finish their course from generation to generation.

EXALTED SERVICE.

But we shall have not only a glorious place and character, but a most exalted service. We shall

reign with Christ on the earth. That is, we shall administer, with Him and with His enduements of wisdom and power, the government of earth. To each will He give two cities or ten, as we have been qualified by the discipline and service of life. Some will be sent forth to take direction of the material improvement of earth's barren wastes; some to build the cities of those busy years; some to organize society amongst the masses of the converted nations; some to inspire and direct the spiritual activities of that age. David shall once more reorganize the throne of Judah and rule with his greater Son over his ancient house, while, perhaps, Solomon, Jehosaphat, Hezekiah, and Isaiah may be his illustrious court. Paul will no doubt muster the roll of the Gentile nations and rejoice at the completion and fruition of his apostolate. Luther may be a prince again where he was a prisoner. Livingstone may be permitted to lift up Africa at last and see it rise from Table Mountain to Atlas snows into a Paradise of beauty and blessing.

WE ARE FORGING OUR CROWNS.

But we bid speculation be hushed, and rest in knowing this, that to each of us will be given

the honor and the work for which our experience, our service, our sacrifices here have prepared and entitled us. To sit on My right hand and my left, says Christ, "is not Mine to give except to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." And then He proceeds to ask them: "Can ye drink of My cup? Can ye be baptized with My baptism?" He adds elsewhere: "Ye which have followed Me—in the *Palingenesis* when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

OUR LOVED ONES.

The Millennium will bring us our departed friends. We shall see again the unforgotten faces and clasp the deathless hands. We shall wonder at their beauty and glory, and shall understand all the mystery of the parting, and like the meeting of Joseph and his brethren, see with amazement how the goodness of God has made all things work together for good. All tears shall be wiped away, and all hearts swell with rapture to know that we can never weep or part again.

EARTH RESTORED.

But the Millennium shall also bring the restoration and evangelization of earth. Not all the glory of those years shall center in the resplendent palaces of the New Jerusalem. But this terrestrial scene "shall also be glad and rejoice for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." Two races shall occupy the Millennial earth. First the Jewish nation, already previously restored to their own land, shall be the Queen of Nations, and from Jerusalem shall once more re-establish her sway to the utmost confines of its ancient boundaries.

But the Gentile peoples shall also be left on earth, in all their myriad populations, and shall at the very earliest period of the Millennial reign be converted to Christ and raised to all the immunities, privileges, and blessings of the highest Christian civilization. In this great missionary movement the Jews are to be largely instrumental, and under the fostering government of Christ Himself, the King of kings, and the wisest men of all the past, they are to advance to a prosperity and happiness never imagined in the wildest Utopian dreams of poets or statesmen. Phys-

ically the earth will no doubt be considerably altered, and its geographical and climatic conditions rendered more favorable and delightful. We know that a glorious river is going to spring from the rocks underneath the sanctuary and flow eastward and westward in fertilizing beauty to the Dead and Mediterranean seas. Other lands may be similarly changed. The highest intellectual and spiritual culture and the supernatural wisdom and power of God will soon transform the most rugged deserts of earth into an Eden of beauty and joy. Socially and politically all shall be pure, just, and happy. Misgovernment and corruption cannot enter there. The world will reach its highest development, and God will show what Eden might have been but for sin, or rather how where "sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

CHAPTER XII.

THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Rev. xxi. 1).

A THOUSAND years of Millennial blessedness have quickly passed. The happy years have flown, and the earth has grown not older, but younger, and long ago robed herself with the beauty and gladness of Paradise restored. The teeming nations have multiplied to billions, and the generations that have been born have not even had the memory of a time when life was not a blessing and a joy. Righteousness has seemed so blessed and so easy that sin has not had power to tempt, and virtue has perhaps grown to be a habit rather than a principle.

HUMAN NATURE ANY BETTER?

Outwardly the world has been conformed to the will and government of Christ, but inwardly it is to be feared that multitudes have not been really converted, and it might easily be demon-

strated that human nature is not inherently any better if really tested, and that if the favorable circumstances were withdrawn, the old wickedness might not burst forth like a volcano, with undiminished fury and malignity.

THE TEST COMES.

It is not long until the opportunity is given. At the end of the thousand years Satan is loosed out of his prison, and permitted once more to visit the world. Perhaps it is designed to be

A TEST EVEN TO THE DEVIL.

Why should we wonder if God should be willing even to give Satan a second chance to show if there is any improvement in him? After a thousand years in his gloomy penitentiary, he is permitted once more to leave his prison and see for himself the grace and loveliness of Christ and the blessedness of His benignant reign. Over all the happy regions of earth he beholds the fruits of righteousness and the blessings of religion compared with the six thousand years of his own destructive rule. Does he appreciate the difference? Does he recognize the beauty and blessedness of obedience and submission to

a good and righteous God? Does he conclude to let these happy tribes alone in the peaceful enjoyment of their Creator's love? Does he manifest the least desire to amend his course and to share the blessings of the scene that he beholds? Not for a moment!

INCORRIGIBLY BAD.

It must be shown to the universe ere he is banished forever to his dismal dungeon, that he is utterly, incorrigibly, hopelessly wicked, and that for the sake of the universe he must be eternally destroyed, and restrained from further harm. And so for a moment longer he is left to his own wicked will. He is not slow to take advantage of it. Burning with fury at the happiness of his victims and the ruin of all his ages of work, he swoops upon his prey with all his ancient cunning. Aided, perhaps, by his countless myrmidons, he whispers in the hearts of men the wild thought of a great rebellion, and a free and independent government unfettered by the despotic will of yonder King.

A GREAT REVOLT.

It is easy to paint the glories of the great Re-

public. It is easy to magnify the hardships of obedience. It is easy for men who never saw the ages of sin to forget the fruits of disobedience. It is easy for proud human nature to pervert its prosperity and blessings and use them as instruments of aggrandizement and evil. How vast their resources must seem, how reasonable their demand of independence, how brilliant the picture of the Serpent's Dream. It is the story of Eden again. Humanity falls once more. Like wildfire the infatuation sweeps over the nations.

AN INCARNATE DEVIL.

Perhaps himself incarnate, as a brilliant and magnetic leader, a Napoleon and Apollyon of policy and genius, he gathers and holds men to him in the spell of his influence, until a host, gathered from earth's remotest nations, and limitless as the sands of the sea, are marching behind his banner and even investing the very seat of Divine Government and the walls of the Holy City.

HIS FOLLOWERS.

The races that shall chiefly follow him are strangely growing into prominence to-day as at

once the revolutionary and also the imperial elements of our age. Russia is the expression of despotic tyranny, and Russia is also the hotbed of anarchy, lawlessness and revolution. It is from this people that the final Gog and Magog are to come. Ezekiel describes a terrible invasion of the same warlike races, but it seems to be an earlier stage, and probably precedes the Millennium.

FIRE FROM HEAVEN.

The conflict is not long. Not now, as in former ages, is he to gain a foothold and prolong the conflict of good and evil. One little hour is given to show his worst and let the world see what sinners can be even after a thousand years of love. And then, by one fiery wave, he and his followers are swept from the scene forever, and he is buried under chains and flames beyond the possibility of release or return.

THE FINAL CATASTROPHE.

And then there bursts upon the universe the great, the dread, the final catastrophe. The last act of sin is over; its awful course finished; the universe must be purged of its longest and latest

stain. All that it has touched must be purified in God's cleansing fire, and a new universe emerge without a shadow of the evil past.

THE DEAD ARE RAISED.

First comes the resurrection of the dead of all past ages. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them." The myriad dead who had fallen through the ages and slumbered on through the First Resurrection and the Millennial Age are rudely awakened to behold a world in flames and the majestic terrors of the Great White Throne. Not one of them shall be lost sight of. Bearing the traces of their sinful lives and the marks of their inward character, they shall stand before the Judge. It will be a sight of unutterable sorrow, and the vision of it looming from afar has brought the tears to Mercy's weeping eyes, and led her to reach out her hands to reckless men in imploring love, and cry, "Flee from the wrath to come."

THE JUDGMENT.

They have come for judgment. Mercy is not

there. She has folded her brood, long ere this, beneath her tender wing, and stands afar off, turning her face away from this sad and dreadful sight. The righteous are not there. Their judgment is long since past. They have no place here, except perhaps as judges by the side of the great Arbitrer of destiny. Beloved, keep out of this judgment. Keep out of this place. It is too late for mercy here. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, shall not come into the judgment, but is passed out of death into life."

It is a judgment according to works. There are several books. There is the book of evidence or facts. Perhaps nature has folded away like the wax pages of the phonograph all the scenes and sounds of the past, and shall unroll them in that day before the eyes of all men. Perhaps memory is a volume of finest tissue pages whose filmy leaves shall some day open, and in the fiery breath of that hour become vivid and plain. No one will dispute the records, and no one will answer back. Time will be given for every excuse, every ameliorating circumstance, every question and excuse. There will be no hurry, and there will be no capricious fury. A patient,

long-suffering and righteous God, who knows full well how hard the easiest sentence is, will not be swift to destroy the last hope of those poor, helpless souls. But there will be strict justice and fidelity to the statute book of the universe. This will be the second book, God's Word; and there will also be the book of conscience. Those who had no Bible will be judged by the inner law, "The will of God written on their heart; their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men."

There will be yet another book, the Book of Life—that is the record of the redeemed. To be recorded there answers all others charges. Through His blood all claims are settled, and we have life everlasting. And all whose names are not found written in the Book of Life are cast into the Lake of Fire.

THE NEW HEAVENS AND EARTH.

Then will come a mighty conflagration. A cyclone of flame shall sweep over the universe and change its character and appearance as completely perhaps as when from the chaotic wreck of the first creation the present earth emerged.

And when the fire has done its work, the new creation will come forth in Edenic and eternal loveliness and purity, never to be sullied again, never to echo a sigh of pain or cry of hate, never to be stained with human blood again, never to bear thorns and nourish serpents again, but to be the eternal home of peace and purity and love, and the scene where through "THE AGES TO COME, God shall show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

"And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any

more pain: for the former things are passed away.

“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

“And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.

“But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

“And the nations of them which are saved shall

walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.

“And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

“And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.

“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

THE RIVER AND TREE OF LIFE.

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads.

“And there shall be no night there; and they

need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

A RECONSTRUCTED UNIVERSE.

There will be new heavens and there will be a new earth, and the characteristic of both will be "wherein dwelleth righteousness." Perhaps even the very heavens, too, have been made unclean and need the touch of fire. There are traces of great convulsions in yonder worlds. Has there been sin there, too? We cannot tell. But there will be sin no more in the ages to come. Earth and heaven will be more closely linked, perhaps, than now. The earth shall still be the habitation of the human race. Successive generations shall still people it, and the nations of the saved shall still multiply upon it. How else can God fulfil His promises to His ancient people, so often given and declared to last through "a thousand generations"? How else could we read in Revelation **xxi.** of the New Jerusalem that after the new heavens and the new earth shall have come, "the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, and they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it." Perhaps this earth

will be too small for all these multiplied races. Perhaps that is the reason why the new heavens are to be prepared. Perhaps they shall be the colonies of the earth and the redeemed confederacies of the skies. Perhaps the true and tried servants of the Lord shall be made the princes and the rulers of yonder stars of light, with a whole world of beings to love and bless. And perhaps from one to another, we shall pass on wings of swiftness and power, traversing the universe of God as illimitably as our thoughts can sweep over it now, and knowing all the heights and depths of His unfathomable wisdom, power, and love, who makes us partakers of His nature and His throne.

OUR ETERNAL HOME.

The New Jerusalem shall be the home of the glorified saints and the seat of the Throne of God and the Lamb. Earth shall become the metropolis of immensity. "The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and God shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people and He shall be their God." It will not be literally a city on the earth, but a suspended city in the clouds. John saw it descending from God out of heaven, bright and

beautiful as a mountain of pearls and precious stones, flashing with all the colors of the rainbow and shining with the glory of God Himself, more marvelous than all His works.

Its dimensions are given, showing clearly that it is a separate, material substance above, not on the earth. It is a solid cube, its length, breadth and height equal. Its streets will not only run hither and thither, but up and down. There will be no law of gravitation there, for it will be itself the center of all power and motion. Its immense dimensions will be *376 miles each way*. A grand and glorious city indeed! Royal mother and majestic home of all the great and good of earth and heaven! Need we wonder that, as its glories have sometimes broken through the mists of time, the home-sick hearts of God's dear saints have sighed and sung like this?

"For thee, O dear, dear country! mine eyes their vigils
keep,

For very love beholding thy happy name, they weep;
The mention of thy glory is unction to the breast,
And medicine in sickness, and love and life and rest.

"O one, O only mansion! O Paradise of joy!
Where tears are ever banished and smiles have nō alloy,
The Lamb is all thy splendor, the Crucified thy praise;
His laud and benediction thy ransomed people raise.

"Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation sink heart and voice opprest.
I know not, oh, I know not, what holy joys are there,
What radiancy of glory, what bliss beyond compare.

"They stand, those halls of Zion, all jubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel, and all the martyr throng.
There is the throne of David, and there from toil released,
The shout of them that triumph, the song of them that
feast.

"And they who with their leader have conquered in the
fight,
For ever and for ever are clad in robes of white.
Oh, land that seest no sorrow! oh, state that fear'st no
strife!
Oh, royal land of flowers! oh, realm and home of life!

"O sweet and blessed country, the home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country, that eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us to that dear land of rest,
Who art, with God the Father, and Spirit, ever blest."

CHAPTER XIII.

SIGNS AND TIMES OF THE END

IS it possible for humble and intelligent faith to forecast at least approximately the time of our Lord's return?

Of course this does not mean that the Scriptures give any warrant for reckless prophesying on the part of fallible men or the making of schedules for the Divine program. Our business is not to foretell the future, but to study the word of prophecy which God Himself has given in the light of history and providence, God's own interpreters of His Word.

The Book of Revelation encourages by a distinct benediction a careful study of the prophetic word, especially this particular prophetic book. After one of the most mysterious predictions, the inspired writer adds: "Here is wisdom. Let him who readeth understand." The writer of this book was commanded not to seal the word of his prophecy, for the time was at hand. Daniel, on the contrary, was told to seal his prophecy, and he adds pathetically, "I heard, but I understood

not." The light that is falling upon the prophetic page through wise and modest interpretation is one of the most remarkable signs that we are in the time of the end.

Writing to the Thessalonian Christians, the apostle Paul assures them: "Ye are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Therefore, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." The Lord Jesus told His disciples that His coming should fall "as a snare on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." But *they* were not to be surprised, but to be watching and ready so that they should escape the calamities which were to fall upon the world.

When a distinguished visitor arrives upon our shores, the announcement of his coming reaches the public at the time of his arrival, usually. But to his intimate friends his coming is known long before, and they are waiting to receive him. When the happy hour of her wedding is fixed, long before the public are aware, the bride herself knows just when it is to take place, and indeed she has most to say in fixing the date. It would be strange if the Bride of the Lamb of God should not know at least enough of the approach of her

Bridegroom to be robed and waiting. Indeed it is in a measure true that the Lord's people have quite as much to do with hastening His coming as the Lord Himself, by fulfilling the conditions and completing the preparations which He Himself has prescribed.

There is a most important principle which we must bear in mind in dealing with this question of the times and seasons. God does not measure time according to our calendars and chronologies in every instance. With Him "a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years." A single day is sometimes fraught with issues as momentous as a whole century at other times. Spiritual conditions rather than mathematical figures measure God's great epochs. In a very important passage which is repeated in substance several times, it is declared that God will "shorten the days" for "a shortened work will the Lord make on the earth." That is to say, that just as a train sometimes accelerates its speed at the end of the schedule and makes up for lost time, so the Lord's coming shall be marked by a quickened movement in the end of the age. May this perhaps be the meaning of the revised translation which some scholars have given of the Lord's

last promise: "Behold I come quickly," and make it to mean, "Behold I come swiftly"?

Let us with great deference and humility attempt to trace from the Scripture itself some of the approximate signs that the Lord's coming is near at hand.

PRETERNATURAL SIGNS.

The Lord Jesus intimated repeatedly that there would be stupendous convulsions in the natural world preceding His coming, and that earth and heaven would shake with the tread of His advent march: "There shall be earthquakes in divers places * * * and the powers of heaven shall be shaken." Such things have frequently occurred at all times in human history, but there is no doubt that they have been of singular vastness and frequency of late. The decade that has recently closed has shaken this old earth as never before, and in three successive years it was literally true that stupendous earthquakes followed one another in every part of the world. A moment's reflection will recall the catastrophies that visited the Island of Martinique, Southern Italy and Sicily, California, Valparaiso, Northern India, Central Asia and Japan. Truly, there were earth-

quakes "in divers places." The heavens also have not been silent in their testimony to the march of God, and there seldom has been such a time of plague, famine and distress on earth.

POLITICAL SIGNS.

The Prophet Daniel gave to us, as we have seen, a program of the political history of the nations down to the end. We have also seen that most of this has been actually fulfilled in the successive breaking up of the world's great empires and the succession of smaller kingdoms which today divide the old Roman Empire. So far as this vision is concerned there appears to be little waiting to be fulfilled. More particularly our Lord announced that the end should be marked by terrific wars, military armaments and great distress in the social and political world: "There shall be on earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, the men's hearts failing them for fear, looking after the things that shall happen on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." We are surely in the midst of these convulsions. The great powers of the earth are facing each other with unprecedented armaments. Recent wars have been of

unusual magnitude and horror, and the future possibilities of war may well be compared as a great soldier has already compared them to "hell." Below the surface of modern society there are volcanic forces in the suppressed movements of Socialism and Anarchy, which may at any moment overwhelm organized society and government as in the days of the French Revolution. In the commercial world the conflict between labor and capital, and in the social world the gulf between the masses and the classes, threaten the greatest calamities. These are ominous signs which may at any moment become a tragedy.

COMMERCIAL SIGNS.

The Prophet Daniel asked some particular indication of the time of the end, and this was the angel's reply: "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Was there ever such a time of running to and fro, not only on land and sea, but in the very air itself? Surely we are in the age of the steam engine, the electric motor, the wireless telegraph, the automobile, the aeroplane; the age of rush. And knowledge is increased: the school, the newspaper, the public library, the printing press, are scattering their

leaves like the forest in autumn; higher education is widening its circle, every branch of human knowledge is specialized, and man is trying his best to build a tower of Babel to reach to heaven and to fulfil the Adversary's first promise, "Ye shall be as gods." A great writer has said that the Nineteenth Century advanced human progress more than all the centuries before, and that the first decade of the Twentieth Century has surpassed the whole of the Nineteenth Century.

God is giving us the earnest of the Coming Age in the wondrous days in which we live. The progress of science may be but an introductory chapter in the advent of the Millennium, an anticipation of the wider knowledge and the larger emancipation of all the powers of nature in the age to come.

Within our own time the lightning has ceased to be destructive, and has become the mightiest force in our constructive and industrial life. Every year is adding to the extraordinary discoveries of human knowledge, and the forces that are being made tributary to the mind of man and the progress of civilization. These are but foregleams of the day when the Lord shall come in person and place all these mighty agencies di-

rectly in the hands of His glorified children, giving to them a sweep of knowledge and an endowment of physical capacity which will enable them rightly to utilize these mighty forces for the high purposes of His kingdom.

MORAL SIGNS.

This is God's table of contents for the last page of human history: "The wicked shall do wickedly and none of the wicked shall understand"; "Evil men shall wax worse and worse." We have only to look at the headlines of the modern newspaper to see how perfectly our age is working out this table of contents. In the United States a distinguished Senator recently stated that 8,975 deaths from murderous assault had occurred in one year, and that capital punishment had been meted out to only one hundred of these. The statistics of divorce reveal the fact that one marriage out of every twelve in the United States ends in a family tragedy. The judges of the night courts of Chicago and New York have lately revealed an epidemic of vice and moral corruption among thousands of children in the public and even private schools between the ages of seven and twelve, that rivals Sodom and Gomorrah. Con-

ditions in England may not yet be quite so grave, but they are sufficiently alarming. France is known to be more and more given up to utter hostility to the Christian religion. Germany is rapidly coming under the influence of Socialism, and Rationalism has long undermined all the forces of spiritual and practical Christianity. Our age is developing original and unique types of violence and crime, and we are not far from the picture of the Master, "As it was in the days of Noah so shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed."

ECCLESIASTICAL SIGNS.

These include not only the development of the great Apostasies which we have already described, but of conditions of declension in the Christian Church, which the Lord said should mark the time of the end. What do we see to-day, both in the pulpit and the pew? The loss of the old faith, the rejection of the Bible and the Cross; the blotting out of the line of separation between the Church and the world; the spirit of liberalism in the pulpit and the professor's chair, and the spirit of worldliness and self-indulgence in the membership of most of our churches; the

declining membership of the Protestant churches of Great Britain, and the stationary, or almost stationary condition in most of the churches of America; the growth of the liquor traffic in spite of the modern temperance crusade, to the awful extent of an increase of five gallons per head to every man, woman and child in the United States in the past five years. These are but some of the emphatic lines which church history is writing to-day in fulfilment of the Master's solemn warning: "When the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?"

SPIRITUAL SIGNS.

The Prophet Daniel also gave to us some marked spiritual indications of the last times: "Many shall be purified and made white and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly." Side by side with the dark shadows would be the increasing light of faith and holiness. And so we find it true that this age of unparalleled wickedness is also an age of unequalled godliness, faith, prayer and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those who are willing to walk with God in holy obedience. Daniel's picture indicates two stages of spiritual experience. "Many shall be purified," indicates

what might be called the experience of personal holiness, which to-day is one of the marked phases of Christian life and work. The next expression, "made white," denotes a deeper purity. The word "white" literally means bright. It is the expression used in describing the Lord's transfigured glory. This denotes the special work of the Holy Spirit in preparing the Lord's hidden one for the "Marriage of the Lamb"; it is the wedding garment of the Bride; it comes through trial and temptation victoriously overcome. Therefore it is added, "made white and tried." God help us all to be thus robed and ready for the coming of the Lord.

JEWISH SIGNS.

We have referred in the former chapter to the remarkable providential movements of our time in connection with Israel, and the distinct fulfilment of Ezekiel's vision of the Dry Bones, intimating first the political, and later the spiritual restoration of God's chosen people. The remarkable awakening in connection with Zionism is surely a sign of the times and of the end. Only less extraordinary is the evidence of a spiritual awakening among the Jewish people and the revived interest in connec-

tion with Jewish missions and the circulation of the New Testament in Hebrew among the Jews in all countries. The attitude also of foreign governments toward Israel is a fulfilment of ancient prophecy. God said He would send "many hunters" and "many fishers" in the last days, to co-operate in bringing about their return. Surely the Russian oppression of our time is fulfilling the former figure. They are being hunted from their places of exile in these unfriendly lands, while on the other hand the appeal of Zionism to the national spirit suggests the fisherman drawing them back in ever increasing numbers to the land of their fathers. Israel is going home and Christ is coming back again.

MISSIONARY SIGNS.

Perhaps the most significant evidence of the soon ending of the present age is the intense missionary movement that is stirring the heart of every earnest section of the Church to-day. We are in the midst of a Missionary Revival. And it is a new revival. Within a single generation the great missionary enterprise has been reborn and rebaptized. All classes are being caught by this new spirit; the women, the laymen, the business

men, the young people and even some of those whom God has made stewards of great wealth for His cause. A new watchword has been proclaimed, the evangelization of the world in the present generation. There is a quick march today to carry the standard of the Cross against the last line of the works of the Enemy and plant that standard on the strategic points of all the unoccupied fields of the world. Surely, faith can hear the undertone: "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come."

CHRONOLOGICAL SIGNS.

We have already referred to some prophetic dates in connection with the development of the nations and the great systems of evil which have been discussed in former chapters. It is proper that we should sum up the signs of His coming by a general and fuller reference to the whole subject of prophetic times.

We have already called attention to the Year Day theory of prophetic time, and noted that this was the principle involved in Daniel's announcement of the Seventy Weeks that should elapse un-

til the coming of Messiah. This is not the only Scriptural evidence of the use of a day for a year in Divine measurements of time. Away back in the Pentateuch we find God announcing that the period of Israel's wandering in the wilderness should be forty years, corresponding to the forty days during which the unbelieving spies had explored the land, a day for a year. Again, the Prophet Ezekiel was commanded to lie upon his right side and upon his left a certain number of days respectively, pre-figuring the years of judgment that should come upon his people, again a day for a year. Unless we have the strongest reason for a contrary interpretation in any particular passage, we are justified in adopting this standard of prophetic time.

In his scholarly volumes on Prophetic Interpretation, *The Approaching End of the Age, Light for the Last Days, Creation Centered in Christ*, etc., the late Dr. Guinness has elaborated this principle with great fulness, and worked out a detailed calendar of prophetic fulfilment from the rise of the Babylonian Empire down to the present day, in which there are many striking correspondences. He has also shown by a great induction of facts and authorities how these chrono-

logical periods run parallel with great astronomical cycles. Without entering into many details, it will be sufficient here to show the fulfilment of prophetic time in connection with the various lines of prophecy embraced in the Scriptures.

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES.

We have already seen that this period was to cover seven times, or twenty-five hundred and twenty years. The question is: when did this period begin? We must bear in mind at this point that God's great movements are gradual, both in their commencement and their consummation. The subjugation of Israel and the supremacy of the Gentile Powers did not come about in a moment of time, but through forces slowly operating during many years. We may therefore expect that the end of Gentile rule and the restoration of Israel will come about in the same way by gradual processes. We may, therefore, expect to find several successive points of departure in our measurement and several points of arrival corresponding. The whole process resembles a ribbon cut diagonally at both ends so that a number of lines carried horizontally from any one end to the other would be of equal

length. A simple diagram will illustrate this.



The earliest date of Gentile supremacy would be the era of Nabonassar, 747 B.C. Twenty-five hundred and twenty years from this date would bring us to the opening stages of the French Revolution, when the governments of the world received their most terrific shock and the beginning of the end was distinctly foreshadowed. The latest period from which to begin the subjugation of Israel and the domination of the Gentiles is 587 B.C., the date of the fall of Jerusalem. Our measuring line from this point would bring us to the year 1934, not now far distant. Between these two periods of about a century and a half God has certainly been working with a mighty hand in bringing about the dissolution of the great world powers which Daniel described and before it shall have expired may we not humbly expect some glorious consummation?

JEWISH TIMES.

There are two measuring lines in connection with Israel's future. The first is twenty-three hundred years, the date given to Daniel in the tenth chapter, measuring the oppression of his people by the Eastern Little Horn representing the Mohammedan power. We have already seen that the starting point of this period in all probability was the decree of Artaxerxes for the restoring of Jerusalem 457 B.C. From this date twenty-three hundred years would bring us to 1884, when the Turkish Government was compelled by the Powers of Europe to issue a decree of toleration both for Jews and Christians. This was the beginning of a period of gradual and increasing liberty on the part of victims of the Turkish oppression and the corresponding breaking down of the Turkish power.

There is another date, however, given in the last chapter of Daniel, a shorter measuring line of a time, times, and half a time, or twelve hundred and sixty years. This period, the prophet was told, was to measure the scattering of the holy people. Measuring from the year 637 A.D., when Jerusalem was captured by the army of

Mohammed, twelve hundred and sixty years brings us to 1897, when Zionism was organized and new forces set in motion for the final restoration of Israel, which are steadily working toward that end. At the same time God has been moving in other providential lines through constant revolutions in Turkey itself and the steady weakening of its power, which are co-operating by a manifest destiny to the fulfilment of His prophetic Word.

In the last chapter of Daniel we have already seen that an extension of seventy-five years was to be added to the period already named, making in all thirteen hundred and thirty-five years. This extension would seem to embrace all the details and stages of God's final working, and bring us to the end of the prophetic cycle and the glorious day of which the Divine messenger declares: "Blessed is he who cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days."

TIMES OF THE PAPACY.

Again and again, both in Daniel and in Revelation, the duration of the persecuting power of the great Apostasy is given as twelve hundred and sixty years. Beginning our measurement

with the year 533 A.D. when the Emperor Justinian gave to the Pope the decree establishing his supremacy, our measuring line would bring us exactly to 1793, the Reign of Terror and the French Revolution. This was the period when the Papacy received its first most dreadful blow, resulting in a little while through the wars of Napoleon in the capture of the Pope himself as a prisoner of war. The next initial point from which we might measure the increasing dominion of Rome is the year 607. This was marked by the Decree of Phocas confirming the former decree of Justinian. Again our measuring line brings us to a still more impressive era, namely, the issuing of the Decree of Infallibility by the Pope, followed immediately by the French and Italian wars, which ended in the final loss of the Temporal Power, and the end of the Papacy as a World Power. Since that date it has simply been an ecclesiastical system and never again can it claim its place among the nations. There is a further date, the Decree of Vitallian, 663 A.D. Our measuring line will bring us to a date still future. God has yet much to accomplish in His final dealings with this evil system. But His faithfulness in the past to the "sure word of prophecy"

encourages us to know and believe that His coming "is near, even at the doors."

When we speak of the coming of our Lord as imminent, we do not mean the fulfilment of all the successive prophecies which reach on to His glorious Epiphany. There may be much to be accomplished before that day shall arrive, but there is another coming for which His saints are waiting, His gracious Parousia. It is of this He is saying in whispered tones of warning to all His waiting ones: "Behold I come as a thief; blessed is he that keepeth his garments."

"I know not if He come at eve,
Or night, or morn, or noon;
I know the breeze of twilight gray
That fans the cheeks of dying day
Doth ever whisper, "Soon."

"I know not if His chariot wheels
Yet near or distant are;
I only know each thunder roll
Doth wake an echo in my soul
That saith, "Not very far."

"I know not if we long must wait
The summer of His smile;
I only know that hope doth sweep
With thrilling touch my heart strings deep,
And sings, 'A little while.'"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PRACTICAL INFLUENCE OF THE BLESSED HOPE.

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (I. John iii. 3).

WHAT is the practical value of the blessed Hope? Is it a speculation in theology, or is it a living and blessed hope and inspiration, linked in the Scriptures with almost every aspect of Christian life?

AN INCENTIVE TO THE UNSAVED.

The apostles used it as an appeal to the careless and indifferent to urge them to decision for Christ. “Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send the Lord Jesus which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things.” And again Paul speaks of the Thessalonians as having “turned from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven,

even Jesus, which saved us from the wrath to come."

It must therefore have been presented to them as a practical incentive and message of warning. It is a message of awakening and conviction which we should use more freely and effectually than we do. It was the message of God's coming judgment which led to Nineveh's repentance, and the proclamation of Christ's coming to the heathen has brought many to bow at the feet of Jesus.

A MOTIVE TO PERSONAL HOLINESS.

So the apostle teaches in his letter to Titus. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world, looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." So again in writing to the Thessalonians he presents the coming of the Lord as the great goal of holy aspiration. "The very God of peace sanctify you through and through, and I pray

God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The beloved John likewise links this hope with the practice of holiness. "When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure." Because we are going to be like Him then we wear His image now. We anticipate our coming glory, and like the Lord Himself, who began to wear the garments of His Incarnation long before He came to earth, so we try on even here the robes of our approaching coronation. The glory of the Holiest shone through the curtains, and so the glory of our future state should cover us even here.

This is our peculiar preparation for His coming, and such a preparation on the part of His Church is the most marked sign of His Advent. When you see the bride arrayed in her wedding robes, you know the Bridegroom must be near. And could we see the Church of Christ robed in the beauty of holiness, and putting on her wedding garments, we would know that day was near, and that the angel voices were about to proclaim, "The marriage of the Lamb has come

and His wife hath made herself ready."

AN INCENTIVE TO HEAVENLY MINDEDNESS.

Mrs. Stowe has pictured in her wonderful little tract, "He is coming to-morrow," the consternation of a millionaire, and the consolation of a poor suffering child of God at the announcement that had just been made to the waiting ones, "He is coming to-morrow."

This was what Paul meant when he said to the Philippians (iv. 20), "Our conversation (our citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory."

There is nothing except the love of Jesus that can so separate us from the world as the hope of Christ's coming. Dr. Chalmers describes the inhabitants of a pestilential marsh, who had again and again been urged to emigrate, but they could not be induced to leave a certain for an uncertain good. At last one day they saw approaching and slowly passing by a beauteous isle clothed with a verdure and loveliness they had never seen before, and breathing the balmy air of its glad and eternal spring over all their unhealthy plains.

Then they began to eagerly enquire if they might enter its blessed harbor. They sent out their boats across the sea, they entreated permission to land upon its shores, and they gladly let go their old cabins and treasures, and hastened to the happy shores of this bright and holy Paradise. So is the vision of His coming. It falls like a withering spell on earthly ambition and avarice, and makes us cry:

“My hopes are passing upward, onward,
And with my hopes my heart is gone;
My eyes are turning skyward, sunward,
Where glory brightens round yon throne.”

IT KEEPS US CLOSE TO HIM.

“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”

When Elisha knew that Elijah's translation was near, he kept very close to his side. To every suggestion that he should leave his side, he answered, “As the Lord thy God liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.” So, if we are waiting and watching for His coming, we will not let a moment separate us from Him. It was but one

evening that Thomas was absent, but that very evening Jesus came.

AN INCENTIVE TO BROTHERLY LOVE.

“The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you, to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.”

How embarrassing it would be for you and your brother to meet to-morrow at His right hand, and, looking in His face, to say, “Lord, I do not speak to him.” There is a day coming when we shall all clasp hands and look into each other’s eyes, and say, “Well, we did not understand each other, but it is all right at last.” Why not assume that we may be mistaken, and love even His erring children for His sake?

A CALL TO VIGILANCE.

“Watch ye therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh.”

“Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men who watch for their Lord when He will return from

the wedding, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open to Him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Of a truth I say unto you that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the second watch or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

“And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”

Here are two ways of receiving the Master. One is to “open to Him immediately.” The other is to “leave his house to be broken through.” Which will we have? Purposely the time is unknown, that we may be ever ready, but we know enough to know that it is near.

The late Dr. A. J. Gordon once sent word to his family in the country that he was coming to them some day the following week. Every evening his little children washed, dressed, and went down to the one suburban train that came to the

village, to meet him. He did not come till Saturday, but his wife told him that the hope of his coming had kept them in garments clean the whole week. So may this blessed Hope purify us "even as He is pure."

PATIENCE IN VIEW OF HIS COMING.

"Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth till he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing." He whose hopes are above the world is not greatly tried by its passing clouds. Oh, how easy it will make our little worries, frets and conflicts to truly realize

"A few more struggles here,
A few more partings o'er,
A few more toils, a few more tears,
And we shall weep no more."

AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO STEADFASTNESS.

"Be ye therefore steadfast, immovable, always

abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward, for yet a little while and He that shall come will come and will not tarry." Hold on, the end is near, the reward is great. Too much has been already suffered to lose the victory now. "Hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Standing on yonder battlements He holds the crown in view. You can almost hear the plaudits and the shouts. Shall you falter now?

AN INSPIRATION IN OUR WORK.

"Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, even to give every man according as his work shall be." And so to the humble reaper, to the faithful pastor, to the soul winning evangelists the New Testament holds out evermore this great Hope as his inspiration and recompense. How ashamed some of us would feel if we received a crown! We would almost walk through the palaces of glory as if we had stolen it! Not so Paul. He will know the name of every jewel in his diadem. There is Lydia. There is Timothy. There is the jailor. There is Sosthenes,

who attacked him at Corinth and was saved in glorious revenge. There is the soldier that was chained to his side. Are you forging your crown and gathering its jewels, or shall you be "ashamed before Him at His coming"?

A CONSOLATION IN SORROW.

"I would not have you ignorant concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be forever with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." This doctrine is the balm of sorrow and the consolation of bereavement. It gives us back our lost in immortal beauty and everlasting love, and it wipes every tear away. "Therefore, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

There shall be no more crying,
There shall be no more pain,
There shall be no more dying,
There shall be no more stain.

Hearts that by death were riven
Meet in eternal love;
Lives on the altar given
Rise to their crowns above.

Jesus is coming surely,
Jesus is coming soon;
Oh, let us walk so purely,
Oh, let us keep our crown!

CHAPTER XV.

THE LORD'S COMING AND MISSIONS.

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come" (Matt. xxiv. 14).

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come" (Rev. xiv. 6, 7).

THE coming of Christ is the great end of creation and redemption. This is the day for which all other days were made, the one event to which all other things are tending.

Even nature itself foreshadows the New Creation. This fallen world, with its minor key of sadness, echoes in every tone the cry for something better than nature knows. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Every radiant morn, every returning Spring, every bursting bud and breathing blossom, and every humming insect, emerging from its wintry tomb and opening chrysalis, is

but the prophecy of the resurrection and our *Palingenesis*, when He that sitteth upon the throne shall say, "Behold I make all things new."

Man's highest philanthropy aims to develop and improve the conditions of this old earth of ours so that some day it shall fulfil the dreams of that golden age of which poets have sung.

SOMETHING BETTER THAN THIS WORLD.

But it were a poor reflection upon God if this old world at its best were the best that His power and goodness have for the human race. When we think of the ravages of sickness, sin, and sorrow; when we realize the malign elements in the earthquake, the tempest and the devouring sea, and when we look at the mouldering dust and the hopelessness and agony of death, and remember that after all the fairest scenes of earth are but cemeteries and the spots that tell of broken hearts and blighted hopes, well may we say,

"Were this poor world our only rest,
Living or dying, none were blessed."

Or, as the apostle has expressed it, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

No, God's wisdom and love have something

better for our race than civilization, reformation, social reform and scientific progress; something better even than a spiritual millennium and the worldwide triumph of the Gospel and the grace of God.

Just as for the individual God's highest thought is not self-improvement, nor the best possible result out of natural character and human culture, but a new creation, a regeneration so complete that old things pass away and all things are made new; so for the world itself God's plan is the same. The mark of the cross must pass upon the earth itself and through death and resurrection it must come forth a new earth to take its place with God's new heavens in the coming age. The City of God does not spring up from the earth, but, as the New Jerusalem, it comes down from heaven. Jesus Christ is the "Nobleman who went into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom" and return. Ages have passed since He went away, and He has been from generation to generation gathering the stones for that glorious city which in a little while will burst from the heavens upon an astonished world and take the place of all our puny structures and all our petty plans.

This was the vision of the ancient prophets; this was the promise of the departing Lord, and this is the great perspective that climaxes the vision of faith and hope throughout the whole New Testament.

SOMETHING BETTER THAN AN EARTHLY MILLENNIUM.

Too long the Church of God has closed the vision with the establishment of the Church and the conversion of the world as the real end for which the Spirit is working in this age. But if we look at the inspired record we find that there is yet another scene in the picture that lifts our thoughts to a higher plane and a more distant horizon. It begins in the tenth verse of the first chapter of Acts, where two men stood by them in white apparel, saying, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Ah, this was needed to complete the perspective. Away beyond the Church, the mission field, the present age, stretched the vista of millennial years with the glorious light of the Lord's return

as the real goal toward which redemption is ever moving forward, and the Holy Ghost is ever leading on. Until we get this fully in view we have not grasped God's great plan, we have not got our eye upon the true goal and our course will be unsteady and our work unbalanced.

THE HOPE OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

It was for this the Apostolic Church was ever watching, praying, working, and waiting. This was the message which the apostle preached to the Thessalonians and which made them 'turn from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven.' This was the comfort he held out to the bereaved and sorrowing saints as they bade farewell to the martyred forms of their beloved ones, that Christ was coming soon, and they should be "Caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air." This was the joy and crown of His own intense ministry, that he might present his people to the heavenly Bridegroom in the day of His coming, as his "crown of rejoicing in the presence of Christ at His coming." And this was his own inspiring hope as he was about to lay down his ministry and meet his Lord, "Henceforth there is laid up

for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day."

THE PLAN OF GOD.

When the apostles were starting out to the great task of the world's evangelization, a great council was held in Jerusalem to settle certain principles for the guidance of the Church of the present age. And to that council the Holy Ghost revealed through its leader, the Apostle James, as he quoted from the ancient Prophet Amos, the divine order of events in the program of the Lord. The first of these steps was stated thus, "At the first God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." The second stage was as definitely stated in the next sentence, "After this I will return and build again the tabernacle of David that is fallen down." Here we find the Lord's coming presented as the sequel of their immediate ministry, the great event for which they were gathering out a people from the Gentile nations.

If the Church had ever kept this in view she would have saved herself the waste of much vain effort and bitter disappointment in her attempts to build up a permanent earthly institution and

create on earth a kingdom without the King.

For the Church itself has been as much at fault in her objects and ambitions as the world in its mere human policy.

Men have tried to found their kingdoms and cities as if they should reign forever, and make this earth a paradise of pleasure without the Lord. And sin has cursed all their ambitions and policies, and turned the vision of earthly pride and power into that fearful menagerie of wild beasts which Daniel saw when he looked at the governments of earth as they appeared in the light of heaven. But just as foolish and short-sighted is the policy of the Christian worker who aims to establish even through the Church an earthly millennium.

THE CITY YONDER.

Earth offers no foundation stable enough for the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Our business is to gather stones, timbers, and jewels for that glorious edifice and pass them on to the great Architect that is building over yonder "the city that hath foundations" and the "kingdom that cannot be moved."

We are just like Hiram's carpenters and Solo-

mon's stone cutters, working in the mountains of Lebanon and the quarries of Judah, and passing the cedar and the granite to its future site. One by one we are gathering the souls which He is fitting into the living temple, and in a little while the vision of its glory will burst upon our view and admiring angels will say, "Come and see the bride, the Lamb's wife." And we shall behold that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God and her light like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. * * * And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them that were saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it."

THE TRUE GOAL.

This is the glorious goal. This is the future toward which the cross of Calvary and the Holy Ghost are leading the generations on. This is the true end for which it is worth our while to

work and pray. This is the transcendent outlook of faith and hope and love. This is the kingdom that Daniel saw, superseding the pride and power of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, when "the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and whose dominion shall never pass away." This is the glorious consummation which the voices of heaven celebrate in the eleventh chapter of Revelation when they cry, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. We give Thee thanks, Lord God Almighty, which art and wast, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned." This is what the Master meant when He said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and bend yourselves back, for the hour of your redemption draweth nigh."

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

The work of missions is the great means of hastening that end. The work of the Holy Ghost through the Church was chiefly intended to gath-

er out from all nations a people for His name, a bride for the Lamb. It is not God's purpose at the present time by any stronger compulsion than the persuasion of the Gospel and the influence of the Holy Spirit to bring men to the acceptance of Christ as their Saviour and King. In the next age every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord; but at the present time **the** Gospel is preached to men as a witness, the opportunity is given to every one, and then it is left to their voluntary choice. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

The purpose of the present dispensation is to give this universal probation for a brief time to all the races of mankind, and, after the opportunity has been given and all that are willing to come to Him have accepted the gracious invitation, to close the day of grace and bring the nations before Him in judgment and then establish a visible kingdom on earth which shall compel the subjection of all mankind and bring earth's millions without exception to bow to His scepter.

To-day it is the few that He is calling; not the subjects, but the rulers of the coming age. Just as David called out the heroes that followed him

in the days of his exile and afterwards made them the princes of his kingdom; so the Lord Jesus to-day is training the men and women who will share with Him the government of the age to come.

This is our high honor and privilege, to be kings and priests unto God, and to reign with Him upon the earth.

HIS COMING DELAYED.

Until the whole number of His elect shall have thus been called and gathered home, His coming would seem to be delayed. This elect company is universal in its scope, while limited in its numbers. It embraces the people of every land, tribe and tongue. The angel of the Apocalypse had the everlasting Gospel to preach "unto every nation and kindred and tribe and tongue." Therefore to-day the work of missions must be world-wide. It is not enough for us to be zealous in gathering a large number of converts among a favored people in Christian lands. God wants us to bring the representatives of earthly tongues, and when this shall have been done, then, He tells us, the end shall come. The Bride of the Lamb, like the Son of man, must represent humanity as a

whole. The Lord Jesus is not a Jew, an Anglo-Saxon or a Greek; but He is the Son of man, the representative of every race, universal man. So His Bride must be the daughter of humanity, the composite photograph, embracing every feature, every color and every kindred of the human family.

THE LAMB'S BRIDE.

It is said that when a great artist was asked to paint the Empress of Russia, he travelled all over the country and sought opportunity to see every beautiful woman of the land, and then in his painting he combined the most beautiful feature or expression in each of these faces in one composite picture, taking care, of course, to make the countenance of the Empress the most distinctive of all, and then he presented it to her with incomparable flattery as her portrait. The heavenly Artist is not painting, but creating, a Bride characterized by all that is most distinctive of every type of redeemed humanity, and all together reflecting the matchless glory and beauty of the Lord Jesus Himself.

ALL NATIONS.

Therefore the work of missions must be uni-

versal. Thank God that the great ideal is being rapidly fulfilled. Already more than four hundred of the languages of earth have repeated the story of the Saviour's love, and all the forces of Divine Providence and Grace are working as never before to prepare the world for the entrance of the Gospel and "gather out of the nations a people for His name."

How manifestly His arm has been made bare in the breaking down of the Roman Catholic and Moslem barriers, and Turkey, France, Italy, Spain, the Philippines, the West Indies, and the South American republics. How He has used the ambitions of European colonizing governments to open the interior of Africa and sent the explorer and promoter to lead the way of the missionary. How the steamship, the railroad, the postal union, and the foreign Consul in China, India, and Africa, have become the handmaids of the Gospel. What a romance of missions the story of the Progress of Japan, Siam, China, and Korea, have been for a quarter of a century. How fully God has answered the prayers of His people a generation ago, and opened all the doors of long closed lands. And how marvelously the Holy Ghost has been seconding the

Providence of God and pouring out a great missionary Spirit in almost every heathen land.

Truly, one is reminded of the message that came to a Christian worker recently in a dream. He saw a great battlefield, and thousands of horses all caparisoned and ready to charge. But there were no riders, and when he asked one standing by for an explanation, this was the answer, "These horses are God's Great Missionary Opportunities to-day." But where are the riders? Where are the men to enter God's open doors? Where?

Surely the message that came to David at Baal Perazim may well ring in our ears to-day, "And it should be when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees that then thou shalt go out to battle; for God is gone before thee to smite the host of the Philistines."

There's a sound of a going in the air
 That is more than the whispering Zephyr's sigh;
 There's a sound in the tops of the mulberry trees
 That tells us the hosts of the Lord are nigh.

For the Ancient of Days is on His way,
 And the hour of His judgment is at hand,
 And the shaking of heaven and earth today
 Is troubling every wondering land.

We are going forth to a strenuous fight,
To a sword of fire and a field of blood,
To the slums of sin and the lands of night,
And the last stern battle of the Lord.

Let us gird ourselves for the glorious fray,
Let us stir ourselves till the fight be won,
For the Son of God is on His way,
And the Lord of Hosts is leading on.

How vain and fruitless all our efforts to help humanity and reform society short of God's plan! Are we wasting our strength in second class philanthropies and enterprises? They are not worth the cost. The time is too short, the crisis is too near, the conditions are too hard. Nothing else will help our ruined world but Christ, His cross and His coming. Do not sink your money in the sands of time, but put all the strength of your life into the best things, the one thing, the only thing that God has given us as the remedy for sin and the business of life.

How unsatisfactory are many of the religious methods and movements of our time! How poorly spent the money that you put into the church choir, a splendid organ, a church spire and an institutional church which is little better than a Sunday club and a place of more respect-

able amusement for so called Christians. How needless even costly missionary institutions for a world that soon will hear the thunders of His voice. More simply, more swiftly let us fly, like the angel of the Apocalypse, with the everlasting Gospel to preach to every kindred, tribe, and tongue.

Let us be wise to understand our Master's plan! Let us be swift to hear His voice and obey His command! Let us make sure of that glorious reward. "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever." Let every one have some part in this magnificent crusade. If you cannot go, you can send. Your prayers can be eloquent, your gifts and sacrifices can give you a substitute and an equal place in the army roll and the glorious recompense.

Come from the vain and perishing things of time, from the mistaken, though well-meant enterprises of humanitarian zeal and from the selfishness and sin of a fruitless and wasted Christian life, and invest the strength of your being in the greatest work in the world, "the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," and "the kingdom which cannot be moved."

The Master's coming draweth near,
The Son of man will soon appear,
His kingdom is at hand.
But ere that glorious day can be,
This Gospel of the Kingdom we
Must preach in every land.

Oh, let us then His coming haste,
Oh, let us end this awful waste
Of souls that never die.
A thousand millions still are lost,
A Saviour's blood has paid the cost,
Oh, hear their dying cry!

They're passing, passing fast away,
A hundred thousand souls a day,
In Christless guilt and gloom.
Oh, Church of Christ, what wilt thou say
When in the awful judgment day
They charge thee with their doom?

