Papers on Daniel

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Brief Notes of Two Addresses on Dan. 8, 9 and 11

(B.T. Vol. N7, p. 307-310.)

In the second chapter of this book the four great world-powers are described under the type of metals; in the seventh, as wild beasts. But here in chap. 8 the second and third of the four monarchies, namely, Medo-Persia and Greece, are designated, not under the symbol of “a bear” and “a leopard” respectively as in the previous chapter, but as a “ram” and a “he goat,” and these two quadrupeds are distinguished from the ravening wild beasts as. being “clean” animals, which the others were not. Why then, it may be asked, have we this difference of description here? It is not that there is any change in the character of these world-powers as such, but that Persia and Greece, who alone were kind to God’s ancient people, are here marked off, because of their treatment to Israel, in contrast with the other powers who were cruel. If the Babylonians took Judah captive, Cyrus the Persian it was who gave commandment for the remnant to return; and so he is not only honoured by having his name recorded in the word of God, but by having it placed there some two hundred years before he himself appeared. In the vision, it is not the “saints of the high places” that are seen, but “the host of heaven” and “the stars” — the whole people are before us, not the godly ones only.

Do we wonder that God should speak in such terms of poor, sinful Israel? Let us remember how He has spoken of us. “Herein is love with us made perfect.” Where do we find such language used of Israel? And the

result!-"that we may have boldness in the day of judgment!" Why? "Because as he is, so are we in this world." In these chapters of Daniel we shall find that the figures become more distinct as we go on. From dead types we pass to living; from unclean to clean, till in Dan. 9 the figures are dropped, unless indeed we can call "weeks" of years figures!

Here, then, we see the ram with two horns (symbols of power), the dual kingdom of Media and Persia, the higher coming up last. Persia rose after Media, and far surpassed it in power.. The kingdom spread and became great till its adversary, Greece, arose. This had one horn (Alexander, which overthrew and stamped on the ram. But when "he was strong the great horn was broken." Alexander died a young man at Babylon. The horn — not the goat — was broken, and four horns came up in place of the broken horn. After Alexander's death his generals quarrelled, and at last they divided his empire among four of themselves. From one of these arose a "little horn," to be carefully distinguished from the Roman or western little horn of Dan 7. for this one comes from Greece. Antiochus Epiphanes was a typical personage, fore-shadowing the one who shall come, for we are distinctly told the judgment falls on him " at the last end of the indignation," after the tribulation and the destruction of antichrist.

In Dan. 9 we find Daniel a student of prophecy. He is studying Jeremiah. Instead of being puffed up and delighted by the near approach of the return from captivity, he (knowing the mind of God) mourns and weeps. He confesses his own sin as well as the nation's, for the nearer a man is to God the more he feels his own sin, while the proud cold heart can hardly acknowledge

its fault, however great. And Gabriel is sent to tell the prophet more details. “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city,” etc., evidently Jerusalem, though who but God would call it “holy”! But when have all the following events been accomplished, as far as Israel is concerned? Never. The Jews still look for their fulfilment; they own that all is wrong, and they wait for it to be put right. The command to restore and to build Jerusalem was given by Artaxerxes. And we have the book of Ezra to give us the command, while Nehemiah shows us how it was carried out. So we possess both the prophecy and its fulfilment. Seven weeks (during which the remnant were settling in the land) are divided from the sixty-two, but together make sixty- nine, until Messiah. “After” (not In) “the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off.” Space is left here, and dates cease. A break occurs;” Messiah shall be cut off and shall have nothing” (the margin is correct). He is raised from the dead-not to the throne of David, but — to the throne of God, an entirely distinct thing.

“The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” Who did destroy Jerusalem? The Romans. Thirty years ago there was no prince of Rome, but God, in His providence, has allowed that there should be one now. “And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week” — “the many” being the apostate nation. The future head of the Roman empire will make a covenant with antichrist to restore the temple service, and so help him against the king of the north. What can we say of those who suppose our Lord would make a covenant for seven Years? When He makes one, it is everlasting. But seven years is a long

time for this wicked man — too long — for he breaks it in the middle of the seven years, and brings in Gentile abominations — idolatry. The Jews think they are safe from idolatry now, but none are safe but those who are on the Rock, the tried Stone, the precious Corner- Stone, the sure Foundation.

Throughout the book we have seen the visions rising from inanimate figures to living ones then to clean beasts. For the unclean “bear and “leopard” of Dan. 7 are seen in Dan. 8 as the “ram” and the “he goat.” Not, as has been already pointed out, that their character was changed, but because of their kindness to Israel. Cyrus the Persian sent the captives back; Alexander, “the first king” of Greece (Dan. 8:21), put them on a level with his Macedonian subjects, and God marks this conduct here. Then in Dan. 9 symbols are discontinued for the time, for plain language has come, the Lord Jesus being brought before us — Messiah the Prince, and He cut off.

Our chapter (Dan. 11) tonight is historical the only really and truly historical prophecy in the word of God. Though with breaks in the history, yet are the main features here given more clearly than by any human, though later, historian. “ Behold there shall stand up yet three kings of Persia.” We know from chap. 10 that Cvrus was reigning at the time of the vision; he was succeeded by his son Cambyses, an unworthy son of a great father, and was followed by an usurper, Smerdis, a Mede who sought to upset Persian policy, and was the Artaxerxes of Ezra 4, who listened to the enemies of Israel. He was destroyed, and Darius the Persian (not the Mede),

known in history as Darius Hystaspes, reigned. He was followed by Xerxes, “richer than they all,” who led (including camp followers) 5,000,000 people across the Dardanelles into Greece, but to be defeated, and in his turn invaded by Alexander, “a mighty king.” Broken at the zenith of his power, Alexander’s kingdom was divided into four parts — his widow and son being murdered that his possessions might not be “to his posterity.”

The terms “king of the north” and “king of the south” must be taken in relation to the land of Palestine. Egypt was to the south, and Greco-Syria (the present Turkey-in-Asia) to the north — the Ptolemies and Seleucidae being the lines of kings mentioned. During the period of the history of these kings we find the Romans coming into power; and a Roman consul was the “prince” of ver. 18 who ordered the king of the north to go home again. The Romans are also seen as the ships of Chittim in ver. 30.

“The abomination of desolation” (ver. 31) was the first placed there by Antiochus Epiphanes, but is not the one spoken of by our Lord in Matt. 24. That we find in chap. 12:11 at the time of the end. The Maccabees did “exploits” — they were heroes, not martyrs, and God used them as such, for they were faithful to His word. But those of “the end” will be saints, not heroes, and will perish, as we find from the Revelation. The cross comes between, and alters these things.

Ver. 35 brings us to another break, and then “the king” abruptly comes in. Who is he? Not of either north or south, for both these come against him (ver. 40). He is the king of Isa. 30:33, and “the man of sin” of 2 Thess. 2

— the great antichrist. Daniel speaks of his political, Paul of his religious, character. He is a Jew, for “neither shall he regard the God of his fathers (Jehovah), nor the desire of women (Messiah), nor regard any god,” yet he is an idolator. He invents a god. “And he shall cause them (his party) to rule over [the] many, and he shall divide the land for gain.” Only one land, where the eyes of Jehovah can rest, is called “the land” — the land of Palestine.

“At the time of the end.” This is his epoch. He is not spread over centuries, as a line of kings, but only appears at the end. The king of the south pushes at him, the king of the north too, and it is the latter that is the subject of the close of the chapter. We know why. The Lord Jesus, by the brightness of His coming, destroys antichrist just at the time when the king of the north goes in great annoyance to fight against meddling Egypt; for “he shall overflow and pass over.” This is his first invasion of Jerusalem spoken of in Zech. 14:2, Three countries escape him. Edom, Moab and Ammon, because they are reserved for Israel to deal with (Isa. 11:14), and they will not escape their hand. But tidings out of the east and out of the north “trouble him,” and he goes back to plant his tabernacles between the seas (the Great, or Mediterranean, and the Dead Seas), in the glorious holy mountain Jerusalem. Then comes the fulfilment of Zech. 14:3, 1. Jehovah goes out to fight at the head of His people. He alone destroys antichrist from heaven. Here His feet stand on the earth, the mount of Olives. And Olivet owns the presence of its Creator and parts asunder. It is not riven yet — a proof that this prophecy awaits fulfilment. But the valley thus formed affords a way of escape for Israel; they flee by it,

and the natural ordinances of day, and night are changed — “at evening time it shall be light,” to enable them to gain the victory.

W. K.

The Seventy Weeks - Daniel 9:24-27

There is no prophecy of which the general scope is more certain than this of the Seventy Weeks; yet there are few on which so much debate has wrought, so much difference exists even among genuine believers. This is apt to create a certain measure of prejudice. So slow are our hearts to expect sure light from God, that the existence of a great variety of opinion, more especially if it be in those that love and value the truth, is apt to deter and turn aside even children of God. It ought not to be so; yet it is too often the fact. Yet to exclude part of the truth of God is not faith, but manifestly owing to prejudices or prepossessions; and particularly has it been so in the case of these Seventy Weeks.

But this at least is plain, that what God was here revealing to Daniel He was revealing through His servant to us. There is a snare too prevalent among Christians, now as ever, that they are on the look-out for something to bear upon their own circumstances. They have been apt to consider that the Church of God, being so great an object to God Himself, must therefore be always the foremost thought in prophecy.

But this does not follow, nor is it true in the Old Testament. The Church is not properly a subject of prophecy, but part of the mystery for which Scripture left room, and which is now revealed. Yet there may be some here who are under the influence of this opinion, and for their sake especially I may say that, besides salvation, there are two great subjects in the Bible; the one is the kingdom in the Old Testament, and the other is the Church in the New Testament. But nearer to God

than the kingdom or the Church there is another object, and this is Christ, who is Saviour, as well as Head of the Church, and King not only of Israel but of the nations too. Hence the true key to understanding any part of Scripture, you will find, is to divest yourself as much as possible of any such external prepossession — in favour, for instance, of either the kingdom on the one hand or the Church on the other — as would hinder you from seeing that God is first of all thinking of Christ, whatever His special relation may be.

In this scene of the Old Testament we see the true centre — Christ, but Christ there in view of the kingdom in its earthly aspect; that is, the kingdom of Messiah as the display of the divine power on earth, of which display Israel is the centre. Indeed this is what gives us the real importance of either Israel or the Church; it is not because of anything intrinsically deserving in them, but wholly of Christ as connected with each. The moment we see that God is glorifying His Son, we understand that His object in heaven or earth must be Christ.

God, however, takes care that in the Old Testament there are words which could not be understood until the Church or Christianity came in. These words here and there received a blessed meaning when the assembly was introduced. And so with the New Testament: God takes care that none should think that the kingdom is done with. And this was of great importance. God had not abandoned the kingdom. Be it that the Church comes in; but even when it has been revealed fully, the kingdom must come also; so that neither when He was about to form the Church had He dropped the kingdom, nor, on the other hand, when He has brought out all His

glorious thoughts as to the Church, has He given up the kingdom. ‘The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.’

This helps us in the subject before us. If I approach it with the desire of seeing how it applies to me or the Church I am off the true ground. The translators seem to have turned aside the edge of the passage by trying to make its meaning bear on the Christian Church, whereas you will learn that this adds nothing to us, but rather takes away. Whatever is meant for the Church is given in the best possible way in the Scriptures which speak about the Church: everything from elsewhere is apt to weaken the truth.

I will use no further preface, but at once turn to that which is before us; and I think we shall see at a glance what God has in view in the Seventy Weeks.

But first of all I would call your attention to the error of regarding the vision as something which one cannot comprehend. The word is, ‘Understand the matter, and consider the vision.’ Further, had it been simply for Daniel’s personal understanding, it would not have been revealed to us. Daniel was inspired by the Holy Ghost to reveal the Seventy Weeks that we might not only read but with intelligence. We may, therefore, look to God to-night to give us such help by grace that we may comprehend this great matter.

And first of all you will notice that in the 24th verse you have the entire period. ‘Seventy weeks are determined;’ which is to say, that from the mass of time God was pleased to cut out a certain portion for a special object; but whether the portion or portions set apart, or cut out, for the object in question — seventy weeks — were to be

all in consecutive order, or whether there was to be a gap or breach between them, remains to be seen. But the first object conveyed is, ‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint a Holy of holies.’

Thus we have the scope of the vision; but we are not left to conjecture. ‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people.’ Whose people? Daniel’s people. The Church? Clearly not. They were the Jews, notoriously at that time in the utmost possible depression — so completely degraded from the grand position in which God had planted them in their earliest history, that God had at this time taken away His name from them. Gabriel does not say that seventy weeks are determined on ‘God’s people’ or on My people, as if speaking for Him, but on ‘thy people.’ They were only Daniel’s people now. Hosea had predicted this a long time before. He was the instrument in making it known to Israel, a most solemn fact for an Israelite that had the fear of God and felt the just delight that his nation had been singled out from all others to be the people of Jehovah and have Jehovah as their God. But God announced to them by His prophet that they were no longer to be His people, though grace will surely make them so once more and for ever in the latter day (Hosea 1, 2, 3.).

And now, you observe, they were in captivity. It is true the time was very nearly at hand when God declared that they should return from Babylon; but they were not yet taken from under His sentence. It was just before Jeremiah’s prophecy of seventy years was fulfilled. They

were on the eve of closing the seventy years of captivity in Babylon, and Gabriel was sent to announce the ‘Seventy Weeks’ — that is to say, seventy weeks of years. Of course, these years were on that very same people; but on that people, be it noted, not yet taken from under God’s solemn ‘Lo-ammi.’ Whatever might be His glorious purposes in the future, and whatever His gracious ways with them for the present, still it is distinctly ‘thy’ people Daniel’s people. God no longer owns them publicly as His people. No doubt there were believers among them, children of God like Daniel and others (as for instance, his three companions were of similar spirit, having received like precious faith with him); but the angel was not speaking of believers only, but about the Jews as a people.

It is the Jews then who are called, not ‘My people,’ but ‘thy people’ — Daniel’s people. ‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city.’ Jerusalem, doubtless, is still called a holy city; but it is no longer as God’s own city: it is ‘thy’ — Daniel’s — holy city. All this tends to make the great object of the Seventy Weeks perfectly plain. It is not Christianity or the Church that is contemplated, but Jerusalem — Daniel’s holy city, and Daniel’s people, the Jews.

The Seventy Weeks therefore, it will be seen from the very words with which they open, are bound up in the clearest possible manner with the Jewish people. ‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.’ Of the aim one cannot doubt when we look at these expressions as a whole; though we might perhaps have a

question if we took up an isolated one. For instance, ‘to finish the transgression’ is, literally, to restrain it. But if one might have a little question about its meaning alone, when he adds, ‘to make an end of sins’ or, literally, to seal up sins, ‘and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,’ these words make the bearing perfectly plain. The seventy weeks were determined upon Daniel’s people and Daniel’s holy city to bring in the blessed time of which the prophet spoke — -to fulfil the promises that God from the beginning held out to Israel. This, clearly, is the object; and accordingly we have it both in respect of sins, to close them, and in respect of righteousness, to bring it in, and not only so but to bring it in everlastingly (that is, righteousness not only given but also secured for ever). There could be no just question, therefore, that what Daniel was intended to gather, and what faith did gather, from Gabriel’s communication was this, that at the end of these seventy weeks of years the long-promised blessing would be made good to Israel.

It is plain however that we must look into the prophecy to see whether the Seventy Weeks were to be continuous; whether or not there intervene a breach, an interruption or postponement of some. But at any rate these Seventy Weeks, described as they are here — for this is all-important for the truth of the prophecy — must be filled up in all their details for the Jew and Jerusalem. I shall show the importance of this before I have done. Clearly the end of the seventieth week would close, according to the word of God, with the fulness of blessing, and righteous blessing, brought home to Daniel’s people and Daniel’s city. That is, it is not at all a question of saving souls and bringing them to heaven; it

is not here a question, therefore, of the purposes of God in connection with Christ above. It is the earth, and, above all, the well-known city, Jerusalem, and the Jewish people. These are the objects of the prophecy. ‘And to seal up the vision and prophecy’ is another thing, too, confirmatory of what I have said. Prophecy, instead of being given out more, was to be sealed up; the whole thing was to be closed. It implies the completion of what prophets had been raised up to predict; henceforth it was to be sealed up, and a Holy of holies anointed; or, in other words, the unfailing power of the Spirit of God would make the sanctuary of the Lord to be in the fullest sense the most Holy. There is in the phrase a slight difference, which has been used, not only by unbelievers, but even by believers, to bring in confusion. But I do not dwell on small points now, wishing to develop the object of the prophecy in as clear and brief a manner as possible.

Let us examine further. The 24th verse sums up the general scope of the Seventy Weeks; but now we come to look at the parts into which the Seventy Weeks are broken up. ‘Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.’ Here again we have most abundant confirmation, if this were needed, from the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. It is not the new and heavenly city, but the old Jerusalem. The end, no doubt, would be Jerusalem brought under the new covenant and the Messiah — under the sway of the King, when the Lord will reign over Israel; but still it is Jerusalem.

‘Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build

Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.' Surely this is a remarkable way of expressing it. The natural mode, it might seem to us, would be sixty nine or three score and nine; but not so: it is 'seven weeks, and threescore-and-two-weeks.' There is a design in this. God never says a word without a blessed reason — a wise and gracious motive; and so there is here. In thus naming the seven weeks there is a purpose, which appears in what follows; for we shall find that each of these two portions of time-the seven weeks, that is, forty-nine years, and then again the sixty-two weeks of years that follow — has a description that follows, which explains them, and shows the reason of the division, as well as the starting point. 'From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks: the street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublous times.' Here is the reason of naming the seven weeks. The rebuilding of Jerusalem, hindered as it might be, was an object of interest to God: His word both predicts and records it.

Sanballat, Tobiah, and their fellows, might show their scorn of the little walls that were rising up. Precious to God was the death of His saints — their very dust; even then His servants took pleasure in the stones of Jerusalem. So it will be in the day that is coming, when indeed it will be the full accomplishment of what is always before God. But even that which reminded Him, if I may so say, or was at any rate meant to remind His people, that God had purposes of good for His degraded and long guilty Israel — that God would yet appear for them, and rear up Jerusalem to far more than pristine

splendour — this was before God even then. It is full of interest, and, I think, an instructive thing for us, beloved friends, that God in a day of ruin takes special consideration of what is despised. Nay, I believe further, that what was lowly, and calculated to draw out the indignation of those that hated them, and the scorn of proud men against them, had a very special interest for God, and God reveals it here. We might have thought it not worth while to have spoken of such a thing in a book of prophecy; but God would give ample encouragement to the Jew in the midst of such adversaries. Was it not sweet to them to know that God had told it them beforehand? Were they then to be discouraged? Now the books of Ezra and of Nehemiah particularly throw beautiful light upon the facts which were the accomplishment of this word. There we find the street built again; there we find the details of the wall. We know the different men that took part in building it. We know some women too; for these too were not wanting even for that work. Wherever the heart is in question, you do not find women absent; and so it was that God has taken care to record their names for ever — those that took part in the building of that very wall, and occupied those very streets in these troublous times.

In short, then, we see these seven weeks are singled out that God might give us not merely a history but a prediction of the troubles. The derision, the hatred, the enmity, the endeavours to destroy, the continual intrigues and plottings in and round the land, the efforts to stir up the court of Persia against them, the carelessness of the people, the faults of the princes, the unfaithfulness of the priests — all these things counter-worked, the bitterest and most humiliating of all their

sorrows being found among themselves — Daniel's people, not the Gentiles or even the Samaritans. Here then we have the prediction, not only the history of it; so much does God think of His people in the day of small things. This, I think explains the reason of the seven weeks.

But now for the sixty-two weeks. What makes up the sixty-two? Ah! here we come to something, I will not say externally grand, but I do say of all moment for God and man; and what was that? The death of the Messiah — his cutting off. 'After the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off.' You will notice the peculiarity of the expression. It is not here said precisely, that He would be led as a lamb to the slaughter. It is not the point that He is to have our iniquities laid upon Him.

'It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him.' This is not the way in which it is now spoken of. The death of the Lord Jesus may be looked at in one of two ways; either from God's side, in the way of atonement, or from man's side, in the way of rejection. It is in the latter point of view that Daniel was here inspired to predict it. 'Messiah shall be cut off.' It is the violence of His death from man's hatred, and particularly too, as we know, because He had been cut off through the Jewish people — Daniel's people. That is the very scene opened here. We find it elsewhere. 'After the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off but not for himself.'

Now here I have to call attention to the warping, not to say the blinding, influence of prepossession. Our translators considered that the death of the Messiah could only be viewed as an atonement. I dare say we have known people of similar mind. We have known

persons who could not take in the death of the Lord for anything except to atone for sins. That is, being preoccupied with self and the wants of self, they have forgotten that God comprises other views. For instance, God must use the death of the Lord Jesus as a proof of the wickedness of man. This is not atonement, although it be when man is thus guiltily rejecting and slaying the Messiah that God accomplishes atonement. But still, we may look at it on the side of man and man's wickedness, or on the side of God, and God's grace, which are two different things. In short, the true meaning of the clause is not that which our translators have given. The margin is much more correct — 'and shall have nothing.' I am not aware of any version which, on the whole, presents the true thought more clearly than this.

It has been a matter for a great deal of discussion to many, and particularly among scholars. And my experience, beloved friends — and I know a little about what these men have said and written — is this, that there are no men less to be trusted than mere scholars, because, being scholars, they are naturally apt to be proud of their scholarship; and whatever we are proud of is always the very thing in which God will humble us. There is the mistake that Christian people often make. They very often overvalue the knowledge of a little Greek or less Hebrew. Depend upon it, that to know the English Bible well is far better than to know somewhat of Greek or Hebrew; and I have rarely found that knowing a little of these languages has any other effect ordinarily than to give a good deal of conceit. It enables persons, of course, to talk about knotty points, especially to those that do not understand them; but I do not think that really profitable for either party. However, I will, not

expatiate upon this, although no doubt it has its practical lesson, because among active-minded Christians, such as those who are present, there is very often a strong desire to know accurately the things that God wrote. Now, if He give means and opportunity, I would not say a word to discourage; but I do advise you, before you begin, not to expect too much from it. Whatever may be the opportunities that you can look to have for learning, you are never likely to be great scholars. You may learn a little; but you must remember that as those of old who translated the Bible were men of real learning, so you are never likely, in this respect, to compare with them; nor can you hope to get by such study beyond what you have already got in the English Bible.

Is there no means then of getting further light? Certainly, and here we have a little help in the margin; for God takes care, in His grace, to raise up persons who, perhaps, spend a great deal of a long, laborious, and uninterrupted life in many of these pursuits; but even this would enable them, you may depend upon it, only to speak with considerable moderation. I think you will find that persons who know most are apt to speak most moderately. They are diffident, after all, as to their own judgment; and although they would give it where it is called for, they would not pronounce so dogmatically as a learner. Through such helps God corrects mistakes for His people.

I say then that the margin here gives the scope, in my opinion, more exactly; for it is not a question at all of the Messiah not being cut off for Himself. The thought would thus be that He was cut off for other people. This is the implication, as it seems to me, of our version —

‘but not for himself.’ He was cut off for our sins. He suffered in atonement for our iniquities. Thus they only viewed the death of Christ in the light of expiation. But not so. The meaning is, that Messiah should be cut off and have nothing; that is, His inheritance is completely gone, His people refusing Him, His land not possessed, His kingdom denied, everything that belonged to Messiah taken away from Him. It was not only that Christ met with a violent death, but there was no repentance on the part of the people afterwards. Their cry was, ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’ Was this atoning blood? or was it not the expression of utter unbelief and the occasion of divine judgment? The Lord told them that He was about to leave their house desolate. He would not call it His Father’s house now but ‘their’ house, and they should not see Him henceforth till they should say, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah.’ And they will say so in the day that is coming; but this day is not yet come. Consequently, after the Lord was cut off on the cross, we see the Jewish people persisting in the same unbelief which put Him to that shameful death. They gave him up then to the hands of lawless men — the Romans, insisting on His crucifixion. And this is the point that the Spirit of God reveals here. He ‘shall be cut off, and shall have nothing.’ The literal meaning — though you must not suppose that the literal meaning is always the best way of rendering words — is this, ‘And it shall not be to him.’ This, of course, conveys no intelligible idea to most readers; but I presume that the meaning of the Hebrew idiom is, that nothing He could claim as His should belong to Him. He had now lost everything, as far as man was concerned. The Jews had risen up in rebellion against their own King, their own Messiah, the anointed

Prince. They had put Him to death on the cross, and He had nothing. All the earthly hopes of Israel were buried in the grave of the Messiah. But it did not at all contradict what God shows elsewhere, that He will revive them in the end, and set them upon a solid basis that never can be shaken — that He will Himself see to it, and found it in pure grace upon that very cross, but the cross as used by God and not by man. Man used it to reject the Messiah. God will use it as a foundation for the kingdom in power and glory by-and-by, just as He has made it the foundation for our salvation and bringing us to heaven. But this is not what is spoken of here. All the vision makes known is what concerns Daniel's people and Daniel's city. And how did the cutting off of Messiah affect them? In rejecting Him they lost their place and nation. It was not only that He had nothing of all His earthly kingdom, but that they lost everything along with Him; and this is shown more fully afterwards.

'And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city.' Now, I ask, when did this come to pass? Clearly at the destruction of Jerusalem. We have seen that the cutting off of the Messiah was after the sixty-two weeks in addition to the seven (or sixty-nine weeks). Here is an interruption, and there could not be a more admirable place for marking the course of the seventy weeks as stopped. The death of the Messiah was a clean breach, not only between God and man, but very particularly between God and Daniel's people and so-called holy city. Daniel's people, Daniel's holy city, rose up against their own Messiah, and crucified Him. Consequently, sixty-nine weeks having run out now, it was 'after' that period. He does not say exactly at the

sixty-ninth, but afterwards. That is, there is room left for a space, less or more: God does not say how long or how short. All we can surely gather from prophecy is this: Messiah was not to be cut off till after the sixty-nine weeks. ‘After’ that time, be the interval less or more, Messiah was to be cut off, and He was to have nothing. And then the next thing of which we hear is an event that took place some forty years, we may say in a general way, afterwards; namely, the destruction of Jerusalem.

Hence it is evident that the past siege has nothing to do with the line of these weeks. Their course is interrupted. The last link of the chain was broken after the Messiah’s cutting off. The course of the sixty-nine weeks till then has been uninterrupted; but now the gap comes in. It is created by the death of Messiah; and the next thing that we hear of is, that ‘the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city.’ What people is here meant? The Roman people. Mark, he does not say that the prince shall come and destroy. He avoids saying so. The people of the future prince — ‘the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy.’ There is the most guarded care not to tell us that the prince came then, but only that ‘the people’ of the coming prince would then come for their destined work of destruction. And this is so true that, although they had a prince at their head, the prince who then came up in command of the Romans was anxious not to destroy all. The great desire of Titus, as everybody who knows history must be aware, was to spare the temple; but, as the well-known historian of the Jews tells us, a Roman soldier flung a fire-brand into the temple, and the consequence was that, in spite of the

efforts of the Roman commander, it was thoroughly consumed.

Thus, you see, Titus is not the prince that is meant here at all. It is a prince that was coming after the people came. His people were to destroy the city and the sanctuary, and so they did. The Romans came up, were manifestly used as the executors of God's vengeance against the Jews, and did destroy the city and the sanctuary, as the prophecy declares.

But there is a coming prince. A prince of whom? Of Israel? No; of the Romans. That prince has never yet come, and to this I call your particular attention. We have had the Messiah, the Prince; but He is the One that was cut off. Here we have a prince spoken of as coming after Messiah had come and been cut off. His people came and destroyed the city and the sanctuary; but he himself is not come. He was yet to be born. It is a future prince — a Roman prince; and this is the great link for which Satan is waiting. When the prince lifts up his head, Satan means to put forth his power in a way that he has never yet been able to do. He is coming, 'The people of the prince that shall come' — or of a prince that shall come — 'shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood.' The destruction of Jerusalem was not at all to be the end of Jerusalem's sorrows. 'The end thereof shall be with a flood,' just like water that does not come down in one sudden shower merely, but in an overwhelming flood. 'And unto the end war, desolatenesses, are determined.' That is, you have a long vista of things desolate as well as war, and this decreed, impending over Jerusalem after the destruction of it by the Romans.

Such has been the history of Jerusalem. What has it been up to the present day, but a city evidently and always under the abiding wrath of God! None but the enemies of God have been allowed to possess it. Nominal Christians, you know, took possession of it for a short time; but they were comparatively soon turned out, and the most violent enemies of Christianity, and especially of the Jews, as the rule, have followed. Even the nominal Christians hated the Jews. Thus Daniel's people have never had any except their bitterest enemies there, whether they might be Christians who attempted to found their supposed Christian kingdom, or Saracens, or Turks that hold Jerusalem up to the present moment. 'To the end of the war desolations are determined'; even as we have nothing but disaster threatened upon Jerusalem, so we also see how evidently this prophecy has nothing at all to do with the Church. It is Daniel's people, and Daniel's holy city.

But now we come to the last verse: 'And he shall confirm the covenant.' Who is he? Why, the last person just named of course. Who is that? 'The prince that shall come.' It is the Roman prince; and there is what has made the difficulty for most people in reading this prophecy, and made it impenetrable. They have actually confounded the Roman prince with the Messiah. They have not seen the Roman prince at all. They thought it must be Messiah that was to confirm the covenant. They had the new covenant in their minds, and therefore they could not understand. But where would be the good of a new covenant for 'one week'? A covenant for the soul — a covenant for our sins — a covenant for the glory of God — how could this avail only for seven years? Where would be the sense of it? No; it is not Messiah. The

Spirit of God here speaks of another prince, and a counter-prince — a prince that will ruin the people instead of loving them — a prince to be connected with the people that destroyed the city and sanctuary instead of building either up. Messiah is to build the temple; Messiah is to sit on the throne of His glory, and build it up another day. But this is to be an adversary of the Messiah — one of His great antagonists; for I suppose, not to speak of an antagonist opposed to both, that two will be at work on the same side; there will be a religious chief, and a political chief: — a fact indeed of great importance for understanding, not only this Scripture, but prophecy in general. If the religious chief is to have his seat at Jerusalem, the political chief will have his seat at Rome (that is to say, 'the prince that shall come,' or the Roman prince). The prince of Jerusalem would not be described as either coming or making a covenant with his own people. This, of course, would be quite senseless. A reigning prince does not make a covenant with his own people. He makes laws, and he sees to the execution of his laws. But we can understand a league, treaty, or alliance, whatever the form of it may be, with another people. Thus every word confirms what I have said — that the person spoken of in the 27th verse does not mean the Messiah, who is the prince of Israel; nay, he does not mean the Antichrist, or the false prince of Israel who will be reigning by-and-by in Jerusalem; but the Roman prince, or 'the beast,' the prince that shall come in the closing crisis.

When he is come, then, he shall confirm a covenant with the many 'for one week.' This is the last week. Here again we see that the last week was severed from the chain of the sixty-nine. The first sixty-nine weeks ran

without a break to the cutting off of Messiah. After the sixty-nine He was cut off. Then was the snapping of the connection of the last week from the chain. That week remains to be accomplished in due time; and as the first sixty-nine weeks ran out before Christ's death, the last week is occupied with the Roman antagonist of Christ — the future political chief of the Roman empire who covenants with the mass of Daniel's people, Daniel's holy city. But then the end of that seventieth week is that the Messiah comes in power and glory; and in spite of the efforts of those that help or hinder, and the excessive wickedness then to be found in Jerusalem, all the promises will be accomplished. The Seventy Weeks will be fulfilled, and divine blessing will follow.

Who can deny a great gap? and in the midst of that gap what has come in? Christianity, the calling of the Church. This it is fills up the space between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth; so that God is always actively working in His own grace and wisdom. Not a hint of this grace to the Gentiles appears here where the prophet speaks only of Messiah's rejection, and the consequent desolation of Jerusalem. Up to the sixty-ninth week it was a question of that poor people being delivered; but they trusted instead to the will of men and their own will to their utter ruin. They were slaves of Satan. The moment you get man's will you will always find Satan's service. Yet so it was. Satan hastened to take possession of that people too glad to throw off Jehovah, as it were, from making use of them as His goodly horse; and on the back of Judah vaulted Satan who thereon became their master and lord. Only there are greater abominations in store.

When and what will these greater abominations be? for such is not the case now. The Jews are what you may call decent people as yet. They are not worshipping stocks and stones. The unclean spirit that possessed them is gone. He left them, as our Lord intimated, after the Babylonish captivity, and he has stayed away for many hundred years. The house is still empty, swept and garnished; but He told them that the unclean spirit shall return, and return not as he went out, but with seven spirits worse than himself. The full power of Satan would accompany the unclean spirit in taking once more possession of Judaism. This is to be in the seventieth week.

Let us look a little more into details. ‘And he,’ this prince, ‘shall confirm a covenant.’ It does not mean the covenant. There is no such word there as the definite article. It is corrected in the margin. This is another case in which the margin gives a sense better than the text. You cannot always expect that; for sometimes the text is far better than the margin. But here we have two instances in this very prophecy where the margin is undoubtedly accurate. He shall confirm a covenant. Man is never to be trusted; and so, whatever the appearances may say, the Roman emperor is yet to make a covenant with the Jewish people to let them have their own religion — to sanction its exercise in their own city, and in their own sanctuary. For this, I apprehend, is what the covenant was about. ‘He shall make a strong covenant with the many.’ ‘The many’ means the mass of the Jewish people; and the mass of the Jewish people are thus singled out for the reason that there will be some who will not trust the prince. There will be godly ones at this very time truly looking to the Lord. There will be a

remnant, whose minds will turn towards Him and His coming; and the Lord will be working in them to draw forth that cry, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah.’ They are looking for another prince; they are looking for Messiah the Prince; they are looking for Him whom their fathers pierced, whom they will acknowledge they pierced themselves when He appears in glory. And for this very reason, though they are only gradually rising, as it were, out of their long slumber of unbelief — for this reason, being born of God, they distrust the arm of flesh. They look for promotion neither to the north, nor to the east, nor to the west. They cry to Jehovah; and accordingly a covenant with the Roman prince does not satisfy them but the mass of the Jews, corrupt and about to apostatize. ‘He shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week.’ For the present, however, he engages to let the Jews have their own worship for the space of seven years.

‘And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.’ It is not Christ doing so by His death, which is the very perverse meaning tradition has put on this passage. Why, the cross had taken place many hundreds of years before — we may say nearly two thousand years before. We have seen in the beginning of the 26th verse ‘Messiah shall be cut off, and shall have nothing;’ and then followed disasters on the Jewish people and city and temple. When finally we plunge into the last week, it is the latter day, the end of the age; and this Roman prince comes forward, who makes a covenant with the mass of the Jews (that is, the unbelieving portion of them or the great majority of the nation); and he promises to let them have their own worship undisturbed, but in the midst he breaks it. Men

cannot be trusted in divine things. Even when they agree together against our Lord Jesus, their witness is not true. Man never succeeds where it is a question of God. The only hope for man is God Himself; and the only way in which God will make good his hopes is by his bowing to Christ Himself.

Now there was just the secret: Christ was a stone of stumbling, and the Jews would not have Him. By-and-by they fall not only under the wilful king, the Antichrist in Jerusalem, but besides there will be the Roman prince — the revived imperial head — the great leader of the western powers in the day that is coming. Ere long he stops their worship, he will impose idolatry once more. ‘He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease’ — the general expression, you know, for the various offerings that the Jews presented to God. God will not be with their effort: it is not really in the current of God’s ways. The time is not come. It is not a question of their offering sacrifice and oblation, but of their repenting and receiving Christ — of their finding out their sins, and looking to God about them. But no, they have trusted the prophet-king in Jerusalem, and they have trusted the emperor in Rome; and this is the result from them both: ‘He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.’

One is sorry, where much is excellent in combating rationalism, to have to complain of the way in which a learned person here deserts his text, and mixes up without the least warrant the middle of verse 27 with the first clause of verse 26, to the total confusion of God’s word. The most ancient commentary extant (Hippolytus, Rom. de Antichristo), which even at Rome, in 1772, they printed along with the true and lately-

found Septuagintal version of Daniel, might have guarded him from an error as popular now-a-days and long-prevalent as it is grave and obvious. ‘The entire cessation’ (says Dr Pusey, Lectures on Daniel, p.184) ‘of the bloody sacrifices of the law has a twofold aspect — of mercy and of judgment. To those who have believed in Jesus, He caused the sacrifice and oblation of the law to cease by replacing the shadows, which portrayed His atoning sacrifice, by Himself, the substance, of offering Himself once for all, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. To the Jews, who rejected Him, He caused sacrifice and oblation to cease by the destruction of the temple and city, and the dispersion of the people. On this, the death of the Messiah, follows the sentence of that utter destruction of the city and temple.’ Quite true; but the cessation of sacrifice and oblation stands in a wholly distinct connection, and as evidently after the Roman destruction of the city, and in the midst of an entirely novel state of things, as the cutting off of Messiah is before that destruction. Is it not serious to bring in the cessation of the Jewish ritual where Scripture is silent, and to avoid speaking of it where Scripture expressly asserts it?

It is agreed that the central unmistakable prophecy lies in the connection of the destruction of the temple and city with their great sin, the cutting off of Messiah, and that the connection here is not of time but of cause and effect. The Roman destruction of Jerusalem is carefully intimated to be within the gap after the sixty-nine weeks close, and before the seventieth begins. Some forty years, as we know, followed the sixty-ninth week, and the Romans came and took away both their place and

nation. Ever since war, desolatenesses, have not been more surely decreed than accomplished.

But the seventieth week awaits its fulfilment; and it clearly supposes two immense changes still in the womb of the future, but as sure to be in the appointed hour, the end of this age, as every other word of the prediction. The Roman empire, or fourth beast, is to ascend out of the abyss, as St John declares in the Revelation, to revive, after its long state of nonexistence, before it consummates its iniquity against the returning Lord Jesus as it did of old in His cross. 'The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and' [not 'yet is,' but] 'shall be present.'

This is one mighty change, pregnant with awful effects for mankind in general, and especially in these lands of the west; but there is to be another equally sure — the return of the Jews in unbelief into their own land by political means, and to the destruction of the mass when the Lord appears to the judgment of the beast and the false prophet, with all their adherents, and the deliverance of a godly remnant. The beast of Rev. 13, 17. is the Roman empire, and the 'coming prince' of the seventy weeks is none other than its last head, who is to confirm a covenant for the last week (or seven years) with the mass of the Jews, and break it in the midst, causing sacrifice and oblation to cease; when we see the last half-week of tribulation follow, or the three and a half years of Daniel and the Apocalypse.

The prophet does not say, but carefully avoids saying, what Dr Pusey makes him say (p. 188), that ‘in the last seven’ of the 490 years Messiah was to be cut off, or that in the midst of those seven He was to make sacrifice to cease; but to confirm a covenant, not with all, but with the many. It has been shown fully that not the foreign or Roman prince, but his people were to come, as they did, and waste city and sanctuary, with war and desolatenesses decreed to the end; and that this prince himself is to confirm covenant for seven years before this age concludes with the many of the Jews, but break covenant, and protect idols or abominations, and not without the guilty consent of the Jews; so that a desolator will come upon the desolate city, but a desolator quite as opposed to the Roman prince as to his associate, the false prophet-king in Jerusalem.

This alone squares with the grammatical context, with the scheme of prophecy in general, with a covenant for seven years (which most would think distinct enough from an everlasting one like Messiah’s), and with the evil character of ‘the many’ in our prophet. The reader can compare ‘the many,’ or mass, in Dan. 9:27, Dan. 11:33, 39, and Dan. 12:3, with chaps. Dan. 11:34, 44, and Dan. 12:2, 4, 10, where the article is absent and no such sense is intended. ‘The many’ cannot be viewed as the same with ‘many,’ but in contrast with the remnant who bow and taste the mercy of the Lord, who certainly are not to know sins ended, expiation for iniquity made, everlasting righteousness brought in, any more than vision and prophecy sealed up, or holy of holies anointed, till the seventy weeks are complete. The destruction and lasting desolation of the city and temple

are not closing traits of the vision, but during a timeless gap after the sixty-ninth week and before the seventieth. Nor is there to be consolation for Daniel, or at least for his people as such, till all the weeks are ended. No doubt we Christians enter into the blessing, while the gap goes on for the Jew; and because we by grace believe, sin is brought to an end for us, and everlasting righteousness brought in — not a covenant for seven years, which no scripture connects with Christ. But for the Jew it is desolation, with worse to come, when the foreign prince of Rome confirms covenant ‘for one week’ with them, and yet breaks it off in the midst — a covenant which is plainly not the new covenant, but merely a human convention for seven years’ liberty to worship after the Jewish sort. Compare Dan. 7:25 for the Roman prince’s changing times and laws, and at this very epoch and for the remaining half-week. It is the Jewish laws and seasons, not the saints, which shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of times. It is the more to be regretted that one should find such mistaken interpretation here, especially as Dr Pusey does not deny, but seems to look for the Jews anew acquiring property in Jerusalem, ‘preparing the way probably for Antichrist’ (page 189, note).

But here we come to a very difficult phrase indeed. I am afraid the margin does not help us now; but I will endeavour to render a little aid. I have no doubt God has given special light for the moment out of His word; and you must remember that Christian people have been examining carefully our English version for the last 250 years since the translation was made. We must not be surprised therefore, if faults have been found in such a long period of examination, where such vast numbers

study, men of prayer as well as of spiritual ability, some few mighty in the word of God.

The literal meaning of the clause is this: ‘Upon the wing of abominations a desolator.’ Here as often the literal way of rendering it gives but little notion of the sense; but the truth of it is that ‘wing’ is used figuratively. Now there are two ways in which a wing is thus used in Scripture. From the expanded wing, it may be either for the wider extension of anything or for protecting, as when the hen spreads her wing over her chickens. Thus the figure is frequently used as where the Lord speaks of the bird and her young, and so on. In this case, to spread a wing over signifies to protect the weak in the hour of danger or the like. It is thus used in a good sense, which is one use of the word wing; but there is another use, where it is rather the idea of overspreading from spreading out the wing. Here our translators considered that the word meant the overspreading of the desolations. They took the word ‘wing’ to indicate the abundant extent or spreading out of those abominations. I take it in the other sense that the wing means protection, and therefore that the preposition means not ‘upon,’ but ‘because of,’ or ‘on account of;’ for the word may mean either the one or the other. If it be a material thing, it means ‘on’ or ‘over;’ but if it be a motive, it is rather ‘because,’ or ‘on account,’ of the protection of abominations. And everybody knows that ‘abomination’ means an idol; as the ‘abomination of Moab,’ or the ‘abomination of Ammon,’ means the particular idol that each worshipped. ‘On account of the protection of abominations a desolator.’ This is the meaning of it — that God will raise up a desolating power to come down on the Jews, chastening them

because of the protection given to idols. They had made, as the prophet Isaiah calls it, ‘a covenant with death and an agreement with hell:’ and he speaks of this very time, this very people, and this very circumstance. Isaiah 28 will furnish you with the most important commentary on, or further confirmation of, the expression.

Let us then consider what the meaning is that we have gathered from all. ‘And on account of the protection of idols;’ that is, because the Roman prince, along with his ally in Jerusalem, had not only interrupted the nominal worship of God among the Jews, but countenanced idolatry in their midst. The worship of God, begun in unbelief, had no value, no power, no acceptance. But still, after all, it was sincere; and it might be said to be, as far as it went, true in the way of form, if nothing more. But forms do not last; and men in the end find their level before God when they take up forms. They must then have reality, and when the forms are not filled with truth, they discard the forms for error, because error is more congenial to the heart of man in his natural state. Hence therefore they have determined to put an end to these forms of the worship of the true God. The emperor of Rome — along with the Antichrist his ally in Jerusalem, the great spiritual chief at that time, the religious head of the world — agrees to set up idols in the temple of Jerusalem. The latter finally sets himself up as an object of divine worship. This is the man of sin, man worshipped as God in the temple.

But Daniel does not give all these details. We only hear that in the midst of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease, and on account of the protection of idols [there shall be] a desolator. You may remember the same general truth elsewhere as ‘the abomination of

desolation standing in the holy place.' It is the same time and the very same place. Compare, with Matt. 24:15, Rev. 13:14, 15. Because of the protection (which I take to be the meaning of the word 'wing') given to these idols, there will be a desolator. A great scourge will be sent in the providence of God to chasten them. That desolator I hold to be what is called 'the king of the north.' He is the person that is referred to here; so that, in a few brief words, we have a reference and an insight to a great mass of facts in Scripture. A desolator is sent down; and you will find that in Isaiah 28, to which I have called your attention already, where you have this 'covenant of death and agreement with hell,' you have an 'overflowing scourge,' the very personage that is called here a desolator.

It is a power from the north, the sovereign of Asia Minor acting under Russian influence. I do not say that it is Russia; but I do say that it is a power completely carrying out the designs of Russia, which is no less jealous of the western powers than anxious to get Jerusalem under its sway. And then they will think they have got a case, and that it is their bounden duty to interfere. Here is the emperor of the west supporting the king in Jerusalem, who is setting up idols and himself in the temple there. The emperor of Russia will not allow this, and he seizes the fact as an opportunity for carrying out his own ambitious designs. His care is not for God; but he makes this his occasion. Men must, of course, always have some plausible excuse for aggrandisement; and this will be the plea. It seems a righteous one; and, having a ground of righteousness in it, God favours it at the beginning. As far as there is righteousness, God always goes so far with it, no matter

who they are. Suppose even a child of God, but that what he does will not stand scrutiny? does not God chasten for that bit of unrighteousness? Always. It may be that other people take advantage of the unrighteousness. God will deal with them afterwards; but He will chastise the righteous first. (Cf. 1 Peter 4)

Here then, where all is bad, God permits these men to show themselves out; and, first of all, He judges and scourges the infamous alliance between the people in Jerusalem and the emperor of the west. The desolator comes down from the north, takes Jerusalem in part, and leads into captivity a certain portion (Zech. 14). Excited with hopes, and filled with the highest expectations of success, he goes down into Egypt — as we are told in the last prophecy of this book — to punish the king of the south (that is, the king of Egypt) in that day. In the meanwhile Christ appears and destroys the antichrist. It is the day of the Lord and of His glory; and when the king of the north comes up again, it is not a question of the emperor of the west, for he is gone; it is not a question of the king of the Jews, for he is destroyed. The northern foe too meets the Highest, and the question is decided. He is cast into Tophet. How worthy of God when the day is come to judge the quick!

This therefore is the point, although it be not all entered into here; but you will see the general facts. ‘On account of the protection of idols [there shall be] a desolator until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate,’ that is, upon Jerusalem.

Thus, then, beloved friends, I have given as succinctly, and at the same time with as much clearness, as I was capable of, the general meaning of the prophecy. May

the Lord help you, in reading His word, to be more and more strengthened in your souls, and may you be enabled also to see MORE THE CONNECTION WITH CHRIST, AND SO THE DEPTH, OF THE WORD OF GOD.

W. K.

The Scripture of Truth - Daniel 11, 12

The Bible Treasury, New Series, 1:163, etc.

Daniel 11

One of our sages, the founder of inductive philosophy, distinguishes between divine prophecies, and such as have been of certain memory and from hidden causes. These were no better than probable conjectures or obscure traditions that many times turn themselves into prophecies. Lord Verulam undoubtedly was a man of profound thought, and (whatever his sad failure) a great deal wiser than those who now in effect deny divine prophecy altogether, and merely show themselves out as unbelievers. Now unbelief is an insult to God and His word and not merely so, but along with it goes as the rule ignorance of Christ and of redemption. Everything is shaken thereby; for the moment you begin to cavil at Scripture, where is the line to be drawn? It is no better if you question the beginning. You may begin with Genesis; for the same principle is apt to carry the mind in doubt throughout the Bible to Revelation. There is abundant evidence for Scripture, more by far than for any books of antiquity; but evidence of an external sort never raises you to faith. Scripture claims to be the written word of God and carries its own evidence as light to the conscience. Unless received on its own divine authority, men do not really believe it savingly. They may readily allow that it has a character intrinsically superior to other so-called sacred books. But this makes it only a question of old Hebrew sages or of those who wrote in Christian times, who were better or abler men. THE HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF THE

NORTH AND SOUTH In the prophecy which now claims our attention we have as nearly as possible the language of history. We have seen the symbolic style in the earlier visions of the book. Dan. 9 is transitional, the weeks being in a measure enigmatic; the rest plain language with figures interspersed, as in all the interpretations. The peculiarity of Dan. 11 and 12, like Dan. 9, is in leaving symbolic form for the language of every day on historical matters. Thus we have a succession of kings in a double contemporary series, north and south of the holy land, which was beyond controversy God's centre on the earth. We must therefore look up or down from that fixed point.

Here we find a striking introduction before we hear of kings of the north and the south. "And now will I show you the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia." Cyrus was then the great ruling personage. Darius was in honour only as a sort of complementary king; the conqueror of Babylon put him forward in recognition of the Medes who joined his standard, whatever may have been the exact family tie which bound them together. For scripture is silent, and the facts are by no means cleared by the profane writers of history. As Ctesias says that Cyrus made his own grandfather, the dethroned king of the Medes a satrap, it is not improbable that he is Darius the Mede of the prophecy. Probable it seems that Astyages' daughter Mandane married Cambyses II., father of Cyrus, whom Herodotus mentions as a Persian noble, the monuments as the king, which appears to have been the fact. However this be, Cyrus was a man of real and widely extended power. Thenceforward Scripture proof of the succession appears in Ezra 4.

First we have Ahasuerus, the unworthy son of a great father, here (Ezra 4:6) called Ahasuerus, or Cambyses as he is named in ordinary history. It was not he that disturbed the Jewish remnant, after their restoration, but the usurper who followed him when the Samaritan enemies of Israel appealed to stop the work of rebuilding the temple and the city. This work Artaxerxes (Smerdis Magus) (Ezra 4:7-23) was the more ready to thwart, as he being a Mede paid no regard to the policy of Cyrus, whose son, Cambyses, did; he would be disposed naturally to reactionary measures. Darius Hystaspis became king on the revolt which set aside the pseudo-Smerdis; and he is the king of Persia who confirmed the decree of Cyrus. See Ezra 5:5, 24, and chs. 5, 6. This Darius H. is the third in Dan. 11:2, that is, the third after Cyrus the Great.

“The fourth,” it is said, “shall be far richer than they all.” This proverbially rich king of Persia was Xerxes, who tried to follow his father’s enmity to Athens (defeated at Marathon, B.C. 490), and strike the Greeks a death-blow. “And when he is waxed strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.” He likewise was defeated at the famous battles of Salamis and Platæa, B.C. 480, 479. How exact and terse is the prophet’s sketch! “By his strength through his riches.” It was not skill or force of arms, but wealth that mustered the vast hosts of barbarians. But his enormous armies, far greater than those of his father Darius, were unavailing. Luxury had enervated those once hardy warriors. And now also they had overstepped their limits. Whilst they pushed their dominions through Western Asia, God in His providence was with them; but when they sought the sea and Europe, by rushing into

Greece, they laid the foundation of that enmity which found its vent in Alexander the Great, who led the Greeks and his own Macedonian forces against the East. The great battles at the Granicus, and at Issus, and at Arbela resulted in the total overthrow of the Persian empire. See how clearly this is set out in a few words in Dan. 11:3: “And a mighty king (Alexander) shall stand up that shall rule with great dominion and do according to his will.” But what about his own dynasty? “And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; but not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion wherewith he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others besides these” (Dan. 11:4). This was all verified to the letter.

Thus are we brought to the desired two out of the four parts of Alexander’s kingdom — Syria in the North, Egypt in the South. And a most characteristic sketch it is. Gibbon, the sceptical historian, says in his sneering way that Daniel “is too exact for a prophet.” “The four empires are clearly delineated: the expedition of Xerxes into Greece; the rapid conquest of Persia by Alexander; his untimely death without posterity; the division of his monarchy into four kingdoms, one of which, Egypt, is mentioned by name; then various wars and inter-marriages; the persecution of Antiochus; the profanation of the temple; and the invincible arms of the Romans are described with as much clearness as in the histories of Justin and Diodorus. From such a perfect resemblance the artful infidel would infer that both alike were composed after the event” (G. to Hurd, Works, v. 365).

Certain it is that the Lord does authenticate “Daniel the prophet” to every believer, who finds here in short

compass a sketch more simple, consecutive, and correct than in all the historians put together, and with slight exception in the common style of history. This is admittedly a feature unusual in prophecy; and because of this some have rashly yielded to incredulity. Dr. Arnold was thus misled; for no piety can quite undo the poisonous effects of unbelief.

But no Christian can doubt that it is as easy for God to give a consecutive anticipation as a single luminous picture. It is the general way of prophecy, no doubt, to hurry on to the judgment, and the blessing that follows the Lord's intervention at the close, as being of supreme importance. But there was good reason in His eyes to give at this junction an account of the kings, north and south of Palestine, and their mutual struggles and alliances, sometimes sought to be cemented by marriage. We have these movements traced with precision; nothing in history can be more exact. Name if you are able any great writer on that time, who gives facts with as great accuracy, simplicity, and clearness, as this chapter.

Take the following curt summary: Dan. 11:5 presents Ptolemy Lagi, one of Alexander's chief captains, in remarkable strength; yet another about to be stronger than he, and to have a great dominion, the first Seleucus surnamed Nicator. In Dan. 11:6 after an indicated space we hear of an endeavour to patch up the jealousy which from earliest days had arisen about the land which lay between these powers, when Ptol. Philadelphus gave his daughter Berenice to Antiochus Theus. But Laodice, the injured first wife, brought all to nought and worse than ever by restoration to the northern king's favour, when she poisoned those from the south as well as her

husband and Berenice's son. Dan. 11:7 and 8 tell us of "a shoot" from Berenice's roots, Ptol. Euergetes, avenging her wrongs, when Sel. Callinicus reigned in the north, and gained great successes over the north, surviving his adversary and returning to his own land (Dan. 11:9). Then in Dan. 11:10 we have the efforts of Sel. Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great against the south, the latter of whom alone recovered Seleucia; so that even Ptol. Philopator, inert as he was, got enraged (Dan. 11:11), and Antiochus after various successes sustained an utter rout at Raphia (Dan. 11:12). But no fruit remained to the Egyptian king, especially as he oppressed the Jews; but Ant. waited till he could fall on his infant nephew when the Jews revolted (Dan. 11:13, 14), and he took Sidon (Dan. 11:15), notwithstanding all Egypt could do to hinder (defeated at Panium), and he visited the land of beauty (Dan. 11:16). In Dan. 11:17 we hear of his fair words but foul intrigues through Cleopatra, who thwarted his craft; as in Dan. 11:18 his invasion of the isles of Greece was stopped by a Roman chief in the person of Quinctius the Consul at the Isthmus. Inglorious defeat sealed his stumble and fall (Dan. 11:19). Dan. 11:20 briefly tells us of his son Sel. Philopator, overloaded with tribute, as is here strikingly noticed, who fell through his "exactor," Heliodorus. From Dan. 11:21 to 32 inclusively follows the account of his brother Antiochus Epiphanes with a detail beyond all before, as being the foe not only of the Jews but of their God, the living God. Demetrius was the true heir. "A person vile" indeed was their supplanter. His deceit was as great against his nephew of Egypt as against his brother. At length "ships of Chittim came against him" (Dan. 11:30), as against his ancestor. The Romans compelled him to retire from Egypt; and he vented his

indignation on the Jews; as later on by his order “the abomination that maketh desolate” was set up in the temple through apostates that helped him, though valiant opposition was not wanting.

If one ventured to enter into the details of those successive kings, it would take considerably more space than can be now given. But the last king of the north stands out from all the rest.

Many were bad enough, violent or corrupt. Sons did not mind marrying their sisters or other nearest relations. Some led deplorably abominable lives, and were a curse to their subjects and neighbours, even more than to their enemies. God had said that Egypt was to be a base kingdom, and no ruler of their race was to reign any longer. No wonder that those kings of the south failed; for instead of raising up Egypt to their own fancied superiority as foreigners, they sunk it to the uttermost, naturally turning to most unnatural evils. Such was the race of Ptolemy.

The worst of the Seleucidæ was Antiochus Epiphanes, called by others Epimanes or the madman. This man went far in his endeavours to stamp out not only the Jews but also the Jewish religion. He placed a statue of Zeus Olympius in the most holy place, and did what none but the most profane men would have thought of — put swine’s flesh and blood in the sanctuary of God. The consequence is that his history is dwelt on with greater minuteness than anyone’s. But the resistance to his aim at the close of his history led to a famous revival amongst the Jews. The Maccabees, as the Jewish heroes were called, resisted his generals, which is what is meant by “arms shall stand on his part” — a sufficiently

definite way of describing a general acting for him against the Maccabees. Their history is given among the uninspired books that compose the Apocrypha. These Maccabees were no models of piety or long-suffering; but, as Daniel says, they were strong and "did [exploits]." No phrase could more accurately characterize them (Dan. 11:32). "The people that do know their God shall be strong and act." They were far from possessing the martyr spirit in their ways, such as will be found in the godly remnant by-and-by at the end of the age. Then indeed none but those willing to lose their lives for the truth's sake will be owned by the God of Israel. Their strength will be in their weakness, they themselves ready to suffer — yea, even unto death for Him Who died and, little known by them, is now in glory. It is needless to say that such suffering is a far harder thing, and entails more blessing from God than anything of power displayed in the theatre of the world.

Here then we have those that were persecuted by their enemy — Antiochus Epiphanes. "And they that understood (or, are wise) among the people shall instruct many" (Dan. 11:33). The phrase means "the" many. It is to be regretted that the article is not conveyed in English where it stands in the Hebrew. For there are the two varieties: the word "many" sometimes with, and sometimes without, the article. The Revisers have taken no notice of the difference, any more than the A.V. "And they shall fall by the sword, and by the flame, by captivity, and by spoil, [many] days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help; but many shall cleave to them with flatteries" (Dan. 11:33, 34). So it came to pass that Antipater, the Edomite father of Herod, got in. For the family had not a shadow

of right to reign over the Jews. Only he stood with the last unworthy scion of the Maccabees, and through Roman help also slipped into power. But such retributions were allowed in God's providence, in order to the humiliation of His guilty people.

"And [some] of them of understanding shall fall, to try them and to purge, and to make [them] white, [even] to the time of the end; because [it is] yet for the time appointed" (Dan. 11:35). Just here it is where the text itself shows an interruption of the history till we come to "the time appointed" — "the time of the end." Throughout the prophecy will be found a similar break. Even this remarkably successional chapter discloses such an interruption both at the beginning and at the end. The first undeniably occurs at the end of Dan. 11:2, after the defeat of Xerxes, and before Alexander the Great. What left room for it is Xerxes stirring up all against the realm of Greece. After a century and a half this entailed the return blow by Alexander. All the intervening history was passed over.

In the same way the Spirit of God has brought us down to the time that follows Antiochus Epiphanes. No notice is here taken of the successive kings that reigned in the north and south; for the next we shall see to be king in the land between the two countries, a king who had not yet come to the throne. After Antiochus Epiphanes we do hear of certain Jews making a bold stand to maintain their law against the apostates, and with trials of all kinds till "the time of the end." That time is still future; but it shall assuredly come, the great crisis for the Jew, which the wise and prudent ignore, and therefore count all the rest of the chapter "too fabulous for a contemporary historian." The truth is that it is all future,

but will surely be fulfilled in its season. There is a perfect answer in the past history to all we have seen up to Dan. 11:35, but to nothing more.

Yet it is not to be allowed that the words from Dan. 11:36 are indeterminate in the least degree. The only appearance of it (and this is intentional vagueness, if such a phrase be permitted here) is in the words, “until the time of the end.” It already covers an intervening space of something like 2000 years. The blank at any rate occurs there.

In Dan. 11:36 we read, “And the king shall do according to his will.” This is no king of either north or south, but quite another monarch who is called simply “the king.” No other designation was required. Every intelligent Jew would at once know, as every Christian ought to know, who that portentous ruler is. O.T. prophecy prepares us for an awful time that is to befall the nation before the Messiah comes in power and glory. They boast much about their boundless charity to their own people; but how little they enter into what David calls the “kindness of God!” Christians are called by their Saviour to love their enemies. I wonder if every Christian here loves his enemies, no matter how unjust they may be? It is just our opportunity of showing that grace makes us to be above spite and evil. Should we be able to sing at midnight in prison, with our feet in the stocks? What can be done with such people? The world finds them invincible. No wonder that they are to reign with Christ by-and-by, seeing that by His grace they now conquer in the irresistible might of weakness. Exploits are all well for Puritans as for Maccabees; but they suit not the Christian. Stonewall Jackson in America and Havelock in India were too like the Maccabees. They had an

imperfect idea of the true place of the Christian. They had not learnt to bear all, and endure all, not only in passive obedience to their earthly rulers, but in grace to such as shamefully injured them. THE ANTICHRIST Here it is supposed that the readers know there is to be at the time of the reigning in Judea an apostate potentate. Having rejected the True Light, the Jews do not realize that they are the very people to be governed by this self-exalting enemy of God. They would not deny that there will surely arise an audacious and wicked king in the land of Israel; but they forget that they are to be his subjects, accomplices, and victims. So far from being king of the north or of the south, we see here that he is attacked by the then kings of both those lands. He is simply called “the king,” as neither of those powers is ever called. He bears that name, as being then king of the land between the north and the south. The text affords demonstrable proof of this. “The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself.” This may be no uncommon quality; but he manifests it to an unheard of degree: “He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god.” What pretension! Did he not then require to eat, drink, and sleep like any other poor creature? Surely this ought to have convinced him how far he must be from God, or even an angel, had he not been blinded by Satan’s power. Nay, he shall “speak marvelous things against the God of gods.” Not this only, but we are told that which gives astonishing evidence of long-suffering till judgment come; we are told that he “shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that which is determined shall be done.” What a solemn way of God it is to let one go on in blasphemous pride, that wickedness may fully come out, and its downfall may be all the more just and complete! God is righteous.

But what is man? What are the Jews, and particularly then?

How came such a king to reign over Judea? They refused Him that came in His Father's name. They will then receive one that comes in his own name. Here we read what he is and does. "Like king, like people" we may say, as one of the earlier prophets said, "As the people, so the priest." They will be in that day one evil lump. The difference is only in degree. Lawlessness will have reached its height. "And he will not regard the God of his fathers." This shows, according to scripture language, he is a Jew. Nobody but a Jew can correctly be described thus: a simple, but incontrovertible proof for such as know the Bible. Where do we find anything like it?

An Englishman who believes may speak of God as his Father; but he cannot talk of "the God of his fathers" except as imitating the phrase of a Jew. This reference of course is to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are the true fathers whom God chose to be the depositories of promise, on behalf of their seed and land, yet to be verified under Messiah: a most happy time for the world, after its hitherto sinful and sad history. I do not of course speak of the gospel, founded on Christ's cross and calling us as the church to heavenly glory. But there is a bright and blessed time for the earth when Israel shall be truly the people of Jehovah exalted above all nations and a blessing to them. The church will have a glorious place in heaven, and will reign over the earth, but not on it. This is the mistake often made in rendering Rev. 5:10. It ought to be not "on" but "over." There is an idiom in the construction which bears this out. Why it should have been over looked by many

excellent scholars seems strange; for the usage is plain enough.

Neither shall this king, to take the next characteristic, regard “the desire of women.” The phrase alludes to the well-known expectation that a maiden of Israel would be the mother of Immanuel (Isa. 7). “Nor [will he] regard any god, for he shall magnify himself above all.” So excessive is his lawless self-exalting presumption that prevalent idolatry he repudiates in his self-assertion. Yet he is an idolater after all — this man who pretends to be the Most High God. “In his estate shall he honour the god of forces.” We can readily understand how everything at such a time will turn to the worship of material force. Never has there been such a rage for arming to the teeth as at the present moment. There have been many epochs when a countless host of barbarians has swept over the civilized world, but never a time when such vast armies stood confronting one another, though their own lands groan under the necessary taxation, afraid of breaking the peace, but ready for war if they saw the opportunity to seize the coveted prize.

Such is the strained condition west and east. Not only is it the fact, but the very powers which thus arm excessively are confessedly perplexed and most anxious under the ever increasing burden, which they necessarily incur on all sides through these bloated armaments. It is the unwitting preparation for the changes and conflicts which precede the great day when the self-exalting king in the Holy Land is worshipped, yet worships “the god of fortresses.” People do not worship what they do not prize or covet. The most audacious in pride knows his own nothingness and bows down to

some unworthy superstition. Such a secret but enslaving power is unbelief. The wilful one that sets up in Jerusalem and the temple may so far remind us of Napoleon, who, however inordinate in his vanity, unscrupulous in conscience of heart, and insatiable in his ambition, worshipped his own star. The anti-Messiah will worship the god of fortresses.

“Thus shall he do in the most strongholds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory, and he shall cause them to rule over the many, and shall divide the land for gain” (Dan. 11:39). There again we see the unmistakable marks of a Jewish king in the land. We recognize in “the many” the technical word for the mass of the Jews; as “the land” in Daniel can legitimately be no other than Palestine. THE CLOSING SCENE “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him; and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships” (Dan. 11:40). Can there be more positive proof sought that “the king” in these verses is quite distinct from the two contending lines hitherto described? Here it is beyond doubt that on the contrary the kings of the north and of the south attack him. How could he be the same as either of the assailing parties?

But there is a yet more important series of details to point out now, about which there have been often great disputes in the minds of Christians, simply because they have looked at the wrong time and place. The Spirit of God says a little more here about this lawless king. We learn that the king of the south appears to be the first in opposing him. This is resented by the king of the north who comes down with still greater resources, indeed, as

it is said, “like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships.” From this point to the end of the chapter the account is of the king of the north. Impossible to ask fuller proof that it is no longer the wilful king in the land, but the king of the north that is described henceforth, ravaging but destroyed beyond help, as in the end of Dan. 8.

One may be asked why “the king” should be dropped here without telling what becomes of him. Great pains had been taken elsewhere to mark him out as devoted to destruction when the Lord shines from. heaven at His appearing. Of course one does not heed the disgusting fiction, with which the Talmud speaks of Armillus. But the Jews, apart from traditions, were aware they will have to do before Messiah comes with a terrific and lawless chief in the land. Whence did they get the ground of their ingrafted fables? Isa. 11 clearly reveals him, and his end at that time: “With the breath of his lips shall he (Messiah) slay the wicked (one).” This is the man. The text is referred to and applied by the apostle in 2 Thess. 2:8, “And then shall the lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the appearing of his coming.” The king is the same person who is designated “the wicked” in our version of Isa. 11 and “the lawless one” in the R.V. of 2 Thess. 2. It is a single individual, and “lawless” more precisely describes him than “wicked.” He is the man who defies all law, all authority of whatever sort, every object of reverence, every heathen god, yea the true god, in order to set up himself above all. Not merely does he trample upon law and gospel, but on God Himself, and his image he sets up in the temple of God. As he reigns over the Jews, it is

natural that for this he should choose the holy place in Jerusalem. “The prince that shall come,” or Roman emperor in the coming day, of whom you were hearing in Dan. 9 is not referred to in this passage. But the prince of Rome in the latter day is to support the lawless king of the Jews, as its chief had the guilt of gratifying the Jews in crucifying the true King. The Roman prince or emperor of that day will be a strong ally of the Antichrist that reigns over “the land.” Rome will then have got clear of the Popes; but instead of being better, it also will rush to perdition. The Roman emperor with his satellite kings will have turned upon Babylon, consumed her flesh, and destroyed her with fire.

Here evidently the Protestant school are at fault; for they cannot deny that it is absurd to suppose the Pope would lead his vassals to destroy Babylon, whether as “city” or as “whore.” Yet it is certain that the Beast and his horns are to do so. This is intelligible and plain when we believe that the Beast is the revived Roman empire, to which even the most corrupt religious power is obnoxious. The Beast in Rome is as wilful as the king in Palestine, and will not brook the harlot’s interference. Babylon is therefore destroyed by him and his horns. The Beast is the coming Roman prince. The empire will be reconstituted, as surely as anything, little as politicians expect it; and Dan. 7:8, lets us know somewhat of the progress to supreme power of a king with a small beginning, before whom three of the first horns were rooted up. It is not for any man to say which these are to be: least of all should we prophesy, who simply believe the prophets. Setting up to prophesy is a great sin, unless you are a prophet in the inspired sense. But it is a shame for a Christian not to believe those

whom such a man as king Agrippa durst not say he disbelieved.

Here, however, we have divine ground to know that the "little horn" of the west is at first to be a small power among the other ten; and that he only becomes great by destroying three of his contemporary powers. He becomes at last not only the possessor of these three kingdoms but the suzerain of all the rest. This is the form in which he becomes emperor of the western powers. It is not a profitable even if a hopeful inquiry, to conjecture the special power which thus from little becomes so ominously great. How sad for Italy if the bad pre-eminence is to be hers! But in that verse in the progress as clearly as the facts can make it is the future, as far as God has revealed in His wisdom. There will be, it would seem from Rev. 13, a sea of confusion for the powers, out of which the Roman empire will reappear.

In that day will be the startling new policy of the latter day, when the western powers will no longer be, as now, striving after a balance one against another. We are sufficiently familiar with the balance of power that has ruled in Europe for many hundreds of years, some trying to unite with others in order to hinder predominance. By-and-by that will be abandoned. God will allow Satan to have his own way for a short time; and all authority and power will be at the back of this chief, the emperor of Rome. At that time he is allowed to dictate to the whole of them. He wields the forces of all the western powers, among the rest, sad to say, of Great Britain. This country once came under that empire. When that empire will be restored, all the divided kingdoms will have their share in the awful catastrophe.

When the Roman prince shall go to support the Jewish king, against the king of the north, they must march at his bidding. It will be, in effect, with the Lamb that they have to fight, as Rev. 17 and 19 make plain. The king of the north is the leader of the north-eastern powers, though there appears to be another behind, which (Gog) is still greater than he, that comes up afterwards to his own destruction. The king of the north is so angry at the king of the south meddling with Jerusalem, that he leaves his campaign unfinished to punish the land of Egypt and its supporters. Half of Jerusalem shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city, as we have it stated in Zech. 14:2. It is expressly the coming of Jehovah's day when all nations gather against Jerusalem to battle. But there are very distinct events which occur within the compass of "that day." "For I will gather all the 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." A third part in all the land had been spoken of in Zech. 13:9, as brought through the fire, refined as silver and tried as gold; who call on Jehovah and are heard. He will say, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God. Thus while we find extreme trouble, no less clear is the work of God in a remnant.

It is the Assyrian or King of the north who acts as the overflowing scourge from without, and at first is successful against the wilful king and the apostate mass of the Jews. But God shields the righteous remnant. While the king of the north goes down to deal with the king of the south, the Lord appears to the destruction of

the wicked king, now reinforced by the beast from the west and his kings and their armies, which is described in Rev. 19. But it is omitted in Dan. 11, in order to pursue the conflicts of the north and the south about the land and its chief, and then to give the return of the king of the north into the land to find his dismal end, as the others had before.

“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him [the wilful king]; and the king of the north shall come against him [the same] like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass through. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown. But these shall be delivered out of his hand, Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon” (Dan. 11:40, 41). Beyond question he is not king of the glorious land, because be enters it as an enemy. Demonstrably it is the king of the north, and not the wilful king who is here before us. “He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries; and the land of Egypt shall not escape” (Dan. 11:42). This proves he cannot be the king of the south, because he attacks Egypt and spoils it. “But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps” (Dan. 11:43). The conquered are compelled to fight under his banner. “But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him,” that is, out of his own country. I have little doubt that the tidings are about the movement of the ten tribes, in whom God is working to return from these parts to the land of their fathers. They were transplanted by the king of Assyria of old. And now the

last holder of that power is on the alert to oppose their return. Much may be found in Isa. 10 which looks onward to the Assyrian in what Daniel calls “the last end of the indignation.” Sennacherib was but a type.

The dealings of God with the ten tribes come out in a very remarkable way, as we may read in Hosea 2 and Ezek. 20. It appears that God is to bring them through the wilderness again; where they are purified by a process of spiritual discipline through which the Lord will put them in those days.

Certain it is that tidings trouble the Assyrian out of the north and east, and he hurries back to Palestine. “And he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.” Already the proud powers of the west had gathered there for their doom, but this he does not consider if he knew it. Men are easily blinded by their passions; and there will also be the special delusion of Satan. The Lord shining from heaven will have destroyed Anti-Christ or the wilful king of the land, as he also destroys the beast solemnly, slaying the kings and their armies that came up to support him. The emperor of the west and his ally in the holy land are both cast alive into the lake of fire, called in the Revelation “the beast” and “the false prophet,” for this king in the land pretends to be a prophet as well as to be Messiah and God. Those at the head of the western powers as well as their armies that follow them are slain on the spot, to be judged another day when raised.

After this comes up the king of the north at the head of a vast force. Then shall the Lord go forth at the head of His people “as in the day of battle.” So we find it stated in Zech. 14:3. Before that it was the Lord coming from

heaven that dealt with the beast and the false prophet. Now He will have taken up His people Israel. It is the rod of His power from out of Zion, as Ps. 110 expresses it, dealing with the head of a great country, who comes to the same end as the beast and the false prophet before him. This is described in the end of Isa. 30. For the king also [not “yea”] it is prepared, that is, for “the king” in the land as well as for the Assyrian. You will see that from the beginning of Dan. 11:36, it is entirely a future time that is referred to. Never has been anything like it; but God here reveals that it must be.

Daniel 12

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people [the Jews without doubt]; and 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 (v.1). But notoriously since the time of the Babylonish captivity, no matter what trouble may have come upon them (and how many and varied their trials!) they have never been delivered. Nebuchadnezzar’s blows were heavy, and at length he carried them into captivity. Still more severe was it when Titus the Roman destroyed the city and sanctuary, and sold or scattered over all the western world in particular those whom he was weary of slaying. From another authority we have the retributive fact that Titus crucified the Jews (who had crucified their own Messiah), until there was not wood left capable of torturing another Jew. Then indeed they became the dispersed of Judah to the four corners of the earth. They attempted a stand in the days of Hadrian the Roman emperor and again they were slaughtered

without mercy, instead of being delivered. And so it has been since. But it remains to be verified in their last and sorest tribulation, “At that time thy people shall be delivered.” Can there be a doubt to any believer that Daniel reveals a deliverance never yet accomplished? Not, it is true, for the mass but for the godly remnant, “thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” This is assuredly before them. There may be only a little remnant left; but “the little one shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation: I, Jehovah, will hasten it in its time,” according to the words of Isaiah. The word of God ought to silence all difficulties. It is only the righteous who will then be delivered. But it is a deliverance by publicly displayed power in the earth, and in no way by the gospel, when the mass of the Jews shall be destroyed, only those delivered, who are then under the holy banner of God’s Messiah. At that time, as God says by Isaiah, “Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever.” Is this not Israel?

But we have more of detail here. The Jews in the land are the persons spoken about hitherto; but what about their brethren that were away and lost to their knowledge. Here we have a striking description of them — and an end put to that anomalous state. “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” It appears that up to that time their resurrection as a nation had not taken place. From the days of Hosea, and Isaiah, the figure of death had been used, and their rising again promised. So we find it elaborately in Ezek. 37. Many have applied this to the literal resurrection of the body, but when viewed in its

connection, it will be found to be only a figure of Israel re-appearing after a long slumber of death. In Ezekiel we hear of the valley filled with dry bones, and of the graves being opened, with other metaphors. It is the same truth as here; not the literal dead raised, but Israel coming up again and standing on their feet, an exceeding great army, whom Jehovah brings into the land of Israel. How could all this describe men rising from the dead? God will bring them out of their utter inaction and impenetrable obscurity.

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” Those who learn of God, and such as labour for God, shall not lose their reward. They shall shine as the stars, instead of changing like the moon. But it is “the many,” or wicked Jews, that are here intended, who are not really turned to righteousness. So that the true fact is, “they that instruct the mass in righteousness”; and they are rewarded for their fidelity, whatever the result may be.

In conclusion let it be observed, that it was the eleventh verse of this chapter our Lord referred to in Matt. 24:15: not Matt. 11:31 which had long before been accomplished, but a future act of similar kind which will bring down divine judgment signally, “And from the time that the continual [or daily sacrifice] shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand, two hundred, and ninety days.” The days here are, I believe, so many literal days. Three times and a half, or one thousand, two hundred, and sixty days, had been spoken of in Dan. 12:7, and in Dan. 7:25, as occupied with the evil wrought by the Beast or Roman Prince. To this thirty days are here

added. The Lord draws particular attention to the facts as calling for understanding on the part of the reader. It is not the Roman siege already accomplished according to Luke 21 as far as v. 24, though the times of the Gentiles are not yet exhausted. From v. 25 all is future. And the final siege will divide into two parts. The first shows us the king of the north partially successful. The second is marked by utter destruction; and no wonder. For the Lord will have taken His place at the head of His people, and sends the rod of His power out of Zion. “Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred, and five and thirty days” (Dan. 12:12).

This is blessing on the earth; but at the same time there is better still. For those saints like Daniel that have fallen asleep are not forgotten in that great day. “But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” Daniel, like all the dead that are Christ’s, will then obtain “a better resurrection.” “He hath swallowed up death” for ever. Christ’s victory is ours, for the heavens, as His victory triumphs over Israel’s enemies for the earth.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Daniel's Vision - Daniel 2, 7

The Bible Treasury, New Series, vol. 1:4, etc.

It may be well here to notice that the book of Daniel is divisible from its nature into two nearly equal parts. The first six chapters may be regarded as the first volume, the last six as the second. This is not at all an arbitrary division. It is one founded on the contents of the book. For the early chapters consist of visions which the Gentile king saw, or facts of a moral kind that befell one or other of the monarchs of Babylon vindicating God’s mind and sure judgment; whereas the last half of the book communicates visions which the prophet saw. Accordingly there is a marked difference between the two portions, even when they treat of the same subject matter. We see this clearly by comparing the seventh chapter with the second. They go over the same ground precisely, but in a different way. The earlier of the two gives the public history of the world as made known to the first man whom the God of heaven made monarch of all mankind, as well as of the lower creation (Dan. 2:37, 38); in the later (Dan. 7) we have a presentation of it to a saint, and details in relation to the Lord and the saints at the end of the age.

Nebuchadnezzar was not able to enforce his sway universally — man never is. But as far as the sovereign gift of God was concerned, it was wheresoever the sons of men dwelt. Cyrus, the Persian, extended his sway somewhat more; Alexander of Macedon, a great deal farther still (v. 39). But it was the Romans who did more than any before them. This was the last empire of the

four, to which God gave to conquer and rule the then known world, leaving outside of it races that were then uncivilized, our own included, but afterwards to become the most important peoples of modern times. The Britons up to the Christian era were rude and undisciplined. So were the Germans as wild and fierce as the Britons, and the Gauls little better, though successively more or less reduced by the Roman arms. You all perhaps know the famous Julius Ceasar visited our country in the south; as others followed and tried to conquer the Caledonians; but the mountains protected those hardy warriors, and the Romans had no particular sway beyond the well-known limits that sever the Highlands from the Lowlands.

However that may have been, here we have God giving in the first part of the book a comprehensive view of the great imperial powers in the history of the world. There was first the vigorous and splendid empire of Babylon. Man had sought and contended for undisputed and supreme power; but it had never been seen before. Thus we see in scripture the haughty ambition of the Assyrian power; and, even after its fall in the destruction of Nineveh, the rising up of the Egyptian, till Nebuchadnezzar overthrew it at Carchemish. Babylon had been but a subject province of Assyria till the Chaldees gave new courage and strength against its suzerain. For they were among the active enemies that destroyed Nineveh, combining with their Median and Persian allies. Whatever the pretension, the Assyrians did not succeed in getting a universal empire. Egypt sought the same thing afterwards, but Nebuchadnezzar crushed any such aspiration. God had decided to exalt a hitherto inferior kingdom. Who on earth then would

have thought of Babylon? Yet was it chosen of God to hold this new place of imperial power. It had under Merodach Baladan become independent no doubt, but it was soon put down again and made tributary to Assyria. Hitherto they appear to have been chiefly of Hamitic race; but some time before the Chaldees gave them a new impetus, coming down from the northern mountains, being of Japheth, from which source were the races that overspread Europe.

But whatever the providential course that wrought, the empire of the world depended on another and all-important turning point. Israel, Judah even, had proved utterly unworthy to be the leader of the kingdoms of the earth. They ought to have been a central witness as a people to all the surrounding kingdoms, a pattern of righteous government under the law of God that all the nations might take heed and see the blessing of having the Lord Jehovah for their God. All this, however, had completely and shamefully broken down before God allowed Babylon to be anything but a power aspiring to independence, but not yet succeeding even in this. When it rose for a little, it was friendly toward Judah, as we may learn from Isa. 39.

You remember how, after recovery from his sickness, Hezekiah the king displayed his treasures to the ambassadors from Babylon, and how the prophet was promptly sent to announce that all should be carried to Babylon without a remnant, and his own sons captives and eunuchs there. No such destiny had God allowed to the Assyrian, who on the contrary fell under an immense disaster, even the destruction of a mighty host of them, through the angel’s intervention. A hundred and eighty-five thousand in their camp were left dead corpses in a

single night. Do you ask how these facts were not acknowledged by the ancients? How could you expect a vainglorious and idolatrous king like Sennacherib to publish his own shame under the evident interposition of the living God?

These ancient despots were ready enough to blazon their successes on enduring pillars or other monuments of pride. Who ever heard of people disposed or ready to acknowledge their own defeats, especially when the defeat was of divine origin as in this instance? And if such be the might of Jehovah's angel, what of His hand? In fact, God then held things in the balance, until first Israel and then Judah proved altogether failing to present the picture of a righteous people here below. Had He continued to keep Judah after Manasseh and others, it would have been God supporting His own in the wickedness of the kings and the people. He cannot deny Himself. For those who know His nature and ways, it is impossible to conceive His doing otherwise than He did in their case; and so He warned them early. "Hear this word that Jehovah hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:1, 2). Who finds anything like this in the Vedas or the Sutras, in the Zend-avesta or the Yih-king, the Koran or the like?

The spurious sacred books of men rather flatter and puff up their votaries, while they harden their hearts to destroy better men who refuse their impostures. God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men that hold the truth in unrighteousness. He will not sanction but punish those

who couple His name with their own evil; and is it not most just? The Epistle to the Romans declares His grace to the ungodly, who, when they confess the name of the Lord, are brought into the richest spiritual blessing. But if they insult the God Who blesses them, what can be before them but righteous judgment? God is not mocked. So the gospel declares. But Israel is still kept as a people to be blessed of God. They are in a truly abnormal state, having been for many centuries without a king and without a prince, and without a sacrifice and without a pillar, and without an ephod and teraphim. What is there that remains to Judaism but dry and empty form? All they can do in Jerusalem is to wail. But this is not the spirit or language of those who have the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. These may and ought to confess their sins; but if they be not happy, there is something wrong with their faith or their state. They who believe the gospel have the deepest, highest, and simplest grounds for rejoicing in the Saviour. "Rejoice in the Lord always," said the prisoner from Rome; "again I will say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4); as he said of himself, "Yea, and if I be poured forth upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all" (Phil. 2:17).

Those that in faith of Christ read the New Testament, or the whole Bible (for one likes it as a whole and not merely its latest part), cannot but glean from it very considerable good. But if they practice what is contrary to the word, the Holy Spirit of God is grieved and therefore makes them miserable in the sense of their unfaithfulness; for He witnesses against their faults till they judge themselves before God. But their regular state is of one of peace and joy in believing.

When the children of Israel not only fell into wickedness against God, but their wickedness became systematic and complete as apostates from His name — not merely the people and the priests, but also the prophets and the kings such as we see them at the and of Kings and Chronicles, God gave them up to one of the most idolatrous of the Gentile nations; and Nebuchadnezzar by His appointment became “the head of gold” (Dan. 2:38). Undoubtedly Babylon was a great city from the earliest days, and “mad on her idols” (Jer. 50:38) as time went on. You may be aware that there was no idolatry in the antediluvian world. All flesh on the earth had corrupted its way, and the earth was filled with violence; but there was as yet no setting up of false gods. When, however, the heavens darkened against them and the waters of the great deep swept them away from before God, after this it was that Satan induced men to worship the hosts of heaven and deprecate the avenging powers of death. They thought nothing so reasonable as to propitiate the heavens that they might ever shine favourably, and the waters that they might no more overwhelm them in their resistless flood. Therefore religion took the form of paying honour to the higher powers of nature as well as of satisfying those lower. All immorality followed, and even contrary to fallen nature itself.

But God called His people Israel to bear witness to Himself as the One living God; and when departed into idolatry, He handed them over as captives to the vilest of men, setting up Babylon as the first of the great world-powers. It did not matter that they pretended to honour Jehovah along with their false gods; indeed such an alliance made things worse in His sight. However

solemn might be their zeal for His feasts, their tampering also with idols only heightened their guilt and His indignation. But the fact was undoubtedly, that they often showed themselves more zealous for the false gods than for the true God; as Christians now, when they take up bad doctrine are absorbed with the error, and seem to lose the very truth they once professed.

God then chose Babylon to be the vessel of supreme earthly power for the punishment of His guilty people. Its ruler was not only a king but a king of kings, an emperor in the fullest sense of the word. Such was Nebuchadnezzar. His thoughts, we are told, came upon his bed what should come to pass hereafter; and God was pleased to reveal the secrets of futurity. But this He did, so as to impress on the Gentiles that true intelligence is only with those that fear Himself. In vain had the king applied to the ordinary means of his empire in order to recall or understand the vision. He asked, as his wise men told him, what no king had ever asked before. By their confession none but He whose dwelling is not with flesh could give the answer. In his imperious style he demanded it on pain of death, and when his minister was about to put the cruel decree into execution, where did God raise up a witness? Among the captives of Judah. If power was vested in the Gentile who scourged a people more guiltily offensive to God, the light of God was vouchsafed to Daniel the captive. God prepared for others too a deliverer from the king’s wrath out of the king’s palace. Daniel was morally prepared, as we see him in Dan. 1 refusing the king’s dainties, which were invariably offered to idols. He was willing to die rather than dishonour the true God, Who gave him favour with his guardians, so as to abide

faithful. For “them that honour Me I will honour; and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed” (1 Sam. 2:30). The great principle here is that, if you are to have the secret of the Lord, you must look to Him and stand clear of the world, and especially of its religion which never is nor can be the truth. Do not expect to enjoy the holy light of God if for your ease or honour or safety you conform to what is of the world.

Accordingly Daniel was blessed remarkably. The king, though he had let slip the dream, was conscious of something altogether extraordinary in it, and in the furious haste of his rage apparently overlooked Daniel. Nor was it till the last moment that he went in and desired of the king that time be allowed him. This given, he betakes himself with his three pious friends to prayer. And God heard. “Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision” (Dan. 2:19). How cheering and beautiful the dealings of God! As Daniel in faith took the initiative, though all four joined in prayer, God singled out Daniel. What happens thereon? Does he at once rush off to the king? He turns to God in thanksgiving. “Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven” (v. 19). As he had looked to Him alone, so the glory he renders to God only. “Art thou able,” said the king, “to make known the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?” (Dan. 2:26). “There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days” (Dan. 2:28), answered the lowly prophet. And he adds, “But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living” (Dan. 2:30); yet was he the wisest then on the earth. But God was in all his thoughts, to Whom be glory. It was a wonderful

revelation for king Nebuchadnezzar; but think, my friends, what we have given of God in the whole Bible.

If you say that we have not Daniel, do not forget that we have a better than Daniel. A wiser and better than Daniel? Yes, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, that other Paraclete, the gift of Christ's redemption. The Holy Spirit had indeed wrought always, notably in Daniel and his companions; but there is now more, the personal presence of the Spirit of God to dwell with and in the Christian for ever, and in the assembly or church of God. See John 14:16, 17, 26; John 15:20; John 16:7-14. He abides, among other privileges of the utmost value, enabling the believer to enjoy all the revelation of God in the measure of his faith by grace. Oh! I what a wonderful boon for the Christian and for the church of God. See that you sink not below your privileges, but enter into them by faith; for it rests not on your own opinion or the authority of other men. There is much blessing in the communion of saints; but God's teaching must be individual. "They shall be all taught of God" (John 6:45).

Remember that the Lord lays down what has just been stated in His remarkable series of parables (Matt. 13). They represent the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and we are in it now. With the kingdom as here made known we have to do now on earth, while the Lord is exalted and hidden in heaven. Yet, though embracing so large a sphere, the Lord says in ver. 9, "Who hath ears to hear let him hear." In the Old Testament the call was to all Israel, to all the people; but now it is to each of us, to a Christian individually. Whatever comes, this responsibility in hearing and receiving the truth of God

is inalienable; and woe to such as deny or weaken it. You will do well to lay it to heart.

Daniel then repeats and interprets the dream to Nebuchadnezzar: a gorgeous image with golden head, with breast and arms of silver, with body and thighs of brass, and with legs of iron, ending in feet of iron and clay, smitten by a little stone which reduced the whole to powder; after which the stone that smote the image became a great mountain which filled the whole earth.

There is also evident deterioration, as the power is distant from its source, and becomes characterized with more of man lower and lower. It has nothing to do with the extent of empire, which, on the contrary, became greater successively. But Nebuchadnezzar in his imperfection acts absolutely, as only One can perfectly to God's glory. In the Medo-Persian empire, wise men counsel much; as in the Greek soldiers of fortune. Rome goes down to the dregs, and is governed instead of governing, so that power from God is swamped by the people as its source.

Not a word of Christ's suffering for our sins, nor of the gospel going forth in consequence to every creature; not a word of Christ's sitting as the rejected but glorified Lamb on the Father's throne, and of our meanwhile suffering with Him while He there waits. It is Christ coming judicially in power and glory, dealing with the fourth empire in its last divided state, as well as with all that remains of its predecessors. Only after this destruction does God's kingdom fill and rule all the earth.

When Daniel had the vision of these four powers as it is given in Dan. 7, they are presented to his eye as four

ravenous beasts. The vision as dreamt by Nebuchadnezzar was comparatively external, as man's eye might see; but the same objects seen by the prophet were according to what a spiritual understanding could enter into. The reader may find an analogy in the parables referred to, first some before all in public, then others to the disciples within the house (Matt. 13).

In Dan. 7 the prophet sees the four powers emerge from the sea or ungoverned mass of peoples: first, a lion with eagle's wings, which ere long is humbled; secondly, a bear which raised up itself on one side and had a measured voracity; thirdly, a leopard with four wings, and eventually four heads, which none of the preceding had; lastly, a beast to which none in the realm of nature answered, beyond all dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, with great iron teeth, devouring and destroying with contempt, diverse from all before, and at length with the peculiarity of ten horns, etc. And here, answering to the little stone of Dan. 2, we have the Son of man before the Ancient of days, receiving dominion, glory, and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Here we have the internal view according to God's mind, with yet more added to the interpretation.

But it may be remarked in passing, that the intervening chapters are as valuable for the world-powers, as Dan. 1 we have seen to be for the moral state of Daniel. Dan. 3 shows that the first recorded act of Nebuchadnezzar was to enforce the most senseless idolatry, on the king's authority, as a means of binding together the peoples, nations, and languages; which only brought out fidelity

at all cost on the part of the three Hebrew youths, the remnant, and the Gentile king's recognition of God their deliverer. Dan. 4 points to the Gentile power, after the seven times of a beast's heart, restored to praise the King of heaven. Dan. 5 is plainly the profaning Gentile judged in the destruction of Babylon; as Dan. 6 attests the Gentile that took the place of God (according to the law that passeth not) confessing the living God Who alone rescues from the power of the enemy, and His kingdom what shall not be destroyed and His dominion unto the end. It is in the then facts the prefiguration of Gentile power abased and of Jew saved at the end to God's glory and the triumph of His kingdom. For no prophecy of scripture is of private (of its own, its isolated) interpretation. Every one bears, all converge, on the grand object of God in the exaltation of the Anointed, at the close of man's busy restless day. The Holy Spirit in what is written never stops short of that conclusion, so worthy of God and His Son, so blessed for the universe and every creature in it, save those that have rebelled persistently against His will. No accomplishment in the past, even if true and important, exhausts the meaning or satisfies the divine end.

If ever man tried to govern the world of his day by his own will absolutely, it was "the head of gold"; and as he sinned in giving the glory not to the Most High but to himself, he was abased personally as no monarch or man was before or since. But mercy intervened in due time, and presented a hope "at the end of the days," which shall not make ashamed; when the nations shall be gladdened with His people and hope in Him Whom they together slew on the tree.

When the monarch took counsel with others, nobles or military chiefs, it was not really better. And when it was avowedly the people with or without an emperor, no tyranny so selfish, none so oppressive, nor so presumptuous against the true God. Never will the divine ideal be realized till He come again to reign, Whose right it is in the fullest way, divine and human, the Father of the age to come, the Prince of peace. All governments meanwhile are imperfect and provisional in His providence, though every soul in Christianity is bound to be subject, as unto higher authorities of this world. The existing authorities, whatever the form, are ordained of God; and he that ranges himself against the authority is a resister of the appointment of God. Yet consisting of sinful men, not one of any sort but has failed and sinned. How blessed to know that He, Who is coming to be King over all the earth, here lived and died and rose and ascended, not only the Lord but the Servant of all, and the Servant of God in serving all others not in love only but as the propitiation for our sins.

For indeed there is one Man, and one Man only, Who never thought of any other object but doing or suffering the will of God. It was therefore and necessarily one course of ever deepening humiliation, though moral glory, till He reached a, depth unfathomable save to Him. He it is Who, when He returns in power and glory, will take the whole world, as scripture fully shows. Meanwhile the Lord Jesus is very far from now governing the world. If He were, would He suffer Satan to be god and prince, as God’s word declares he is, even since Christ took His seat on the Father’s throne?

God's providential care does not fail of course, but what occupies Christ now is His loving ways with the church, and saving sinners to serve God and wait for Him from heaven. They are not of the world as He is not, and He is coming to receive them to Himself in the Father's house. This is far better. No matter how effectual and glorious the government of the world by-and-by when Christ reigns, it is not at all comparable to union with Him even now, and suffering with Him here below, and enjoying His love as Bridegroom for ever in heaven. This is what Christ is now carrying on in God's children, that, when He shall be manifested, we may be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

But returning to the first vision, we note that it was a great image, whose brightness was excellent, and the form thereof terrible. So it was seen by Nebuchadnezzar; whereas Daniel was given to behold the self-same first empire as a lion with eagle's wings. This power was not to endure long, because its continuance was measured, as Jeremiah (ch. 25:11, 12) had already predicted, by the captivity of Judah — in round numbers about seventy years. It was a power of peculiar majesty and splendour, Nebuchadnezzar being called "the head of gold," as it appears to be in part, if not mainly, from receiving his power as king of kings direct from God in a way that none else of these empires did afterwards, and allowing no human element to enfeeble his acting as so constituted. It was not won by conquest merely; it was God's immediate gift in his case, instead of being derived successively from others put down. Thus Cyrus was in many respects a greater man, and employed to do God's will on behalf of the Jewish remnant typically. Even Nebuchadnezzar was not a ruler

to be despised, being (I suppose) the greatest city-builder the world ever saw. There are to be seen countless bricks with his name on them still, although thousands of years have passed since they were made. There they remain, strong and recognizable as ever almost, circumstances being no doubt peculiarly favourable for their preservation. Nebuchadnezzar also had much energy and practical wisdom in many other respects, as in seeing to the water-ways of the great rivers, and the irrigation of his fruitful plains, in order that the country might flourish and the people be prosperous as it never was before.

Under his reign Babylon became by far the most powerful and celebrated city of that age on the globe. The country was watered by two great rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, rivers having their rise in Eden, where was the original Paradise of man; a remarkable proof that the deluge which left neither man nor beast on the earth did not blot out so much as some think. And as this great king actively provided work for the people, so also did he promote immense foreign trade. We read of “the cry of the Chaldees in their ships,” and their ports then became a source of enormous wealth and led to enterprise without end. Yet when the allotted hour struck, the golden city was razed, and, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, became in due time as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. Nor was there in all history so tragic a scene, if so righteous a fate, as that which is portrayed in Daniel’s account of her last night as an imperial power.

Then followed the second empire of the Medes and Persians, the captors of Babylon, set out by the image’s

breast and arms of silver, and by the bear that raised itself on one side: a kingdom of larger extent, but inferior in vigour and splendour, which lasted some 200 years before it fell before Alexander the Great, the founder of “another third kingdom of brass, which should bear rule over all the earth.” Who could have conceived of an empire so much wider than its predecessors, from the vain and contentious Greeks, led by the despised race of Macedonia, and their boy king? Up to that time what did they present but a cluster of jealous factious states, if one except Sparta, struggling for leadership, whatever their skill in arts or letters? The attacks of Darius and Xerxes at length united them for a while in patriotism with a humanly brilliant result. Only God could have led the king to dream, and the prophet to interpret, the Greek or Macedonian kingdom. Yet there is the living picture, the details of which cover the beginning of Dan. 8.

There is more particularity as we descend the stream of time; so false is the maxim of the rationalists who leave out God, or count Him such a one as themselves. How plainly does He put contempt on their assumption that a prophet anticipated no more than the imminent future! They are given as God pleased, Babylonians, Medo-Persians, Greeks, and Romans. The first or Babylonian no doubt was there before men; but which of the rest could have been foreseen even plausibly by a single soul on earth? Least of all would Nebuchadnezzar have conceived changes so beyond calculation.

We have seen the extreme improbability of a world-wide empire from Greece or its rude neighbor Macedon. What is the fact as to the Rome of Nebuchadnezzar’s day? The philosophers count its annals as for the most part

uncertain if not fabulous. Yet we need not doubt the city was then ruled by such petty kings as Italian towns could boast of old, kinglings indeed. Long before, we see a sort of analogy in the numerous kings whom the sons of Israel smote under Joshua (ch. 12), more than thirty. The kings were succeeded by consuls; dictators too ruled occasionally; decemvirs; and consular tribunes; till the chaotic condition morally and politically gave opportunity for an emperor, though still employing republican forms. Rome yet for hundreds of years had been engaged in constant struggling with its rival neighbours. Sabines, Volscians, Veientes, and the like. Finally they had their city taken and burnt by the Gauls; they further had to fight for their very existence with another competitor. And what think you, was the power that rose up to dispute in a life and death conflict with Rome? It was Carthage, an active mercantile city, exceedingly ambitious and aspiring, planted and colonized by the accursed race of Canaan.

From early days God had pronounced against that son of guilty Ham, who had indeed many sons; so that we may admire the mercy that all were not involved in similar ruin. It was righteous that God should mark His displeasure. Is there not a moral necessity to deal with men guilty of signal wickedness? Even an infidel husband would not condone his wife’s dishonour, or his son’s stealing the family’s money. If God must not punish iniquity, to let man off, what is it but desiring God to be less holy and righteous than the most worthless of mankind? If justice is not only free but bound to render according to the due desert of human deeds, is God alone to be debarred from that prerogative? In the three Carthaginian or (as they are called) Punic wars, the two

cities fought for supremacy, and so for life. Rome fought in Sicily, in Spain, and at length, after desperate defeats on her own soil, in Africa. In the last of the three Rome's stern determination was to destroy Carthage. The senate felt that thence emanated an enemy that would entirely frustrate all their hope of progress and conquest; and so the cry that Carthage must be blotted out arose accordingly. These wars stretched from long before Christ; but they were still longer from the time of Daniel who died an aged man more than five centuries before our Lord's birth. Yet even then all that so deeply concerned the last of the empires was made known and written down by God's inspiration. Here we have, from two separate aspects, a complete sketch-map of the world-powers that were to govern from first to last until the Lord appears in power and glory. Even so it is given clearly in the brief space of a few paragraphs.

Does any one object that there are few particulars? If time permitted and such were my present object, it would be easy to prove that they are many more than hasty men imagine. And is it observable that, just when we are brought down to the fourth empire, then these details are supplied in most abundance. What a rebuke to rationalism! And why was it so? Because the Roman was the empire in which Christ was to be born and be cut off; as that empire is to rise up again by Satan's power when He will shine forth in judgment from heaven. The Roman empire was to be expressly different from all its predecessors. The Babylonian lost its imperial power; so did the Medo-Persian; as well as the Macedonian or Grecian, never to rise again. Yet they were all to exist, and so they do still; but their dominion was to be taken away, as it is laid down in Dan. 7:12.

There was to be no revival of their imperial character, though a prolonging in life was given them, when their dominion was lost. Rome and Rome alone is the empire which must rise again, as we learn in Rev. 13 and more awfully than of old, quite falling in with what Daniel predicts of its end in chs. 2 and 7.

A great many Protestants think all this refers to the papacy. But the Pope essentially differs from a Roman emperor. The Popes have played a shameless imposture in Rome under the abased name of the Lord. Babylon is much more like their evil in pride and corruption and persecution than a Roman emperor. It was the Roman power that was responsible for the crucifixion of Christ under the apostasy of the Jew long before the first budding of the papacy. Pontius Pilate who condemned the Lord was the local expression of Rome in Judea. God as well as man always holds the governing power to be responsible for its public, deliberate, unrepudiated acts; as we see sometimes in international affairs. In the face of his conscience, of his conviction of Jewish unrighteousness, and of solemn warning, the governor condemned the Just; the Roman empire far from repudiating it accumulated its acts of enmity. This is the power whose head was wounded to death but healed to universal astonishment on earth; and it emerges not only from the sea but from the abyss, the historical fact being given of the little horn in Dan. 7 as the character is in Rev. 13, 17. It “was, is not, and shall be present.”

Nothing so wonderful in all past history as that which is predicted in the Book of Revelation, as for instance this three- fold condition and its moral source at the end, as well as God’s judgment of it: “the beast that was, is not (which we can now say still applies), and shall come

forth out of the bottomless pit" (as Christ Who died and rose will be present from heaven). The first points to a condition of past existence, then to its non-existence (we know it was destroyed by the Goths and other wild races, chiefly the Teutonic tribes of that day), and lastly to its future re-existence. The moment of its revival surely hastens. Already a great step is taken toward the re-appearance of that empire. Italy has become a kingdom; and not only so but a great power is Italy now considered. I cannot doubt that it is destined to become still greater before the sure execution of God's judgment on the peculiar iniquity of the empire. Scripture cannot be broken; and we find that which has been said fully proved in Daniel and the Apocalypse. The outline was manifested clearly enough in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and yet more in the vision of Daniel. Then above all in the Revelation our attention is drawn to a principle of the greatest moment. Most is said throughout on the fourth or Roman empire. Thereon the Spirit of God dwells most, because of its collision with the Lord Jesus. That would have seemed most difficult, humanly speaking: to deal most fully with the most distant is not the manner of man, who would have naturally said as much as possible about Babylon; then, if at all, more hazily about Persia, and not a word could have been said of the two western empires.

Again, how could man prognosticate that only four world-powers were to rise? There was ample ambition of founding more. Even in the middle ages Charlemagne tried to set up such an empire and failed, with the strongest desire to succeed. Then a military genius arose in this century no less ambitious, and never scrupling at violence or corruption to effectuate his

schemes; Napoleon Bonaparte essayed it. He sought, if ever man did, a universal empire, but notwithstanding all means, skill, and opportunity, he broke down utterly in the attempt. God employed Britain to smash all Napoleon's hopes. Nelson with his fleet completely crushed his navy, and on the field of Waterloo Napoleon saw his star set forever. There was to be no new world-power, though all know of course there are those who style themselves emperors in a quite subordinate sense.

But now what is the "little stone cut without hands," which at length becomes a mountain? Perhaps all my readers are accustomed to hear this referred to the Lord gradually making good the kingdom of God. Undoubtedly He will come in that kingdom of God when the hour strikes. But take care that you understand its true force. Excellent men will tell you that it will be through the gospel — the kingdom of God introduced by the Spirit. Allow me to ask this, Does the gospel smite kingdoms of the world? Does the Holy Spirit by the word destroy powers that be? The first action of the "little stone" is to fall upon the feet of the great image, and the effect of that decisive blow will be to scatter its fragments like chaff of the summer threshing-floors.

You know God's gospel is the revelation of Christ applied by the Spirit of God to save sinners, Jews and Gentiles that believe. But the "little stone" on the contrary symbolizes a power, small in appearance, which at once deals destructively with all that is high, great, and strong on the earth, at the first blow reducing the entire imperial system to powder. Consequently the attempt to make the gospel out of it wholly fails. The word of God is by the Lord compared to the seed that, sown in the good ground, bears fruit more or less abundantly, as a germ

of life by the Holy Spirit. It is plain that the “little stone” is not the gospel or the church, but the kingdom of God which Christ enforces when he returns. Conclusive and clear is the proof of this from the comparison of the closing scenes in Dan. 2 and the corresponding part of ch. 7. It is not only an intervention from on high, but of a judicial and even executory character. The gospel is no doubt of God, but it is His sovereign grace based on the cross of Christ. Whereas the “little stone” smites the powers of the world, the mightiest then reigning no less than the remnant of all that preceded, and at once crushes them to atoms.

What can be more in contrast with the gospel? After this the “little stone” grows and becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth. The gospel never smote any earthly power, never will destroy a single king or kingdom. God’s work in the gospel is to reconcile the sinner to Himself and render him meet for heaven. Can one conceive things more different? All Christians profess to believe the Lord Jesus is coming again. What to do? Is it not to judge the quick and the dead? Even the common creeds of Christendom admit that; Copts and Jacobites, Nestorians and Greeks, as well as Latins and Protestants of every variety, confess this truth. They read, say, and sing that Christ is coming to judge, not the dead only but the living also; and these before the dead, we may add.

It is easy to theorize, but scripture shows Christ to reign a thousand years, and to judge the quick. The judgment of the dead follows, as Rev. 20 teaches, and this after the heavens and the earth flee away; whereas the quick He will judge on this earth. Will not Christ’s feet stand on the Mount of Olives? and when He stands there, will not

the mountain be split in two? So Zech. 14 declares. Yet there it is still, as solid as ever; but it will be cloven yet, giving testimony to its Maker and to the word of God. Who can wonder when the Creator stands there in power and glory? When He came the first time, it was in grace and humility, bearing all and enduring all, when He deigned to die a sacrifice to God, yet at the hands of His own creatures, that their sins might be blotted out. Then it was all pure and sovereign grace, in which He bore God's judgment of our evil that we who believe might be delivered from wrath. But when He comes again, it will be in judicial power and glory. And will He come alone? His own glorified hosts will follow Him — they that are Christ's (Rev. 17:14; 19:14).

Carefully avoid the new-fangled notion that seems to please some in the present day, that none are with Him but "superior Christians." I have generally found those men when weighed sadly wanting. They and their set are no doubt excellent in their own eyes; but God forbid that a true-hearted saint should regard Himself as better than others. We are debtors to God's grace in Christ alone for salvation; and we have abundant reason to humble ourselves before God while here below. There is doubtless power in the Spirit of God to keep us; but as a matter of fact, in many things we all stumble. Let us look to Him Who alone can keep us from falling. It is a strange delusion, by way of what is called "deepening the spiritual life," that any can jump into holiness practically; and why connect this idea of themselves and the like with the translation of the saints to heaven at Christ's coming?

For such self-flattering expectations scripture gives no warrant. "We shall not all sleep," says the apostle, "but

we shall all be changed in a moment," and the same moment. The living saints found when our Lord comes are not to die. The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, not some of us but all, shall be caught up together with the risen to meet the Lord. This is the mystery as it is called, or New Testament truth, added to that of resurrection revealed in the Old Testament.

When Christ comes and those that are His along with Him from heaven, He will smite the powers in open blasphemous rebellion (Rev. 19), and call all the nations to account, as He will in Matt. 25:31-46. The two leaders civil and religious will be thrown living into hell. Their followers and kings and armies will be slain on the spot. Did you ever realize who these will be? The flower of the civilized world, the rulers and hosts of the then kingdoms of the west. They will have hastened at the Emperor's demand to protect the Jews and their king in Jerusalem. The Jews who rejected the true Christ will then have received the Antichrist. Then will all the powers of western Europe be involved in the same sin. Balance of power is long gone. The satellite kings "have one mind, and shall give their power and authority to 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; and they that are with Him (the glorified saints) are called, chosen, and faithful." "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (Rev. 17:13, 14, 17).

There will remain for divine judgment the last king of the north (Dan. 11:40-45); and after him Gog from the land of Magog, Prince of Rosh (Russia), Meshech (Muscovy), and Tubal (Tobolsk), the power that makes

the king of the north mightier than his own strength could command. These shall all perish in due time after the Lord has appeared: all must receive the due reward of their deeds. Is this not as far as can be from the kingdom of God in spiritual power such as we know under the gospel? But it is in full accord with that which is the true meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and of the prophet's interpretation, as well as of his own visions in ch. 7 and elsewhere. The destruction of "the beast" and other powers which will then be in a state of rebellion must be fulfilled at the end of this age.

And what is preparing for an end so awful? The superstition and the infidelity of the day: each provokes the other beyond measure. Where are these men so different in appearance and pretension, yet alike unbelievers, the one sanctimonious, the other profane? They are everywhere; their name is Legion. You have them both here in your quiet little town, lively and strong. But it does not matter where they may be: God is not mocked, and they are His enemies. How they swarm in the great city, the metropolis of the kingdom! It is not so strange that they often join arms, sometimes are combined in the same persons. Such are those who dare to say that God did not inspire the Bible, and deny him who wrote this book to be "Daniel the Prophet," although the Lord declares so it was. They would make it a romance written hundreds of years after his death. Whoever so speaks, and whatever he pretends to be, no orthodox believers should shrink from denouncing such a man as infidel. They are corrupting this country and America, as others have Holland and Germany.

But let it be understood that no mistake is greater than to suppose Roman Catholic countries free from

scepticism. No country more abounds in infidelity than France and other Popish lands. The women may go to mass and confession, and some of the men may follow occasionally; but this is no disproof of their infidelity. And the issue will be (spite of all forms, and processions, and what not) the falling away or apostasy, as the apostle told the Thessalonians. The open abandonment of the gospel is at hand. Then man under Satan's power will become the object of universal admiration and worship to the exclusion of God; and this will bring down the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. So He in Dan. 7 answers to the "little stone" of ch. 2. He is seen coining to the Ancient of days, and receiving dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. It opens with the execution of consuming judgment on earth, and most unsparingly where most light had been given and given up.

Is it possible to find a scene in stronger contrast with grace? The gospel of God's grace is founded on Christ's first coming, and on His death, resurrection, and ascension; for His object was atoningly to suffer to God's glory for sins. When He comes again, it will be as the "little stone cut without hands," wholly apart from human means to destroy the kingdoms (then apostate), and to establish God's kingdom in power, righteousness and glory over the earth. He will appear from heaven, and (falling, as we see in Dan. 2 and 7, on the Roman empire) will efface all the authority set forth by the image or by the four beasts. The beast (or he who then shall wield the power of the fourth empire revived) and the false prophet are to be consigned to the burning flame. That is, the imperial as well as the religious chiefs are to meet this unspeakably frightful doom, while their

adherents are slain (Rev. 19:19-21). Besides, judgment falls on all the other elements. “Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together.” So too is it in Daniel’s vision of the beasts whose dominion had been taken away and their lives prolonged (Dan. 7:12). There is no sparing of evil longer. Jehovah reigns, and the earth rejoices. It is the Son of man Who makes good the kingdom over all the earth, as His first advent gave grace its scope for heavenly glory, which the Christian and the church should enjoy now in faith.

The Eastern Little Horn - Daniel 8

The Bible Treasury, New Series 1:86, etc.

We have had before us most prominently the West, which among the earthly powers was the chief object for the prophet's contemplation as unveiled by the Spirit of God in the second and the seventh chapters of Daniel. This is the fourth and last Empire of man, and its revival under Satan's power, the occasion which will bring the Lord Jesus from heaven (2 Thess. 2:8, Rev. 17, 19) to the judgment of the world, and to the setting up of what is called in the Revelation, "The world-kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. 11:15). Thence we see the Christ has not yet received His world-kingdom. It is clear that the state of things proclaimed under the seventh trumpet has not arrived, but assuredly it will in due time. It is plainly to be at the end of the present age or dispensation, which is followed by a new "age to come" before the everlasting state.

Now you will find in all these visions of the Book of Daniel, whether made to Nebuchadnezzar or vouchsafed to the prophet, that they look forward to that epoch or what is called in a later chapter, "the time of the end." As the additional visions are given, further light is afforded or there would be no reason for giving them at all. They all, more or less, evidently end with divine judgment on the power to which they refer. Further it is clear that the vision of which we have been reading in Dan. 8 is of a comparatively limited nature. There is a preliminary review of the second and third empires; and you may wonder why a branch of the third should stretch away to the still future time when the Lord

comes in judicial power and glory. But the reason of this will appear presently. You will do well to remember the truth already stated, that these successive world-powers or empires were superseded by one another; but there is no intimation that they lose their existence when they lose their supreme power. They retained a subordinate place after they were subdued; but they are shown to have a continued existence still. This indeed is distinctly stated in Dan. 7:12: “As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.”

Here then we now hear of the Persian empire; where we would draw attention to the fact that Persia is no longer as in Dan. 7 shown as a bear. There the moral judgment of the Holy Spirit expressed itself symbolically about it and the other powers to Daniel. Nor is it either the arms and breast of silver, such as Nebuchadnezzar saw. The glory of Persia is somewhat diminished in comparison with the kingdom of Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar; but still it was a kingdom of great energy and conquest, especially at first. But why is it here changed from the bear of Daniel in the seventh chapter to be the ram as portrayed in Dan. 8:2. It would appear to be for a very interesting reason. The second and third kingdoms were friendly to Israel in a way that neither Babylon nor Rome could pretend to be. Rome has hitherto and always been the enemy of the Jews. It was Rome that also razed the city and the sanctuary of Jerusalem to its foundations. None save the Edomites have been such unrelenting persecutors of the Jews as the Romans. And so the Rabbins identify Edom of old with Rome in modern times as the unsparing enemy of God’s earthly people repudiated for a while for their sins.

No doubt the guilt of Israel was inexcusable and shameless, but God has not for ever cast off His people whom He foreknew; He may be indignant, but always has pity for them; and He is looking onward to the day when He will gather Israel out of the lands from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Whatever God gives, He stands to it; and sooner or later, when the day comes for His grace to work according to His promise, His call will indeed be effectual. The Jews are enemies now as regards the gospel, and grace brings Gentiles meanwhile to God. But as regards election, they are beloved on account of the fathers. For as the Gentiles once were disobedient to God but now become objects of mercy through Jewish unbelief, even so these were disobedient to your mercy, that they also may become objects of mercy. For God shut up all unto disobedience that He might have mercy on them all. And so, when the fullness of the Gentiles is come in, all Israel shall be saved {Rom. 11:26}. There ought to be no doubt that their call was from God and in the end sure. Every Christian knows it for himself and for the church; but he ought in no way to question it for the Jew. Rom. 11:29 is said by the apostle himself expressly about Israel, though the principle is no less true of ourselves, who should never forget His people, and God’s mercy yet in store for them.

Now there was exceptional kindness on the part of Medo-Persia; and this is seen from the first in the conduct of Darius, who was the first actor of that empire recorded in this book (Dan. 6). If Babylon was the power which became the enslaver and jailor of the Jew, Cyrus was the characteristic restorer of the Jews to their own

land; and this in the very first year of his reign. It is clear that the prophecies of God had a powerful influence on him. It is true he did not know God; but God knew him, and this struck him immensely. He was not disobedient to the vision, as some men nominally Christian are today. Isaiah wrote not his chs. 44, 45 in vain even for him. Daniel too was famed among Jews and Gentiles before that day; as the prophets were acquainted one with another, and cherished the highest reverence for such as had gone before. It is only a conceited age that raises up its petty head, and shakes it at the word of God. But what opens the door of true intelligence in the scriptures is on the contrary faith, and as a consequence love for everything of God.

Christ personally is the living bread that came down out of heaven that the eater might live for ever; and such is His written word, the sustenance of that life: not bread, but God's word; and in such a way as cannot be destroyed, though in detail it may by man be injured as other things. How perverted has Christian baptism been! and the Lord's supper, in what divergent ways, how deeply! And what shall we say of priesthood, ministry, the church itself, from early centuries? So the word of God may be perverted through either ignorance or craft; not only if truly rendered, it stands, but nothing can be conceived so admirable. Even the scholars of the world cannot rest without being occupied with it. Who in Christendom but literateurs care about the Vedas, or the Avesta? the Yik-king, the Shooking, or the She-king? or about the Koran if we come later? Yes, the remarkable fact confronts us of mere rationalists, who believe in nothing of the Christian truth, spending their lives on the Bible, Old Testament and New. A few scholars may

look into the heathen books to see what were the beliefs of ancient races; but think of the many baptised sceptics who give themselves up to the life-long study of the Bible! No doubt they do not lack boldness in treating of the holiest themes; nor are they indisposed to show by their peremptory decisions what wonderful critics they are, as well as the strange shortcomings of others who differ or are opposed to them. What a contrast with the inspired, both in communicating their messages and in estimating the prophets of old!

However, be this as it may, Dan. 7 sets before us a bear and a leopard as the symbols of the Persian and the Macedonian empires, which Dan. 8 represents under a ram and a he-goat. The reason for this change we take to be the close bearing of the latter chapter on Israel, and the kindness shown by those empires in their early days. Cyrus and Darius Hystaspes stand out prominently as their benefactors; and Alexander the Great paid them marked honour, as is known, whether or not we receive the account Josephus gives of the High Priest meeting Alexander and the reverence paid him by the conqueror.

Although viewed before God the Medo-Persian and the Macedonian were but “beasts,” and no better than the Babylonian before and the Roman after, still God did not fail to appreciate kindness done to His chastened people. Hence the change of the symbols in Dan. 8 compared with 7. In this special aspect they are presented as clean animals. First, Medo-Persia is now viewed as a ram, and, secondly, Greece as a he-goat. Whatever might be their consideration of the afflicted Jew, there was no mercy, nor lack of ambitious will one toward another. We have the ram as remarkably described now as the bear had been in the preceding

vision. It was necessary to intimate a composite power. In Dan. 7 the bear raised itself on one side. In Dan. 8 the ram had two horns, both high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. Nothing like this was the case with the eagle-winged lion of Babylon. Notably distinct was the Greek he-goat, first with one conspicuous horn between his eyes, and later, when it was broken, four of mark (answering to the four heads of the leopard) toward the four winds of the heavens. Still more different was the Roman beast, with its ten horns, and a little one that subsequently overthrew three of the first horns.

Plainly then we herein see the peculiarity of Medo-Persia thus described as a twofold imperial power, and so contrasted with the one before, and the rest that succeeded. This quality belonged to it only. Nor this only: for, as we have read, it is stated carefully that one of the high horns came up after the other, and that the later one became the higher. This was the Persian element, which, though later, surpassed the previous Medish state. There was nothing similar in any other of these world-powers.

Care is taken that one cannot among the nations and kingdoms of the earth find anything really analogous but the Medo-Persian kingdom, thus assailed and superseded by Alexander the Great. He of course is the he-goat's notable horn. All is contrast. No other horn comes up to dispute with that conspicuous horn. Yet was it broken, as neither Nebuchadnezzar was, nor Cyrus. Alexander did indeed come from the west as one that touched not the ground, and in the fury of his power ran upon the hitherto mighty Persian power that pushed westward, and northward, and southward. Yet in the

strangest and saddest way Alexander's course was cut short as a young man of thirty-two, in the midst of far-reaching plans beyond all his predecessors. And his generals began, as they often do, to fight one with another, if one could not inherit all, which should have the largest possible share of the broken Macedonian or Greek empire. After a few years' conflict emerged four kingdoms, four notable horns. Give if you can, out of any history, anything that so clearly answers to the vision. The facts are notorious and exactly correspond with the prophecy, and as contrasted as can be conceived with other conquerors in the East.

But two of these four horns are specified, and in a continuous manner beyond example in Dan. 11, whereas in this ch. 8 one only is selected. Why? Because of its bearing upon Israel and their worship in contempt of their God, Who at the set time ("the end of the indignation") will surely judge it. It is not at all here a question of Christianity but of the ancient people, already captive and scattered, a revelation for whose instruction and consolation was given to the prophet. There was then no such thing as the church as we know it now. Only one people had the law of God, yet broken and unhappy, because they had been guilty and even apostate people, priests, and kings. But still they had most of the Old Testament scriptures; and God looked on them with matchless patience. So He is still doing with fallen Christendom in spite of those men whom it ill becomes to fight against Him and His word. And while the Gentiles are being called by the gospel, God has not done with Israel, who are, spite of all, beloved for their fathers' sake. "The last end of the indignation" is an instructive statement in this very chapter, which shows

how God, while cutting off the transgressors of Israel, will yet assuredly accomplish the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For God cleaves to His word and His oath, though we may have to wait for the set time. Israel will yet awake to far greater love than that of the fathers, and on a deeper basis. They are beloved of Christ, and will be brought into living relationship with Jehovah under the new covenant.

It is clear that this time is not yet come. But all these visions bring us down to the border of that wondrous change, if they do not prepare the way for it. Accordingly, toward the end of Dan. 8 in the interpretation given to Daniel, we find not the date named in the vision, which appears to be already verified under Antiochus Epiphanes, the type of the coming foe, with details about this closing personage. The main interest centers in what is still future. There is no excuse for turning back on the past after so close an intimation from Him Who knows. Full information is given immediately after from verse 19, where we read "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the latter time (or end) of the indignation." What was the beginning of the indignation? What does "the indignation" mean? It is first employed, similarly applied as far as one knows, in the prophet Isaiah, as you may verify for yourselves in Dan. 10 especially: God's holy displeasure at the persistent idolatry and corruptions of Israel. Therefore did He at length let the Gentiles not only master them but use their victory to expel them from the land. The "end of the indignation" will terminate in their restoration inwardly and outwardly, as all the prophets testify. It has nothing at all to do with the Christian or the church.

Christian interpreters rack their wits in vain to bring in their own relations with God and His Son; and as the Papist tries to fasten on Luther or Mahomet, so do Protestants on the Pope. But this controversial style is a wholly unintelligent way of reading prophecy. Besides, it panders to the selfish and schismatic leaven which alike produced, and is perpetuated in, the anomalous sections of the Christian profession. We surely ought to search and understand the scriptures, having the Holy Spirit to this end among others; and we are bound not to force or twist them, either for outdoing others or for our own comfort. In the gospel we have got good measure, well pressed down, and running over. Being thus blessed as we are in the Lord Jesus and by His perfect work, we ought to be under no temptation to take anything away from Israel. There they are through idolatry first, and rejecting the Christ last, in the worst plight possible, scattered and banished till the latter day, when they must pass through a tribulation unparalleled; and for what could it be but because of national apostasy? They will once more return to idols, little as they think it, and set up “the abomination of desolation” in the sanctuary. They refused the Christ; they will receive the anti-Christ as the retribution. God never chastises nor does He ever give His people up to their enemies, except they flagrantly depart from Himself. Then His aggrieved love proves that He is a jealous God, and has indignation against the enormities of His people. Judgment begins there.

What has all this to do with the Christian or with the church? It was through Israel’s fall that salvation came to the Gentiles, but even thus ultimately to provoke Israel to jealousy, and to display at the end the saving

unfailing mercy of God. You may tell me Christians are often unworthy in their ways; and so they indeed are. You may tell me the church has been quite as guilty as ever Israel was in the past; so much, that one, who knew what it was to be alternately a Protestant and a Papist and a freethinker, ventured to say, “The annals of Christendom are the annals of hell.” He who so spoke never knew the Lord in any of his phases; yet his words do not misrepresent Christendom. He was a brilliant historian, but not having the Son of God, he therefore had not God. He could see evil, but knew neither grace nor truth. Thus and there it is, that man’s judgment comes into such collision with everything divine, while believers are bound to judge the wickedness of a hollow Christian profession. “Everyone that is of the truth heareth My (Christ’s) voice.” The only true God is faithful and true, and having given us grace and truth in the Lord Jesus, He calls us to be decided and uncompromising before the world. Begotten by the word of truth, it becomes us to be ever careful about the truth; but where we are not assured of it from God, it were well to wait in silence, yet earnest to learn and confiding in His love.

To resume then, this power that stood up (one of the four from out of the broken Greek empire) has its representative at the end of the indignation. “The ram which thou sawest having two horns; they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Greece (Javan); and the great horn that was between his eyes is the first king,” Alexander of Macedonia, surnamed the Great.

Now that being broken, whereas four stood up in its stead, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation,

but not with his power. And at the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors shall have come to the full, a king of bold countenance and understanding dark sentences (or riddles) shall stand up. Who are “the transgressors” in this or in other scriptures? The reprobate among the Jews; and why? Israel only had the law of God given direct to themselves, the violators of which are therefore termed “transgressors.” How does scripture describe Gentiles? “Sinners of the Gentiles,” not transgressors. We of the nations were led away to dumb idols, howsoever we might be led, as the apostle describes it; and by the gospel we were brought straight from idolatry to Christ. Gentiles did not pass through the kind of legal apprenticeship which the children of Israel knew. It is plain that the correct designation of our once heathen state is therefore “sinners of the Gentiles.” Scripture is more accurate than theology or any human authority; and to unlearn current phraseology in divine things is an invaluable Biblical exercise.

The text intimates here that the Jews are at the end of the age to become worse than even now. So said Isaiah and the prophets generally; as our Lord also in the parable, as we may call it, of Matt. 12:43-45. The unclean spirit, which had gone out of the man, but returns to his house, empty, swept, and garnished, takes with him to dwell there seven other spirits worse than himself, and thus the last condition of that man becomes worse than the first. So shall it be to this wicked generation also. “Empty, swept, and garnished” had been, was then, and is now the condition of the Jews. In striking contrast with their ways of old, there has been no idolatry among them for more than 2,000 years. God’s discipline in sending them to Babylon suppressed

their inveterate love of strange gods, which were no gods but demons. As a clever Hebrew apologist admitted in the Quarterly Review some few years ago, the Jews that forced Pilate to crucify our Lord, Pharisees, priests, and all, were just like the Jews of the present day. Granted; and therefore did our Lord characterize them as “this wicked generation”; but as He said elsewhere, “This Generation shall not pass away until all these things shall be fulfilled.” It is still the same moral state, till all that the prophets predicted of “the end” be accomplished. This Christ-rejecting generation that crucified Him is going on still; there is the same self-will, the same enmity, against Him Who came to die sacrificially. There is no change for the better, no repentance to believe. The house is still “empty, swept, and garnished.” The Holy Spirit does not dwell there. Consequently the Jews, though fairly moral and clear of idolatry, have no life Godward, and lie open to the final delusion. So the Lord declared there is a sad change coming at the end; and that change is parabolically described by the old unclean spirit accompanying the seven spirits worse than himself, when he returns for the close. How little the Jews believe they are going to establish idols again! Yet this is as certain from various scriptures as anything can be, notably Dan. 9:27, and Dan. 11:38, 39, which await their fulfillment. Thus the last state will be worse than the first. But only at that time will deliverance come, as well as destructive judgment for “the many.”

So shall it be also to that wicked generation. Here the transgressors shall come to the full, and God allows the Gentile scourge in “a king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences,” who shall stand up.

And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall... corrupt the mighty ones, and the people of the saints. Scripture describes Israel according to their privileges and moral responsibility, even when they are as far as possible from answering to them. And through his policy also shall he cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he will magnify [himself] in his heart; and by peace (or prosperity) will corrupt many; he will also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand (Dan. 8:19-25). This evil agent is not the wilful king or Antichrist who is to reign in Palestine in that day. It is another king that from without opposes Antichrist, is no less wicked, and perishes as awfully. He is the same who in the last prophecy of Daniel (11:40-45) is called “the king of the north.” Many no doubt are aware that out of Alexander’s broken empire arose the kingdom of Syria which fell to Seleucus Nicator. Of that line Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. 11:21-32) persecuted the Jews and insulted the God of Israel beyond all others, and sought to destroy the Jews and their religion. Who was raised up as a stay in that day? A great empire? Nothing of the kind; the Maccabees who knew their God and were strong and active. This movement among the Jews, mingled as it was, is described in Dan. 11:32-35; but we need no more now, as it will come before us later.

The Only Key to Daniel's Prophecies

The Bible Treasury, New Series 5:237

An examination by W. Kelly of a book of that name by W. S. Auchincloss.

This is a bold title, but such a thing is not so uncommon across the Atlantic. Dr. Sayce counts it “a great advance on previous interpreters” to make these prophecies “end with the beginning of the Christian Church, instead of lengthening out into a still unknown future.” Most Christian students in Europe and elsewhere will agree that neither Mr. A. nor the Assyriologist know anything of value about the matter. If it were not that Mr. A. sincerely believes that the book is “a most important part of the word of God,” his “only key” should have no notice here; if he really understood Daniel, he would find it incomparably more important than all he sees of it as yet.

Perhaps his strange omission of Dan. 2 accounts for much. Nebuchadnezzar’s first dream, to say nothing of the second in Dan. 4, is of immense moment. There the four Gentile empires or world-powers, according to the prophet’s interpretation, are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; paralleled by Daniel’s own vision of the same powers, as beasts out of a great sea: all at the end of the age rising up into collision with the Son of man coming in power and glory to establish His kingdom universal and everlasting. By attempting to squeeze all this into near about the First Advent, the book is shorn of its chief value. Every vision goes on to that future judgment of the quick. It is the Lord’s judicial dealing with the last phase of the powers, which

as God's first act shall be destroyed, and then "the whole earth" is to be filled forthwith with His kingdom.

Neglecting Dan. 2, Mr. A. makes a false start with Dan. 7, in taking the lion as not Babylon but the Medo-Persian empire; then the bear as Greece. What a blunder! In the leopard he gets right as the Macedonian or Greek. But his notion about the ten horns of Rome how grotesque! 1 Marius, 2 Sylla, 3 Pompey, 4 Crassus, 5 Julius Caesar, 6 Brutus, 7 Casaius, 8 Octavius, 9 Antony, 10 Lepidus. For the ten horns are concurrent vassal monarchs supplanted in part by a subsequent little one who becomes sovereign of all, and by his audacious wickedness brings down final and fiery destruction on all, and makes open the way for the public kingdom in righteousness of the Son of man, when the saints of the high or heavenly places shall take the kingdom. For the saints are to reign with Christ. To apply this to the First Advent, or to events since, is preposterous. It is the same fourth or the Roman Empire, which played its part in crucifying the Lord of glory, which (Rev. 12; 13; 17; 19) is to rise again by Satan's energy, but for perdition. Then the Lord will take His great power and reign, instead of the kingdom of God to faith as now, when all enormities are done in the world unjudged of Him. To make this accomplished A.D. 70 or so is to bring Daniel's prophecy and all others into contempt. It is to be carried away by a human idea. See p. 20.

Mr. A. is less astray as to Dan. 7 in the preliminary part; but he is wholly wrong as usual in the most momentous conclusion of the matter, of which Antiochus Epiphanes was but a type of "the king of the north" in the latter day, the antagonist of the Roman Emperor about Jerusalem and its sanctuary. Both are to perish with

their adherents, successively, at our Lord's coming again. What in the past can compare with this? Then, and not till then, will come the days of heaven upon the earth. Earthly judgments precede them; for "when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9).

The latter rain of the Spirit will as it were fertilize it. The gospel does not, nor is it its nature to, govern the world; and the so-called church (no matter which) has made an awful mess in attempting it. Its true work is to gather saved souls out of it for Christ and heaven.

Similarly Mr. A. is entirely ignorant of the true bearing of the last of the seventy weeks. For the Roman siege and subsequent trials are supposed to have taken place before v. 27. After the 69 weeks began a great gap created by Messiah's cutting off; and the last verse (Dan. 9:27) is about "a" (not "the") covenant for seven years, which the future chief of the Roman empire will make and break, depriving the Jews of their rites; whereon the great catastrophe follows (Dan. 9).

The prophecy in Dan. 11 is similar: only it is not the western power that figures; but the wilful king, the Antichrist in Palestine "in the time of the end," and his enemy, "the king of the north," the then monarch of Turkey in Asia, as "the king of the south" is of Egypt. It is the hour of judgment for all powers, the last of which is Gog, the lord of all the Russias; after which Daniel himself is to appear and stand in his lot among the risen saints of the high places. Thus there ought to be no such mistake as men make in foreclosing prophecies, which all end with the Lord's appearing, and then only.

Mr. A. ought not to have confounded Darius the Mede, the ad interim and complimentary king after Babylon's fall before Cyrus succeeded, with Darius the Persian, who was conventionally chosen after Cambyses and the impostor Gomates. Ezra 4 makes this certain, Ahasuerus answering to the former, and Artaxerxes to the latter. Then comes Darius (Hystaspis) King of Persia.