# The Elements of Prophecy

William Kelly

Public domain. As published on plymouthbrethren.org.

Also online at https://plymouthbrethren.org/series/6200

KEE Ministry Library · Faithful Men
kee-ministry-library.netlify.app

# Preface and Introduction

Answer to Historicism

The Second Advent

Elements of Prophecy, by W. Kelly, appeared in The Bible Treasury, and then in book form, with additions. What the reader has in his hands is a freshly typeset copy of the 1876 Morrish edition of this work.

Items in braces { } have been added. Thus, for example, Scripture references have been inserted so that they may appear in the Scripture Index; and notes in brackets { }, including some footnotes in brackets, have been added.

## Preface

The work now before the reader is the examination of a book which appeared many years ago from the pen of a certain professor of Moral Philosophy and was regarded at the time by not a few as conclusive against Futurism. Even then, as some know, it was my intention publicly to test how far its principles were scriptural, and its reasonings valid; and it seemed to me none the less a duty because of the deliberate and strong conviction, whatever the delinquencies of the Futurists, that its tendency was retrograde, to the dishonour of Christ and the injury of the church of God. The professor however having since then divulged views on the punishment of the wicked which shocked all orthodox men, including of course those of his own party, I have judged it best not to give his name, nor to cite formally from his book. Hence such as have not read it might scarcely gather

that my work is controversial; while those who do possess it will see that, however briefly, I have endeavoured to follow up with conscientious care his use of scripture and his argument, as well as his plan, so as to leave nothing unrefuted which seemed worth noticing. The Christian will perceive and I hope learn from God how much larger and more exact and profound is revealed truth than either the Historical scheme or the Futurist. This is the fruit I desire by grace to the praise of the name of the Lord Jesus. London, December, 1876.

## Introduction

Prophecy is the revelation of the thoughts of God as regards the future, and His glory in Christ is the one blessed end of the prophetic word, as well as of all the divine actings. Make man, make self, the end, and singleness of eye is gone; darkness ensues by the just judgment of God — a result as sure in the domain of the spiritual understanding as in that of the spiritual conscience. It is true we may say of the prophetic part what the Holy Ghost says about the whole written word, that it is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. Still, the revealed acts are the expression of the principles of God’s government of the world, and therefore the accomplishment portrayed in His word is the place where we learn these principles fully. This is surely what we have to ascertain. Otherwise we form our own notions of that which God has given us, prophecy, whereby to know His thoughts. Our business is to gather

of what God speaks; and though all scripture is given for our profit, it is in no way necessary that all should be about ourselves. The glory of God in dealing with Jews is, in its place, as much the object of our faith as His dealings with Christians. And the apprehension of the distinctions in His ways, that is, real understanding of His word, depends on our knowing to whom it applies.

Is not this taking away scripture from the church? Quite the reverse. There is no instruction in the past or future history of Israel, as revealed in the Bible, which is not for the church, but it is not about the church. That such passages are so written as to bear an analogous application to the Gentile body, now grafted into the olive-tree of earthly testimony {Rom. 11}, I do not deny — an application which calls for the utmost caution, and a right division of the word of truth, because each dispensation has its own peculiarities, and in some cases there may be, and are, points of decided and intended contrast. Still, the church is not the subject treated of under the names of Judah and Israel, Zion and Jerusalem; and the effect of the unrestricted accommodation of such passages, to which we have been all accustomed, has been not only to rob the Jews of their promises, but to lower and obscure incalculably the privileges of the church, so far as present realization is concerned.

There is now, however, a considerable class of persons who admit that the only complete fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy involves the restoration of the literal Israel to their own land, and their national blessing and peace there, according to the new covenant, in the presence and personal reign of the Messiah. Hence, as a whole, they rightly refer the

prophecies of future glory to the same people whose sins and judgments are therein detailed. They acknowledge that the reign of Christ over the converted Jewish people in the millennium is a very different thing from the secret counsels of grace which, through faith, have saved souls from the beginning. So far there is a step, and an important step, in the true direction. But here is a stopping short. It is not seen that the rejection of Christ by Jew and Gentile on the cross, and His consequent exaltation at the right hand of God, and the intermediate mission of the Holy Ghost here below till the Lord returns again, have made way for the accomplishment and revelation of an unique work of God, which had been kept secret from previous ages and generations {Col. 1:26}. This work is the church, Christ's body.

It is not merely an increase of light as to the counsels of salvation, on which the entire line of the faithful, from Abel downward, had reposed, but there was a hitherto unknown and hidden mystery respecting a body destined to be the consort of Christ in heavenly glory at His coming, and meanwhile called into manifestation and enjoyment of its privileges by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, who was to commence, sustain, and guide it here below, while waiting for the Bridegroom. The Holy Ghost had acted, He had given faith, He had quickened, He had wrought efficaciously and savingly from the first; but there was no baptism of the Spirit till Pentecost. He was not (that is, in this new way) till Jesus was glorified (John 7:39). So the Lord teaches us in Acts 1:5 "Ye shall be baptized of the Holy Ghost not many days hence." When just about to ascend He said this to the already believing, regenerate disciples. On the day

of Pentecost the Holy Ghost did baptize them. He imparted many miraculous gifts, “the powers of the world to come”; but besides this He baptized them on that day, never before. Now it is certain that the formation of the body, the church, hinges upon the baptism of the Spirit, for “by one Spirit (as we are told in 1 Cor. 12:13) are we all baptized into one body.” You cannot, therefore, have the body of Christ before the baptism of the Spirit; they are simultaneous and inseparable things. Accordingly we there find for the first time “the church” spoken of as an existing corporation (Acts 2:47). The Lord Jesus, it is true (Matt. 16:18), had already said, “Upon this rock I will build my church”; but these words themselves prove that His church did not yet exist, save in the purpose of God. “Upon this rock I WILL build my church. It was not yet building. The foundation had to be laid; in death and resurrection alone could it begin. It was essential, as a condition of the existence of the church, that in the cross the middle wall of partition should be broken down, and Jew and Gentile be made one new man: in the next place Gentile and Jewish believers were builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:14, 15, 22).

For the Comforter was now come, the promise of the Father, to be in and with them for ever — that Comforter for whom it was expedient that Christ Himself should go away. The old Judaic order was nothing now before God. There was another and better temple, where God’s presence was. There was one body, wherein Jewish and Gentile distinctions were absolutely gone, the church on earth, and one Spirit who resided there. It is not a mere continuation of a believing people who looked to

promise, but established on accomplished redemption, an entirely new body appears, brought into union with Christ in His heavenly honours, between the first and second advent, while He is absent above. The latter terminus is admitted now by many who would dispute the former. It is confessed that the church is the bride, the Eve of the second Adam, and that the millennial saved people, though just as much saints, as truly redeemed by the blood of Christ, as we are, nevertheless answers to the type of Adam's children, and not of his wife. That is, it is an acknowledged principle that saintship, as in those who succeed the second advent, does not necessarily constitute membership of Christ's body. But as to the former terminus, even a far plainer proof has been here produced as regards the saints who preceded the first advent. Whatever may have been their many and precious promises, they are never in scripture called the church of God; nay, it has been shown that they could not consistently be so termed, because they were not baptized of the Holy Ghost into the one body, and there is no other introduction therein than by that baptism, which did not then exist. The true, the scriptural, limits of the church are the cross and the coming of the Lord Jesus {at the pretribulation rapture}; founded upon the one, and waiting for the other, is that body, one with its Head on high, in which God dwells by the Holy Ghost; a new and unearthly body, having a path here below traced out for it, in many and important respects, quite distinct from what characterized the Old Testament saints, or what will characterize the millennial saints.

If these principles be admitted, their bearing on the faith, affections, worship, and service of the children of

God, will soon be felt and seen. But of such consequences this is not the place to speak, though I would here advert briefly to the way in which they affect our apprehension of the prophetic word.

The disciples, though subsequently forming part of the church when it began, were nevertheless not of it during our Lord's ministry on earth. They believed in Christ, they followed Him in His temptations, they were instructed by Him, but were not yet of the church, nor could they be till Jesus was glorified on high, {Acts 2:33} and the Holy Spirit baptized them here below {1 Cor. 12:13}. Their position was thus a peculiar one during that transitional order of things which began with John Baptist, and terminated with the cross, the proclamation going out meanwhile that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. If Matt. 10 be examined, it will be seen that the Lord gave them directions, some of which suited them only in their then state, as in Matt. 10:5, 6, some of which might well apply when the Spirit was given, as Matt. 10:16, 20, 24, 42, and others, which evidently look on to a future resumption of the testimony among the cities of Israel before the Son of man comes. Compare especially verse 23. Throughout this chapter — and it is not the only one of the kind — the disciples are addressed as having a peculiar connection with Israel, and in no way as being the church, or as representing it. No one denies that much of the chapter was fulfilled after the descent of the Holy Ghost to form the church. It was then, and in Judea, that persecution fell upon them. Still the chapter does not contemplate them as the church, but as Jewish disciples carrying out a Jewish mission, and awaiting, in the difficulties and sorrows of their testimony in that land, the coming of the Son of

man. In Matt. 17 we find Peter, James, and John, the evident types of the spared and converted Jews in the millennium, and in the same scene Moses and Elias, the types of the glorified saints.

It is upon similar Jewish ground that our Lord speaks in Matt. 24. His disciples had heard Him pronounce desolation in the preceding chapter. But it was a judgment mingled with mercy; for He distinctly intimated that if the Jews should not see Him henceforth, it was not unlimited; it was till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Vengeance must fall upon the unbelieving generation, such as the mass then were and are. But the time is coming when the nation, or at least a remnant of it, shall bless and curse not; wise ones who understand shall at length with joy welcome Him whom they crucified on the tree.

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world [age]? (Matt. 24:1-3). Now it is not doubted that the church may have used, and may still use, the general principles of this chapter. All belongs to the church, for profit, instruction, reproof, or comfort; but most decidedly Matt. 24 is occupied not with the church, as such, but with Jerusalem and the temple, the consummation of the age, the clash of nations and kingdoms, famines, pestilences,

earthquakes, persecutions, and trials, similar to Matt. 10, and a preaching of the gospel of the kingdom to all the Gentiles throughout the habitable world. Such is the general picture to verse 14. After that, the scene becomes more specific, both as to time, place, and circumstances. Precise interpretation must confine verses 15-31 to a period still future, though Jerusalem is still the foreground. “When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand); then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains” (Matt. 24:15, 16). Now what has this to do with the church as the church? What has she to do with that holy place? (Compare Acts 6:13; Acts 21:28). And how could the setting up of the abomination in the Jewish temple be a sign to the church to flee? But no! the passage refutes the idea. “Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.” Accordingly they are directed to pray that their flight be not on the Sabbath-day, nor in the winter, for either might impede their flight and expose them to imminent peril. It is to be a brief though terrible trial: “except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” {Matt. 24:22}.

That these elect are Jewish elect (see Isa. 65:9, 15, 22) is confirmed by the Lord’s warning the disciples about false Christs who shall arise. Could the church, who knows that she is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air — could she, I say, be in danger from the cries, Lo! here is Christ, or there; behold, He is in the desert, or in the secret chambers? But a perplexed Jewish remnant, whose hope is a Messiah on earth, might well need such monitions as the Lord here supplies. The

coming of the Son of man (for it is Christ coming judicially which the chapter contemplates) shall not be secret, but as the lightning shining from east to west. They were not to be enticed by a “Lo, here or there.” Other unmistakable signs should be granted. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken” (Matt. 24:29). Here again it is manifest that the Lord is not describing the translation of the elect church, but the gathering of His elect Israel, and for a plain reason: “When Christ our life shall appear,” says the apostle addressing the heavenly saints, “then shall ye also appear with him in glory” {Col. 3:4}. Christ will not be manifested first, and the church be caught up subsequently; both are to appear together and at the same time in glory. But with the elect Jews the case widely differs. “And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other” (Matt. 24:30, 31). They are delivered and gathered after the Son of man has already appeared. The church had not only been caught up before, but had come out of heaven along with Christ preparatory to His appearing (Rev. 19:11-14). This prophecy, then, in any full sense, for I do not deny a partial historic accomplishment, looks to a future state of things, and directly concerns a believing Jewish remnant, quite distinct from the church.

Is it in Matthew, and other Gospels only, where we read of such a converted remnant? By no means. Matt. 24:15, 21 evidently refers us to Daniel for other particulars of the same scenes and times. If therefore it be clear that Matt. 24:15-31 concerns a future converted body of Jews, and not the church, have we not here also a divine help for interpreting Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:1, 7, 11, and the connected parts of the same? That is, the saints spoken of in Daniel are Jewish, saints, and not the church, properly so called. Daniel's people, or at least the understanding ones (compare Matt. 24:15) of that prophet, are those whom the Lord further instructs in the prophetic discourse of our evangelist. Again, it is admitted very generally that Daniel and the Revelation are so linked that, when you have determined the bearing of the one, you necessarily therein involve the general interpretation of the other. The beast of Dan. 7 is the beast of Rev. 11; 13; 17; and the time, times and a half, in that same chapter answer to the same period in Rev. 12, Compare the image in Rev. 13 with the abomination of desolation in the Gospel. Plainly therefore, while the Apocalypse has many subjects besides those treated of in Daniel or Matt. 24, while it admits of a far closer application than either to the providential history of the empire, etc., since the days of John, the grand final accomplishment of the book cannot be dissociated from the prophecies of Daniel and of the Lord Jesus Himself, which, we have seen, specially regard Jerusalem and the Jews at the end of the age.

Turning to the Psalms we find this truth confirmed. Let us first take Psalm 79, and assume what to many readers appears self-evident, that in its full import it tells of a day not yet come. The Holy Ghost there

provides an utterance for a suffering people. But for what people? Clearly they are, and speak of themselves to God as His servants, His saints (Ps. 79:2). Now is there a single sentiment which is characteristic of the church of God? Or is there one which does not breathe of Jewish affections and hopes? If the heathen invade Judea, if they defile God's holy temple in Jerusalem and lay the city in heaps, we can understand how these things may, and will deeply affect the heart of an Israelite. If the Gentiles shed the blood of God's saints like water round about Jerusalem, and give their flesh to the beasts of the earth, rightly may he pray, "Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling-place." But is this the language of the heavenly bride? Is it suitable to her standing to say, "We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. How long, Jehovah, wilt thou be angry? for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight, by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed" (Ps. 79:4, 5, 10). Is it for us to pray that God may be known among the heathen in our sight, by revenging the shed blood of His servants? "O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low" (Ps. 79:8).

Is there not another body of saints of whom these words will be far more emphatically true? Not that the church may not blessedly use such a psalm; not that she may not discern what is essentially applicable to herself: but

plainly the circumstances, the experience, the cries, are all characteristic of Jewish saints passing through the fire, and not of the church of God. That they are owned servants of God, who suffer in and near Jerusalem before the Lord appears for their deliverance; that in the next psalm they call on Him that dwells between the cherubim to shine forth; that they acknowledge their sins, and the righteous retributive dealings of Jehovah therein; that they deprecate His anger and jealousy, crying, “Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved; O Jehovah God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?” that they appeal in faith to the God of hosts, cleaving to the link which binds Him to His people, howsoever failing, and entreat His hand to be upon the man of His right hand, “the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself”; that they are saints is plain, but it is equally evident that the whole current of their prayers, sanctioned by the Holy Ghost, and answered by the Lord in person, is quite inconsistent with the calling of the church. Forgiven all trespasses (Col. 2:13), I admit that it becomes us, individually conscious of sins, to confess them, in the assurance that God is faithful and just to forgive us, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness {1 John 1:9}. But this goes upon the ground that we are forgiven (1 John 2:12), that we are already accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:6), and that as He is, so are we in this world (1 John 4:7); whereas in the Psalms it is plain that the believing remnant have still to cry, “Show us thy mercy, O Jehovah, and grant us thy salvation,” etc. Full known acceptance is evidently not enjoyed until Jesus appears (compare Zech. 12:10-14; Zech. 13:1; Joel 2, 3, etc.).

As to Ps. 81, it needs little proof that a joyful noise to the God of Jacob, the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery, the blowing up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on the solemn feast-day, that all this is no statute for the church, though it is for Israel; nor are we ever told to look for the finest of the wheat and honey out of the rock. Again, what relation to Christianity have the earthly tabernacles and glory in the land, beautiful as Ps. 84 and 85 may be? So also the fitting supplication for those who hate us is certainly not the language of Ps. 83:9-18; but it is the right utterance of faith in Jewish saints, who are looking to God to arise and judge the earth. “Do unto them as unto the Midianites; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison; which perished at En-dor: they became as dung for the earth. Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna: who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession. O my God, make them like a wheel: as the stubble before the wind. As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm. Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, Jehovah. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame and perish: that men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.”

While the church is being called, God is interfering in no such way. He is proclaiming salvation to the world that rejected and murdered His Son, who is still, so far as man is concerned, the outcast One, though crowned with glory and honour upon the throne of His Father. Hence the church’s calling is governed by the present

patience of God toward an ungodly world. Suffering, therefore, is her portion meanwhile, and grace, not judgment, her cry to God about her enemies. But the time is fast coming when God's dispensational displays will change, and, instead of making His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sending rain on the just and on the unjust alike, "it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come out, that have no rain, there shall be the plague, wherewith Jehovah will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:17-19). When that time comes, there will be another and a suited witness here below; not the church, (whose calling was during the time when the riches of His grace knew no measure, namely, between the cross and the return of the Lord Jesus), but His people Israel, the righteous remnant become a strong nation on earth. "Jehovah said, I will bring again from Bashan: I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea; that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same" (Ps. 68:6. See all Ps. 94). "Remember, Jehovah, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones" (Ps. 137:7-9). "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-

edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye Jehovah" (Ps. 149:5-9). I might thus comment on all the Psalms, save the few which describe the atoning sufferings of Christ personally. In all of them it is the Spirit of Christ in special sympathy with Israel, though the Holy Ghost applies to the church in the New Testament many truths which are equally true of us and of them (cp. Ps. 44:22, with Rom. 8:36). But this in no way sets aside their proper and prophetic bearings, any more than Hosea 11:1 is denied to contemplate specifically the literal Israel, because in Matt. 2:15 it is referred to Christ.

If then the Psalms are the outpouring of the souls of Jewish saints, if the Spirit of prophecy breathes in them from one end to the other, is it wonderful that the prophet, who especially presents us with the times of the Gentiles, should speak of the trials of the same Saints in the last terrible crisis of suffering? Other prophets dwell much upon their ultimate triumphs, in a state totally different from that in which the Jews are now, namely, under Messiah at His coming, and the new covenant. Daniel describes the four great beasts, and more particularly the last with its little horn, before whom three of the first ten horns, or kings, were subdued. "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the high places, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy

it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the high places, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7:25-27). If Daniel in chapter 7 is occupied with these future Jewish saints and not with the church of God, who does not see that this goes far to decide the just and complete realization of Rev. 12, 13, and of the prophetic portion generally? For it is confessed by most that the Apocalypse is, to a great extent, an expansion of those parts of Daniel's visions which were still unfulfilled; and those who trace as the grand lesson of the former, the corruptions, persecutions, and judgment of the papacy, are sure to bend a considerable portion of the latter to the same point. On the other hand, if it be clear that Daniel bears decidedly, in the most literal and important aspect of the book, upon the Jewish remnant during "the time of the end" or closing scenes of Gentile supremacy, the Apocalypse is necessarily fixed as having (I do not say its exclusive, but) its main application in the same eventful epoch.

It is in the final results that God proves His judgment. Morally, I admit, we should say that even now there are many antichrists. One might think to hear some reason, that this showed that the Antichrist should not come. But this is not what we have heard in scripture. Neither is it that we deny local events to which many Old Testament prophecies apply. Only it is quite certain if the word of God is to be listened to, that the vast body of the results of prophecy in Old and New Testaments will have their accomplishment in a state altogether different from that which exists at present; when the

church will be no longer represented as seven candlesticks on earth, but under the symbol of twenty-four enthroned elders in heaven, and God begins to resume His old associations with the Jews, chastening them in a special way, and judging their proud and blaspheming Gentile oppressors. To leave the Jewish part out, to slight it, as is commonly done, is folly and presumption. It is presumption, for God will finally prove by judgment what He really is, and the truth of all He has said of man, His hatred of sin, and His faithful mercy enduring for ever. He will demonstrate publicly and irrefragably that there is a reward for the righteous, and a God that judges in the earth. To prefer the protracted period {historicism} is to prefer the moral judgment of man to the perfect manifestation of the almighty judgment of God. It is folly, because the peace and rest which follow God's judgment in power cannot follow our detection of the moral character of what leads to it. The consequences are spiritual vagueness — a condition of soul, in this respect, hardly beyond that of many a pious Israelite who fully acknowledged God's providence, foreknowledge, and wisdom in controlling earthly events. Nay, the judgment and full manifestation of God therein are even less seen in this scheme than a godly Jew might have known before the first advent of Christ.

Dan. 9 may briefly illustrate what I have been seeking to explain. It is clear that this prophecy directly contemplates the Jews and Jerusalem only. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (Daniel's people, the Jews), and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgressions, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy,

and to anoint the most holy" (Dan. 9:24). I do not doubt that this entire period brings us up to the end of the age {up to the appearing of the Lord in glory}. The terminus a quo {starting point} is equally clear, and, in my opinion, furnished by Neh. 2. From the command to build the city "unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks," the briefer period being occupied probably with the building of the street and wall, and the longer period, added to it, carrying us on to the cutting off of Messiah: "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah (not be born, or enter on His ministry merely, but) be cut off, but not for Himself." He is rejected; His own received Him not. He died for that nation, though not for that nation only {John 11:51, 52}. Now this is most important to note. The death of the Messiah is after the sixty-nine weeks expire, and has nothing whatever to do, so far as the text informs us, with the seventieth week. Between that death and the last week an evident gap appears, not measured by dates, but simply filled up by the revelation of disasters upon the city, sanctuary, etc. In this interval we hear of another prince, not the prince who had already come to bless the city, and who was Himself cut off, but "the prince that shall come." It was not foretold that this coming prince was to destroy the city and sanctuary, but that his people should. What people are they? Unquestionably, the Romans; and they did thus destroy. Then follows a general picture of woe to the last. "And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

But what of the last week? It remains entirely apart, and the particulars are given in the closing verse. "And he shall confirm covenant (not the covenant) with many (or

the mass) for one week." It is the history of the seventieth week. We have seen Messiah already out off after the sixty-nine weeks; we have heard of another prince coming, whose people, not himself, destroyed the city and the sanctuary {AD 70}. It is of this future Roman prince we are now to learn. He covenants {confirms} for one week, for seven years, with the mass of the Jews (cp. Isa. 28:14, 15, 18, 22). The covenant of Christ is an everlasting covenant, and never marred. But this is an evil covenant, and it is by-and-by broken. "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that, determined, shall be poured upon the desolate." This seventieth week again is taken up, though perhaps not this period only, in the Apocalypse viewed in its future application; the last half of {the seventieth} which are specified in the period of 1260 days, during which {time} are the witnesses (Rev. 11), as well as in the time of vengeance, during which the beast has power given which he uses in warring with the saints and overcoming them (Rev. 12, 13; Dan. 7). These saints, as we have seen before, are not the church, which is nowhere found on earth from the end of Rev. 3. Its earthly pilgrimage and testimony had closed before the [seventieth] week began: from Rev. 4-19 the church is seen symbolically in heaven, and in heaven only.

Thus is shown the peculiarity of our position, upon whom the ends of the ages are met. It is a novel, unprecedented and heavenly place, in no way interfering with the vast scheme of God's earthly government: on the contrary, in this latter, room is purposely left for

another field, which was entirely hidden of old, namely, for the development of the glory of Christ as the exalted Man. It is with a Christ on high the church is associated. Of course I do not speak of His incommunicable divinity, as the Son, but of a peculiar heavenly glory shared with His bride, and unknown to the Old Testament writers, who dwell so largely upon His Messianic rights. The church then began after the cutting off of Messiah, and goes up to meet the Lord in the air before the seventieth week commences with the Roman prince and his covenant. With the cross the earthly people fell under judgment, how long soever it might linger, while God was gathering a remnant to the Saviour. That same cross becomes the foundation of Christ's heavenly body, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. When this work is concluded, the church will be borne away to join the Lord in the air, and renewed dealings will begin with the earthly people once more. The church has, no doubt, committed to her the more complete revelation of these judgments on the Gentiles which precede the good things in store for Israel, but the strictly prophetic part of the Apocalypse is not therefore about herself. On the contrary it reveals, throughout the chief contents of it, the glorified worshipping in heaven, and the blows of divine judgment falling with a deepening intensity, till Christ and the saints come out of heaven and appear together for the destruction of the beast and the false prophet with their armies.

# Chapters 1-4

## Chapter 1 - The True Principle Compared with Current Maxims

Christ is the centre of the counsels of God, and hence of prophecy, which treats of the earth and of His government of it for His own glory. Hence the importance of Israel, of whom, as according to the flesh, came Christ who is over all, God blessed for ever. They are His people by a choice and calling which cannot fail in the end, though there may be and has been a fall and a long continued disowning of them in God's righteous judgment of their apostasy. But mercy will restore them ere long, humbly, joyfully welcoming the Messiah they have so long rejected.

This had been feebly seen, nay, generally denied, throughout Christendom for ages. Scarcely any error is more patent throughout the Fathers than the substitution of the church for Israel in all their system of thought. Every Father, whose remains have come down to us, is a witness of the same allegorizing interpretations; not only the Alexandrian school of Clement and Origen, but Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and the Pseudo-Barnabas. The Latins followed in the same wake, not Augustine and Ruffinus and Jerome only, but Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius. Not one held the restoration of Israel to their land, converted nationally; the millenarian portion expected that the risen saints would reign with Christ in Jerusalem rebuilt, adorned, and enlarged, not that the Jews would be restored and blessed in the land. The medieval writers naturally adopted the same view: so did the Reformers, as far as I

am aware, without an exception. All fell into the error of putting the church into the place of Christ, and so of leaving no room for His earthly people, besides His heavenly saints and glorified bride. They neglected the warning of the Apostle Paul, and assumed that the Jewish branches were broken off that the Gentiles might be grafted in, and take their place gloriously and for ever. They did not pay heed to the prophetic word, as Peter exhorts, but applied systematically the predictions of Israel's blessing in the last days to the Christian church: still less did they appreciate the day dawning or the daystar arising in the heart. Catholics, papists, Protestants, had no real light, no spiritual intelligence, as to the hopes of Israel as distinct from those of Christians.

Is it not as solemn as it is startling to see thus beyond just question the immediate, universal, and lasting departure of the Christian profession from prophetic truth? But so it is and must be. For the divine glory in Christ as the center for all things in heaven and on earth being the revealed purpose of God (Eph. 1:10), when this is forgotten, false hopes spring up. Man, self, becomes the end, instead of Christ; the true light is lost, and darkness ensues in the just retribution of God. The effort to make the church all, instead of preserving the real dignity of the church as the heavenly spouse of Christ, lowers her to the position of Israel, a people reigned over, not reigning with Him, His inheritance, not heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

The future actings of God as revealed in prophecy are the expression of the principles on which He will govern the world; and so His word is the means by which alone we learn these principles fully. If we fail to ascertain

them thus, we form our own thoughts of that which God gave us prophecy whereby to know His mind. Our business is to gather of what and whom God speaks; and no greater delusion can befall us than to imagine that, because all scripture is for our profit, all must be about ourselves. The purpose of God as to the Jews is in its place as truly the object of faith as His counsels respecting the church. Thus, the apprehension of His various ways for glorifying Christ is essential to real understanding of His word. Here, as everywhere, a single eye is needed. With Christ before us the whole body will not fail to be full of light.

Is not this to take away scripture from the Christian? Quite the reverse. To understand it according to God is the truest and richest gain; to misapply it to ourselves in Gentile conceit is ruinous. Yet there is no instruction in the past or future history of Israel as revealed in the Bible which is not for, though not about, the church. That such scriptures concerning the Jew may have been written so as to bear an analogous application to the Gentiles is not denied; but the application calls for the utmost caution and a right dividing of the word of truth, because each economy has its own peculiarities, and in not a few things there are confessedly decided and intended contrasts. It is an error therefore to read the church in Judah and Israel, Zion and Jerusalem; and the effect of this alchemy, which the Fathers originated and handed down to popery and Protestantism alike, has been both to rob Israel of their proper hope and to lower that of the church incalculably.

Yet no maxim of interpretation can compare with this most misleading identification for importance, antiquity, or widespread reception. Since the apostles, perhaps

beyond every other tradition, has this been accepted always, everywhere, and by all. Fathers, Romanists, Reformed, have alike applied it habitually in their comments, as well as in practice.

Few sober minds doubt that the visions in Dan. 1 2, 7 start from the times of the prophet; that the Revelation applied in some sense from John's day; that the fourth beast sets forth the Roman empire; that the little horn in Dan. 7 denotes its last ruler; that Babylon in Rev. 17 represents Rome; that the prophecy in 1 Tim. 4 was fulfilled long ago; that the man of sin relates to the Antichrist, and is rather the ecclesiastical or false prophet power of Rev. 13 than the imperial chief or first beast; that the two woes in Rev. 9 are strikingly illustrated in the Saracens and Turks, and that the days, times, etc., may have had a symbolic force.

But these are points of detail, all of which together are a trifle compared with the one grave principle which effaces Israel from prophecy and installs the church in their stead. What then can be thought of the judgment that could overlook an error so transcendent, vitiating all sound exposition of both Old Testament and New from Genesis to Revelation? One can account for it by two considerations: first, a quite superficial estimate of the evil involved in this old and general error; secondly, a very exaggerated feeling against those who looked for a personal Antichrist among the Jews and a future revival of the Roman empire before the age ends, lest it should weaken Protestantism in the face of the popish re-awakening in our day. There is no adequate sense of the wrong which has been already done the truth for nearly eighteen centuries, and the darkening influence which Judaizing the church has wrought far and wide in

Christendom, among the Orientals, Greeks, and Latins, as well as Protestants more recently, throughout all its history save the first century. The feverish doubts caused by a few fanciful essayists like Drs. Maitland, Todd, and Burgh, Messrs. Tyso, Dodsworth, and the like, were slight indeed compared with the original paralysis which destroyed all true power in the body of Christian profession, whether in the distinct perception of the Christian's heavenly privileges in union with Christ on high, or in the just recognition of God's fidelity to Israel.

To my mind the way in which Protestant compromise has played into the hands of Romanism is very serious (and this in many ways more than the prophetic speculations which palliated popery); but I speak of an error far older, deeper, more withering, and less suspected, which seems not to cross the vision of him who would defend the Protestant interpretation of prophecy against the futurist assailant.

The fact is too that it has been the common view of Protestants as well as futurists to take for granted the natural if not necessary clearness of fulfilled prophecy; to make much of general consent among interpreters; and to decry that view which could not plead antiquity or what was held by alleged heretics. Protestantism has ever made much of history, as if time were the interpreter rather than the Spirit of God leading souls into the truth. Hence Protestantism has sought to maintain that prophecy extends in nearly equal proportion over all ages down to the future advent of our Lord. This naturally excites the desire to find what answers to it up to and in our own day. And it is vain to deny that the ablest of Protestant interpreters have themselves laid down that the main use of prophecy is to

convict, if not convince, unbelievers. Futurists have in this simply turned Protestant batteries against the Protestant system of interpretation.

The Christian, if wise, will eschew party spirit and narrowness here as elsewhere. He need not be a mere futurist because he cannot be a mere Protestant; and if anything ought to deter him from such systematizing, the contractedness of the one, and the virulence of the other, ought to serve as an effectual beacon against both. That half-a-dozen men in their zeal for what they saw to be unfulfilled pushed matters to extremes against the Protestant school which had misled them is clear; but to say that the system of the futurists in its very foundations directly contradicts the early writers is the last degree of controversial blindness if not asperity.

I am sure that it is a poor thing to court or reckon up the suffrages of the more ancient Fathers who wrote on prophecy; but it is absurd to deny that, right or wrong, they stand in the main with the futurists against the historicalists. They held that the end was nigh; they held that the Antichrist was an individual, not a succession; they held that he would take Christ's place, not His vicar's; they held that he would set up to be God in the temple of Jerusalem, not as the Pope in Rome; they held that the days are days, not years, so that the times of Daniel and of the Apocalypse would be but a brief crisis. Now these are the capital points of futurism, as opposed to Protestantism; and how the earlier Fathers thought is beyond controversy. Their foundations are those of the futurists. What has been alleged by special pleading consists of mere individual eccentricities, exaggerated into its very foundations, in order to ensure (or at least yield the semblance of) an easy victory.

Thus the great mass of futurists have ever held that the visions in Daniel start from his own time, if not from a defined point not far distant as the seventy weeks {Dan. 9}. But then they suppose a gap in the fourth or Roman empire, which, after extinction, is to revive for the time of the end; and of this they have unquestionable proof from scripture. A few persons attacked were excessive in their sentiments. It was apparently from not knowing how much there is common to intelligent minds both futurist and Protestant, as well as to Christians who have larger views than either. It was ignorance probably; if not, it was worse. Such strokes of strategy may suit polemical objects; but they retard the truth, and injure those most who deign to use them or are misled by them.

Not the least hurtful of influences in the Protestant system is the assumption that history is the interpreter of prophecy, and the undue place thus given to it. Prophecy explains history, never the converse. No matter how the facts answer to the prediction, they are but the least and lowest part: God’s mind in the revealed facts is the lesson, and of this the Spirit is the only teacher, not history. Now He can and does lead the believer into the divine mind as well as the outward facts before, no less than after, fulfilment: so utterly do I reject the alleged futurist principle that fulfilled prophecy is plain as distinguished from the obscurity of what is unaccomplished. Not so: scripture is only understood aright by the Spirit, who is independent of time or history, and gives divine certainty by and to faith, whether the word of God be about the past or the present or the future. On the face of it the theory is false; for we must understand the prophecy before we

can apply it truly, and when we do understand it (which is quite independent of its being fulfilled or not) we have what God meant. The proof of its application to events (that is, of its accomplishment) may be interesting to believers, and useful to meet (or stop the mouths of) unbelievers; but this is not the primary and ordinary intention, for it is in general given to instruct, cheer, and warn the believer, not merely to prove that God knows and speaks the truth beforehand as in some few exceptional instances.

And just think of the state of mind which could cite Deut. 4:32, and Psalm 28:5, in proof of the duty of studying history for the interpretation of prophecy! The first passage reminds Israel of the great and terrible fact that God spoke to them out of the fire. Moses appeals to them if ever man had heard the like. What is this to the purpose? Still less, if possible, is the second: the works of Jehovah and the operations of His hands are anything but man's account of man's doings. Nobody doubts that history, as far as it is true, must confirm a prophecy which really speaks of the same events: the question is its use in interpreting.

Nor are notorious facts justly to be styled history. In facts of the kind God acts in known public judgment, of which all the world can take cognizance. The fatal flaw here again is the leaving aside His public government for providence secret in its ways, which is not really the subject of prophecy as the general rule. In short then the use of fulfillment in reasoning with infidels is one thing; quite another is interpretation, which is our question.

It is in vain to deny that prophecy in general, even the visions of Daniel which take in the rise and progress of empire very cursorily, converges on the close of the age. Nor is there the least inconsistency in one who sees this, which it is utter prejudice or dishonesty to evade, complaining of that exaggeration of past or passing events to which the historicalists are notoriously prone. Take Dan. 7 for instance: is it not plain that the early verses as to the first three beasts are only introductory to the object of the Spirit? and that His object was meant to act as a present thing on the conscience, as well as to guide the feet of the saints when the circumstances appear? The confusion arises from the supposition that God's moral government as such has its results now, which it never can have till Christ be manifested, in view of whom all has been carried on.

To the historicalist, Christ or His glory is not the key of God's government; he is occupied with the past or present, which is but a parenthesis of secret providence between God's immediate government of old on earth and His resumption of it in the midst of Israel when the beasts and the Gentiles at large are judged. He makes a Ptolemaic theory, instead of seeing facts as they are with Copernicus; he views Christendom meanwhile as the central object, instead of Christ the true centre of the divine system. Hence, during that period of which history ancient or modern is so boastful, the great actors are regarded but as "beasts"; and all is passed over lightly till the conclusion of their history when judgments crowd into a brief space, and the Lord Jesus closes them all by His own personal appearing to judge and reign. Of these "times of the Gentiles" God has not lost sight; and hence they are noticed in Daniel,

Zechariah, and the Revelation; but it is mainly to show how Christ will displace all and take the reins of God's kingdom.

Now that God has brought in fuller light, the historicalists are those who oppose it most keenly, because it corrects a vast deal of their visionary interpretations, and they are not prepared for that which makes little of man as he is in order to exalt the second Man. Like the masses in Christendom, they had lost sight of the proper hope of the Christian. Neither did the so-called futurists deliver minds from the prevalent confusion, being occupied themselves with the solemn events of the last crisis of the age or with the reign of Christ manifested in glory that succeeds. They had, none of them, any adequate hold of the heavenly hope as a distinct thing from prophecy. They might be thought to heed the prophetic word, but enjoyed little, if at all, the day dawning and the day-star arising in their hearts. All was confounded for both.

## Chapter 2 - Alleged Presumptions for Historicalism

The historical school allege in favour of their view certain presumptions, such as these:

1. That it is the nature of scripture prophecy to occupy a continuous range of divine providence, and that this must be especially true of such detailed and symbolic visions as those of Daniel and St. John;

2. that the writers of the primitive church almost unanimously contradict the theory of a future crisis, and agree with the Protestant interpreters on the most material points; and

3. that the discordance of those who contend for a convergence on the end of the age is fatal to the alleged superiority of their interpretation in point of simplicity, harmony and clearness.

I. The following scriptures have been produced to prove, not only that the inference is unsound, but that the allegation is entirely false. The test chosen is to take the leading prophecies in order from the first and to observe the length of the continuous period over which each of them extends.

1. Gen. 3:15 is supposed to denote a continuous period of seven thousand years from the death of Abel to the judgment. But surely this is an arbitrary view, and though in the scripture there may be included the enmity between Satan and man, no spiritual mind can fail to discern that according to God's word the grand bearing of it is found in the two great crises of the cross and the appearing of the Lord Jesus.

2. Gen. 6:3. No one doubts the striving of God's Spirit (or, at least, the days of man) an hundred and twenty years; but, again the interest is concentrated on the judgment which closes all rather than spreads over that interval.

3. Gen. 9:25-27. The curse on Canaan B. C. 1451 (Zech. 14:21), a period of three thousand three hundred years; but here too one looks onward to the future intervention of Jehovah rather than to any partial dealings meanwhile. And so with the blessing on Shem, and the enlargement of Japheth. To treat John 4:22 as the fulfillment of the former, and Acts 9:18 (? 15), 28:28 as the fulfilment of the latter, seems most inadequate. It confounds the earnest, which may be more or less

continuous, with the fulfilment, which is yet future, and far from an unbroken line.

4. Gen. 13:14-17. The possession of Canaan BC 145-AD 70 for 1500 years would be a poor answer to the rich words of the God who gave promises to Abraham. The true accomplishment is still future, and will only be under Messiah and the new covenant.

5. Gen. 15:13-16. No doubt the Israelites were afflicted 400 years by the stranger; but the point of hope was the judgment of that nation, and Abraham's seed coming out with great substance.

6. Gen. 22:16-18. Gal. 3 shows us that no long period is the point meant, but Christ the risen Seed of Abraham through whom blessing comes to all the nations. The Jewish promise of supremacy for the countless seed of Abraham is as yet unfulfilled. There is no question here of a space of 4000 years, but of the consequences of Christ's first coming and of His second.

7. Gen. 49:3-27. Here too, in the scattering of Levi, we think not so much of a space as of a fact. There is more ground to speak of continuance in the case of Judah; but it is to me clear and certain that the gathering or obedience of the nations to Shiloh is yet future. It is the kingdom, not the gospel, which is before us here, and a future crisis, not past or present history.

8. Ex. 3:7-12. The sign is not the space of 40 years, but the final token of bringing Israel to Horeb.

9. Lev. 26. No doubt the chapter speaks of past sorrow and desolation; but the remembrance of Jehovah's covenant and of the land, when Israel repent, is absolutely future.

10. Num. 24:17-24. Here also I cannot doubt that the Star's smiting Moab and Edom refers to the great future epoch, not to any bygone period, though there may be a past application of "the ships from Chittim" etc.

11. Deut. 32:7-43. I see nothing properly to be styled a history of Israel in their own land in verses 7-20 extending over a long period, but rather Jehovah's blessing, Israel's rebellion, and then His judgment, morally pronounced, followed by its execution; then the day when Jehovah's hand will take hold on judgment to render vengeance to His enemies. Is not this crisis rather than the continuous range of events regulated by providence?

12. Deut. 33:5-11. Past discipline appears here and there, but the prophecy points to the known and final crisis. What we see in the Pentateuch is abundantly confirmed in the rest of the Old Testament. Hence we may conclude that, with few exceptions, the nature of prophecy is to deal in crisis rather than to occupy a continuous range of providence. At another season we may look into the symbolical and detailed visions of Daniel and John in detail.

II.

It is supposed that a full induction of facts proves that the writers of the primitive church agree with the Protestant interpreters on the following points:

1. That the head of gold denotes the Babylonian empire, not the person of Nebuchadnezzar, or Babylon and Persia in one.

2. That the silver denotes the Medo-Persian empire.

3. That the brass denotes the Greek empire.

4. That the iron denotes the Roman empire.

5. That the clay mingled with the iron denotes the intermixture of barbarous nations in the Roman empire.

6. That the mingling with the seed of men relates to intermarriages among the kings of the divided empire.

7. That the lion denotes the Babylonian empire.

8. That the eagle wings relate to Nebuchadnezzar's ambition.

9. That the bear denotes the Medo-Persian empire.

10. That the rising on one side signifies the later supremacy of the Persians.

11. That the leopard relates to the Macedonian empire.

12. That the four wings denote the rapidity of Alexander's conquests.

13. That the fourth beast is the Roman empire.

14. That the ten horns denote a tenfold division of that empire, which was then future.

15. That the division began in the fourth and fifth centuries.

16. That the rise of the ten horns is later than the rise of the beast.

17. That the vision of the ram and he-goat begins from the time of the prophecy.

18. That the higher horn of the ram denotes the Persian dynasty beginning with Cyrus.

19. That the first horn of the he-goat is Alexander the Great.

20. That the breaking of the horn, when strong, relates to the sudden death of Alexander in the height of his power.

21. That the four horns denote four main kingdoms into which the Macedonian empire was divided.

22. That the three kings (Dan. 11:2) are Cambyses, Smerdis and Darius.

23. That the expedition against Greece is that of Xerxes, BC 485.

24. That the mighty king (v. 3) is Alexander the Great.

25. That the king's daughter of the south is Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

26. That the one from the branch of her roots is Ptolemy Euergetes.

27. That the sons of the king of the north are Seleucus Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great.

28. That the battle (ver. 11) is that of Raphia.

29. That the battle (ver. 15) is that of Panium.

30. That the daughter of women (ver. 17) is Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus the Great.

31. That the expedition (ver. 18) is that of Antiochus against Greece.

32. That the prince (ver. 18) denotes the Roman power.

33. That the death of Antiochus is predicted in verse 19.

34. That the raiser of taxes is Seleucus Philopator.

35. That the letting person or thing (2 Thess. 2) is the imperial power of Rome.

36. That the Apocalypse begins from the time of St. John.

37. That the first seal (Rev. 6) relates to the early triumphs of the gospel.

On the other hand it is allowed that the early Christian writers are opposed to the Protestant school as to the following weighty points:

1. That the ten toes denote individual persons.

2. That the ten horns denote the same.

3. That the little horn (Dan. 7) is an individual king.

4. That the times, time, and a half of Daniel are three and a half years.

5. That the period of Dan. 8. consists of literal days.

6. That the 1290 days, and 1335 days in Dan. 12 are to be taken literally.

7. That the man of sin (2 Thess. 2) is an individual.

8*. That the 42 months are three and a half years literally.

9*. That the 1260 days are literal.

10*. That the two witnesses are individuals.

11. That the beast and the false prophet are two individuals.

12. That the ten kings (Rev. 17) are individuals.

The points are marked with asterisks where concurrence is but partial. Thus some at least of the ancients apply the toes of iron and clay, or divisions of the empire, not to the barbarian kingdoms which sprang up in the 4th and 5th centuries, but to the kings of it at

the very end, whom the Lord will find and crush at His second advent; as they also interpreted the little horn in Dan. 8 of Antiochus rather than of Antichrist, and some of the periods indefinitely.

But it is a total mistake that any, save a few extreme futurists who never exercised influence on serious souls in general, differ from the former list, save as to 35 and 36 in part. Thus the letting {restraining} power {2 Thess 2} is, I believe, the Spirit of God, and this not merely as dwelling in the church, but yet more distinctly as acting governmentally in divine providence. Hence the ancient reference was imperfect rather than false. Corrupt as Babylon is, it is not yet the apostasy nor the man of sin revealed. He who letteth acts still, though imperial Rome is long gone. The Holy Spirit is that power and person who hinders as yet the display and working of the lawless one, whatever governmental means He is pleased to employ for the world's good order. Again, I do not doubt a general application of the Revelation since the time of St. John, viewing the seven churches as past, instead of as "the things which are" followed by the rest of the book as converging on the great future crisis. Of 37 the less may be said, as almost every person of intelligence has now abandoned the old fancy of early gospel triumph and among them (if I mistake not) the very person who first drew up this list.

But it must also be repeated, that among sober Christian inquirers the long first list is accepted on all sides; so that the second tells against the historical interpreters with unbroken force. This demonstrates how far any are justified in affirming that the Protestants have the warrant from antiquity tenfold on their side. The truth is

that in all their distinctive features they stand wholly unsupported, yea opposed.

Yet one must frankly allow that no importance whatever should be attached to early tradition. Scripture, and scripture alone, is the only sure arbiter, the sole reliable source of the pure truth of God; and the children of God should be the more jealous on this score, as we see around us the unmistakable results of recurrence to tradition in the revived Judaism of our day. It is ridiculously ignorant however to suppose that the mass of Christians who look for the brief future crisis of a personal Antichrist in Jerusalem and a revived Roman empire to be destroyed by Christ in person have ever questioned these thirty and more points any more than the dozen which follow. The representation to the contrary is a mere sleight of hand trick of controversy, unless indeed those who made it knew very little of the real thoughts of those who have most studied prophecy in our day.

III.

The last head remains to be noticed, the discordance of such men as Drs. Maitland, Todd, and Burgh, of Messrs. Tyso, etc. The believer is in no way concerned in defending the discrepancies of all, any more than the desire on the part of some to palliate Romanism. They were none of them men who took their stand in simple faith on the word and Spirit of God. Nevertheless, faulty and rash as their interpretations may be, and in points of detail often at variance with one another, they did service in recalling attention to the neglected and imminent end of the age, “the time of harvest,” as in other senses, so for prophecy also. There would be little

edification in occupying the reader with a collation of their mutual contradictions or with those of the Protestant school, which simply show how far both are from deserving confidence. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light (no morning)in them.” The Christian has no interest save in God’s communications, which are very sure, and make wise the simple. In keeping them there is great reward.

Here too appears the importance of seeing that the manifestation of God’s glory in Christ is the proper object of prophecy. Had this been seen and held firmly, men could not have lost themselves in vain efforts to find in the past or the present what answers not to it save in scanty measure. Before Christ God was proving in every form the first man: since His rejection and the accomplishment of redemption on the cross, the Holy Spirit is revealing the mystery hidden from ages to the church, as well as publishing the gospel to every creature. It is of the scenes called the consummation of the age, συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος, as well as of the subsequent kingdom when the Son of man is manifested in power and glory, that prophecy treats, whether in the Old Testament or in the New. Rarely does the Spirit touch on any circumstance of guilt on man’s part or of judgment on God’s, without going on to these solemn times which introduce the days of heaven on the earth; and this is just as true of the symbolic visions of Daniel and St. John as of the rest, although there is no doubt expressed in the last a more systematized series.

But other dealings of God at the time of the prophet were but inchoative and germinant: the crisis is, as the rule and with very few and slight and evident

exceptions, the plane of incidence where prophetic words and visions and types meet in Christ, then revealed and no longer hidden as now, the centre of all things in heaven and on earth. To stop short of this, and arrest the mind meanwhile on analogies supposed or even occasionally real, is not only an error fatal to the true understanding of prophecy but bears evidence of a heart not in accord with the mind and purpose of God in glorifying His Son. For special reasons there might be revealed a chain of comparatively ordinary events in providence, as for instance from the first and through the greater part of Dan. 11, where in scripture historical account fails. But even there it is but introductory, as invariably, to the great principle of crisis. For we are only brought down continuously on the one hand to Antiochus Epiphanes and his iniquitous efforts against the Jews, the temple and the law, with the disastrous issue for himself, his instruments, or his victims, and the Maccabean stand on the other hand. Then follows a vast break, and we are abruptly landed in presence of the last wilful king in the land of Judea, and the final conflicts of the kings of the north and the south, terminated by divine intervention and the deliverance of the chosen people. It is plain to any upright and intelligent mind that, whatever be the importance of every word (and this it is not for me to deny or weaken), the grand point of the Spirit is to direct all hearts to the tremendous catastrophe of the close, which follows, not the merely introductory thread of continuous facts, 2000 years past, but the vast gap, after Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees, till the personal Antichrist reigns in the land, the old jealousies of the north and the south reproduce themselves round devoted Palestine and the Jews, and the power of God interferes to put down all

rebels within or without, and establish the wise and holy in peace under the reign of Him who is Ancient of days no less than Son of man, and who must yet be honoured on earth as well as in heaven to the glory of God the Father. “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” The risen saints will reign along with Him over the earth, but from their own proper heavenly sphere: He is head to the church over all things.

## Chapter 3 - The Four Empires

It has been already shown that the clearness or the obscurity of prophecy is independent of its fulfilment, and that Protestants and futurists have been almost equally guilty of mistake as to this. For many among both have assumed its necessary obscurity when unaccomplished and its clearness when fulfilled. Both also have been eager to avoid the objection of novelty against their own system, and anxious to claim the consent of antiquity, not knowing that the Fathers were serious offenders against the truth and particularly ignorant on the subject of prophecy.

Nevertheless it ought to be not a matter of litigation but certain that the Protestant exposition in all its peculiarities is at direct issue with the early ecclesiastical writers who stood on the main foundations of futurism, except indeed as regards the restoration of Israel to their own land, which many Protestants allow no less than futurists. In this at least no instructed mind can agree with the Fathers; and the difference enlarges according to knowledge. Of the other presumptions for

or against their respective systems, enough has been said already. As to such a protracted application as Protestant writers conceive, the Fathers knew nothing, expected nothing, of it. Some of the earliest held with the futurists that the prophecies of scripture are mainly occupied with the grand crisis at the end of the age; but the fact is however that very few appear to have known anything worth notice about these subjects, even in principle, not to speak of details.

We may now enter on a direct examination of prophecy, at least of that portion which is most in debate. And here it may be well to bear in mind its distinctive character. Prophecy is not, like Christianity, the revelation of God's counsels but rather of His kingdom or of His ways in bringing it in. It is occupied, not with heaven and the sovereign grace that gathers to Christ there, but with the earth, and hence with the judgments of God which put down evil in order to the reign of righteousness. No mistake can be more profound than the notion that its main subject is the outline of secret providence during the last two thousand years and more. Daniel in the Old Testament shows us the rise and fall of the four great Gentile empires, the Revelation in the New Testament adding much light on the last phase of the fourth; but this is an episode rather than the direct subject of prophecy, which necessarily has Israel in view as the central people in the plans of God for the government of the world. Only their history branches into two divisions: Israel under the first covenant, failing at every point to the uttermost; by and by Israel under the new covenant met, delivered and blessed in divine mercy, and then used for His glory among all nations here below. All turns on Christ. There was idolatrous apostasy of old,

which was judged in the Babylonish captivity; but when He was rejected by them as a nation, what could there be but misery and ruin? When He is by grace received, there will be abundant fruits of mercy and goodness. The interval between His rejection and His reception by the Jew is filled by “the times of the Gentiles,” under the fourth empire the gospel also going out and the church of God coming in. After this last empire in its last condition is judged at the Lord’s appearing from heaven, the regular order of prophecy resumes its course, and Israel becomes the head and centre of all nations, the Gentiles the tail.

The Jews, no doubt, were blindly ignorant, and did perversely distort the word of prophecy; but it was a worse error which brought on their final catastrophe and dispersion. It was their insubjection to God, their self-righteous refusal to repent, their rejection of the Messiah and of the gospel. All through their history they only who looked for the Messiah served God according to His law; and, when the Messiah came, those who received Him not were alien from all His will and ways, no less than from the object of faith that grace then presented to them. So now it is evil to slight prophecy, but it is not wise to exaggerate that evil; for there is one still deeper underneath, the evil that slights Christ and consequently resists the Holy Ghost as well as the authority of the word of God in general. Faith in God is the great want of souls. How solemnly the Lord has the lack of it before His Spirit when anticipating His return to the earth! I see no room for boasting in Protestants against futurists, or in futurists against Protestants. Mede, Vitringa, and Bengel were men of piety, seriousness, and learning; but it is impossible to have

the requisite spiritual intelligence for apprehending prophecy, or the word of God generally, till the Christian calling on high is discriminated from the earthly calling of Israel, and this intelligence is equally and conspicuously absent from both schools. It is a mistaken thought that any but a very few futurists ever doubted the ordinary meaning of the four Gentile empires, or of the other prophecies in Dan. 8, 9, 11. The mass of futurists agree with the mass of Protestants as to these elementary outlines. They may differ a little as to Matt. 24, and still more as to the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse. On the other hand there is no doubt that, as to an alleged succession of the horns and the little horn of the fourth beast, the abomination of desolation, the man of sin, Babylon, etc., the historical school departs widely from the ancients.

But, as to the four empires in general, there is no real discrepancy among grave and thoughtful Christians. When we come to the details of the fourth or Roman empire, the divergence is considerable. A few eccentric individuals in modern as in ancient times have indulged in doubts and broached strange theories; but all sober persons apply the visions of the great image (Dan. 2) and of the four beasts (Dan. 7) to the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. The broad truth of this is indisputable. They were successive kingdoms, to which God allowed universal supremacy from the ruin of the Jewish state by Nebuchadnezzar till the Messiah. But this advent, as it was a perplexity to the Jews who looked for His glory and not His sufferings, seems scarcely less enigmatic to Christendom, which looks at His sufferings, not at His glory as returning to judge it — one knows not how soon. It is particularly in

view of this last point that difficulties are felt and found among interpreters. The soul that does not judge the present state of Christendom will no more understand prophecy than the Jew who failed to judge according to God the Jewish condition when Messiah first presented Himself. Without faith it is impossible to understand the word, any more than to please God in our ways. Accurate statement, sound reasoning, gravity and reverence are excellent; but, without the faith which applies the truth with a single eye to judge oneself and all things else in relation to God, they are wholly unavailing.

Further, not only are the four empires acknowledged to be successive in their rule, but they correspond respectively in each vision. The head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream answers to the lion, the breast of silver to the bear, the middle of brass to the winged leopard, the lower extremities of iron and clay to the unnamed ravening beast of the prophet's vision. Only the great image was the more comprehensive of the two, that of the four beasts much the more detailed. The Son of Man's kingdom is evidently that which answers to the vision of the little stone which becomes a great mountain. The doubts of the late Drs. Maitland and Todd, as of Grotius and others before, are mere incredulity. They never exercised the slightest influence among spiritual men. It is as to the course and conclusion of the last of the beasts or empires that we find the greatest disagreement. But there ought to have been no hesitation that, as the third means the rapidly acquired Macedonian kingdom of Alexander the Great, so the next is the Roman. Its place as the fourth (recognized in the New Testament as then in power), its

strength, its subsequent division, its mingling with the seed of men, its sudden and utter destruction at the Lord's second advent, point unanswerably to the same conclusion.

Here the Revelation supplies the most weighty intimations to help us out of difficulties; for it tells us of the fourth beast that "it was, and is not, and shall be present"; and, further, that its future re-appearance is to be "from the pit or abyss." One can understand the ruin of that empire which played its part in the crucifixion of the Lord, and which will revive by diabolical energy in the last days to oppose Him when He returns from heaven to restore the kingdom to Israel.

Here is the statement of the man who did most to lay the foundation of the Protestant school {J. Mede}:

Nebuchadnezzar's image points out two states of the kingdom of Christ, the first to be while those times of the kingdoms of the Gentiles yet lasted, typified by a stone hewn out of a mountain without hands, the monarchical statue yet standing upon his feet, the second not to be until the utter destruction and dissipation of the image, when the stone, having smote it upon the feet, should grow into a great mountain which should fill the whole earth. The first may be called, for distinction's sake, regnum lapidis, the kingdom of the stone, which is the state of Christ's kingdom which hitherto hath been; the other, regnum montis, (that is of the stone grown to a mountain, etc.) which is the state of His kingdom which hereafter shall be. The intervallum between these two, from the time the stone was first hewn out (that is, the kingdom of Christ was first advanced) until the time it becomes a mountain

(that is, when the mystery of God shall be finished), is the subject of the Apocalyptical visions.

Note here, first, that the stone is expounded by Daniel to be that lasting kingdom which the God of heaven should set up; secondly, that the stone was hewn out of the mountain before it smote the image on the feet and consequently before the image was dissipated; and therefore that the kingdom, typified by the stone while it remained a stone, must needs be within the times of those monarchies, that is, before the last of them (namely the Roman) should expire. Wherefore Daniel interprets that in the days of these kingdoms (not after them, but while some of them were yet in being) the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed, nor left (as they were) to another people; but should break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms, and itself should stand forever. And all this he speaks as the interpretation of the stone.
"Forasmuch" (saith he) "that a stone was cut out of a mountain without hands and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold." Here make the full point; for these words belong not to that which follows (as our Bibles by mis-distinguishing seem to refer them) but to that which went before of their interpretation. But the stone becoming a mountain he expounds not, but leaves to be gathered by what he had already expounded." (Mede's Works, pp. 743, 744, 4th edition, London, 1677). But the little stone is plainly the kingdom of God in Christ, which was only seen to come after the image was fully out, even to the toes; and its first action was to smite the feet and toes, reducing the whole statue to powder, after which it grows into a mountain and fills the whole earth. That is, the gospel,

or the kingdom of God now known to faith, is wholly excluded from the prophet. The vision looks at nothing but the second advent in power and glory, beginning with the judgment of the imperial system in its last form, and then the kingdom of God diffused to the blessing of all the earth and to His own glory for ever. The Protestant idea of a “regnum lapidis” going on from the incarnation of Christ through the whole course of ancient and modern history is a mere interpolation. Even Theodoret had better light. One can have no sympathy with the unbelief which overlooks the solemn place of the Roman empire, past or future; but why should one countenance the fable of a “regnum lapidis” meanwhile? It is possible and the fact that more than one untoward futurist denied the fourth kingdom to be the Roman empire, and this to relieve the papacy as well as to shake confidence in Protestant views. The truth is that there is no vitality, nor sanctifying power, save in the word received in the Holy Ghost. To slip away from this into the study of the elder commentators, especially of the Fathers, does pave the way for a relapse into the idolatrous embraces of the mystic Babylon, which might well turn to her own account the fable of the “regnum lapidis.” For she at least desires to reign now as a queen without sorrow, instead of being content with the apostles and saints to wait, apart from the world and in present rejection, for the Bridegroom, that we may reign together with Him at His coming.

I am not disposed to deny an application of prophecy, especially of the Apocalypse, throughout the middle ages; but it must be owned by fair minds that the resemblance between the prophetic visions and the historical facts is slight and vague. Who can wonder

then that the injudicious efforts of most commentators known as Protestants, who sought to prove the most punctual fulfilment in the past, led to that reaction which is commonly called futurism? The Christian will do well to study the written word in peace, undistracted by controversy, profiting by every real help God vouchsafes him, but holding firmly to dependence on the Lord to open His word to him, whether prophetic or any other. It is the Holy Spirit who alone can, who will do so only where grace makes one true to the glory of Christ. For this He is sent down; and He at least is true to the divine purpose.

But on the other hand one may ask of those zealous for the past application of Dan. 2, 7, where is the complete and exhaustive likeness they profess to find between hordes of barbarians breaking up a long sick and expiring empire into some (say ten) portions in which they establish themselves, in the course of a century and a half, and a power of extraordinary vigour with ten kingdoms as the expression of its strength, swayed by one mind, which gives all unity, whether first to wreak God’s vengeance in idolatrous corruption, or finally to conspire against the Lamb to their own destruction?

In fact, even when one looks into the prophecies which deal with the times of the Gentiles, it is not true that their object is to enter into the details of succession (Dan. 11 being only in part an exception for peculiar reasons), but the Spirit is content to give the broad general facts with distinct light converging on the solemn crisis when God displays and establishes His kingdom on the rebellious ruin of man’s. The reason why people prefer to apply it historically is, because this transfers the mind’s attention to what the world has

written and gives a certain scope to human ingenuity as well as research. But it weakens the impressive lesson of divine judgment on that which is highly esteemed among men. The true view recalls the conscience to God and His word, concentrating our attention on the evil and ruin of the first man, and on the sure coming and reign of the Second.

## Chapter 4 - The Vision of the Ram and He-Goat

The dream of Nebuchadnezzar, as the vision of the prophet in the first year of Belshazzar (Dan. 7:1), embraced the entire circle of the four world-powers. The vision of Daniel 8 stands strikingly contra-distinguished in this that here we have only to do with the second and third of these empires, though (as it will be shown) we are brought down to the time of the end in an off-shoot of the third empire. No grave Christian doubts what every dispassionate reader of the prophet must see, that the ancient Medo-Persian and Macedonian powers are set before us.

It seems surprising that any one should make more than their worth of the singular speculations of the late Dr. Todd. For who can fail to see the unusual distinctness in the interpretation supplied by the Holy Spirit Himself? One need not reason on the date or the scene of the vision: verses 20, 21 are decisive to any simple mind. On the one hand the final superiority of the Persian over the Median is evident when we compare verse 3 with verse 20; the eastern source of it on its course of conquest westward, northward, and southward, being marked in verse 4. On the other hand the Macedonian conqueror and his overthrow of the great king appears most graphically in verses 5-7 as compared with verse 21.

History may and does illustrate; but no believer needs more than is here given to have a clear intelligent certainty of conviction as to the prophecy and its application. Verses 8, 22 plainly point to a fourfold division after the death of Alexander the Great (not by defeat or when internal discord dissolved the kingdom, but contrariwise “when he was strong, the great horn was broken”), “four notable horns”; and so there were as is commonly known. It was absurd therefore to argue from verse 17 in Gabriel’s explanation that all the vision related to “the time of the end,” or that the powers represented by the ram and he-goat are future.

But it is a characteristic and an all but universal error of the historical school that they enfeeble and lose sight of the truth that the main object and interest of the vision hinges on “the time of the end,” the end of the indignation which rests on the Jewish people. There ought to be no need of proof that the end of the divine displeasure with the ancient people is certainly yet future. It is in vain to refer to Dan. 9:26, or 1 Cor. 10:11, to turn aside the phrase from its bearing on the end of the age. For the prophet in the one expressly limits the end to the city and the sanctuary, and brings in a definite subsequent period before the way is open for blessing; and the apostle means in the other that the ends of the ages are come, or met, on us, Christians. Matt. 24:14, which is also appealed to, really confirms the future view; for “the end” there spoken of is assuredly not yet come.

It may be added that there is no great difficulty in the way of applying the host of heaven and the stars to the Jewish system and its rulers, though at this time supposed to be subject to the Gentile beasts politically.

The people may be Lo-Ammi; but such a designation, though it be not a figure from the day of Jehovah but rather from the night during which they feebly shone, was at any rate a testimony to their hopes whilst it acknowledged their true estate meanwhile. The last king of the north finds himself in collision with Christ, the Prince of princes, and perishes by divine judgment. But this king of the north is as distinct from the wilful king who will reign in Palestine as from the last head of the Roman empire, though all of them daring enemies of the Lord at the same epoch, as will be shown presently at greater length. Ancients and moderns have generally confounded all three.

Observe again the fact that the very language is changed, which from Dan. 2 was Chaldee. Now from Dan. 7, as bearing on that which, while connected with the Gentile powers, specially touched the ancient people of God, Hebrew is employed. Were it the design to draw particular attention to Cyrus and the details of that victorious career in which he had just entered when the vision was given, the propriety of this would be by no means apparent. Nor is it at all convincing that the reason for representing the second and third empires by the ram and goat (that is, not beasts of prey, but animals of sacrifice) is their favouring Israel, when both had been represented in the chapter before to the same prophet under the symbol of the bear and the winged leopard; yea, when in this very chapter the grand point is a king mighty, but not by his own power, who shall destroy the Jews, but himself be broken without hand — a vision which affected the seer yet more deeply than that of Dan. 7. No one denies the admirable symbols employed to depict the comparatively slow and heavy

aggressiveness of the Medo-Persian, and the amazing rapidity and impetuous force of the spirited Greek; also the subsequent division of the Syro-Greek kingdom of the north. But all this, however full of interest, is preparatory to the main design for the latter day when a mysterious king shall meddle with the Jews to the hurt of many among them, but to his own destruction. That Antiochus Epiphanes answers in part to the little horn in the vision (Dan. 8:10) I do not for a moment doubt.

Only it is well to remark three points: first, the parenthesis consisting of verse 11 and the first half of verse 12, in which “he” takes the place of “it,” apparently looking onward to the great personage of the close rather than to the horn of the goat that typified him; secondly, that verses 13, 14 do not necessarily go beyond the defilement which has already taken place; thirdly, that the interpretation concerns itself with the crisis at the end, only linking on the proximate Medo-Persian and Greek empires with that tremendous issue, but with an enormous gap manifestly between the circumstances then at hand and the last end of the indignation of God against Israel. To deny the all-importance of the crisis in order to eke out a case of continuity here would be mere infatuation, the effect of a blinding system.

# Chapters 5-8

## Chapter 5 - Supplementary Observations

There are two matters which it seems desirable briefly to meet before passing on to fresh matter, as the true solution may confirm what has been already urged, and clear the way for what is to come. One is the question as to the identity of the two little horns of Dan. 7, 8; the other the use of the word “kings” as equivalent to kingdoms. These are handled in this order.

## The Two Little Horns

The tendency of ancient as of modern times has been in prophecy, as everywhere else in scripture, to confound things that differ. Thus, on a large scale, the trials and hopes of Israel have been merged in those of the church, to the enormous loss of intelligence in the mind of God as revealed in His word; on a lesser {scale}, we see a similar confusion as to the great actors of the latter day, which inevitably narrows the scope of prophecy and spreads a haze over the solemn issues of the final conflicts of good and evil. From this the futurists have never fully emerged, for they in general make the Antichrist of the end to be the last enemy of the church instead of being the head of the Jews and Christendom apostate, and they leave no room for the other foes of the Lord, making all the prophecies of evil powers at the end concentrate in that great adversary. Now though it is natural for us to feel a special interest in the West, we ought not to lose sight of the East if we would have an adequate view of the field.

The truth is also that obvious uncertainty surrounds every school of interpretation as to the little horn of Dan. 8. Thus, while the ancients with almost one voice conceived that it presents the character and persecutions and end of Antiochus Epiphanes (some also maintaining a future reference to the wicked or lawless one, the Antichrist of St. John), Sir I. Newton (followed by his Episcopal namesake) and not a few others applied it to the Gracoe-Roman empire; but far more since view in it the Mahometan power, some of them interpreting it of the Turk. Others refer it, like Dan. 7, to the Papacy. No reader will be surprised to hear that the latter theories were not held of old, but that men, Jews and Christians, held then that Antiochus Epiphanes was meant, though many felt that more was included in the prophecy and regarded that enemy of the Jews as typical of their final adversary. Sir I. N. reasons thus against the view so long prevalent:

This horn was at first a little one, and waxed exceeding great; but so did not Antiochus. His kingdom on the contrary was weak and tributary to the Romans, and he did not enlarge it. The horn was a king of fierce countenance, destroyed wonderfully, prospered and practiced (that is, he prospered in his practices against the holy people); but Antiochus was frightened out of Egypt by a mere message of the Romans, and afterwards routed and baffled by the Jews.

The horn was mighty by another’s power, Antiochus by his own. The horn stood up against the prince of heaven, the prince of princes; and this is the character not of Antiochus but of Antichrist. The horn cast down the sanctuary to the ground, and so did not Antiochus: he left it standing. The sanctuary and the host were to be

trampled under foot until two thousand three hundred days, and in Daniel's prophecies days are put for years. But the profanation in the reign of Antiochus did not last so many natural days. They were to last until the time of the end, till the last end of the indignation against the Jews; and this indignation is not yet at an end. They were to last until the sanctuary which had been cast down should be cleansed; and the sanctuary is not yet cleansed. The utmost then which can be allowed is that the prophecy had only a precursive and partial accomplishment in Antiochus. Its proper fulfillment is future.

On the other hand, they are wholly mistaken who, futurist or historical, identify the little horns of the two prophecies (Dan. 7, 8). No doubt there are points of resemblance between them, as there are between all men; but how absurd to deny their distinctness!

It has been well shown that there are at least ten particulars predicted of the first horn:

· þ its rise from the fourth beast;

· þ its co-existence with ten kings,

· þ and its subjugation of three;

· þ its eyes as of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, · þ and its judgment by the Ancient of days;

· þ diverseness from the other kings;

· þ blasphemy against God;

· þ persecution of the saints;

· þ changing of times and laws;

· þ and continuance for a time, times, and the dividing of time.

· Again, at least twelve points are given as to the second horn:

· þ its rise from the he-goat or Grecian empire in one of its five divisions;

· þ its great increase of size and power,

· þ and the three directions of its conquests;

· þ its trampling on the stars of heaven;

· þ opposition to the prince of the host;

· þ removal of the sacrifice and casting down of the sanctuary;

· þ the time (two thousand three hundred days) of continuance or of some related events;

· þ its might not by its own power;

· þ its fierceness of countenance;

· þ its understanding of dark sentences;

· þ its triumph by policy;

· þ and destruction without hand.

The truth is that the marks of likeness between these two powers are of the most shadowy character, those of difference sharply defined and numerous. They agree in being enemies of the Lord and of His people, well as in their awful end under His judgment when He appears and reigns; but even here the form, circumstances, and precise epoch differ widely. The question is in no way one between the historical school and futurists, for a few of both see aright, the mass of both indistinctly, and

some who reject both see at least not less clearly than any of either party.

### The Prophetic Significance of Kings

On this one may be brief, as scripture shows that while “horn” means a kingly person or power, it may according to the context mean a succession and not merely an individual. It cannot be assumed that a succession is always meant, for it more frequently refers to a single person. But in Dan. 7:17-23 we have the decisive proof that a king may mean morally a kingdom. To treat this however as a license for so interpreting it universally in these prophecies is unwarrantable.

## Chapter 6 - The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

The main defect in the historical school here is one which vitiates almost every writer pertaining to it — the assumption that the seventieth week terminates, either with the death of the Messiah and its immediate results, or at most with the destruction of Jerusalem under the Roman power. There are not a few varieties of exposition among moderns as among older writers; but the error named has been and is an insuperable hindrance to a real understanding of the vision as a whole.

They all shut out the future from the last seventieth week, which nevertheless can be demonstrated to be its true force unfulfilled. Most of them deny a break or interval in the chain which nevertheless can be proved to be required on any right view of the prophecy. They thus destroy the analogy between this and all the other visions of Daniel, which from first to last bring us down to the point when the guilty Gentiles vanish under the

judgment of God and give place to Him whose is the kingdom, and whose reign shall not pass away.

Further, those who regard every vision in the book of Daniel as going on to the future, that is, to the end of the age (though for this very reason not continuously, but with a broad and in general a well-defined gap) in no way deny truths common to almost all who have studied the prophecy. For instance, it is maintained by all, save three or four pseudo-literalists of no spiritual weight, that the first advent and death of Christ is foretold here, as well as the overthrow of the Jewish polity; secondly, that the weeks or sevens are to be reckoned as of years and not of days; and, thirdly, that 7 + 62 (= 69) such weeks were to elapse from the Persian decree to build Jerusalem before the cutting off of the Messiah. Rightly understood this, like all the visions in Daniel, goes on to the end of the age.

It is interesting by the way to note that the oldest extant exposition of the book approaches more closely to the truth than most of the works written on the prophecy since. For Hippolytus of Rome is distinct in this at least that the last week is occupied exclusively with the future immediately before the appearing of our Lord in judgment of the quick {the living on earth}. There is not only mistake as to the starting point but the ordinary confusion of the Antichrist with the two little horns of Dan. 7, 8, the first beast of the sea, and the Assyrian or king of the north. This however need not surprise any one acquainted with the views which have prevailed and still prevail. It is the common state of all, whether historical or futurist. The good bishop’s chronology seems defective enough in thinking that sixty-two hebdomads {sevens} of years (even adding the previous

seven) would cover the space since the return from Babylon to Christ's coming; but there can be no doubt that he interpreted the last hebdomad {seven} of the future, as indeed Primatius was disposed to do. Compare Hippol. R. Opp. ed, De Lagarde, pp. 23, 104, 108, 114, 166, 187.

There is the manifest and striking difference in this prophecy from the previous ones, that it is occupied mainly not with the Gentile conquerors so much as with Jerusalem, its sanctuary, and Messiah, with its glory and spiritual blessedness at least at the close, but with disasters and ruin to the last degree, not only during the last week, but for a term unmeasured before it.

From the beginning of the chapter {Dan 9:2} we learn how unfounded it is to wait till a prophecy is fulfilled before profiting by it. This did not Daniel, who understood, not by a special intimation to himself but "by books," the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet. Himself a prophet too, he shows us the importance of weighing the prophetic word already given. Babylon was taken punctually: were not the same seventy years to issue in the return of the Jews from captivity? No sign of this favor of God had yet been given, save so far as the fall of the captor city might be its earnest. Daniel, not doubting but believing, sets his face to the Lord Jehovah to seek by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. Such was the effect on one who judged the present in the light of the word and of prophecy among the rest: not occupation with political speculation, but confession and humiliation and intercession before God. Daniel identifies himself with all Israel. "And I prayed unto Jehovah my God, and made my confession, and

said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him; and to them that keep his commandments, we have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets which spoke in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land." There is thorough vindication of the Lord and condemnation of all Israel (Dan. 9:7, 8). There is a pleading of His mercy and forgiveness (Dan. 9:9), but a renewed acknowledgment of disobedience and transgression on the part of all Israel, to which the curse written in Moses, under which they were groaning, is imputed (Dan. 9:10-12). It is owned that, though the Lord had smitten them, they had not entreated His face that they might turn from their iniquities and understand His truth (impossible otherwise); and therefore the Lord could but watch to inflict more and more (Dan. 9:13, 14). Reminding the Lord of His mighty dealings for Israel from the beginning, the prophet renews his confession but beseeches that His anger and fury be turned away from Jerusalem, and this to the removal of the burden and reproach of their sins (Dan. 9:15, 16), and begs in answer to his own prayer that His face may shine on that long desolate sanctuary, and His eyes may behold their desolations and the city called by His name for His great mercies' sake (Dan. 9:17, 18), winding all up with a succession of most brief and earnest appeals. "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name" (Dan. 9:19).

Nor did the answer tarry. But it was strictly and exclusively in reference to what the holy prophet had besought the Lord — Jerusalem and the Jews. “And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before Jehovah my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision” (Dan. 9:20-23).

Then follows the prophecy, “Seventy weeks have been set [divided] upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish {or close} the transgression, and to make an end of [or seal up] sins, and to atone for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the holy of holies.” This is the consummation of grace — the establishment of Israel at the end of the seventy hebdomads {sevens} specified; for it will be observed that it is not simply the accomplishment of the efficacious work of propitiation and its consequences, but its application to the Jewish people, which alone can meet the prophet’s desires and God’s message in reply. Chiefly then to provide for the steps in the fulfillment of the prediction, and to mark where the interruption comes in, and to warn of the awful trouble which precedes the final blessing, we have the seventy weeks, not only summarized or viewed in

their completion in {Dan. 9} verse 24, but next also broken into portions in the verses following.

Know therefore and understand: from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince [shall be] seven weeks and sixty-two weeks: the street and wall shall be again built, and in times of pressure. And after the sixty and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off and shall have nothing; and the city and the sanctuary shall the people of the coming prince destroy; but the end thereof shall be with the flood; and until the end war [and] desolations [{are] decreed. If interpreters had looked into scripture for the decree which exactly answers to that which the prophecy describes, it is hard to see how there could have been hesitation or even delay. At least it is plain enough that it was neither Cyrus nor Darius, but Artaxerxes who issued such a command first in his seventh year, and then later in his twentieth year {Neh. 2}. But of the two a close comparison will soon show that the first, like the decrees of Cyrus and Darius, had regard to the temple, theirs for its rebuilding, his for providing its due order and service; and this was naturally entrusted to Ezra the priest (Ezra 7). But the later one was just as characteristically entrusted to Nehemiah the Thirshatha, and it is patent that his commission, as it grew out of his complaint that the city of his fathers' sepulchres lay ruined and its gates consumed by fire, so was the decree, {Neh. 2} distinctly for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and its restoration in general.

It would seem that most have been turned aside through their adopting the vulgar reckoning (B. C. 445) of the date of Artaxerxes' accession, and consequently of the

twentieth year of his reign. But the fact is, that Bishop Lloyd here departed from Archbishop Ussher's correction, who very deliberately records it as his judgment that the common reckoning places the first year of Artaxerxes nine years too late. The grounds of this the reader may see in his Ann. Vet. Test. A. M. 3531 (Whole Works, 8:292). People could not reconcile the dates of the prophecy with those ordinarily current, and hence have been disposed to adopt the seventh year instead of the twentieth. But I shall presently show that this view does violence to the sacred text and therefore must be discarded, for it brings in the last week wholly, or in part, to eke out the reckoning, whereas it is certain that the last week remains to be fulfilled.

It is plain on the face of Gabriel's message that the division into seven weeks and sixty-two weeks had a special meaning: as otherwise such an arrangement would never be made, especially where the style is so singularly concise and pointed. The seven weeks or forty-nine years, then, embrace the restoration of Jerusalem; and the book of Nehemiah shows us in what times of trouble the work was begun and continued. To these add the sixty-two weeks of years already named, and the next announcement after that term is one of the strangest sound and most solemn import, not the birth, nor the reign, but the cutting off of Messiah. No wonder that Jews wince, and avoid or wrest such a prophecy. Yet was it no Christian who wrote the startling prediction but their own prophet Daniel, a man greatly beloved. Why should the Talmudists or others slight the writings of one so singularly honoured by his inspired contemporary Ezekiel? If it be the fruit of an evil conscience, it is intelligible. For nothing can be plainer

than that he who predicted without a date the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, when it is a question of His kingdom in power and glory, predicts here, after a chain of sixty-nine weeks of years the Messiah cut off and having nothing (that is, of the kingdom that should have been His among the Jews). It is just as in Isa. 49. Christ had spent His strength for nought and labored in vain, as far as His ancient people were concerned. Only the earlier prophet shows His confidence that His cause was with Jehovah and the recompense of His work with His God; and the answer is, that it is a light thing to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel: Jehovah appoints His rejected but accepted Messiah for a light to the Gentiles that His salvation may reach to the end of the earth, as the gospel now testifies. Whereas the later prophet abides the herald of captivity and of sorrow for the returned captives, who should know a flood of desolations after Messiah was to be cut off.

The Vulgate understands the clause following to mean, “and shall not have his people who should deny him.” This is not only an intolerable paraphrase rather than a version, but it narrows the sense unduly of to His people as no more His; whereas it means very simply “there is not (or shall not be) to him.” Its object is to show that, as the consequence of excision, He was to have nothing of all that might have been looked for according to promise. Every Jew would naturally anticipate all blessing to themselves, all glory to Messiah, at His coming. Who could have foreseen that He should be cut off and have nothing? Yet the spiritual man feels that it could not be otherwise; for sin was there as everywhere, and not even adequately confessed, still less judged

according to God. Here (Dan. 9:26) it is not the efficacy of His death for others that is taught, as our English translators seem to have conceived, but the guilt of it on those who cut Him off out of the land of the living.

Hence follows a flood of sorrow and overwhelming desolation, at first and precisely under the Roman people who should destroy the city and the sanctuary. But this was not the end; for a vista opens of war and desolations to the end, and that by God's determinate decree (compare Isa. 10). The indignation of Jehovah against His people is not yet complete. How amazing that men, pious men too, should have overlooked the broad and plain signification of a timeless interruption after this, including the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and all the long line of humiliating trouble on the Jew since, especially on Jerusalem and its temple! For beyond controversy the chain of weeks is here broken, as (to be exact as well as just) it ought to be. The series was unbroken from the Persian decree to restore Jerusalem till the sixty-ninth ran out, after which Messiah was cut off. How could this bring aught from God righteously but a breach and woes on those who by lawless hands had slain such a prince?

It is in vain to drag out of {Dan. 9} verse 27 the cessation of sacrifice in order to put it into verse 26. The true connection is thus destroyed, and a meaning is given by such a transposition to that suppression of Jewish worship which differs wholly as we shall see from that which is really attached to it where God has put it. And this also disturbs the true chronology by bringing in the last week, wholly or in part, and tacking it on to the sixty-nine weeks. Not that the cutting off of Messiah is said to be at but after the sixty-ninth week. This leaves

the date somewhat open; it could not be before, it might be a little after. But with the seventieth week, as far as the prophecy teaches, it has absolutely no connection. On the contrary, events are named as posterior and evidently judicial consequences, although different in character, at the hand of Gentile oppressors, which are by no fair means within the course of the seventy weeks, but rather when the gap came following the cutting off of Messiah.

How long that interruption was to last, Gabriel had not come to declare. But the picture disclosed in the latter part of {Dan 9} verse 26 naturally includes all the woes of Jerusalem since the Romans took away their place and nation. The disastrous end is not yet come. For it is remarkable in more respects than one that the destruction here is attributed not to the coming prince but to his people, the Roman people; and so it was beyond controversy. They came and destroyed {in AD 70}. But their prince {a Roman} did not yet come — I add, is not even yet come. We shall hear of him in the verse following when the seventieth week begins.

For on all just principles of exposition the last week remains till the Jews are once more back in Jerusalem and their sanctuary rebuilt. This is implied in what follows, however it may grate on those who slight the prophetic word through their confidence in present appearances. Alas! the Jews will be again there, the mass, not many only, of them (for this too the last verse teaches, as in many another word of the prophet elsewhere) in unbelief and ready to apostatize. And herein is found the true bearing of him who strengthens a covenant with the many for the one week (Dan. 9:27). It is the coming prince, a prince of that people which

after the death of Messiah destroyed the city and the sanctuary. It is the Roman chief, the little horn of the revived fourth empire {Dan. 7:8}, who is to confirm a covenant with the multitude of the Jews at the end of this age.

This is the simplest reference grammatically, as none can deny, not to the cut-off Messiah, who in no sense ever did or will make a covenant with any for one week, still less with “the many” or mass of the Jews, in this book bearing no good character (compare with this verse 27; Dan. 11:33, 39; 12:3: the more strikingly because of a different sense in Dan. 11:34, 44; 12:2, 4, 10, where the article is not used). It is in no way the covenant, still less the everlasting covenant, but a covenant. It is mere assumption to say (what the context explodes) that it must be a covenant with God. Have men never read Isa. 28:15, 18, that they so pertinaciously cling to the violent perversion of this verse to Messiah, overlooking the explicit teaching that Messiah had long before come and been cut off, and that we were told afterwards of a coming foreign prince, whose people destroyed Jerusalem? It is a future Roman prince who is to confirm a covenant for seven years, not with the godly remnant {of the Jews} but with the mass of the Jews, before the new age arrives when Messiah, even Jehovah of hosts, shall reign gloriously in Zion.

But the strongest hopes of man are weakness itself if God sanctions not. And how could He sustain what put His people into alliance with death and hell (Sheol) {Isa. 28:15, 18}? The confirmation of the Roman empire no more stands for the Jews than its seal of old could hinder the resurrection of the buried Messiah. Hence we read that in the half or midst of the week he will cause

sacrifice and offering to cease. This suggests the scope of the covenant named. It appears that it will be a solemn engagement to permit the Jews to carry on their temple ritual. This he now terminates. But there is far more than this shown us. “And because of the protection [literally, “wing”] of abominations, a desolator [shall be].” So I understand this phrase. No one can dispute that it is quite as good a rendering as the unmeaning “on the pinnacle of abominations a desolator.” For the Hebrew word is used for a wing, and hence protection, as decidedly as for a wing or pinnacle of a building.

The desolator is sent retributively by God because this Roman prince breaking covenant with the mass of the Jews is allowed to suspend their legal worship and enforce idolatry. (Compare Matt. 12:43-45 and 24:15 with Dan. 11:36-39 and Rev. 13.) So we saw in Isa. 28:18. The overflowing scourge there, is the desolator here, who will tread down the Jews once more for their guilty yielding to Satan’s wicked triumph in the latter day. No doubt the Jews would scorn the imputation and count such a concession to the Gentile who once destroyed them an impossibility. So would they have said beforehand of the rejection of their own Messiah. But unbelief of danger is the path of ruin, not of preservation. And those who refused the Christ who came in the Father’s name are yet to receive him who comes in his own name, that is, the Antichrist, the wilful king of the Jews {Dan. 11:36; 2 Thess 2; 1 John 2:18; Rev. 13:11-18}, who, in league with the Roman beast {Rev. 13:1-10}, alike wicked instruments of the idolatry and evil still worse in the temple of God at Jerusalem {Dan. 12:11; Matt. 24:15; Rev. 13:14}, shall bring down the overflowing scourge or last desolator, the Assyrian of

Old Testament prophecy, “and that until decreed desolation be poured on the desolate,” that is, on Jerusalem thus righteously wasted till He come and reign whose right it is.

It is no wonder then to my mind that the confusion of {Dan. 9} verse 27 with 26, common to most of the christian commentators, should expose their interpretation to the lawless attacks of rationalism. The view here presented however maintains all that is certain as to the past (whether in the restoring of Jerusalem under Nehemiah, or in the cutting off of Messiah, as in the subsequent, though undated, destruction of the city by the Romans, with its disastrous history up to the present), whilst it preserves the natural meaning of the last week for the end of the age, when the Roman chief {Rev. 13:1-10} of that day will meddle with the Jews again in Jerusalem and their worship, to his and their destruction under the Lord’s judgment when He appears and we with Him in glory {Col. 3:4} Other scriptures show that a righteous remnant will be kept, and that they will become the nucleus of restored Israel who are to be gathered into the land {Ezek 20, etc.} from all the countries of their dispersion, and blessed under the Messiah reigning in glory over the earth.

## Chapter 7 - The Scripture of Truth

Daniel 10-12

This prophecy differs from all the preceding visions in the minute consecutiveness with which it presents to us, not so much the succession of the Persian empire down to the struggle with Greece, as the conflicts of the Syro-Macedonian kingdom with Egypt. But even here the

historical thread is interrupted, partially in the prefatory part as we shall see, still more conspicuously at the epoch of Antiochus Epiphanes, the close of whom furnishes the point of transition where an immense gap occurs, and we soon after find ourselves in presence of the wilful king in the holy land {Dan. 11:36 — the Antichrist} with the last embroilment of the last kings of the north and south. If the futurists are inexcusable in caviling against the fulfillment of Dan. 11:1-32, they of the historical school may find it convenient to slip out of all reference to {Dan. 11} verses 36-45, not to speak of chapter 12 where their own erroneous interpretations are no less palpable, though in the opposite direction of applying to the past what is wholly unaccomplished because future.

The barest outline must here suffice to set forth the true object of the Spirit, how far the prediction has been fulfilled and what remains for the great crisis at the end of the age; for this will be found to be the common issue and meeting-place of the great closing scenes in the book of Daniel, and we may say in the prophets generally. The revealing angel declares (Dan. 10:14) that this vision refers to the Jew and the latter day — not of course its starting-point of sorrow and trial, of weakness and shame, but its bright end when God will bless His people and land with power and glory.

Very briefly is the Persian sketched in the three successors to Cyrus, Cambyses, Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspes, till the fourth, Xerxes, famous for his “riches,” attacks the realm of Grecia. The “mighty king” that stands up is Alexander {the Great}, the great horn of the Grecian goat of Dan. 8:5-8, 21, whose sole kingdom breaks up, followed by four notable horns, two

of which are thenceforth described in these wars, intrigues, alliances, with Palestine between them, often their field of battle, oftener an object of their strife. Here we see Ptolemy Soter and Seleucus Nicator; Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus and Antiochus, and the tragic end of that business; Ptolemy Euergetes and his successes over Seleucus Callinicus, who afterwards came against the kingdom of the south {Egypt}; then, after the death of his brother Seleucus Caraunus, the antagonism of Antiochus the Great and Ptolemy Philopator at considerable length, as the Jews figure in it; the failure of his policy in giving his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy Epiphanes, and his defeat by the Romans; then the tax-burdened reign of his son Seleucus Philopator, murdered by his treasurer Heliodorus; and lastly Antiochus IV, his brother, surnamed Epiphanes but called Epimanes by his own subjects in derisive resentment. The Maccabees record his impious and sacrilegious madness.

But need we dwell here in the details of the Lagidae and Seleucidae? No sober Christian doubts the application of these continuous predictions from verse 5 to 32. Even the infidel is compelled to take refuge in the hopeless theory that they must have been written after the event! being as perspicuous as the histories of Justin and Diodorus. One might go farther and affirm that no history contains so exact, concise, and clear account of that period, the Spirit of God dwelling with especial fullness (Dan. 11:21-32) on the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, as the last of these kings in the past; and this, because he defiled the sanctuary and sought the apostasy of the Jews, thus becoming of all these the only remarkable type of their enemy at the end of the age.

It is here that historicalism betrays its inherent weakness, especially when it forces scripture to comply with its presumed law of unbroken continuance. Every other vision in the book refutes this presumption; and if there be in this chapter an unusual and double line of kings traced, even here the beginning and the close protest against those systematizers who refuse to learn from the chapter itself its own contents. Verse 2 leaps over several kings from Xerxes to Alexander the Macedonian, who overthrew the Persian empire in the person of Darius Codomanus. But a far greater gap is apparent at verse 35. In the former there is no intimation of it; in the latter room is left expressly and indefinitely for all intended. Indeed it is evident that the transition extends through two or three verses, "And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, [many] days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be helped with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. 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 a time appointed" (Dan. 11:33-35).

The last clauses of the quotation can leave no doubt that here we are transported from the Maccabean struggle to "the time of the end," wholly passing over the first appearing of the Lord and the gospel state of things. Suddenly in {Dan. 11} verse 36 we look on the wilful king of the last days in the holy land, with the kings of the north and south once more. Of this there can be no question for any intelligent and unbiased mind. In the course of the description of the conflict it is positively

declared to be “at the time of the end,” and the connection with the succeeding chapter (“at that time”) is alone consistent with such an epoch and character of events; but it is the end of the age, not of the world save in that sense. It is immediately before the time of reward for the righteous on earth, the time when waiting melts into blessed enjoyment for the saints in the kingdom of God.

Evidently therefore the effort to find here the Papacy or even Mahometanism is a delusion; as also still more the old empire of Rome in the east. It is a feeble interpretation that finds in the Gospels and Acts “such as do wickedly against the covenant,” or in the language of the chief priests to Pilate, the promise of Pilate to release whom they would, the address of Tertullus to Felix, and the wish of Felix and Festus to do pleasure to the Jews, examples of corrupting “with flatteries.” And we need to look in quite another direction, beyond the Acts and the Epistles, for the just application of the words “the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.” It is the glory of the Christian to suffer; the Maccabees really did exploits. So too the Maskilim were among the people, the Jews; and “the many” in {Dan. 11} verse 33, not in 34, is a technical phrase meaning the mass of that nation. Their troubles are plainly set forth, and a persecution which was to have a sifting effect then, and up to the time of the end. And I have little doubt that there will be an analogous state among the Jews in the land when the time of the end comes — analogous, not in heroism, but in tribulation. The mistake is in applying all this to the intermediate Christian state.

Once “the king” {Dan. 11:36} is introduced on the scene, we recognize the great personal rival and usurper of the rights of Christ in the holy land. So interpreted, and only so, the prophecy flows on clearly and smoothly. It is St. Paul’s Man of Sin, as opposed to “Jesus Christ the righteous” who according to 2 Thess. 2 is to sit in the temple of God showing himself that he is God; it is he who coming in his own name {John 5:43} is to be received by the Jews that rejected Him who came in His Father’s, the Antichrist of St. John {1 John 2:18}. Here he is “the king,” an expression borrowed apparently from Isa. 30:33, (cf. Isa. 57:9) where he is really distinguished from the Assyrian, as here from the king of the north. The article does not necessarily imply a reference to some person or power already revealed in the context, but one so familiar to the Jewish mind that they at least should be in no danger of mistake who believe the prophets.

We have seen that it is not Antiochus Epiphanes, but a king after the great gap and in the time of the end. No doubt it will be before the judgment of the fourth or Roman beast, which is to revive once more by a sort of resurrection power of Satan before going into perdition (Rev. 13:2, 3, 5; Rev. 17:8). But the wilful king’s rule is in the land of Israel, as his blasphemous self-exaltation is pre-eminently in the temple of Jerusalem, and his prosperity is till God’s indignation against Israel is accomplished. It is arbitrary, yea contrary to the scope of the passage, to transport the wilful king to Rome, or to conceive that the proper seat of his power is in the west or anywhere but in Palestine: {Dan. 11} verse 39 is as decisive for this as verse 37 that he is a Jew, though apostate; and this is confirmed by {Dan. 11} verses 41,

45, though the subject be no longer the wilful king, but his enemy the last king of the north. Everything however fixes the scene as in the holy land just before the final deliverance of the Jews. This king of the north is the little horn of Dan. 8, the king of fierce countenance, who shall stand up against the Prince of princes but be broken without hand. So here he comes to his end, and none shall help him.

Dan. 12 repudiates every effort to turn away any of its parts from the last great crisis for Israel. Daniel's people shall then know the tribulation that is without parallel even for them; and they have tasted bitter times enough under Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, and Titus. But after the future and worst they shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. God will make it a means and occasion of purging them. It is true that the resurrection in Dan. 12:2 is figuratively spoken, but it is of the Israelites, and not confined to those "of a clean heart," who now lie as it were dead and buried among the Gentiles, but who then shall come forward, some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. It is the time of the judgment of the quick {the living}, when evil men are no longer tolerated, and intelligence and zeal for the Lord meets its recompense (Dan. 12:3).

Again, the sealing of the book (Dan. 12:9) points to the end of the age among Jews, in contrast with the portion of the Christian in the truths now revealed, as we see in Rev. 22:10. So too the three years and a half (Dan. 12:5-7): apply as people may to others after a protracted scale, there can be no doubt that it is expressly said of the Jews at the end. A fuller revelation comes by John to us, not to Daniel (Dan. 12:8, 9).

The brief period of the crisis is strongly confirmed by Dan. 12:11, 12, in the former of which it may be observed we have the true source of the Lord's reference in Matt. 24:15: not Dan. 11:31, which is exclusively past in the days of Antiochus, but Dan. 12:11, which is wholly future and speaks of Antichrist only though no doubt sustained in it by the fourth beast or Roman empire. Compare Dan. 9:27, and 11:36-39.

We have thus taken, not a collection of extreme views, but what is set forth by an advocate of historicalism who is more than ordinarily alive to the future, in order to show that the system in its best shape fails in representing the true scope of prophecy. The main error is preoccupation with ourselves, instead of seeing that Christ's glory is the true object of God in scripture, which accordingly shows us Him in heavenly places as the head of the church, but Him also about to appear as the King of Israel and as the Son of man to reign over all nations.

## Chapter 8 - General Conclusions

Maxims have been drawn from traditional views of Old Testament prophecy, applied to Daniel in particular, which it seems well to notice before passing on to those of the New Testament.

I. The law of departure, which has been thus stated: every detailed prophecy must be viewed as commencing with the chief present or next preceding event at the time when it is given, unless direct proof to the contrary can be brought forward.

II.

The law of continuity, which supposes that each prophecy is to be viewed as continuous, unless when there can be assigned some strong internal proof that the continuity is broken.

III.

The law of progressive development, which conceives each prophecy that is added to give a fuller expansion of what was seen more briefly before.

IV.

The law of prophetical perspective, or the notion that distant events are described more briefly in comparison with those near at hand.

1. Now no sober believer will be disposed to doubt the general truth of the first principle, though he might not think it reverent to treat the word of God as one speaks of creation around us, and to formulate canons of interpretation in prophecy as theologians have done to the great detriment of revealed truth in general. As the rule prophecy, especially detailed prophecy, starts from facts present or imminent. It supposes failure in what is actually before us, the judgment of which God pronounces, in order to make way for “some better thing.” But herein lies the fatal defect of the first “law,” that it is a mere intellectual deduction, even if true, which is not always apparent, leaving out man’s sin and God’s judgment, as well as His intervention another day. The moral side is thus overlooked, as well as the divine glory; that is, all that is of chief moment for God or man. But it is plain that in this cold, scientific, dissection of the prophetic Word the alleged law cannot be justly applied to the famous Seventy Weeks. If the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem was

only in the days of Artaxerxes Longimanus, the terminus a quo of the series, this can scarcely be said, without extreme harshness, to have been either the chief present event, or one preceding the prophecy which followed immediately after the fall of Babylon. The object of all this is mainly to involve the reader in a preconceived theory of the Apocalypse, as well as of the Lord's prediction on Mount Olivet, which evidently are each as distinct from one another, as both are from the book of Daniel with its distinct visions going down from each respective starting-point to the end of the age.

The Apocalypse alone contemplates not only the millennial reign from first to last, but the events which follow, and even the eternal state. How groundless then to frame laws from the book of Daniel for what is so obviously different!

2. Then we have seen that, though there may be a measure of continuous order, every vision of Daniel from which the law is avowedly drawn shows a break more or less distinct; and the same principle is certainly true of the Lord's prophecy. It is confessed that there is one apparent break in the last. It would be truer to say that they all exhibit, after a certain continuity, a distinct gap, before resuming the connection of each with its results in divine judgment at the end of the age.

3. If it be merely meant that each successive prophecy adds more light to what was already vouchsafed, the third maxim would be true enough, and almost a truism.

4. The alleged "prophetical perspective" seems to be as purely imaginary as can be conceived. The fourth empire has far more details than any of its predecessors

in Nebuchadnezzar's reign, as it has also in Daniel's vision of the beasts. So have the little horns in Dan. 7,

8. On the Seventy Weeks the law does not in the least bear; and it is reversed by the enormous disproportion given to Antiochus Epiphanes in the last vision, and still more by the space occupied by the final struggle (Dan. 11:36-45; 12).

But further, to reason from the state before Christ to the eighteen centuries under the gospel, to assume that now we ought very plainly to expect a peculiar fullness of prophetic revelation, and this respecting the ordinary events of God's providence, proves nothing but the extreme pre-occupation of a special pleader. We must weigh the predictions of the New Testament themselves, without drawing rules from the visions of Daniel, so obviously different, in order to control their application as men desire. It is as true in prophecy as in the truth as a whole, and in practical conduct, that "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

# Chapters 9-12

## Chapter 9 - The Lord’s Great Prophecies in the Gospels

Matthew 24, 25; Mark 13; Luke 21

It is allowed by the historical school that there is a real difficulty in every hypothesis, so as to make caution peculiarly needful in treating of this prophecy; and indeed that many who differ from the futurists elsewhere seem almost ready to adopt their exposition here. The prophecy begins with troubles in the apostolic age; it closes with the second advent of our Lord; yet there are express words in it, besides the apparent connection of its parts, which seem to confine it within the limits of one generation. But these considerations being inconsistent with each other, which of them must be modified or abandoned?

Three answers, it is alleged, have been given. That of Bishop Newton and others, who adopt a figurative construction of the closing scene, and thus cut it off from all immediate or direct reference to the Lord’s personal return; that of the futurists (Burgh, McCausland, Tyso, etc.), who sever its beginning from apostolic times, and regard all as converging on the end of the age; that of Bengel, Horsley, etc., who would trace a continuation from the siege of Titus to the second advent. As the moderns confess the untenableness of the first view, which chiefly rests on an unfounded restriction of “this generation” to the apostolic age, we must look a little more closely into the other two.

The truth really is, that Luke 21 furnishes, not a parallel to Matthew 24 or Mark 13, but a most important supplement. This is lost, if one regards his verses 20 et seqq. as an inspired paraphrase of the two other Gospels, and thus miss the true force of “the abomination of desolation” on one side, and of “the days of the vengeance” on the other. The parallelism of the prophecy is admitted; but this is perfectly consistent with the belief that the Lord uttered truths, some of which the Spirit led one to omit and another to record, and vice versa. No parallel in the Gospels is absolute, nor indeed in any part of scripture. The measure of correspondence depends on the degree in which the divine design in each permits or opposes it. It was the same occasion, and substantially the same discourse; but the design of the Holy Spirit working by each writer accounts for the difference in each reproduction of the prophecy. Inspiration is characterized by the Spirit’s selection in accordance with His special object by each instrument. This is the true key, not the notion that Luke 17 is the real parallel to Matt. 24.

Again, the point of departure in no way decides this question. Granted that in all three Gospels the prediction starts from times close at hand, instead of pointing at once to the end of the age; but how does it hinder the Spirit from vouchsafing the true link of transition in one Gospel, while the other two pass this and converge on what precedes the close which it omitted? It is the less reasonable to reject this solution; as it is confessed that between the first and second Gospels there is a very general agreement in the words of the prediction, while in the third there are much more numerous deviations. To assume that a marked deviation

in Luke is a comment on Matthew and Mark is of all explanations the least satisfactory; that it should supply what is lacking in the others, because in accordance with its own design, is as simple as sure, and worthy of the God who gave them all. The meaning of the "abomination," etc., in Matthew or Mark is not therefore to be explained away by the compassing "with armies," any more than "the holy place" points to the mountain on the east, or the "desolation" is that which has now lasted almost eighteen hundred years.

But it is a total misconception that the denial of the absolute parallelism of Luke with Matthew and Mark involves the thought that no part of the prophecy relates to that destruction of the temple which was then imminent, for this never should have been a matter of hesitation to any believer. Further, it is puerile to say that the abomination (or idol) of desolation corresponds in identity with our Saviour's words a little before, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." This is no better than verbal trifling. Nor does the historical fulfillment of Luke 21:20 afford the least evidence as to the true and proper meaning of Matt. 24:15; for this is the question — its meaning rather than its fulfillment.

It is a plain error that our Lord's prophecy is professedly an answer to the specific inquiry about the destruction of the temple; for they say, "Tell us, when shall these things be, and what the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" For larger and more remote events were thus in question. It is not a choice therefore between the views which look only at the next ensuing generation, or at the last generation before the second advent; for the truth is that, while all three Gospels start from events at hand, and all close with the presence of

the Son of man in power and glory, only Luke 21:24 gives us the transitional “times of the Gentiles,” during which Jerusalem is trodden down by them.

Again, it appears to me demonstrable that, as Dan. 11:31 refers to the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, long passed when our Lord prophesied on Mount Olivet, so the reference in Matt. 24:15, Mark 13:14, is exclusively, as well as certainly, to Dan. 12:11, and therefore an event not only not accomplished at the siege of Titus, but wholly future and bound up with the final tribulation and deliverance of Israel. It is ridiculous to identify, as some of the historicalists do, Dan. 11:31, 12:11, for one is wholly past, and the other absolutely future, and neither of them in any way connected with Titus. It is allowed that the phrase, “in a holy place” ( ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ), is not so precise as those in Acts 6:13, 21:28; but the other part of the clause is not “an,” but “the abomination of desolation,” and means that idol which brings desolation on the Jews, their city and temple.

The true place of transition is then indicated in Luke 21:24, but this is an added statement, owing to the peculiar design of his Gospel, and in no way a comment on one word in Matthew or Mark. But the great and unparalleled tribulation in these two Gospels is clearly proved by Dan. 12:1 to be not a past but a future event, just before Israel’s blessing at the end of the age, and far more precise than the mere “days of vengeance” in Luke 21:22. His comparatively moderate terms, in verse 23, “there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people,” were historically verified, and are in the clearest contradistinction from the statements of Matt. 24:21, 29 and Dan. 12:1, which, beyond doubt, are future, and as yet unfulfilled.

It has not been adequately considered how completely Luke 21:32 settles the real bearing of those much-debated words, “This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.” As long as they were regarded only in the light of Matt. 24 and Mark 13, there remained room for doubt; and certainly there could not but be doubt without a just and sure understanding of their context; and this was the very thing most contested. Those who restrained the chapters to the apostolic period, or to the end of the age, interpreted the clause according to their respective theory. But the truth is larger than either of these human views; and when its extent and precision withal are seen, the light which flows from these words of our Lord is no longer hindered or perverted. To this end the third Gospel contributes invaluable help, not certainly by swamping the other two, but by the fresh wisdom of God communicated by Luke, making us understand each so much the better because we have all, and thus furnishing a more comprehensive perception and enjoyment of the entire truth.

Here then God has taken care for the first time to introduce “the times of the Gentiles” still going on after the Roman siege of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews. Then from v. 25 we have the signs of the last days, and finally the Son of man seen coming in a cloud with power and great glory, proving the futility of the scheme which would confound Titus capturing Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-24) with the Son of man appearing in verse 27. But it is after this that we read in verse 32: “Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.” It is not till they “begin to come to pass,” of which we do read in verse 28, and a call to the faithful when they see it to “look up and lift up their heads.”

This generation is not to pass till ALL be fulfilled ( γένηται). No language can be more accurate. This Christ-rejecting, unbelieving, stubborn and rebellious generation of the Jews should not pass away till then. A new generation will follow. The expression has a moral, and not a mere chronological, sense. Compare Ps. 12:7 (Heb. 8) in contrast with the generation to come. See Ps. 22:30 (31), 31, (32). The clause therefore seems to be meant in its unlimited strength, and so put by the third Evangelist as to render all other applications impossible. Nor is there the least ground for taking it otherwise in the corresponding places of Matthew and Mark; but Luke demonstrates this.

The case then stands thus. On the one hand Matthew and Mark do not notice the times of the Gentiles, which Luke was inspired to present very distinctly as well as the successes of the Gentiles, not only when their armies conquered Jerusalem, and led the people captive into all nations, but also during their continued occupation of that city as in fact has been the case for 1800 years. On the other hand Matthew and Mark, but not Luke, notice distinctly the setting up of the abomination of desolation and the unequalled time of trouble just before the Son of man comes for the deliverance of the elect in Israel at the end of the age, passing at once from the early troubles in the land (while Jerusalem was still an object of testimony) to the last days, when it re-appears with its temple and the Jews there, but alas! the deceived of Satan and his instruments till the Lord appears in judgment. Hence it will be observed that there is no question in Luke 21 as to “the sign of His coming and of the end of the age.” In all this I see, not confusion, but the perfect mind of God giving what was exactly suited

to each Gospel. It is the comment which confuses the truth, instead of learning from each and all. In Matthew and Mark the future crisis follows a preliminary sketch of troubles put so generally as to apply both to the apostolic times and to the earlier epoch when the Jews return and rebuild their city and temple in unbelief before the age ends: Matt. 24:4-14 (Mark 13:5-13) being the general sketch, and Matt. 24:15-31 (Mark 13:14-27) the crisis at the close or last half-week of Daniel's unfulfilled seventieth week. Luke alone gives us anything like continuity in the very brief words of chapter 21:24, as he alone gives us distinctly in this prophecy the past destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, as he does also in {Luke} 19:43, 44. {Luke} 17:22-37, I do not doubt, also refers to Jerusalem, but exclusively the latter day, when the Son of man is revealed, not when Titus sacked it. In that day there will be a perfect discrimination of persons in the judgment, which proves it to be divine, not a mere providential event however awful.

## Chapter 10 - The General Design of the Apocalypse — Objections Met

From early times scarce any consent has been more general than to view the Revelation as a comprehensive prophecy which extends from the days of the apostle to the end of time. A few, chiefly since the Reformation, would confine most of it to the fall of Jerusalem; a few more began to apply it to the end of the age, as the early fathers did. It seems desirable however to examine the question afresh with all brevity. There can be no doubt that faith in the future application has spread much of late years. It is the more incumbent therefore to

examine what is urged by such as plead for the more extensive range of the prophecy throughout the times of the Gentiles since the days of the apostle. The objections usually pressed against historicalism appear to me of little weight.

I. The variety and even discordance of the popular expositors I have already allowed to be a feeble disproof. The truth might be in a few without being apprehended by most men or even by all true Christians. Spirituality of mind is needed to discern truth, nor is it difficult to muster objections to that which is most certain. How many saints are cloudy in their views even of grace as well as righteousness! How many fail to see intelligently the return and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus! Besides, the variety is not small among the futurists themselves. To be distracted by such clashing of opinions on either side is really to give up certainty as to all truth.

II.

The adherence to a literal interpretation is necessarily absurd where the language of the book is beyond doubt figurative or symbolic. Now of all books of scripture, certainly in the New Testament, none so abounds in symbols as the Revelation. To insist upon a rigid literalism here must end in continual straining, disappointment, and error.

III.

The same exaggeration is apt to appear in looking for events of a character wholly transcending the past. That such wonders do appear in certain parts of the Revelation is clear. It is unfounded to expect them everywhere.

IV.

The attempt, not to run merely a parallel, but to assume identity between the prophecy on the mount and the seals, etc. of the Revelation, is unfounded. An analogy may be allowed, but no more. Such reasoning altogether fails to fix the time when the Revelation will be fulfilled.

But there are weightier grounds of a wholly different nature which may be now advanced. The Lord Himself in opening the book to John distinguishes “the things which are” from “those which must be hereafter” (or after these things” {Rev. 1:19}). “The things which are” comprise the messages to the seven churches. It is the church-period {Rev. 2 and 3}. “The things which shall be after these” {Rev. 4ff} are the visions of God’s dealings and judgments on man’s ways in the world which follow that period till the end of all things. But “the things which are” may be viewed in two ways. They are either the churches viewed as exclusively in John’s time, and hence now past — after which would begin to apply the prophetic visions of the rest of the book. In this point of view the historical school of interpretation ought not to be discarded as untrue or unprofitable. On the contrary I believe that God was pleased to use the book for the comfort of His saints both in their early trials from the hostility of heathen Rome and in medieval as well as later times from the persecutions of Babylon, the meretricious antichurch of the Apocalypse {Rev. 17}. But in this point of view the prophetic visions must be allowed to be vague; and no wonder should be felt that discord abounds among the interpreters.

But there is a second point from which we may view “the things that are,” or the messages to the seven

churches {Rev. 2 and 3}. They have a prolonged and successive application whilst God owns anything of a church condition on earth. This He clearly does as yet; and according to this view chapters 2, 3, of the Revelation give the things that are still, and are not passed but rather fulfilling before our eyes. Till they are past, “the things which must be after these” {Rev. 1:19} cannot even begin to be accomplished. Then only will commence the making good of the prophetic visions in their full sense and application to the crisis which closes this age and introduces the kingdom. Of these seven, the first indicates the declension from first love which characterized the day when John saw the visions of the book; the second, the outbreak of heathen persecution which followed not long after; the third, the exaltation of the church in the empire under Constantine and his successors. Thyatira is marked by more tokens than one which prove that this state, which was fully out in medieval times, is the first of those which thence-forward go on not merely successively but contemporaneously from their rise to the Lord’s coming. As Popery, though far from Popery alone, was therein found, so Sardis presents Protestantism; as Philadelphia, the reviving not only of the brotherhood with its love but of separateness to Christ’s name and word, while waiting for Him, so Laodicea concludes the seven with the self-complacent latitudinarianism of our day which takes shape and position, more and more as time goes on.

But it is all-important to the understanding of the general scope and design of the Revelation to see that, after these {starting with Rev. 4} there is nothing of a church character recognized in the book. “The things

that are" will be then terminated. An entirely new state of things follows, visions chiefly of judgments on earth, or saints suffering, with testimonies and warnings from God, but never any instance assemblies or churches here below.

Indeed the case is far stronger than this. For "the things which must be after these things" {Rev. 1:19} (that is, after the church-state) open with a prefatory scene of the deepest interest in heaven, wherein is seen round the throne of God {Rev. 4} (which is neither that of grace as now, nor that of millennial glory, but of a judicial character suited to a transitional space between the two, the end of the age) the symbolic circle of the crowned elders in heaven and this in their full complement, which is never added to till the heavenly hosts follow Christ from heaven when the day of Jehovah dawns on the earth and the reign for a thousand years is begun. That is, the elders thus seen above show us the heavenly saints translated, and enthroned round the throne of God, evidently corroborating and following up the previous fact that the church-state was done with and a new condition entered on, preparatorily to the kingdom of God in power and glory.

Entirely in keeping with this we hear henceforth of thousands sealed from the tribes of Israel {Rev. 7:1-8}, and, separately from these, of countless Gentiles brought out of the great tribulation (for so it is, not out of great tribulation as a general fact or principle, but out of that special time of trouble which we know from many scriptures will be at the close of the age) {Rev. 7:9-17}. There is no gathering more from among Jews and Gentiles into the church where these distinctions vanish. The seven churches in their protracted application had

given that condition up to their last, seen on earth {Rev. 2 and 3}. God thence-forward works among Jews or Gentiles as distinct and with a view to putting the habitable earth under the rule of the glorified Son of man, the risen saints being on high, and some from Israel and the nations spared to enjoy the blessings of that day on earth; as He executes judgments first preparatorily though with increasing intensity under the seals, trumpets, and vials, till Christ with the translated saints appears in glory and reigns, judging the quick first, then the dead, after which is the eternal scene. Such is the general outline of the Revelation. In anything like a clear and comprehensive view of the book the futurists seem to be scarcely better than the historicalists. Neither party knows what to make of the vision in {Rev.} 4, 5, which follows the seven churches and introduces the strictly prophetic unfoldings of coming dealings with the world. Hence their views are almost equally uncertain. The key to the intelligence of the book lies in a right apprehension of this vision.

## Chapter 11 - The General Design of the Apocalypse — Direct Arguments

It must be owned that the actual state of Apocalyptic interpretation is humiliating. The book has been treated with silent slight or turned into an arena for busy conjecture rather than found to be a rich source of blessing according to the promise of the Lord. Not that God’s grace or truth have failed, but that most had lost the blessing through mis-reading it. In the midst of unbelief, however, God has vindicated the value of His own word for those who have clung to it, eschewing either historicalism or mere futurism. They have read it

in faith, using not only the lamp of prophecy but the still brighter light to which the Christian is entitled as blessed in heavenly places in Christ. It is well then to bring to the test what men allege as to its character, and to examine fairly and fully whatever evidence scripture affords for a decisive judgment. It will be found impossible to have either a comprehensive view of its scope or a correct application of its parts, without a solid establishment in the gospel and an adequate understanding of our own special relationship as Christians individually or as the church of God. As being the closing book of the New Testament canon it naturally supposes acquaintance with the rest of revealed truth. None can truly appreciate the Apocalypse who has been used to misapply the Old Testament prophecies of Zion and Israel to christian subjects, any more than such as fail to see the entirely new character of the body of Christ, now that redemption is accomplished and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Every one knows that the Fathers, so-called, entirely broke down, and most of them in this way, both in the mass of the older catholic bodies and in those which followed in their wake. No less have Protestants in general failed to recover the true character of the church, in consequence of confining their attention for the most part, even when orthodox, to truth for the individual, such as justification by faith and ordinary christian practice.

Let us turn then to certain arguments which are supposed to determine the true direction of the book. Does it spread over the entire period since the apostles {to the present, and even beyond} in its prophetic visions? or does it bear most strictly and fully on the

closing crisis before the Lord appears in power and glory, though embracing this too and carrying us forward even into the eternal state?

I. The title of the prophecy, it is thought, points to the right conclusion — “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Some have imagined that these words denote simply the second coming of Christ, and would therefore limit the book to that great event, its antecedents and consequences. But this view is not more erroneous than to interpret the words as a removal, for the instruction of the church, of the veil which conceals the Lord now that He is ascended to heaven. Nay, of the two, the latter is much the most misleading; for the characteristic truth of the apostle Paul even as a part of God’s righteousness is that the Christian sees His glory with unveiled face. It was no insignificant fact that at His death on the cross the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. The Christian walks in the light even as God is in the light. He is brought nigh by the blood of the cross; and God looks for the fruits of light in all goodness and righteousness and truth. To make the Revelation therefore to be the unveiling of Jesus Christ in person would really be to deny that the veil was completely gone and known to be so ever since the cross and His ascension to heaven. The title then does not mean the removing of the veil from His person, but rather that unveiling of what is coming which God gave to Him, and which He communicated to His servant John and through him to us. But this leaves the question of the time still to be solved, save indeed that the closing words of the preface declare that “the time is at hand,” and not in course of fulfillment. The examination of the prophetic visions too confirms this; for each of them

presents to us some distinct view of our Lord in heaven, and some fresh aspect of God's providential dealings here below, but wholly different from what is found in the rest of the New Testament which directly applies to the church in its passage through the world. Further, we have already seen that Rev. 2, 3, does not suppose a chasm between the apostle's day and the future crisis of the world, but rather bridges it over by a most instructive transition which furnishes light increasingly as God lengthens out "the things which are" — that is, the seven churches or the epistles to them. They are not yet past.

II.

The analogy of Old Testament prophecy tends rather to mislead than to fix the true character of the Apocalypse, for the people of God then had to do with times and seasons in a way wholly different from us. There is contrast therefore really, rather than analogy, though one would not deny, as often remarked, the bearing of principles and help from them for christian sufferers from the Apocalypse. But the fact that the Lord has accomplished redemption, sent down the Spirit, and is ready to judge the quick and the dead, shows the total difference from the state of things before His first advent. The analogy therefore wholly fails instead of being full or complete.

It is easy to assert that the church has derived such light from the Apocalypse as the early triumphs of the gospel, the downfall of Rome, the troubles and temptations which intervened to the church, and the final triumph of Christ's kingdom. But such instances as these rather disprove than demonstrate the assertion. He who could

apply to gospel triumphs the first seal, for instance (the white horse with its rider going forth conquering and to conquer), {Rev. 6:1, 2} has certainly derived little true light from the Apocalypse. And as to Rome, though Babylon {Rev. 17} be unquestionably its symbol, there is much to try and exercise the heart for those who are occupied with outward circumstances; for that “great city” is far from fallen yet, though fail it must in due time. One has no wish to doubt that more or less may have been gathered from the book as to intervening troubles and temptation in principle at least; but I fear that those who drew from it the final triumph of Christ’s kingdom have fallen into interpretations as unworthy as those of Eusebius, and this as time advanced, no less than in earlier ages. It would be easy, in fact, to show that the effort to apply the book, in its prophetic visions, to the course of the church on earth has led to little more than mistake in detail as well as wholesale. The church of God was meant to be from day to day expecting Christ. “Known to God are all his works from the beginning”; but He has carefully abstained from revealing to us that which might set aside the constancy of our hope. This was not at all the case before redemption. Even the rejection of the Messiah was a matter of prophetic date. Those who overcome during the various stages of the church on earth are seen translated to heaven and glorified there in Rev. 4, 5 before the properly prophetic visions begin to apply.

III.

The special analogy of the visions of Daniel breaks down when examined closely. For though there be in his visions a scarcely broken succession from his day to the first advent, it does not follow that the visions of St. John

must reach from the apostolic age {down to today} without break. In none is this more conspicuous than in the seventy weeks {Dan. 9}, where we have continuity up to the death of Christ, but a distinct gap after it. The destruction of the city and sanctuary no doubt is recorded as subsequent, and a vista of desolation and war follows to the end; but otherwise it is all vague and unconnected with any date whatever. That it is after the sixty-nine weeks, and before the seventieth, is all one can learn from Dan. 9. There is no hint of time between; the last week remains to be fulfilled. Eighteen hundred years have already elapsed within that gap.

So it is with the Apocalypse. Its prophetic visions converge on the great future crisis, the accomplishment of the seventieth week, within which fall also “the time, times, and half a time” of Daniel. The resemblance between the Revelation and Daniel is found here only. That is, they do not resemble where the visions of Daniel are continuous, but coalesce after the gap for the end of the age. The analogy is that, while Daniel only gave succession up to Christ, both converge on “the time of the end.”

IV.

The prophecy of our Lord must be perverted in order to apply the Apocalypse continuously from the Apostles’ day on to His coming. For in Matt. 24 the grand question is as to the consummation of the age and not the sequence of events before it. And in Luke 21, where alone we hear of the “times of the Gentiles,” we have no more information than the general fact of Jerusalem being trodden down by the Gentiles till then. We are next plunged into the signs external and moral which

mark the end of the age — “signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” It is after revealing all these events that our Lord solemnly declares, “This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.” This generation therefore lasts till after the second advent no less than the fall of the temple. It is a mistake that there is a twofold affirmation with regard to the times: the first, that all the events predicted concerning the fall of the temple should certainly be fulfilled in that very generation; and the other, that the day and hour of the second advent was at that time purposely concealed. One has only to read carefully our Lord’s own words in order to see that there is no such distinction and that the Christ-rejecting generation of the Jews was not to pass till all was fulfilled, including the second advent — not merely till the temple fell. Scripture teaches nowhere that that day and hour are now revealed.

1. Hence there is no continuity in the Lord’s prophecy, any more than in the visions of Daniel, which justifies the name of a “law” and affords a presumption that the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse must stretch over the last 1800 years.

2. The Lord’s prophecy in Matt. 24, 25 consists of three main divisions: first, the Jewish part in Matt. 24:4-44; secondly, the christian part in Matt. 24:45 to 25:30; and, thirdly, the Gentile part in Matt. 25:31-46. The disciples who were then instructed by the Lord could fittingly

represent the future Jewish remnant, as this they were at that time themselves before they were brought into church standing by known redemption and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Hence the argument founded on their christian character to insinuate the propriety of prophecy about Christians and their circumstances all through entirely fails.

3. The mention of the “times of the Gentiles” in Luke 21 seems a slender ground for assigning to the Apocalypse an application to so many centuries instead of to the last week of Daniel.

4. Nor does the resemblance between Rev. 11:2 and Luke 21:24 blot out their differences, still less warrant the conclusion that the Apocalyptic visions are the expansion of the earlier prophecy.

V. The presumption from the prophetic notices in the Epistles is equally slight. Thus, though the mystery of lawlessness already wrought, there was nothing in 2 Thess. 2 to indicate that either the apostasy or the manifestation of the lawless one will be before the time of the end; other scriptures prove that they will be then exclusively; with which the notices of this chapter quite agree. Still less force is there in 1 Cor. 10:1-10, where we have Old Testament facts used as types, which no doubt might apply then or at any time. But this is moral admonition, not continuous prophecy. Again, 1 Tim. 4 speaks only of “some” and “in latter times.” It is no more the end of the age than a prediction ranging over all the times of the gospel. Solemnly true and needed as is the warning of 2 Peter 2:1-12, there is nothing here to decide the application of the Apocalypse all through.

VI.

The distinctive character of St. John's writings is alleged to point to the wider application rather than to the crisis. Undoubtedly the choice of the penman was in the fullest harmony with the message to be conveyed; but there is also variety as well as a common principle. The Gospel {of John}, the Epistles {of John}, and the Revelation do not only come from the same writer, but manifest character of truth peculiar to themselves. To call his the spiritual Gospel (as by the Greek Christians of old τὸ εὐγγέλιον τὸ κατὰ πνεῦμα), as contradistinguished from Luke's, Mark's, or Matthew's, seems far from precision and rather derogatory to the others; quite as much so to contrast his Epistles with those of Paul. The Gospel of John shows us really eternal life in the Son of God, the glory of the Only-begotten who reveals the Father; the Epistles show us the effect of this revelation where faith received Him, "which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness passeth and the true light already shineth"; the Revelation, the results not only in the overcoming and glory of those who are His but in the iniquity, lawlessness, and judgment of those who believe not, that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. Hence it is that, while He is God and man in one person throughout all John's writings, He is more prominent as Son of God in the Gospels and Epistles, as Son of man in the Revelation. Authority to execute judgment is therefore given to Him {John 5:22, 23} on those who would not come to Him that they might have life; and thus there are two resurrections, of life for those that practiced good, of judgment for those that did evil, the turning-point being faith or unbelief in His person who is the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. The crisis therefore falls in far more

with this, the evident object of the Revelation, than any mere course of providential judgments spread over the continuous history of Christendom.

The opening verses of the book correspond with this; for if John is said to bear “witness of the word of God and the witness of Jesus Christ,” it is qualified by “whatsoever things he saw.” That is, it is not the person of the Son as in the Gospel nor our possession and manifestation of the life that is in Him as in the Epistles, but visions. And when in the course of the prophecy Christ is named The Word of God (Rev. 19), it is evidently in destructive judgment whilst in the Gospel we see Him in the fullness of grace. With such marked distinctness does the Spirit guard us against wrong inference from the rest of John’s writings, and condemn those who would foist in the miscalled spiritualizing of the Revelation. Details only confirm this, if we bring each distinctive mark of the Gospels and Epistles to test the prophecy.

1. To argue that, because the Gospel and Epistles dwell not on the external and transient and earthly but on eternal truth, therefore the Apocalypse cannot disclose outward signs and wonders from the end of the age onwards till eternity, is to fly in the face of the evident scope and contents of the book. It has been already pointed out that its character is judicial (not the revelation of life in Christ), and this also enjoyed by and manifested in the saints. In the Revelation we have first the churches judged by the Son of man; and this state of things being closed, the world judged first preparatorily and with increasing intensity till (with the risen saints) Christ appears to judge in person, first the quick in the reign for a thousand years, then the wicked dead at the

end before the new heavens and earth in the final and fullest sense. It is admitted however that, as in 1 John 2 {: 19} we hear of many antichrists even now, the forerunners of the Antichrist of the close, so the Apocalypse may afford light in a general way now, while it shines most distinctly on the great future crisis; and thus it is larger, as well as more exact, than either historicalists or futurists can see.

2. If both Gospel and Revelation open with the Lamb, each strikingly employs a different word, though it be about the same person: the Gospel, ἀμνός as expressive of God's grace in all its extent and in relation to sacrifice; the Revelation, ἀρνίον as the holy earth-rejected Sufferer, whose blood indeed has bought believers to God, but whose wrath is about to fall on a guilty world and the still guiltier apostates at His appearing till Satan himself perishes for ever.

3. The Gospel and the Epistles do suppose the Jews disowned for a new work of God {going on now}; but even so not without distinct pledges both in type (John 1:45 to 2:21; John 21:24-29) and in direct terms of mercy reserved for them (John 11:51, 52). The Revelation unveils the fresh working of God on their behalf when the {present} church-state is done with; and this both in Israel (Rev. 7) and in Jews (Rev. 14). It is as false to restrict it with the futurists to the narrow limits of Judea as to efface the Jews from a distinct and precious portion in its predictions, as most historicalists do.

VII.

The date and place of the prophecy are supposed to yield further and very distinct signs of its true meaning.

It was revealed to the last of the twelve apostles, as the fullest evidence shows, under the last of the twelve Caesars. The first century was closing, the temple and city of Jerusalem destroyed, the Jews dispersed. The gospel was in all the world, bringing forth fruit, and growing. The church gave its testimony to Christ in the various lands and tongues of the known habitable world. The Old Testament had borne witness to the rebellious iniquity of Israel and Judah, not merely in the worship of idols, but in the rejection of the Anointed of Jehovah, and had pointed out sufficiently the consequences, not only to the chosen people in judgment, but to the Gentiles in grace. The time was now come for a final revelation, which, first of all showing that Christendom would be equally faithless to its responsibility, next hides not the dealings of God which should succeed, whether preliminary and partial before Christ appears, or completed when He executes judgment in person; and this, not only on the quick {living} throughout the thousand years' reign, but on the dead who had not shared the holy and blessed "first resurrection," the wicked dead raised after it {Rev. 20}. That John stood in a relation toward the church similar to that of Daniel toward the Jews is plain, the latter having been a captive of the first Gentile empire [the Babylonian], as the former of the fourth [the Roman], neither of them occupied himself with the details of providence, both with the end of the age, as ushering in the rule of the heavens wielded by the glorious Son of man. Only as Daniel was given to predict the ways of God consequent on the ruin of the Jew, so John what was to follow Christ's spewing out of His mouth the last of the seven churches {Rev. 3:16}. As the privileges of the church far transcended Israel's, and the testimony for which the

Christian is responsible was limited to no race, land, or tongue, instead of being cooped up in one narrow country and people, so doubtless the issues from God's hand are incomparably graver, and proportionably extended; and these, therefore, it fell to John's lot to have unrolled before wondering and aggrieved gaze.

If all the circumstances indicate a reference to the new economy rather than to those special Jewish relations which had been suspended, no less do they suppose that God is judging the failure of man under the gospel, and disclosing how He will take up all under Him, the second Man, who never failed. The prophecy therefore no more shows us Christendom the direct object of God's dealing, than its Jewish prototype did the Jews. It points out what will follow, and as the future crisis was the main airs of Daniel, so it is yet more effectually and fully of John; only John expands, as Daniel does not, not only into an incomparably vaster sphere, but also into the endless ages which follow the Lord's return. Such in fact was the uniform character of prophecy in the Old Testament. There was a series undoubtedly, and each wrote from his own time as the starting-point; but not one of them was limited in his predictions either to events which occurred during his lifetime, or to the next main event of Jewish history. They all looked onward to the coming of Messiah, and most fully indeed to His coming in power and glory. So did our Lord at the close of His own ministry. It is a total mistake that He merely took up the end of their thread, and prolonged it to the fall of Jerusalem, leaving it for John to carry it on continuously throughout the centuries which have elapsed since. One can understand such theories where the heart is in the world as it is, and man therefore as he is possesses our

admiration and our interest. Doubtless there is light for the faithful at all times, and especially in an hour of ruin, through the Spirit of prophecy; but being the witness of Jesus, that Spirit hastens the grand consummation when evil shall be judged righteously, according to the light given but despised, and the Lord Himself shall take the reins. If Christianity superseded the finally proved antagonism of tho Jews to their Messiah, the corruption of Christianity gives occasion for God to indicate how He will replace the apostasy and man of sin by His kingdom at Christ's coming, and the eternal state, when God shall be all in all. This widely differs from the Protestant scheme of the Apocalypse.

VIII.

A guide or mark to determine the general scope of the Revelation has been drawn from the parties to whom it was first sent. It was given to John, and through him the seven churches of Asia were addressed. It has been argued therefore that, if the Apocalypse records the history of the church, the address to the Asiatic churches {Rev. 2 and 3} is most suitable, and in full harmony with the precedents of scripture; but it is equally incongruous if the main reference of the work be to a Jewish remnant alone during a few years at the end of this dispensation. The truth is, however, that the epistles to the seven churches are but introductory to the strictly prophetic part of the book, or "the things which shall be after" the things which are {Rev. 1:19}; and "the things which are" exhibit the churches coming under the judgment of the Son of man. Thenceforward we have visions of the world judged, and the most conspicuous absence of a church; nay more, the presence of Jews and Gentiles {who are} objects of

divine grace, and this separately, instead of being united in one body. That is, the book, as a whole, in its predictions contemplates an entirely new state of things, as the result of the faithlessness of Christendom, and the removal of the faithful to heaven [at the pretribulation rapture], paving the way for the reign of the Lord and the glorified saints {when the millennial kingdom is established}. That state, however, is no return to a mere Jewish remnant, though such a remnant be one of its elements; but on the proved ruin of Christendom, as of Judaism, the visions show us God's measures for investing the Lord with the world as His inheritance. We hear the first church threatened with the removal of its candlestick {Rev. 2:5}, we see in the last its setting aside with abhorrence as the Lord's resolve {Rev. 3:16}; and this in order to make way for the visions of woe, not without testimonies of mercy, the process which introduces the First-born in judgment of the whole earth. Clearly it was meant that those in the churches, or a church position, should profit by all the communications of the book; but the book itself is the strongest proof that churches, or even Christians properly so-called, are nowhere contemplated in the scenes of its predictions. Its object is to reveal what follows in the world when those that overcame in the church-state are no longer on earth.

IX.

The direct statements with regard to the time which begin and close the prophecy are another evidence of its true application. It was sent to show God's servants "things that must shortly come to pass." "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written

therein: for the time is at hand." The motive is neither that the things are in course of fulfilment, nor that they are about the church. Compare Rev. 22:10. And this last is the more striking, because Daniel was told to seal his book even to the time of the end; whereas John, receiving still further and deeper details, was told not to seal the sayings of the prophecy of his book. The true inference is, not that there was a merely human or ordinary scale of time applied to either, but that since redemption and Christ's session at God's right hand, ready to judge the quick [living] and the dead {2 Tim. 4:1}, the end of all things is at hand to John and the Christian, as it was not to Daniel and the Jew. Having the Spirit meanwhile, the Christian has divine capacity to understand all that the word, prophetic or not, reveals. It is no question of comparative distance or nearness merely, but of the immense change effected by Christ, who has brought all things to a point before God; so that the same apostle, John, could say, "it is the last time," or "hour" {1 John 2:18}. This was neither manifest nor true when Daniel lived. {For Daniel,} A revealed series of events necessarily intervened. It was otherwise when John wrote. In both prophecies the Spirit had the crisis in view. None can conceive that the earlier events predicted by Daniel belong to the time of the end, or were for many days. "The last end of the indignation" has no reference to the siege of Titus, nor will it fall within the limits of the so-called christian dispensation. "The indignation," it appears from Isa. 10, etc., is evidently God's anger against idolatrous Israel; and "the abomination of desolation," in Matt. 24 and Dan. 12, will not be till the end of the age in the sanctuary of Jerusalem. These allusions are demonstrably outside the times of the gospel; but the

Christian is entitled to comprehend what the Jew must wait for. To us, therefore, it is always morally “the time of the end”; and nothing, accordingly, is sealed or shut up from us. It is an evident mistake that 1 Peter 1:10-12 refers to these texts in Daniel, but rather to such as Dan. 2:34, 35; Dan. 7:13; Dan. 9:26, “the sufferings respecting Christ, and the glories after these,” which are now reported more fully still in the gospel, as some of them will be fulfilled only at the revelation of our Lord. Thus the contrast of the words in Revelation with Daniel’s lends no support to the hypothesis that even the seals apply to gospel times from John’s day.

X. The character of the opening benediction {in Rev. 1} bespeaks the true references. It is not from God, as such, or from the Father, as such, His special revelation in grace and relationship which we know as Christians. It is rather His name of Jehovah, hitherto made known to the children of Israel, now for the first time translated from the Old Testament idiom into Greek, but Hebraistically. This surely suits a prophetic book which was intended to unfold, not christian privilege or duty, but judgment on a world guilty of rejecting as well as corrupting Christianity, where God begins to prepare an earthly nucleus for the returning Lord, and this from Israel, as well as all nations, but expressly distinct from each other. There is a difference between the form of the name in Rev. 1 and in Rev. 4; but on this we need not enter, as being beside the present argument and purpose. It is undeniable, however, that He is not in either revealed in christian or church relationship, but in a form and character suited to One who is to act thenceforward as governor, not merely of Israel, but of the nations. In accordance with this, we do not hear of

the “one Spirit,” as in 1 Corinthians or Ephesians, nor yet as the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, but with a difference no less striking, “the seven Spirits which are before the throne,” a phrase which suggests His fullness governmentally, and refers to Isa. 11, but is never used when Christian standing is in question. So the characters of Christ Himself pointedly leave out what is heavenly and in church connection. It is neither priesthood nor headship; but what He was on earth, and there in resurrection, and will be when He returns. What He is displaying now on high is left out. Continuity is not in the least expressed; but rather a break from His resurrection, till He takes His great power and reigns. So with the associated title, “I am Alpha and Omega”; it may be of Gentile source, joined with one familiar to Jewish ears, and thus together most suitable to a prophecy which lifts the veil from the future crisis, when it is no longer that body wherein is neither Jew nor Gentile, but Christ is all and in all. Here we have only Jews and Gentiles after Rev. 6.

As to Rev. 1:7, it is in no way to be limited to Jews, whatever the resemblance to the Septuagint version of the words in Zech. 12. Indeed this is but one case of the general principle, that the Revelation, like the New Testament as a whole (save in application of fulfilled prophecy) enlarges the sphere, and deepens the character, of what is borrowed from the older oracles of God. But allowing that “all the tribes of the earth” should be here meant, rather than “of the land” merely, and as distinguished from “those who pierced Him,” it seems strange that the bearing of “every eye shall see Him” should be overlooked. For if the object had been to guard the reader from the vague providential line of

interpretation, and to fix our attention on the Lord's coming again to the earth, it could hardly be secured more plainly than by such a text. There is a larger and more comprehensive scope than in Old Testament prophecy; but it is in relation to the world, not to the church, and to the visible display of glory, not to the kingdom of God viewed spiritually. We walk by faith, not by sight. The book is for, but not all about, the church.

XI.

The special occasion when these visions were revealed is supposed to be very significant of their bearing on the church rather than the Jews. For the apostle "was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." Domitian was persecuting; the conflict was begun between the witnesses of Christ and the idolatrous power of Rome; John's exile exemplified the warfare and suffering which was to continue for ages; as Rome is seen, near the close of the prophecy, drunk with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. Thus the book traces the moral war from first to last without token of any abrupt transition. Such is the reasoning. If the extremes are fixed, and the intermediate links many and various reasonable doubt of the continuity of the whole?

The truth, however, is that John is seen throughout as a "servant," rather than a son or "child," as in his Gospel and Epistles; and the word of God and testimony of Jesus are narrowed to visions ("all that he saw," Rev. 1:2) to prepare the way for taking in as servants those saints who could not be placed on the same ground as the members of Christ's body. They will follow us on the earth, and will be His servants, having the word of God

and the testimony of Jesus, when the Lord will have taken us to heaven. The Christian, like John himself, should seek to read the Revelation from his own standpoint of association with Christ risen; but the book clearly makes known other saints on a quite different footing throughout the prophetic periods. The inference drawn is therefore unsound. Rev. 4, 5 show us the church as a whole, glorified; and Rev. 6-18 others on earth who, though saints, are quite distinct from the church.

Doubtless the attempt to interpret “the Lord’s day” {Rev. 1:10} as the day of the Lord is mere ignorance, though men of learning have so argued. The force of that day really is, that, though John was speaking as a prophet of what is coming on the world, he did not forfeit his proper portion as a Christian. He was in the Spirit, and saw the visions “on the Lord’s day,” as the first day of the week was now called in virtue of Christ’s resurrection. But is it not almost equal ignorance to apply the sabbath in Matt. 24:20 to the past? It clearly refers to the future crisis, when Jewish saints must pray that their flight be not on that day nor in the winter. At that time the abomination of desolation will be their signal to escape from Jerusalem, according to the Lord’s warning {Matt. 24:15}.

XII.

The emblems of the opening vision are supposed to be a further key to the nature of the prophecy. The first, expounded by our Lord Himself, is the seven golden candlesticks {Rev. 1:12, 20}, denoting the seven churches of Asia: a type borrowed from the Jewish sanctuary, but without a local centre or a visible head,

so as to suit the wider character and greater liberty of the church. If the candlesticks be symbolic, why restrain the ark, altar, and temple, with its outer and inner courts, to an outward sense? And so with the stars in Rev. 1. If used to denote living intelligent persons, why should the star of the third trumpet, for instance, denote merely a meteoric stone? Why not those spiritual realities which belong to the whole church of God?

The answer is plain and decisive. The Lord Himself draws, in Rev. 1:19, the line of demarcation between the opening vision, with the connected “things that are,” and the “things which are about to be after these.” Hence it is a rash assumption, at the very least, to say that the symbols abide the same in parts of the book so distinguished. If churches and their angels are found only in Rev. 1-3, disappearing absolutely from the prophetic visions which follow, it is natural that so vast a change must modify in a corresponding way the application of the symbols, though of course the essential idea remains. They cannot describe these spiritual realities which belong to the church of God, when it, as a whole, is no longer seen on earth. And, confessedly, quite different symbols denote the church in heaven. But we are not driven to the pseudo-literal alternative of two Levitical candlesticks in Rev. 11, any more than to one meteor in Rev. 8. We must interpret them in congruity with their context, not therefore in reference to the church, which is gone, but to the world, with which God is then dealing, whether among Gentiles or Jews. The star here means a fallen ruler, and in the western Roman earth, not supreme, like the sun, but subordinate; as the two candlesticks may be an

adequate testimony to Christ's priesthood and royalty among the Jews. But one need not dwell on details.

XIII.

A similar remark is true of the allusion to the "Jews" in the first chapters when used to govern the application in the rest of the Revelation. Certainly the seven churches (viewed either literally as the past assemblies in proconsular Asia or as foreshadowing so many phases of Christendom till the faithful are caught and the Lord utterly disowns the last outward state) suppose the title of Jews ("those that say they are Jews but do lie") misused by those in Christendom who boast of antiquity and not present power in the Spirit, of succession and not grace, and of ordinances and not Christ; and just as certainly such a phrase could only be used during the Lo-ammi time of Israel's rejection. But it is a hasty inference thence to interpret the prophetic visions when God begins to seal a people out of the twelve tribes of Israel, after the church is withdrawn from the earth.

XIV.

It is in vain for the same reason to argue from the general character of the Epistles to the seven churches, for they stand in evident contrast as "the things that are," or church-state, with the succeeding visions of the future, though no doubt a moral preparative for them of the highest value.

1. Thus the season of trial in the epistle to Smyrna might be blessed to the saints similarly tried during the prophetic periods later on; but there is the strongest possible internal reason why we should not apply these as the true meaning of prophecies which suppose the church no longer existing on earth, and new witnesses,

Jews or Gentiles, succeeding who are expressly in a different relationship.

2. As little does the reference first to “the doctrine of Balaam” in Rev. 2, compared with the false prophet in Rev. 13:14-17; Rev. 16:13; Rev. 19:20, warrant the conclusion that the marks of a regular connection and sequence are herein given. Similar evil, though modified in form, is all that can be fairly drawn from the earliest and later passages. So it is with the types of the wilderness. It applies to us now; it will be as true, though in greatly altered circumstances, of others after we join the Lord above, before the kingdom be established in power and glory.

3. The mention of Jezebel in Rev. 2:20 and of her great counterpart in the prophetic vision (Rev. 14, 16, 17, 18) stands on just the same ground.

4. So does the local fulfillment of the opening predictions. They may be of profit at all times; but we cannot intelligently apply to the church what God predicted of His government of the world, or of witnesses raised up for that state of things.

XV.

The nature of the prophetic scenery as described in the following chapters (Rev. 4, 5) yields abundant and irrefutable disproof of the notion that the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse contemplate the church or its history on earth. For the purpose in hand there is no need of entering into the details of specific interpretation; but a few broad features may be briefly pointed out which are decisive against the notion in question — a notion entertained by not a few futurists as well as by the Protestant school generally.

1. It is perfectly true that the opening of the visions is eminently symbolical. The living creatures, the lamps of fire, the elders, the Lamb and the sealed book, the vials and the odours, all have this character, not to speak of the voice of thunder, the four horsemen, etc., in what follows. But it is a mistake that either the heavenly calling of the Christian claims especially such a veiled or emblematic mode of instruction, or that the end of the age must through all its extent see the cessation of silent mystery and the commencement of visible and material wonders. It is plainly enough revealed that it will merge gradually into a brief period in which the western powers will adopt a peculiar political order and partition with its suited chief, the north-eastern will advance for a final struggle, the Jews in their land and under their king {the Antichrist — Dan. 11:36; 2 Thess. 2} be a main object of defense and attack, and Satan avail himself of the apostasy {2 Thess. 2} he has effected to reveal the lawless one in all power and signs and wonders of lying, God Himself sending those who believed not the truth a working of error that they should believe the lie. But these horrors do not begin at once, and the worst of them will steal over men by degrees. There is no such abrupt change as is conceived by such as oppose. On the one hand Jerusalem and the temple will be the scene not only of renewed and strange idolatry but of man arrogating the glory of God; on the other God will not leave man throughout the world without suited testimony and solemn judgment, increasing in intensity till the Lord appears in glory.

Let the reader remark the total change of scenery at this point. It is no longer the Son of man in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, nor the successive messages

to the angels of these churches, but a throne in heaven, the prophet being called up to see and hear {Rev. 4}. The actual or church state exists no more, giving place to “things which must be after these.” It is a question of government from heaven, and the throne one of judicial glory, not of grace as we know now; and hence out of it lightnings and voices and thunders, not the message of peace and salvation; and the saints now glorified surround it as the heads of the royal priesthood, no longer on earth as in Rev. 1:5, 6. It is a company, be it noted, complete from first to last (Rev. 4-19), so that for this as well as other reasons it cannot be separate spirits but glorified men. The seven Spirits of God, or the fullness of the Spirit in attributive power, are seen as seven lamps or torches of fire burning before the throne. There is no altar, as it is no longer a question of coming to God; and, instead of a laver with water to cleanse the defilements contracted by the way, there is a sea of glass in witness of perfect and fixed purity. The cherubim, or living creatures, are no longer two but four, and seraphic as well as cherubic, characterizing the throne in executory judgment according to the holiness of God. If the aim were to reveal a new state wholly distinct from the present, and a transitional relationship, before Christ and the risen saints come out of heaven to reign over the millennial earth, it would be hard to say how it could be made more apparent or unquestionable. In full keeping with this Christ is seen after a new sort as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, yet the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David: the holy earth-rejected sufferer, slain for God’s glory, who had bought a people to God by His blood, who alone could and does open the otherwise sealed book of divine purposes and plans for the deliverance of the world and reign of God; and the

elders fall before the Lamb with vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints {Rev. 5}, clearly not their own but of others on earth in a different position from themselves in glory, as the visions that follow will confirm.

2. Equally true is it that the action of the prophecy is derived from the opening of the sealed book; and that the taking and opening of it is grounded on the personal power, worth, and victory of the slain Lamb. But on the face of the scripture the scene does not follow His ascension. It rather awaits the close of the church-state and our translation to heaven, when the present work of gathering the heavenly co-heirs with Christ is finished. This in no way treats the atonement of our Lord as for eighteen centuries idle and powerless, unless the forming of the bride of the Lamb be nothing; it shows on the contrary, that, so far from exhausting the virtues of His blood, fresh counsels of God, to us long revealed, are all in His hand and for His glory who will take the earth as well as heavens under His headship, and who, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believed {1 Thess 1:7, 8}, will take all peoples and nations and tongues as well as Israel in chief under His sway. No Christian doubts the truth and importance of Matt. 28:18 or Phil. 2:8, 9; but the character or time of application is another question. And we may well doubt that these or any other texts determine that the Revelation sets forth in its visions the triumphs of the cross while the church is on earth, called as she is now to be the follower of Christ in His earthly shame and suffering.

3. Further, it is said that there is no event between the ascension of our Lord with His solemn inauguration in

heaven and His visible return in glory, and especially now in the last days, which can claim to be the true commencement. But this leaves out the vision of Rev. 4, 5 in its evident import, especially as following up the sevenfold message to the angels of the Asiatic churches or the mystery of the seven golden candlesticks, and as introducing the predicted dealings of God with the world in the rest of the book. The throne of God assumes a relation notably distinct from that of grace as we know it, and even from that of glory as in the millennial day; it is clothed with a judicial character akin to that which Ezekiel beheld when Israel was judged and carried into captivity, but with special features as must be in view of Christendom's ruin and God's judgment of the earth generally, and in particular of what had been faithless after such unexampled favors. And the absolutely new object seen on high is neither God's throne with the cherubim or seraphim nor yet the Son of man long before ascended, but the twenty-four crowned and enthroned elders. It is strange that men should have all but universally overlooked so patent and grave a fact corroborated by circumstances already pointed out, which furnish a very defined starting-point from which the succeeding visions begin. To neglect this is to act the part of a voyager who should take his departure not from the main shore but from a floating bank of mist into uninterrupted fog.

For what worthy point of departure follows the seven churches of John's day? It is wholly incorrect, as is thought, that till the return of our Lord (that is, to reign) all is one continuous dispensation — one ceaseless progression of Divine providence. The translation of the saints to meet the Lord and be presented to the Father

in His house before they appear with Him in glory for the government of the world is assuredly a fact and change of amazing interest. It had been not only disclosed by our Lord, but fully opened out by the apostle of the Gentiles in his earliest Epistles; and it is now put into its relative place by John in the grand systematic prophecy which winds up the New Testament.

The peculiar mode in which the Spirit here records it is worthy of all note as flowing from His own consummate wisdom; for there is no vision of the actual rapture of the saints to heaven when the Bridegroom meets them, as if it were one of many prophetic events like those under the seals, trumpets, or vials. It is the accomplishment of the Christian's hopes, and in no way confounded with the subject-matter of prophecy, such as the appearing or return is, when every eye shall see the Lord and them in glory. It is a preliminary vision of the saints already in heaven after the church-state on earth is ended, and before the special judgments and transitional testimonies begin which terminate in the Lord's coming out of heaven followed by the saints (Rev. 17:14; 19:14) already there since the end of Rev. 3 as proved by Rev. 4. His "coming" or presence ( παρουσία) thus embraces and overlaps the day of the Lord, as it leaves room for the gathering of the saints risen or changed to Him with an interval in heaven, which the Apocalypse shows to be filled up by solemn dealings of God on earth mainly judicial but not without special mercy to saints on earth, both Jewish and Gentile, some of whom suffer to death as others are preserved for the kingdom when Christ and the glorified ones appear in

His “day” to execute judgment and reign over the earth for a thousand years.

If “the second advent” be restricted, as it commonly is by almost all schools, to the day of the Lord, it leaves the fact of our seeing the heavenly redeemed under the complete symbol of the twenty-four royal priests from Rev. 4 entirely unaccounted for. Distinguish His coming for His saints and His coming with them, and all is so far plain; though it is easy to see difficulties and conjure up objections to the surest truth of revelation, or even of our being, and of the world around us. But the word of the Lord abides for ever. One may add too that the prophecy nowhere describes near its close (that is, in Rev 19 or 20) the removal of the saints to heaven: they follow Christ to the judgment of earth {Rev. 17:14; Rev. 19:14}; but how they got there so as to be in His suite in His day is not described.

It is evident then that the translation to heaven of the co-heirs, witnessed as a fact from the beginning of Rev. 4 is a fixed and clear point of departure, which the ordinary schemes of Apocalyptic students, Protestant or futurist alike, have failed to observe. It becomes then not only possible but easy to test the alleged fulfilment of the book. Before the seals or trumpets which prepare for the investiture of Christ with the inheritance, there must be in heaven an adequate answer to the plain facts, that churches are thence-forward seen no more on earth, and that a new company appear in heaven, never before seen there, under the symbol of the twenty-four elders. If men explain away or pass over so important an introduction as Rev. 4, 5 to the strictly prophetic portion of the book, they naturally confound our gathering to the Lord on high with the day of the Lord on the earth,

and a moral or partial application of its contents with its proper meaning, to the utter lowering of the church's calling, place, and walk, as well as hope.

XVI.

The oath of the mighty angel is imagined to furnish another not less decisive mark of the historical acceptation of the prophecy: "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God shall be finished" {Rev. 10:7}. What it really says is that there should be no more delay, but under the last trumpet, which ushers in the end of man's day, God would bear with evil no longer in the grace which works meanwhile for higher purposes. He would bring in the manifested kingdom of the Lord forthwith. Israel's rejection and the times of the Gentiles may fall within "the mystery of God," as well as the calling of the church; but not a word implies that the church was still on earth during the trumpets. Doubtless the trumpets are accomplished before Israel's restoration, but not before Jews return to their land in unbelief, set up their king, and other awful scenes of the latter-day wickedness ensue. Nor is there anything to intimate that the seals and trumpets measure the mystery of God, but simply that it closes with the seventh trumpet, as one sees in the latter part of Rev. 11. The world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is come. It is no question of secret providence then, as it was during, and had been before, the Apocalyptic period.

XVII.

Concurrence for sixteen centuries, even if universal, is but human opinion; and what is this worth in divine things? It is but the recent tradition of the multitude;

and in these ages of declension, what can the maximum of such agreement yield but the minimum of truth? It is the refuge of unbelief at all times, and can never be right since Christendom went wrong. One need not wonder at lack of intelligence during many a century when even saints had lost the sense of eternal life, of accomplished redemption, of standing in Christ, and the varied energy of the Holy Ghost, not to speak of the church as the body of Christ and the house of God. The notion of a continued advance, slow at first but afterwards steady and discernible, is a dream, more worthy of a mere humanitarian progressionist than of one who looks for Christ to receive the saints and judge the world and above all favoured but guilty Christendom. A symbolical history of the church on earth might be founded with some show of truth on Rev. 2, 3, not on what follows, which is expressly not “the things that are” or church-state, but what must be after these things, when the overcomers are all and “ever with the Lord.”

If people only saw the special calling and heavenly character of the church, the Apocalypse from Rev. 6 (and indeed Rev. 4, 5) to chapter 19 never could have been supposed to predict its course or circumstances on earth. Men have not distinguished the various dealings of God; and hence, as some scrupled not to apply Israel and Judah, Zion and Jerusalem, in the Old Testament prophets, to Christianity or the church, so still more fell into the kindred error of tracing it here below throughout the prophetic visions of John. But it is hard to conceive a fuller combination of evidence than that which the book itself has just afforded us against the common hypothesis, and in confirmation of our being on

high while the providential judgments of the seals, trumpets, and vials intervene, till we follow the Lord from heaven to reign with Him over the earth.

{Concerning the book of Revelation: }

· þ Its preface and its conclusion;

· þ the analogy of former prophecy and, most of all, of that book which it resembles so closely;

· þ the season and the place and the writer;

· þ the churches to whose angels messages were sent;

· þ the repeated declaration of the nearness of the time;

· þ the whole character of its introduction repeated often and in the most various forms;

· þ the plain contrast between the churches as the things that are" with those "which must be after these things";

· þ and the intermediate vision of the elders in Rev. 4, 5 respecting the heavenly redeemed in their complete and glorified state around the throne above, seem to leave little question as to its scope to the believer, unless he sacrifice the authority of scripture to the general consent of Christendom during the very centuries when it had lost even a clear and full gospel for the world and forgotten its own privileges as well as responsibility to the grief of the Holy Spirit. In truth no one is fit to form a sound and spiritually intelligent judgment of the bearing of the Apocalypse who is not clear as to salvation and the church, as well as prophecy; and where were such to be found since the second-century remains disclosed the early and utter ruin of the christian profession? Neither antiquity nor consent, if universal, can sanctify error, though they may expose to

the charge of rashness or even innovation such as go back to the once-revealed truth. But wisdom is justified of her children. Far from being self-evident, the mind of God in His word cannot be severed from our practical state in fellowship with Him. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light,” is a principle as true in scripture study as in walk; nor could one wish it otherwise: it would be a premium to unspirituality.

## Chapter 12 - On the Year-Day Theory

It has now been shown that, though there may be special characteristics in the symbolical visions of Daniel and the Revelation, there is no ground for the notion that they relate to gospel times, still less that they present the church’s predicted history on earth from the close of the Jewish dispensation to the second coming of our Lord. There is a transition of the greatest importance on which the details of these visions converge — an interval which has for its main object to disclose the consequences, on the one hand of Israel’s evil and ruin, and on the other of Christendom’s. God has taken care that the church should not be without divine light on its path, but He has done so with perfect wisdom so as not to interfere with its own proper and peculiar privileges; whereas the interpreters of almost every school have sacrificed them to their theories, overlooking the true scope of the book.

It is quite true then that the difficulty is due, not so much to the various and complex nature of the symbols themselves, as to the spiritual condition of the readers and the moral character of scripture itself, judging as it does the degeneracy and corruption of Christendom. It carries the war at once into the strongest fortresses of

ecclesiastical pride and christian worldliness. The scriptures, predictive or not, which reveal Christ rejected on earth and glorified in heaven, are as obnoxious to professing Gentiles as those of His humiliation and cross were to the unbelieving Jews. In either case faith in God is called for; in the gospel especially unsparing judgment of self and separateness from the world. This is so distasteful to flesh that one need not wonder if souls shrink back from the truth which exposes their unfaithfulness, and either neglect the Apocalypse or take up schemes which allow more room, for human energy and distinction on the one hand, or for earthly ease on the other. If Christ's glory were the one object, there, would be more simple subjection to the truth; and it would soon be seen that, as Daniel unfolds the times of the Gentiles on the proved downfall of the Jews, so John gives us the judgment first of Christendom, next of the world, though not without dealings of rich mercy toward the faithful at all times, to His glory who was cast out from the earth, and is now in heaven.

I. Let us proceed however to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the hypothesis called popularly the year-day theory, as one not only long held by Protestants but claiming of late to have its basis made sure and simple by scripture proof. It is supposed to rest on these maxims:

1. That the church was intended to be kept in the lively expectation that Christ who had ascended would speedily come again.

2. That in the divine counsels a long period of near 2000 years was to intervene between the first and second

advents and to be marked by a dispensation of grace to the Gentiles.

3. That, in order to strengthen the faith and hope of the church under the long delay, a large part of the whole interval was prophetically announced, but in such a manner that its true length might not be understood till its own close seemed to be drawing near.

4. That in the symbolical prophecies of Daniel and St. John other times were revealed along with this, and included under one common maxim of interpretation.

5. That the periods thus figuratively revealed are exclusively those in Daniel and St. John, which relate to the general history of the church between the time the prophet and the second advent.

6. That in these predictions each day represents a natural year, as in the vision of Ezekiel; that a month denotes 30 {years}, and a time 360 years. Such is the general nature of the theory and of its foundations. Its statement is supposed to remove at once the main difficulties that have been felt; as for example concealing the length of the delay when the knowledge might have been injurious, and revealing it when once it became a help to the church that it should be known.

The answer however is that, as Daniel contemplates manifestly only the Gentile powers of the world and Jewish saints, with the mass of the people apostate, so the Revelation does provide for the church’s direct instruction as such in the seven epistles of Rev. 2, 3 — epistles which applied at once to the seven literally addressed assemblies of St. John’s day in proconsular Asia, but surely also meant in a mystery to embrace the successive need of saints on earth as long as the Lord

has any here below possessed of similar privileges and with like responsibilities. It is only when these seven states could be looked back on as fairly developed that God permitted the evidence to be at all distinct and complete; that is, when the light derived from the messages would strengthen rather than weaken our waiting for Christ day by day. In this point of view we see that the direct bearing of the prophetic visions is on the same elements as in Daniel, Israel and the nations, with the aggravated guilt of having despised the grace proclaimed in the gospel as well as exemplified in Christ and even in the church while here below. The times and the seasons are, or ought to be, well known to us, but about the earth and the earthly people. Those who belong to heaven are not so regulated. The prophetic dates therefore are about suffering Jewish [sic] or their Gentile oppressors. Those who apply them to the church ignore its heavenly title, and the fact that, when they apply, the heavenly redeemed are demonstratively on high, not here below. We may dismiss the clashing of swords between Mr. Mede or Dr. Maitland, their defenders or their assailants. Protestant or Romaniser, neither of them really understood the nature of the church as distinct from the Jew and the Gentile, and consequently they are almost equally dark as to the prophetic word.

II.

On the nature of the evidence to be expected we need not dwell. It is freely granted that there may be a literality in interpreting no less spurious than the so-called spiritualizing. We have to weigh on the one hand whether the form be simple or symbolic; but we have to discern on the other whether a particular part belong to

the vision or its divinely given interpretation, bearing in mind the fundamental fallacy of expecting no more from the words of God than from the writings of any man as such. Whatever is conveyed in a specially mysterious form should be weighed proportionately. The least change in scripture intimates an adequate design on God's part.

III.

The general character of the passages themselves has next to be considered. Do they occur in the explanation or in the vision to be explained? Are they worded in the most simple, equal, and natural terms; or do they bear plain marks of a singular, uncommon, and peculiar phraseology, perhaps even prefaced by words importing concealment?

The following are all the passages in Daniel and St. John to which the year-day principle has usually been applied:

· þ Daniel 7:24-26

· þ Daniel 8:13, 14, 26

· þ Daniel 9:24-27

· þ Daniel 12:5-9

· þ Daniel 12:10-13

· þ Rev. 2:10

· þ Rev. 9:5, 10

· þ Rev. 9:15

· þ Rev. 11:2, 3

· þ Rev. 11:9-11

· þ Rev. 12:6

· þ Rev. 12:14

· þ Rev. 13:6

That a mysterious character attaches to all or almost all these expressions of time naturally insinuates something more than the barely literal dates. The general application then of the longer computation may be allowed; but one must not thereby set aside the brief and definite periods of the closing crisis.

IV.

The general symmetry of the sacred prophecies is supposed to yield a presumption as strong against the shorter acceptation of these numbers as in favor of the longer view. It is urged that, when a declaration of future events is attended also with one of definite seasons, one expects some degree of correspondence between the two parts of the revelation; and that scripture precedent confirms this; as in the one hundred and twenty years' delay of the flood, the four hundred years and four generations of sojourn in Egypt, the forty years in the wilderness, the sixty-five years before Ephraim's captivity, the seventy years' captivity of Judah, the forty years of Egypt's desolation, the seventy weeks before Messiah's kingdom with its minor terms, the three days of our Lord's burial, and the seven years to follow on Israel's restoration (Ezek. 39). In these an evident proportion is held to exist between the time predicted and the event announced; whereas it is argued that in the twelve or more specified seasons which extend from Cyrus to the second advent, on the shorter reckoning all proportion is lost between the range of the events and the periods entering into the predictions: especially as features even on the surface

suggest more than the letter. The answer is that, besides the principle of the break or interruption already seen to obtain in Daniel regularly, which leaves us free to take the times in their strictest force at the end of the age, there is no need to deny the Christian's title to gather help all through from the great prophecies of Daniel and John which contain them.

V. The presumption drawn from the symbolical nature of the books is of a similar kind. Since the prophetic dates are found exclusively in those two books which possess, also exclusively, a symbolical and mysterious character, it is a sufficiently natural inference that those dates have themselves a covert meaning. This may be allowed if one do not get rid of the short reckoning which finds its limits within the last or seventieth week of Daniel. The reserve of that period (seven years) is surely significant.

VI.

Again the dispensation as being one of mystery is pleaded. But the comparison of Dan. 12 with 1 Peter 1:10-12 conveys no thought of the peculiar reference of the times to us. "Prophets that prophesied of the grace toward us sought out and searched out concerning salvation, searching what or what manner of season the Spirit of Christ which was in them was declaring, while testifying beforehand the sufferings as to Christ and the glories after these; to whom it was revealed that not to themselves but to you they were ministering the things which now have been announced to you by those who preached the gospel to you in the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven." Here is no distinct assertion whatever that the times fall within our lines. As often noticed, there are three things: the predictions of old; the gospel

now preached in the power of the Spirit; and the future manifestation of the Lord Jesus, when the promises shall be accomplished. It was revealed to them, not that the prophetic dates belong to our day, but that to us, Christians, they were ministering the things now announced by the gospel, not yet the glory in which Christ and we shall be manifested together.

To confound the mystery of God in Rev. 10 with Eph. 3 or even Rom. 11 is to display singular lack of discrimination; and this confusion is the reason for the hasty conclusion that the six trumpets and all the numbers connected with them must be contained within the limits of this dispensation.

VII.

Their mysterious introduction is the last of the presumptions that the various forms of date in Daniel and the Revelation are not designed for the shorter periods, but in some analogical meaning which may restore their harmony with the wider range of the prophecies they belong to. But we have already conceded that a larger reference may be admitted if the distinct application to the future crisis be kept intact.

# Chapters 13-16

## Chapter 13 - The Year-Day Theory Continued

The general indications of a figurative meaning having been briefly discussed, let us now as briefly notice the special evidence for the year-day system.

I. The prophecy of “the Seventy Weeks” has always held the foremost place in the direct arguments for that view. It is clear that the Weeks in this case are not of days but of years; and it is hence inferred that, since all such predictions of time bear one common character, occur in the same prophets, and have the same general object, they ought to be explained by one common rule. But theoretic consistency has its snares as much as the inordinate love of variety; and it is dangerous in the revelations of God to reason from a special prophecy to others before and after wholly distinct from it. Were the supposed key given in the first of Daniel’s prophecies where dates occur, there might seem reason for it: or if it were given at the close, where dates abound, as an appendix of instruction. Whereas it is plain, on the face of the visions, that Dan. 9 has a remarkable isolation in its nature, and might therefore have a special form in this respect, as it certainly has in others. Were the time, times, and half a time, expressed in that way, the argument would be more plausible. It is rash to draw an analogy of sameness, from a single instance differently situated and characterized, to all that precede or follow. There are grounds in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks which forbid the shorter reckoning; but this is not at all the case in any of the others. Hence the resemblance

fails, and the reasons which determine in the case of Dan. 9 do not appear elsewhere.

II.

The sentence of Israel in the wilderness is habitually cited as another testimony (Num. 13:25; 14:33, 34). It is plain that a retributive dealing with Israel in the desert is a slender ground for interpreting symbolic prophecies given many centuries after.

III.

The typical siege of Ezekiel is another witness called to sustain the system (Ezek. 4:4-9). Here again we have to note that an argument is based on this, not for the dates in Ezekiel's prophecy, where it is recorded, but for Daniel and John, where it is not. From such special instances, so carefully explained, it would seem safe to conclude that a day not so applied was to be taken literally, especially if given in the explanation and not in the symbolic form only. IV.

Another argument has been drawn from the words of our Lord given in Luke 13:31-38. But it must be owned that the colour for giving this the definite meaning of three years is slight indeed.

Let us turn to the prophetic dates themselves which are in question.

V. The "time, times, and dividing of time" (Dan. 7:25), may be first considered, as it is thought to contain many distinct proofs to confirm the year-day theory, and to refute the shorter reckoning. The peculiarity of form is due to the prophetic style, which loves to arrest the attention of the reader, and to suggest matter for reflection, instead of limiting itself the phrases

customary in common life. The comparison of the different phrases for the same period in Revelation makes it perfectly certain that three years and a half were meant, even if there could have been a doubt before, which there was not: Jews and Christians alike accepted the phrase as comprehending that space. It has been already intimated however, that there is no objection to allow of a protracted application in a general way, provided that the crisis be not set aside, as is done almost always by the historical school. And it may be that such a twofold reference accounts for the enigmatical appearance of this date.

VI.

The dream of Nebuchadnezzar stands on exactly similar grounds. The seven times were assuredly accomplished in the seven years' humiliation of the great Babylonian chief. It is possible that there may be a prolonged application figuratively to the times of the Gentiles from the beginning to the end of the four great empires.

VII.

Without doubt the phraseology is unusual; but Mr. Mede, the greatest advocate of the year-day system, here allows that the vision applies to Antiochus Ep., and consequently views the date as a brief period only. It seems scarcely worth while to dwell on such assumptions as that the vision is of the restored sacrifice! before a fresh desolation!! including several centuries!! not only without scripture but against the text commented on. Such proofs might be multiplied, but where is their worth? I believe myself that the "many days" are not before, but after, the numeral period, and that here, as elsewhere, the vision

concentrates on the close, though not without the accomplishment of grave facts comparatively close at hand.

VIII.

The oath of the angel in the last vision, and all the attendant circumstances, are supposed to be in favour of the mystic view of the historical school, and against the brief crisis at the end of the age.

But why the solemnity of the oath should require the lengthy application to the past, and not the awful lawlessness of the future, seems hard to understand. That the deepest interest should converge on the out-burst of evil which brings the Lord judicially and in glory into the scene is most intelligible, and the desire be expressed to know how long such horrors are to last before the end come. To the prophet, intensely feeling for the Jews in their sorrow, and wholly ignorant of the present calling from among the Gentiles (not to speak of the one body wherein is neither Jew nor Greek but Christ is all), can anything be conceived more suitable? We may rest assured that 1 Peter 1:12 does not refer to this passage, for the apostle speaks about inquiry among the prophets, not, as here, the celestial beings whom Daniel saw and heard. Nothing can be clearer or more certain than the convergence of the thought here on the end. It is of this only that Daniel inquires, and learns that the words are sealed till then. The point is not the immediate history.

IX.

The supplementary dates have been pressed into the same service, and with as little result in favour of application to the past. For, however sorrowful it is to

see men so occupied with the world's doings and sayings as to overlook the abyss that is opening, not only for the Jews but for Christendom, the Lord Himself directed attention to this part of Daniel in such a way as to make argument of small moment to the believer. Compare Matt. 24:15, etc., with Dan. 12:11. Whatever Antiochus Ep. may have done similarly (Dan. 11:31), it is certain that there is to be a future abomination of desolation set up in Jerusalem's sanctuary, that a brief but unexampled tribulation will ensue, and that the Son of man will immediately after appear to the deliverance of His elect. The Lord does thus supply the amplest proof that the theory which shuts out the crisis is false, and that the end of the age is precisely the era when these things are to be fulfilled.

X. Of the cyclical character of the prophetic times I would rather avoid speaking. The truth needs no support from science. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Even the sturdiest advocates of the protracted and intervening application have to own here the literality of the specified times, where explanation too had been sought. The mention of so many days does not convey any necessary thought of a prolonged period, but of God's gracious counting up the daily sorrow that must befall those who bore His name, and of the dishonour put on His own sanctuary and sacrifice, after they had too hastily assumed that He could own them as they will be then. The wicked will not care for this, but hail the abominations then to follow; the wise will understand and confide in the word of God which deigns to reckon up the time before deliverance comes day by

day. An immense series of years would be cold comfort at such a time.

No doubt the two periods of thirty days, and of forty-five {Dan. 12} added to the thirty, are a supplement to the times already mentioned, but they are really connected directly with the date in Dan. 7, without any reference to Dan. 9 (though less obviously, I presume there is a bond between all, namely, the last half week of the seventieth, which is identical with the time, times, and an half, overlapped doubly by the supplemented twelve hundred and ninety and three hundred and thirty-five days, as we have seen). But there is no hint of a long period when these dates proceed, whatever the interval before they begin. Indeed our Lord appears to intimate the express contrary, when He says, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened; “and it is in reference to the same period that, in the Revelation, the devil is represented as come down in great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. Does this look like more than a thousand years? Finally, the assurance that the prophet should stand in his lot in the end of those days does not imply that those days are themselves of a longer continuance than might appear from the letter of the prophecy. The long delay was before the days commence, not in their long continuance. The prophet knew well that he lived (then a very old man) at the beginning of the second of those four empires, though he might have no knowledge of the strange vicissitudes of the fourth, and of the mysteries which the New Testament would reveal in due season during its continuance and disappearance, before its revival, and the portentous crisis, terminating in its

judgment, when these days have run their course, after which the prophet should stand in his lot.

Thus, even in the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, the point is not at all the course of secret providence in history of which men love to weave systems, but the announcement of divine judgment, when the overt unrestrained blasphemy of the powers makes it morally imperative on God's part. This is the reason why scripture passes so curtly over the long periods of which the natural mind is so boastful, in order to fix attention on the closing scene when the responsible holders of authority come into collision with the God who originally delegated the authority. No one doubts the importance of what God works secretly; yet it is not of this that prophecy treats, but of His public inflictions when man's evil becomes intolerable by openly denying God and setting up himself instead. And as secret providence is thus excluded from prophecy, still more is the church, whereby God now displays His manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers in heavenly places (Eph. 3:10). Even when He does deign to furnish light as to His working in the church during a day of decay, till the spewing out of its last form, He chooses seven existing assemblies, "the things that are," as the means of it, so as not to falsify His own principles in the Christian's constant waiting for Christ, and in our having a heavenly position in Him, instead of being an object of prophecy on earth. When the properly prophetic part of the Revelation commences, "the things which must be after these," those who had enjoyed the church's relationship with Christ are seen already glorified on high, and we return to Jews or Gentiles, unjust or righteous, filthy or holy, on earth. The bride is

above during the visions of judgment, or at least their execution.

It is no question then of speculating about God's ways, but of submission in thankfulness, to His word who tells us the end from the beginning, and dwells not on the mere intervening stages which are noticed — if at all — in the most passing way, but concentrates our gaze on the closing conflict between good and evil, when Satan fights out his last campaign against the Lord and His Anointed, and we can the better discern by such an issue the frightful character of wiles which looked specious at an earlier day. The real difficulty to a spiritual mind would be to conceive the Spirit of God occupying, not merely the Christian now but even the godly Jew of old or by-and-by with Gentile politics and the details of their godless history. It is quite simple to under-stand that all the blessing is not introduced, when judgment intervenes first to destroy the beast and the false prophet, other enemies needing to be put down, other measures necessary to clear away evil and its effects, and that two or three months more beyond the three and a half years are added in this way. But that so seventy-five, or even thirty, years should follow the destruction of the beast and the anti-christ, before the full blessing of the millennium comes in, is a most unnatural supposition; yet it seems inseparable from, and therefore destructive of, the system which interprets these days as so many years.

## Chapter 14 - The Year-Day Theory: The Apocalyptic Numbers

Having briefly examined the reasoning of the historical school as to the numbers in Daniel, we may now

consider those contained in the Book of Revelation. The same principle really applies to both; but it may be more satisfactory if we notice what is attempted to be drawn from them in detail.

I. The ten days' tribulation in the message to the Smyrnean angel comes first in order. Here it is felt that caution is needed; for men like the late Mr. E. B. Elliott1 would carefully eschew such evidence. It is well known that they deny the seven Apocalyptic assemblies to be types of the main varying phases of the church on earth [Rev. 2 and 3] till the Lord takes His own on high. Here therefore is a rent among both futurists and historicalists, some on the two sides owning, many rejecting, the larger view of these churches. Yet there are those even of the latter school who, in accordance with the acknowledgment of their application to distinct stages in the church's history, interpret these ten days {Rev. 2:10} of the ten years' persecution under Diocletian, the most remarkable in the early times of the church. So, after speaking of the Seventy Weeks, the late Mr. G. S. Faber says: "We find likewise that the Apocalyptic ten days' persecution of the church of Smyrna has been similarly proved by the event to mean, not a persecution of ten literal days, but a persecution of ten mystical days; that is to say, the persecution of ten years which is recorded by Eusebius, and Lactantius, and Orosius." (Sacred Calendar, 1. 45, 46). Homogeneity is supposed to require a similar construction of the various other numbers of these two prophets. It is notorious however that many, even in early times, interpreted the ten days of the ten persecutions down to Diocletian, as others recently in more general terms. The real thought appears to give the persecuted the

comfort of knowing that it was limited, a meaning familiar to the reader of scripture from Genesis to Daniel. But on the prolonged scheme one need not set aside the general facts more than this.

II.

The time of the locust-woe has next to be examined. Here the most natural allusion appears to be the ordinary period during which locusts live to ravage: so should the scourge symbolized by them last, and no such space as to wear men out. It is but a preliminary infliction, tormenting but not prolonged excessively. Greater judgments must follow: this is the first woe.

III.

The time of the second woe, or Euphratean horsemen, is thought to afford another proof, though involved in greater difficulties from the various readings or versions.

The true text is that attested by the Alexandrian and Porphyrian uncials, supported by many cursives, versions, and patristic quotations: καὶ ἡμεραν, and the cursive Cod. Reuchl. omit these words, as does the Complut. Pol., most probably by oversight. The Basilian uncial however, and more than twenty cursives, before ἡμεραν intercalate εἰς τήν, and six cursives (28, 38, 49, 79, 91, 96)

τήν only.

Hence Mr. Faber says in a note to page 420 of his Sacred Calendar, ii., The many erroneous versions of this passage have arisen entirely from improper. punctuation. I read the original Greek, pointed as follows: Καὶ ἐλύθησαν οἱ τέσσαρες ἄγγελοι, οἱ

ἡτοιμασμένοι εἰς τὴν ὥραν, καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ μῆνα καὶ ἐνιαυτὸν, ἵνα κ. τ. λ. The accusatives, ἡμέραν and μῆνα and ἐνιαυτὸν, I consider as denoting continuance of time, and as depending, not upon the preposition εἰς, but upon the verb ἐλύθησαν. Hence he would render, "And the four angels, who had been prepared unto the appointed season [which would require, rather καιρόν than ὥραν] were loosed during both a day, and a month, and a year, in order," etc. Another author of the same school prefers: Matthaei's text, framed on the comparatively later, or Constantinopolitan, authorities, and would translate, "the angels prepared for that hour, and (for) that day, were loosed both a month and a year," evidently to fit in to the supposed period, so as to agree with the three hundred and ninety days of Ezekiel. However it is the less needful to refute this fanciful analogy, as the author himself appears to have abandoned it, and in a more recent work returned to the ordinary text and the common rendering. But it will be observed that all this shows the extreme precariousness of the historical application, and of the effort to extract a chronological period for the Turkman woe, as we may see in the former case, where the school divides into the classes which see either one period of a hundred and fifty years, or two such periods in the same Saracenic woe.

The truth appears to be that in the vision the angels were loosed that were prepared against the hour, day, month, year fixed of God — that is, it is an epoch rather than a period; and this is secured by a single article {the word "the"}, which brackets all together. As another remarks, had the article been repeated before each, the ideas of the appointed hour, day, month, and year would

have been separated, not, as now, united; had there been no article, we might have understood that the four were to be added together to make up the time, though even thus the εἰς occurring once only would have made some difficulty; for the natural way of expressing such a meaning would be εἰς ὥραν, καὶ εἰς ἡμέραν, καὶ εἰς μῆνα, καὶ εἰς ἐνιαυτόν. If this be so, we must conclude that this phrase in the second woe has no more bearing on the year-day question than the five months in the first. It may be added that, if an aggregated period had been meant, the natural order would have been the inverse of the actual one, for a year, and for a month, and for a day, and for an hour.

IV.

The treading down of the holy city, and the related numbers, we have next to consider.

But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth" (Rev. 11:2, 3).

1. It is true that two distinct phrases are used to denote the time, and that neither is the usual phrase in common life. But that this points to the mystical interpretation desired, or accords with it only, is more than should be affirmed. One can understand the time presented in a different light from spiritual motives, and wholly apart from any question of disguising continuance of time. Indeed, if the object were simply the acting on the year-day principle, it would seem more natural to adhere solely to so many days, which is exactly what the Holy

Spirit avoids. The variety of forms is therefore adverse to what is sought as evidence. Whether one apprehends justly or not the aim that underlies each variety may be questioned; but it is not a sound judgment that any, or all, of them can be counted inconsistent with the space of three and a half years. The usage depends on other and higher considerations than concealing a long space under an apparently brief one, though this be not absolutely denied. But who does not feel the propriety of telling us how His witnesses prophesied in sackcloth “a thousand, two hundred, and threescore days?” and so of feeding the mother of the male of might in a place prepared of God in the wilderness {Rev. 12}, though it be the same space which is styled “a time, times, and half a time” when she is said to flee there, and be fed, away from the face of the serpent? Within these extremes we have the forty two months, during which it is given to the Gentiles to tread down the holy city, and to the beast to practice or pursue its career.

2. Again, what is there, in the comparison of Rev. 11:2 with Luke 21:24, to prove, or even insinuate, that, because the treading down of Jerusalem stretches over the times of the Gentiles, therefore the treading down of the holy city in the Apocalypse must be equally spun out? It would seem more pertinent, on the contrary, to infer, from the limited terms of the Revelation, that the latter must be a brief space as compared with the former. The historical treading is as long as the times of the Gentiles, the symbolic and future is restricted to forty-two months.

3. Is it not weak to argue from the allusion to Elias, in the account of the witnesses {Rev. 11}, that the period is presumably twelve hundred and sixty years?

Undoubtedly the time of famine in that prophet's day is twice mentioned in the New Testament as lasting "three years and six months"; but the same term need not be used in a prophetic book if the time here were identical: other reasons, as we have seen, might operate to modify the expression. And, granting the typical character of his history, it is straining matters to infer that the time of the witnesses must be an immensely larger, as well as analogous, period.

4. In the gospel of Matthew three days and three nights are predicated of the Lord's burial. This style of speech was according to Jewish reckoning, which counted even a small fraction of a day before sunset, or another after it, as a night and day respectively. The principle involved was that of a full witness to His death. In the Revelation it was no longer a question of this, but of such a computation as suits and is intelligible to men at large.

V. The wilderness abode is of the mother, not of the bride; of Israel, not of the church (Rev. 10:12).

1. The symbolical teaching therefore points away from the church to the ancient people of God, when they once more enter the field of divine dealing in the latter day; and thus the presumption is rather against, than for, the year-day.

2. The woman is no doubt a miniature, but of Israel at the end of this age; and thus the plainest consistency with facts demands that the time should be taken in its literal import. See Dan. 7, 12.

3. The distinctness of the phrases denoting the same time in no way betokens a prolonged mystical period, their unusual form being due to reasons of a spiritual, and not merely a chronological, character.

4. Further, there is a most express intimation in Rev. 12:12, which seems to forbid the lengthening out of the times into a very considerable portion of the world's history. The reason for the great wrath of the dragon is said to be because, when cast down, he knows that he has "but a short time." It would require strong proof to show that this means, not three years and a half, but twelve hundred and sixty. There is nothing in the Old Testament predictions about Israel which could lead us to gather that there will be again a delay of even forty years, as of old, in the wilderness, though we know from Ezek. 20 and Hosea 2 that God will plead with them there once more. There is quite a different object in such scriptures as 1 Cor. 10 and Heb. 4, which refer to the Christians apart from time, and not to Israel in the future crisis (as in Rev. 12), subject to times and seasons. To say that there is a designed coincidence between this chapter and the texts in Numbers, Ezekiel, and Dan. 9, usually cited for the year-day, shows a warm imagination in quest of constructive evidence: what else? It is in vain to eke out an appearance of proof by alleging that, as the unbelief of Israel turned the forty days of search into forty years of wandering, so the similar unbelief and corruption of the church has turned the twelve hundred and sixty days expressed on the surface of the prophecy into those twelve hundred and sixty years of actual delay and desolation which lay couched beneath the expression, and have been slowly fulfilling into the course of divine Providence. This is rhetoric, not even logic, still less scripture. For the woman, mother of the glorified Man in Rev. 12, is beyond doubt not the church but the Jewish people — first, as seen in God's mind and purpose; then in the latter-day trouble through which she must pass, though

strong and rapid means of escape from Satan's murderous malice be provided of God. In short, the argumentative or rather fanciful application to the church is the merest and most fatal mistake, not of details merely, but of the entire object of the chapter.

VI.

The close of the mystery of God, and the oath that announces it in Dan. 10:5-7, are supposed to supply another proof, less evident perhaps at first sight, but which on examination is said to be of the strongest kind, when compared with the parallel text in Dan. 12 {5-8}.

1. It is true that this oath, in the most general view of its meaning, denotes the shortness of the delay, and the impending close of the mystery of God. "There shall be delay no longer." But it is a mistake to think that this implies the six trumpets to have been really a time of long-suffering, still more that the previous delay in the course of those trumpets had been of long continuance, and, most of all, that this of itself can accord only with the larger interpretation of the times. Nothing hinders our believing that the time of longsuffering preceded the Apocalyptic judgments, that these follow in quick succession, but that the last introduces the reign of God when evil is set aside for the world finally.

2. The oath in Rev. 10 unquestionably resembles that in Dan. 12, though each has its points of grave distinction. But the more August and peremptory is that in the Apocalypse, the less does it lend itself to affording evidence of a chronological sort.

3. This conclusion is refuted by the words themselves. It is well known that the Authorized Version of the clause is untenable, suggesting an unfounded contrast of

“time” with eternity as if instantly to follow, whereas a whole millennium and more must intervene. Besides, χρόνος is not used in this abstract way, but for a long or short space, a lapse or interval, and hence delay; and this as pointedly is contrasted with καιρός in Daniel, which means not mere duration of time, but a set time and hence “a year.” It is in evident allusion to Rev. 6:11, where it was told the earlier martyr-band that they must rest ἔτι χρόνον [

μικρὸν], a while, or space “longer”; whereas the oath now runs that χρόνος οὐκέτι ἔσται, “there should be no longer delay.” It is strange that Dean Alford, who agreed in this correction, should nevertheless have given, even in the third edition of his Greek Testament (1866), the same erroneous version as the Authorized; but he sets it right in his small Testament, compared with the Greek (1870), “there shall be delay no longer.” It has been objected indeed, that this does not convey the full meaning of the oath, and for two reasons: first, that the narrative in the following chapter implies some measure of delay, even after this announcement; and, secondly, that the analogy with the oath in Daniel is almost entirely destroyed. But the answer is, first, that the terminus a quo of no delay is the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he should sound the trumpet, as he was about to do, whereas the main part of the following chapter precedes the third woe, as any one can see by inspection; and thereon, when the second is past, follows quickly the seventh trumpet, which does introduce the closing scene forthwith; secondly, general scope and minute phraseology stand here in marked contrast, not analogy, with the oath in Daniel, as already

noticed. A more correct and consistent version therefore cannot be looked for.

4. With these convictions we cannot but discard the strange rendering of “A TIME no longer,” a version which is contrary to all scriptural usage, and satisfies not a single condition of the text.

5. The use of the word in Luke 1:57; Acts 1:7; Acts 3:21; Acts 7:17; Gal. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:1, is too obviously different to require detailed argument. Nor can any words either sanction or disguise the confusion of it with καιρός, as if they could equally bear the same interpretation. Even the very few who contend for the interchange evidently feel the difficulty, which is in no way removed by their reasoning. For the contrast with the Apocalypse is evident in what follows: compare, Dan. 12:9 with Rev. 22:10. And the comparatively narrow compass of the oath in the Old Testament prophet is as noticeable as the breadth and depth of that in the New. The strict correspondence of the two oaths is therefore fallacy, so transparent that perhaps overzeal in controversy can alone account for the assertion. Nor again is it true that χρόνος and καιρός are so nearly allied in their meaning that the difference vanishes in a correct version. It is only to deceive oneself if one reasons from the four places in the New Testament where our translators have loosely given season for χρόνος, as in every one it should be while, or time, or space; equally so to infer from the sixty places where they translate κ. by time, that the distinction between them is evanescent. No scholar who has weighed this usage would deny their distinctive propriety in every instance, as the Christian ought to believe it, because he is certain of God’s wisdom in every word He has written.

It is only a lax rendering therefore which seems to assimilate the two words.

6. But the absurdity of the effort will be made apparent if one were to give to Rev. 6:11 the sense sought to be imported into Rev. 10:6; and the stance ought to be the fairer test, inasmuch as the one may be justly reckoned to refer to the other. What would be thought, then, of imposing on the earlier text the meaning of resting longer for a year, be it of days or years, until both their fellow-bondmen and their brethren, who were about to be killed as they, should be fulfilled? Every intelligent mind would scout such sense of Rev. 6:11; yet there is as much, or as little, ground for so understanding Rev. 10:6. Not a single instance of χρόνος occurs in scripture approaching the desired meaning. The demonstration is complete therefore, that χρόνος lends no help to the scheme which denies the future crisis of three and a half years, and makes of it an interval of many centuries.

VII.

The duration of the sixth, or rather seventh, head of the beast (Rev. 17:6-11) has long been thought to furnish another reason for the longer reckoning. But the argument is a mistake. The sixth king, or form of Roman government, was the then existing imperial, as distinguished from the five already fallen; the seventh, when he came, was to remain but a little while, that is, as compared with the previous state. The eighth, who is also of the seven, is characterized, not by remaining a little while, but by going into perdition; let his remaining be ever so short is not the point, but his coming out of the abyss and going into perdition in a way altogether characteristic. What is there, then, in this really to

confirm the year-day theory? The seventh head has a brief continuance, as compared with the preceding heads, and certainly the sixth or imperial; or with the eighth, and its awful source and end peculiar to itself! There is not a word implying that the time of the last must be greater than a few natural years.

This may suffice to show how little real ground there is to boast that the evidences for the year-day theory are full, clear, and unambiguous. The presumption is arbitrary that the dates have some secret meaning; and there is no such thing as a plain and certain key of interpretation appointed of God, which explains the transactions of modern history. When we proceed to look more closely into the particular passages where the dates occur, they appear to yield decisive opposition to the system which denies the brief crisis at the end of the age, and sees only the protracted history of Christendom, in their occurrence.

## Chapter 15 - The Year-Day Theory Concluded

The direct arguments for the denial of the future crisis, in order to make out the protracted historical reckoning of prophetic times as the true meaning of scripture, have now been briefly met; and many of the usual pleas have been shown to be groundless. But there are a few others, differing from those we have just noticed, which call for a short examination, especially as one cannot but reject the pseudo-literal narrowness of the futurists quite as much as the vagueness of their adversaries.

There is no need to dwell minutely on the conflicting theories on either side, which owe their rise to ignorance of scripture and of the power of God. A few

remarks may suffice for the review of what remains to be noticed.

I. The uncertainty about the ten kingdoms does not seem so small a matter as the historicalists like to think, but the allegation against it of their adversaries is not an objection of much weight. It is plain and has been reasoned out, that the prophecy itself points to temporary changes by marriage or alliance in Dan. 2, and by uprooting of no less than three horns before the little horn which came up among the ten in Dan. 7.

There is a far graver obstacle to the providential scheme in the fact that, in the prophecy, the ten horns compose the instruments of the power of the fourth beast in its last phase; whereas in the history, which some regard as its fulfillment, they are the separate kingdoms which the barbarians, enemies and destroyers of the Roman empire, erected on the ruins. This is strengthened by the intimation of Rev. 17:12 that the ten horns of the close receive authority as kings one hour with the beast — not especially at, or merely so, which would require the dative, but the accusative, for one hour ( μίαν ὥραν). They have received no kingdom as yet: when the beast or Roman empire revives, they will. When the beast originally had its way, there was no such division. The Caesars governed an undivided empire. When the Germanic and other kindred hordes broke up the empire, they may have formed some ten kingdoms, less or more, in the West; but the empire was gone, save in name. There was no such thing as the co-existence of an imperial system with its head, and of these ten kings animated with the one policy and purpose of giving their kingdom to the beast. It will be so when “the beast that was and is not” “shall be present,” before he goes to

destruction, God putting it into the heart of the no longer jealous Western powers to do His mind, and to do one mind, till His words shall be finished.

But this future condition is as far from the present or medieval division into separate kingdoms as the old undivided Roman empire differs from both. Now the Spirit of God in Daniel clearly contemplates as the full meaning of the prophecy the same state of things as John does in the Revelation, where there is an imperial chief directing the united energies of the ten kingdoms of the West, which, in any proper or full sense, is in neither the pagan times nor the papal, but in the future only. The utmost which can be allowed is, that the papacy may have shadowed in part the enormities of the little horn in Daniel, and of the beast in John; but assuredly the complete fulfillment awaits the final crisis, when that empire, which smote the Lord Jesus of old in humiliation, will rise again from the abyss to oppose Him as He comes again in glory {Rev. 13:3, 4; Rev. 19:19}, but must go into perdition. This is a far more serious objection to the system which sees only an immense web of providence, in past history, and it is riveted, not removed, by the most exact review of the prophetic word. Nothing that has already been exhausts the vision.

II.

Much has been said of late for and against the true terminus a quo of the twelve hundred and sixty years. But some, who reasoned from its uncertainty to overthrow the historical school, seem to have misunderstood the meaning of the prediction. Thus, if the saints have been for ages given over to the

blasphemous little horn of Dan. 7, it was thought incredible that the church should be at a loss when and how the change happened. Many, it was urged, assert that it is; others are as fully convinced that it is not; and nine-tenths stand silent, avowedly unable to give any opinion on the subject. “They may, or may not, be in the hands of the little horn, and he may, or may not, be wearing them out, for anything they know. They hope and believe that they are the saints, but whether the beast is making war with, and has overcome, them, they cannot tell; it is a deep, curious, and litigated question, and one on which, among so many conflicting opinions, they never pretended to form a judgment for themselves.” Dr. Maitland’s retort has embarrassed not a few. The fact, however, is, that the prophet means that not the saints, but the times and laws, were to be given into the hand of the little horn. God does not let His people out of His own hand. On the other hand, the giving of the times and laws into the hand of the little horn is a very different thing from the pope’s perversion of the prophecies, and wresting the promises of the future glory of the kingdom to the present grandeur and dominion of Romanism. And, whatever be the guilt of forbidding marriage to the clergy, or, yet more, of annulling the rebellious sin of idolatry by what we may call christening images, of heterodoxy and lying pretension in the Mass, of refusing the cup to or shutting up the Bible from the laity, and of sanctioning troops of false mediators in the worship of saints and angels and Virgin, it is not true that every feature of the prophecy finds its counterpart in the Roman papacy. It is in vain to say that the little horn claims the office of a seer, who has full insight into divine mysteries; and of a prophet, as infallible interpreter of the divine will. This

is a true description of the pope, not of the little horn, which symbolizes a king, or rather emperor, not a bishop — a king, small at first, but not always, before whom three of the ten fell, and who wields the force of all the rest, rising up to the greatest height of his power before he is cast down for ever by divine judgment, and the beast given to the burning flame. “Eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things,” in this horn, do not warrant the notion of an episcopal any more than of a prophetic dignitary. The symbol attributes high intelligence to this Roman chief {the coming Roman prince of Dan. 9 and the first beast of Rev. 13}, as well as audacity of speech, which takes the character of blasphemous pride against the Most High. (Cf. Dan. 7:11, 25.) He assumes the power of changing times and laws {Rev. 13}, like Jeroboam (1 Kings 12). Only this will be done by the emperor of Rome dictating to the Jews in Jerusalem, and changing the divinely-enjoined feasts and institutions given to that people. One may compare with this the last verse of Dan. 9, where he is said to cause sacrifice and oblation to cease “in the midst of the week,” which would coalesce with the beginning of “a time, and times, and the dividing of time.”

Nor is it faith to plead the superior reasonableness of giving these predictions for many generations, rather than for one only. This is to make the actual circumstance outweigh the communication and enjoyment of God’s mind, and is opposed to all that is really spiritual. Our notion of utility is apt to mislead, guided as it ever is by mere reason. The question for a believer is the true meaning of the word, the intention of God Himself, which the Holy Spirit will surely unfold to

those whose eye is, by grace, single to the glory of Christ. It does not commend itself to the ear of faith, when the effort is not to vindicate the prophecies from the guesses of men, but to reduce them to the same uncertainty as the twelve hundred and sixty days among historical commentators. Such reasoning ought to warn souls that it is the spirit of man which is at work, and not the Holy Ghost.

III.

Of the repeated failures in the predicted close of the twelve hundred and sixty year-day system others have said enough. They are notorious. Yet they have found an apologist, who argues that these successive interpretations, mistaken as they were, are just what it was reasonable to expect. This might be, if prophecy were no such thing as God's word, or if we had not the Holy Spirit of God to give us the truth of it. In human things man progresses gradually, and the sense of past failure stimulates to future success: is it so in divine things? Is it true that, only by such failure and men's gradual approach to a correct view of the times and seasons, could the two main purposes have been fulfilled — growing knowledge of the prophecy, with a constant and unbroken expectation of the Lord's coming? To the Christian who repudiates the jarring schools of men it does seem no light instance of the irony observable here below, that Protestants should boast of a year-day theory, as applied to the time, times, and a half, which confessedly appeared about the year 1200; that they should avow the uncertainty of the ten kingdoms; and that they should cry up a few apparent successes, spite of a thousand mistakes, in their application.

The effort to retort failure on those who, from apostolic times, have been awaiting the Son of God from heaven, is as unworthy as it is baseless. For, while the apostle Paul, for instance, taught the saints to be, with himself, ever looking for Christ, there was the most complete care never to connect Christ's coming for us with a single date. The times and seasons are, without exception, bound up with the trials and deliverance of the Jews, never with the church.

This, it will be seen and felt, goes to the root of the year-day system, when it takes the place of being the true and full aim of the Spirit in the prophetic visions. Hence, the more closely Daniel is searched, the more it will appear certain that the church is never contemplated as the object directly concerned in the scenes there disclosed to the view of faith. Again, the Apocalypse affords still more positive instruction, because therein we have a protracted scheme of the churches here below as "the things which are"; after which no such state is known any more, but a new company is seen for the first time in heaven, and the old distinction of only Jews and Gentiles follows on earth, with the most marked absence of the churches. Yet, singular to say, total failure in apprehending this, the broadest and weightiest lesson of the Revelation, pervades the opposing parties of futurists and historicalists alike.

Nor is it here only that they are almost equally mistaken, but also in confounding the christian hope with the prophetic word, a distinction which runs through the New Testament, from John's Gospel, and before it, to the Revelation, but formally distinguished in 2 Peter 1, as in fact the apostle Paul does in 2 Thess. 2:1, 2; for he beseeches the Thessalonians by the coming of

our Lord, which is to gather the saints on high, not to be soon troubled, as though the day of the Lord were present — that day of solemn judgment for the earth, and men on it, of which the prophets had very fully spoken. So the apostle of the circumcision reminds his brethren that we have the prophetic word more firm (that is, confirmed) by the scene witnessed on the holy mount of transfiguration, to which they were doing well in paying heed, as to a lamp or candle shining in a dusky place, till day dawn and the day-star rise in their hearts {2 Peter 1:16-20}. Those who knew Old Testament prophecy were thus encouraged in holding it fast; but it was at best a light for this scene, now wrapped up in gloom, but soon to enjoy the reign of Him whose right it is; and they should desire another light, as much brighter as that of day exceeds a lamp however excellent, and that too shining from, and centering in, Christ above, the day-star, whom we look for from heaven before the terrible day of the Lord come upon the world. The heavenly hope rising in the heart is thus wholly distinct from prophecy which tells us of the judgments which usher in the day of Jehovah on the earth. But of this most sure distinction, momentous as it is, not only for the affections but also for true intelligence, it would be hard to say which of the two contending schools is farthest from the truth. In general they are on the same ground of confusion in this respect, though most evidently wrong are they who are the boldest in saying, My Lord delayeth His coming. May neither of them say it in the heart, whatever be the faultiness of their systems!

Where is the scriptural intimation of gradually increasing light from prophecy to sustain the lively

expectation of the Bridegroom's coming for us? The analogy of providence has nothing to do with what is a matter of His word addressed to hearts animated with divine love and hope. To unbelief, no doubt, this may seem general and vague; not so to those who, with bridal affections, have the Spirit prompting the cry, Come {Rev. 21:17}. If it is a mere question of reasoning from a literal sense of the words, hope must wane away, and each succeeding generation feel less and less warrant for inferring the nearness of the advent. Hence the theory is that prophetic dates must dawn with a gradually increasing light in order to quicken the church's hope, which had otherwise lapsed into more and more indifference; and it is confidently affirmed as a fact, that ever since the reformation those who have most studied the prophetic dates, as an actual chronology of sacred times, have been the main instruments in awakening the church to a lively expectation of the coming of Christ.

Very different is our Lord's own representation. The virgins who at first went out with their lamps to meet the Bridegroom, while He tarried, all slumber and sleep. Surely this condition of slumber, as regards the hope of our Lord's return, characterized Christendom long after the Reformation, and down till our own times. However this may be, at length follows (not prophetic research, but) a cry at midnight, Behold the Bridegroom! go ye out to meet Him. It is this really which accounts for the present activity of wise, and even foolish, virgins. The cry is gone forth, but it is at midnight, not the flattering notion of a time of increased light, gradually bringing in the day.

Certainly the prophetic word, when studied in faith, gives one to judge principles now at work, it may be hiddenly, by God's revelation of their full fruit and of His public dealings at the end. The effect is to separate one to Himself from the scene ripening for judgment. But the coming of the Lord for His own is associated with His love, and the highest enjoyment of His glory with Him in the Father's house, with moral feelings and practical effects of another character, higher and more intimate, far above the prophetic word and its solemn announcements, however right and glorious. To confound the Christian's hope with prophecy, to supplement the state of the apostolic church with the fuller light of the present, to assert that the history of the year-day expositions accords in the closest way with these truths, like successive steps towards the just apprehension of the course of divine Providence, seems as distressing in its ignorance as in its presumption. It was a false alarm as to the day of the Lord, not excitement about His coming, which shook the Thessalonians. There is in scripture no protraction of His coming, always and only a lively anticipation of it contemplated, and this up to the last chapter of the Revelation, though we have there plenty of times and seasons revealed before His day. It is the year-day theory which tries to conciliate errors and simply misses the truth.

The supposed successes of Protestant interpreters call for few remarks here, though open to not a little assuredly. Suffice it then to say, that the chosen anticipations drawn from prophecy, which have proved so singularly correct in their main features, are these:

First, about the year AD 1600 Brightman calculated in his commentary that the overthrow of the Turkish power would occur AD 1696. In the year 1687 Dr. Cressener renewed the prediction, placing the time a year earlier, but restricting it to the close of the year of the "Turkish encroachments," or the last end of their "hostilities." This is caught up as in almost exact accordance with history, because the year 1697 was marked by that most signal victory of Prince Eugene over the Turks, which has proved the final limit to their aggressions upon western Europe. Bengel and Fleming are brought in to swell the train.

Here are the words of Brightman (p. 171, ed. Amst. 1611): "The execution of the commandment lighting upon the year 1300, by due consent of all history-writers; when their domesticall dissentions being appeased, and all consenting to the empire of the Ottomans, they might freely bende themselves with all their power to enlarge their borders, and some time at length creape out of their narrow straightes. How long time this power given to the Turks should continue is declared in the next words, prepared at an houre, and a day, and a month, and a yeere, which so exact description perteineth to the comforting of the godly whom the Spirit would have to know, that this most grievous calamity hath her set boundes, even to the last moment, beyond which it shall not be continued. Which indeed seemeth to be the space of three hundred ninety and six yeeres, every several day being taken for a yeere, after that manner which was interpreted the mouthes before. Thus he makes it out: from AD 1300 + 396 AD 1696; or as he says on Rev. 20:3 (p. 650), if we follow the reckening of the Julian yeeres, the impious

kingdom shall not be prolonged beyond seven yeeres; then utterly to be abolished without so much as the footsteps of his name after him. It will be judged hence how far it is candid to say that Brightman's anticipation was verified. Was there indeed such an extirpation of the Turkish name (not to speak of 1696, but) in 1697? Was it singularly correct in its main features?"

The fact is that Brightman taught that the thousand years' reign began in the year A.D. 130, and that the first resurrection belonged to the nations of Europe (p. 656); that three hundred years had then passed since that resurrection (p. 657). "We must also yet tarry some short space before that our brethren the Jews shall come to the faith. But after that they are come, and Christ shall have reigned some ages most gloriously on earth by His servants in advancing His church to most high honour above all empire,2 then also all nations shall embrace true godliness," etc. (ib.) Hence Brightman was expecting the papacy and the Turk to be utterly abolished shortly. "Until this victory be gotten, the church yet is in war, liveth in tents, and sigheth with many adversaries. But after this war is finished, she shall keep a most joyful triumph, and shall rejoice with perpetual mirth.... The truth shall yet reign among the Gentiles for seven hundred years: how long afterwards among the Jews no declaration doth declare (p. 658). Is this the Protestant way of keeping the expectation of Christ's coming lively? It may be added in illustration of this chosen expositor's skill in prophecy, that he interprets the destruction of Gog and Magog in Rev. 20 of the overthrow spoken of in Dan. 11:45; Dan. 12:12; Ezek. 38:8, when the hour, day, month, and year of the Turks' tyranny shall come out, to wit, at the year a

thousand six hundred ninetieth more or less. Finally, Brightman held that the rising of the dead small and great for judgment before the great white throne means: “the full restoring of the Jewish nation” (p. 664).

But the strangest thing of all is that the very advocate who cites Brightman’s deduction from Rev. 9:15, as a conclusive answer to such as have declaimed on the total failure of these prophetic times, had himself rejected the reading, and of course the translation, of the text on which this anticipation was based. Thus while Brightman adopted the common text in that verse, which is essential to his calculations, his advocate, at the time when he commended this calculation as an instance of a distinct and accurate insight into what was coming on the earth, adopted as preferable Matthaei’s reading. This ought to have made no small difference if it was a date. But we have already shown that it is not, Brightman and his advocate being alike wrong.

Further, Dr. Cressener, like Brightman, looked not merely for a grave check or severe defeat of the Turks, but their then total overthrow, or as Cressener says in the preface to his Demonstration (p. xx, London, 1690), “the last end of all Turkish wars.” Was this a just estimate of the battle of Zenta?

Secondly, Cressener in 1687 anticipated “that the true religion will revive again in some very considerable kingdom before the general peace with the Turks or eight years at furthest.” “The next year seems in all probability to be a year of wonders for the recovery of the church.” Will the christian reader believe that all this is thought to have proved singularly correct in the revolution of England, AD 1688, and the peace of

Carlowitz, 1698? Again, Cressener conjectured that before 1800 Rome would be destroyed, and soon after its chief supports, ecclesiastical and civil? Is this correct too?

Further, R. Fleming, jun., in 1700 predicted that the French monarchy, after having scorched others, would itself consume before 1794; as Bengel thought that the papacy would close its chief dominance in 1809. But surely, whatever the coincidence in appearance, our minds must feel that the grounds were as weak as the fulfilment was imperfect.

His Apocalyptical Key, or "Extraordinary Discourse on the Rise and Fall of the Papacy" (my copy is the reprint in 1793 of the original published in 1701) pretends to no more than "some conjectural thoughts on this head; for I am far from the presumption of some men to give them any higher character." It may be added that in the same work the author conjectured that a divine judgment to be poured on the dominions belonging to the Roman See would begin probably about 1794, and expire about 1848, which has been regarded as no less strikingly verified than the former thought. But what is the ground of these anticipations? His view of the vials, which, according to him, suppose a struggle and war between the papist and reformed parties, every vial being regarded as the event of some new periodical attack of the former on the latter, but the issue proving at length favourable to the latter against the former.

Hence Fleming considers that the first vial began with the Reformation, and continued about forty years (that is, 1516-1566); that the second ran on thence about fifty years (1566-1617) to the confusion of Spain and partially

of France; that the third closed with the peace of Munster in 1648 after Germany was humbled; and that the fourth expired with 1794. “The reason of which conjecture is this; that I find the pope got a new foundation of exaltation when Justinian, upon his conquest of Italy, left it in a great measure to the pope’s management, being willing to eclipse his own authority to advance that of this haughty prelate. Now this being in the year 552; this, by the addition of the 1620 [really 1260] years, reaches down to the year 1811, which according to prophetical account is the year 1794.” And this involves his idea that the state of Protestantism is what is set out in Rev. 16:10; namely, “Atheism, Deism, Socinianism, irreligion, profaneness, skepticism, formality, hatred of godliness, and a bitter persecuting spirit continue and increase among us.” But is it really the fact that the French monarchy, after scorching others, did itself consume by doing so, till it exhausted itself towards the end of the eighteenth century, as the Spanish towards the end of the sixteenth?

For my own part I cannot but agree with the more weighty commentators of recent times, that, if we are to apply the vials historically, the scheme of Fleming is a mistake, and that the vials, in a partial way at least, begin with the French Revolution instead of the fourth ending there and then. Napoleon answers thus to the scorching agent, and the blaspheming sufferers who repented not are chiefly the papal nations of the European continent. Further, it seems superficial to cry up his applying the fifth vial to the years 1794-1848; for unquestionably it is rather since than before that the pope has been so signally ruined in his temporalities, and this by Italy spite of France, of which the

conjecturer had not the most distant notion. He had pitched on 1848, reckoning the 1260 years prophetically from 606 when the pope received the title of Supreme Bishop. Then would follow the sixth vial on Mahometanism or the Turks up to 1900, as the seventh up to 2000 by Christ's appearance (though not personally) bringing in the total judgment of Rome, etc., with the millennium afterwards. The first and inevitable result of his system is to set aside the waiting for Christ and to make death the necessary expectation of the Christian. "Though we are not to live to see the great and final destruction of the papacy, the blessed millennium, or Christ's last coming to judge the world, yet seeing death is the equivalent of all these to us," etc. (p. 82). Is it not strange to hear such a conjecture cited as a witness of the value of the Protestant system by one who avowedly rejects his basis?

Is it right again, to notice the last instance, that one who was perfectly aware of Bengel's chimerical system of Apocalyptic chronology, to which it may be doubted that he converted a single individual of sobriety, should deign to use an example which had no more solid basis than the prognostication of an astrologer?

Pious and learned as the prelate may have been, no one will think that such remarks are too stringent on his prophetic dates, when it is remembered that he started with the assumption that the famous number of the beast 666 in years = his allotted term of forty-two months. Hence a καιρός = 222 and two ninths years, and of course 3.5 καιροί = 777 and seven ninths; the little time of Rev. 12:12 ( ὀλίγος χρόνος) = 888 and eight ninths; what he oddly calls the non-chronus (or as he thinks in better Latin — which may be doubted — the

ne chronus) of Rev. 10:6 = 1111 and one ninth; the μικρὸς χρόνος of Rev. 20:3 = half a καιρός, strange to say, or 111 and one ninth; the millennium, or χίλια ἔτη (though Brightman indeed makes two, the first of Satan bound, the second of the saints reigning) = 999 and nine ninths (sic); the χρόνος = 1111 and one ninth; the αἰών = 2222 and two ninths, of which he gives 3.5 to the world, 7777 and seven ninths or 490 of his prophetic months. As the result, Bengel in his eagerness for dates finds a chronus in Rev. 6:11 (that is, 1111 and one ninth years) from AD 98 (a rather early beginning) to 1289 or Innocent III.'s crusade against the Waldenses. The first woe, with its five prophetic months = 79 common years, dated from AD 510 to 589; the second, with its hour, day, month, and year = nearly 207, from AD 634 to 840; the non-chronus from AD 800 to 1836, within which are placed the interval after the second woe (84-947), the 1260 days of the woman after the birth of the man-child (864-1521), the third woe (947-1836), the time, times, and half-time, with the beast and his number (1058-1836), the everlasting gospel 1614, the end of the 42 months 1810, the beast from the pit or abyss 1832, the general dates closing with 1836 when the mystery of God is finished, the beast destroyed, and Satan bound.

Apology is due for presenting such a mass of crude and unfounded or rather ill-founded speculation; yet this is the expositor whose opinion that the chief period of papal dominance would close in 1809 is not only cited for the censure of those who objected to the historical system, but said to have distinct grounds! The charge of delusion and falsehood brought against these estimates of the prophetic dates, unless advanced with important limitations, is said to be itself false and delusive. This is

bold; when it is known that he who thus dogmatizes did not differ from but agreed with his adversaries that Bengel's entire system of Apocalyptic dates has not an atom of truth in it. The Christian will judge from such specimens, which are no doubt the best that could be produced to commend the popular scheme of prophetic chronology, that, if there is little to attract or reward in the expositions of futurists, there is nothing to trust for candour or correctness in the defence of historicalism. One may not look for depth or breadth of truth where the heavenly headship of Christ and the distinctive association of the church with Him are ignored if not denied; but it is painfully instructive to see how special pleading destroys common honesty, and not least in the things of God.

## Chapter 16 - Concluding Observations

We have now briefly examined the leading assumptions of the historical school; we have tested what is peculiar to the system, and have given sufficient evidence to show its lack of spiritual intelligence, even when, as of late, reasserted with considerable confidence to oppose further light which God has caused to shine afresh from His word. The objections urged by the futurist party may not be always well founded; but a really close search into scripture will prove that they both err by their narrowness: futurism by slighting the prophetic light cast on the past; historicalism by still more serious oversight of what is coming; both by overlooking the heavenly glory of Christ and the church's union with Him in it, as distinct from the past as from the future ways of God on the earth. The extreme advocates on both sides lead equally to unbelief through their one-

sidedness. We have seen that the crisis at the end of the age, closed by the Lord's appearing in glory, is the grand point in Daniel and the Apocalypse, as well as our Lord's own prophecy; though there is also a passing notice of the older Gentile empires, to which the world-power was successively assigned by God, when the Jews had proved themselves unworthy by idolatry, as at length by the rejection of Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God. Finally, the year-day theory, when applied definitely and in detail now, we have seen to be as superficial as might be expected from its source in the dark ages.

It is in first or fundamental principles that these schools betray their character. Not only are they narrow, and thus short of the full sphere, but they ignore the divine center, and fail to distinguish the heavenly circle from the earthly one, the body and bride of Christ on high, from His people and kingdom under the whole heavens, though embracing all peoples and kindreds and tongues. No prophecy of scripture is of its own interpretation; isolate it, as the historical system in general does, from the future coming and kingdom of our Lord, the gathering point of the prophetic word in Old and New Testament, and the Holy Spirit's object is missed, the key lost. You are no longer in harmony with His line and aim who inspired all. Judged by this divine criterion (furnished by the apostle Peter) historicalism is most faulty, though its rival is blamable enough for denying the use of the lamp throughout the night. The spirit of the world, ever magnifying man and the present course of the age, is the main hindrance; as the Spirit of God, who searches all, even the depths of God, alone gives us to know, by and in and with Christ, what has been freely given us of God, and this spoken in words taught, not by

human wisdom, but by the Spirit, spiritual things being communicated in spiritual words.

Now Christ and His glory are ever before the revealing Spirit; and as His kingdom over (not Israel only, but) all the earth is what all the prophets attest, so the apostles point to His heavenly exaltation and His bride's along with Him.

The obstacle to the truth, then, is far wider and deeper than any party question of polemical divinity; though no doubt, as some few of the futurists have been swayed by the (perhaps unconscious) desire of palliating popery, so many of the historicalists no less by their scarce too strong abhorrence of that soul-enslaving and idolatrous system. They seem both to have forgotten the maxim which the apostle John impresses on the little children, or the very babes of God's family: "As ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now are there arisen many antichrists, whence we know that it is the last hour" {1 John 2:19}. The futurists think only of the coming antichrist, the historical school are absorbed with the many antichrists. The Christian should not forget, on the one hand, that even now there are many antichrists in being (antiquity being the worst possible disproof of opposition to Christ); on the other, that a great personal antagonist of the Lord is surely coming, of which the many that have been and are should be regarded as signs and precursors, rather than as the fulfillment.

It is confessed, even by the apologist of ordinary views, that there was in the mind of many Christians an exceeding jealousy of all discussion on unfulfilled prophecy. It was thought to be speculative and uncertain, adapted to produce and foster a vain

curiosity, and to divert the mind from the duty of practical religion. Hence arose a tendency to dwell only on unfulfilled predictions, to consider evidence as the main benefit to be derived from the study, and to proscribe all investigation of the future as unlawful and pernicious. It is owned that these notions were too defective, and too plainly opposed to the statements of scripture, to endure the test of a prolonged inquiry; and that thoughtful minds, however cautious and devout, could not fail to see that other purposes of equal or greater importance were to be answered by these sacred predictions, warning to the careless, instruction to the faithful, instruction in the nature and outline of coming events, spiritual preparedness, etc., being real objects recognized by scripture itself, and only to be answered by unfulfilled prophecy. Thus evidence was seen to be only a secondary use for the conviction of the incredulous, while the purpose was the help of the believer to enjoy the confidence of Him who revealed all in His love.

Hence, as has been supposed, a natural recoil from the prevalent doctrine which had proscribed the study of unfulfilled prophecy as useless and dangerous, to the opposite extreme, which treated fulfilled prediction as powerless for instruction or profit; and hence also a tendency to transfer as many predictions as possible into the class of unaccomplished prophecies, which might thus be still available for the guidance of the church.

Far from any believer be the thought that the prophetic word has not a decided bearing on the divine side, as revealing God’s glory and ways, besides its reference to, or use for, the personal wants of man. All scripture has

this twofold character, and prophecy among the rest. But it is not in general seen, whether by futurist or historicalist, that the prophetic word treats of judgments and earthly blessing by God's power and goodness, but does not as such unveil the depths of God now revealed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. (See 1 Cor. 2; 1 Peter 1.) It was the prerogative of Christ the Son thus to communicate to His own, in contrast with a prophet or even the greatest born of women, who could not rise above the earth wherein he had his origin, while the Lord Jesus, coming from above, is above all, and testified what He had seen and heard, and the Holy Ghost taught all things about the truth which they could not then bear, besides bringing to remembrance all that Jesus had said. In the communion of this precious and special intimacy stands the Christian and the church; and hence their exceptional place in relation to the prophetic word, as we have seen in the end of 2 Peter 1, where the apostle shows that the believers addressed should heed that word for this dark squalid scene, till daylight dawn and the daystar arise in their heart. Prophecy is an excellent lamp, but there is something yet brighter, the daylight of our heavenly association with Christ Himself on high, source and centre of all, (daystar as He is here called), which is far better.

It is this which exempts the Christian from the system of times and seasons, though he is entitled to know them, but to know them as bearing on the earthly people, not on those whose portion is with Him whose light is brighter than the sun at noon. With this accords the fact, that, when we look into the saints contemplated in the details of Daniel, they are found to be Jews, and so are those in the Saviour's prophecy of the dealings with

Jerusalem in the end of the age; only that we hear then of Jews and Gentiles now on earth, but at that crisis not of the church or heavenly saints, who are previously seen in the Apocalyptic visions glorified, and with Christ above, whence they come with Him in the day of His appearing.

No thoughtful Christian then denies the value of fulfilled prophecy as evidence of revelation. It was really in no small measure the forcing of prophecy to bear on what was not its object, and the popular effort to make it speak of the past and present in gospel times, which largely led to the reaction expressed in Dr. S. R. Maitland's words:

We point the infidel to the captive Jew and the wandering Arab, but who challenges him with the slain witnesses? We set before him the predicted triumphs of Cyrus; but do we expect his conversion from the French Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon? We send him to muse on the ruined city of David, and to search for the desolated site of Babylon; but who builds his arguments on the opened seals of the Apocalypse? And why is this? I do not speak hastily, and I would not speak uncharitably, but I cannot suppress my conviction that it is because the necessity of filling up a period of twelve hundred and sixty years has led to such forced interpretation of language, and to such a constrained acquiescence in what is unsatisfactory to sound judgment, that we should be afraid, not only of incurring his ridicule, but of his claiming the same license which we have ourselves been obliged to assume. I firmly believe that the error lies in adopting an interpretation which requires us to spread the events predicted respecting three years and a half over more than twelve

centuries, and which thus sends us to search the page of history for the accomplishment of prophecies still unfulfilled (Enquiry, pp. 84, 85. 1826). It is not that one cites this futurist leader as laying down principles of sterling value; for his work was much more negative than positive, and he was as much as his adversaries under the idea that the main end of prophecy is to convict unbelievers.

The error lies in two things: first, unbelief of the authority of God's word; and, secondly, ignorance of our privileges as Christians in the perfect favor of God, and unwillingness to accept the truth that the world is awaiting the suspended judgment of God at Christ's return. Those who, justified by faith and in peace with God, stand in His grace and rejoice in hope of His glory, do not need evidence that the word of their God and Father is true, or that the providence of God orders all the varying plans and thoughts of men to the fulfillment of its own deep and wonderful counsels. And for him who knows what it is to walk in the light as He is in the light (the place of every Christian), it is strange doctrine to hear that fulfilled prophecies lend great help to our thoughts in seeking to attain this holy and divine elevation. It is really by faith of Christ, as possessed of His life and cleansed by His blood. What a descent from His presence thus to history, or the account of all the events of time under the light of the prophetic vision, good as it is; and how painful the effort thus to christen, if one may so say, all the main subjects of classical study and pursuit!

Again, to talk of the sure progress of all history towards its consummation in the kingdom of Christ is very apt to blind men to the fact, that "the times of the Gentiles,"

under which we live, are really an interruption in God's ways with men on the earth, a parenthesis rather than the orderly course of things, though a parenthesis since redemption during which a mystery of the deepest grace and richest glory is revealed, a mystery great indeed as to Christ, and as to the church. When our Lord returns, the world will pass under the direct government of God, when Israel and the nations shall be blessed under the glorious Son of man, as of old all fell to ruin which stood on man's responsibility. To blend in such prospects of glory with the whole range of history, to make all the events recorded by profane historians, and by the orators and poets of Greece and Rome, so many pledges to us of the everlasting kingdom, is to confound clean and unclean, and to verge on profanity itself, if it have any definite meaning.

In all this reasoning it is plain that the Protestant is no less dark than the Catholic in seizing the true and special nature of the church. This misleads both the conflicting parties; and it is hard to say which errs most from the truth. Thus we are told by the historicalist that there is in the full provision of divine truth in these fulfilled prophecies an unspeakable exhibition of God's wisdom and love, who, knowing the weakness of our faith as to all the great blessings He has promised, by these connected and continual visions converts every event of providence when fulfilled into a new and fuller pledge of the mercies still only in prospect; and Babylon and Persia, Greece and Rome, Cyrus and Alexander, Antiochus and Titus, the powers that have oppressed or the conquerors that have wasted (not Israel or even saints among the ancient people of God but) the church! become tokens of the approach of Messiah's triumphant

kingdom. None can be surprised if there be the widest divergence in general doctrine, in worship and walk, in communion and hope, seeing that there is such total ignorance of the church in fact and character. The effect is disastrous in the extreme. As our special relationship to Christ at God's right hand is unknown, so perpetual interest in all the events of past history takes the place avowedly of setting our minds on things above; so too boasting of the whole deposit of revealed wisdom successionally unfolded from age to age forbids the sense and confession of our actual fallen estate, and the foreboding of the troubles (not of the Jews and Gentiles at the end of the age, but) of the church eclipses the continual looking for the Bridegroom as our proximate hope.

It is indeed solemnly true that there will be a judgment of the quick {living} as well as of the dead {2 Tim. 4:1}, and that the kingdom over the earth covers the space between for a thousand years; that the past is not something extinct and perished for ever, but that every actor shall give account, and every work be manifested before the Lord; but how this teaches us the perpetual interest of the church of God in all the events of past history seems an inference very wide of the premises. The value of Old Testament facts, as well as testimonies, we are best taught in the application of them by the Holy Ghost in the New; but this is a thing very different from our busying ourselves with all the events of past history, or the records of bygone days, as such.

We may notice too that, where the church of God is relegated to history for its moral lessons, the whole of revealed truth is classed under the law, the gospel, and the word of prophecy, ignoring those writings of the

apostles which make known the mystery hidden from ages and from generations {Col. 1:26; see also Rom. 16:25, 26; Eph. 3:9}. Promises and law, gospel and church, might each and all be distinguished from the displayed kingdom of which the prophetic word speaks so fully. The Old Testament gives us the promises and the law; the New Testament, consequent on the work of the Son and the mission of the Spirit, gives us the gospel and the church; while prophecy is found in both, more largely in the Old Testament, when all blessing was future, more profoundly and completely in the New, where what is coming is treated systematically till the eternal day.

As in the New Testament we have the truth in Christ for the individual and the body, so we have not merely this evil or that, but all that opposes itself against the will of God, and this from the first to the last. Hence, whatever be the iniquity of the popish system, the Spirit testifies against all the forms of departure from God and His grace. Thus, in the seven Apocalyptic churches, not to speak of the apostolic epistles, there is a word from the Lord bearing on all which He judged it of special moment to notice; and the prophecy, strictly so-called, discloses the second beast as distinct from the first, and Babylon so different from the beasts, that she becomes at last the object of destructive hatred to one, if not both. There the varying and opposed evils of men are seen successively, or together, falling under the righteous wrath of God and the Lamb; while the saints are seen as variously blessed according to the Father’s gracious wisdom, of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named.

Yet will it be found in practice that no one will be found intelligently to profit in any full measure by the Apocalyptic visions as a whole, who is not established in the riches of grace and the counsels of glory, and, above all, in that present sense of association with Christ in heavenly places, which is the central truth of the Pauline testimony. To those who by grace are thus fitted to weigh the book of Revelation, its visions are invaluable, and as instructive as they give solemnity to the spirit and joy to the heart. If the visions were fulfilled, they would be no more effete and worthless than the books of Moses or of the prophetic Judges that followed, which, if read in the Spirit, repay quite as richly, or more so, than the predictions of Isaiah or Ezekiel which remain to be accomplished. But they are, as we have seen, “at hand” in any full sense, not yet accomplished, and so in every way invite and will reward the reader with a double blessing from Him who promised it to such as read, hear, and keep the sayings of that book. To His name be all the praise and glory.

1 The protracted view of the seven churches neutralises Mr. E.’s primary objection to futurism — the supposed instant plunge of the Apocalyptic prophecy into the distant future of the consummation.…

2 One sees by this the worthlessness of Protestant pretensions to spiritual intelligence, or to the least right apprehension of the church’s calling here below. Instead of being content to suffer with Christ, waiting to be glorified with Him by-and-by, Brightman covets for Protestantism what the popes won for Romanism. And is it to such blind guides as these in prophecy or the church’s hopes that some would lead back our souls under cover of attacking futurism?

# Appendix A

{Prophecy: Its Classes, Purpose and Study}

The prophecies of holy writ may be divided broadly into these two classes: those like Isaiah's, which were addressed to the people of Israel while standing in recognized relation with Jehovah as His people; and those like Daniel's, which suppose the Jews disowned for a season till grace restore them in the latter day, placing them under Messiah's reign and the new covenant. Of old God had governed Israel as His people, and the pavilion of His presence in their midst was its sign. The present interval, humbling to conscience and solemn to faith, is marked by the departure of the Shekinah till its final return never more to leave the city and sanctuary where the eyes of Jehovah rest continually; and during that space imperial authority is confided to four successive and well-known world powers, the great Gentile empires. This is "the parenthesis," as it has been justly designated; and the term is so suited to maintain a true sense of the peculiarity of the interval, and to hinder forgetfulness of its total difference from the ordinary course of God's direct government of the earth according to the great and regular scheme of prophecy, that it would be most unwise to forego its use because some do not, and others will not, understand it. The "times of the Gentiles" span this remarkable interval, begun by the captivity of Judah under the head of gold, and closed by the destructive blow which the returning Lord, the Little Stone cut without hands, will inflict on the iron-clay feet, reducing the entire image to powder, before the Stone itself expands into a great mountain

and fills the whole earth. Then and not before will have come the world-kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ (Rev. 11:15-18; 19; 20).

It is very intelligible that the professing Gentile should revolt at the fact, plainly as scripture reveals it, that, whatever the deep ways and heavenly counsels of grace revealed since Christ came (the whole New Testament indeed), the Gentile empires have merely and precisely the function, under God's sovereign will, of filling up the gap between Israel's fall and their rising again. It is offensive to such as glory in the arts and letters of Greece and Rome, in the sciences and discoveries of modern civilization. Hence wounded feeling proceeds to worse daring, and profanely mocks at this view of the parenthesis, which is the sure representation of God's word, as if it were no more reasonable than a dream of Arabian or Hindoo mythology. But it is foolish to kick against the goad: the fact, humiliating to Gentile conceit and call it as we may, is written indelibly in letters of light.

It is alleged however, in order to reduce the sharpness of the truth and its moral lesson, that, in a sense exactly similar, the whole Mosaic dispensation is itself a parenthesis between the times of the patriarchs and of the christian church; while the millennium is another parenthesis between the dispensation of the Spirit (the reader must overlook so unintelligent a phrase) and the final glory, when the redemption is complete. Now, while in a limited sense this may be allowed of all economic or mediatorial dealings as compared with the boundless infinitude of eternity, the parenthesis was spoken of as such in respect of God's government of the earth, whether partial or complete, past or future; which

government all the faithful surely believe to be the only normal condition for the world since God deigned to make it His plan. Not only before the deluge but after it, till the call of Israel out of Egypt, God did not govern the earth in this way. Men previously had only to maintain His honour, as we see in Job 31:27, 28; but this was soon lost through idolatry, and Abram was called out, the nations being abandoned to walk in their own ways. Hence evidently the patriarch's call was not God's government of the world. On the contrary God, though He left Himself not without witness, as we see in the destruction of the guilty cities of the plain, would not then interfere because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full {Gen. 15:16}; and the wandering patriarchs, so far as they were faithful, had in the land of promise not so much as to set their foot on, though we cannot but discern also, how God suffered no man to do His prophets harm, rebuking kings for their sakes.

But at the Exodus, as is known to all, God judged the nation that oppressed the sons of Israel and brought themselves out of the house of bondage as His people, in whom His government was to be exercised and His ways displayed. And so they were (not merely that secret and ceaseless providence of His which never fails), till by their persistent hopeless apostasy from Himself for idols, subsequently fixed yet more by their rejection of Himself in the person of His Messiah, they were in the just dealing of God, after unwearied patience, set aside as no longer His people, though still providentially kept apart, until He resumes at length His immediate government of the earth {in the millennium}, He will in Christ returning to reign in the last days.

The gap then, since Israel became Lo-Ammi {Hosea 1}, till they are restored again and for ever as His people to His land, as the central sphere of His earthly government, is filled up by the four successive beasts {Dan. 7} or imperial Gentile powers {Dan. 2}. The regular course of earthly dispensations supposes the throne of Jehovah in Jerusalem; the removal of it when power was committed to the Gentiles is exactly a parenthesis as to His earthly, government, which is true of Israel's history neither before nor after these "times of the Gentiles"; for Israel is the exhibition, in the past of failure under law, in the future of power under the Messiah, in respect of God's proper and immediate government of the earth, whereas the intervening Gentile period is its interruption, whatever the wonderful works of God in His grace meanwhile. Yet God has not lost sight of these parenthetical times, abnormal as they are, but inspired Daniel particularly in the Old Testament, and, John in the New Testament, to write of them, though in view of the blessing at last of the people still under rejection, as well as of the higher and larger things for which that rejection furnishes occasion. It is our Lord too, who in Luke 21 vouchsafed to us that very term "times of the Gentiles," which is only another way of describing the parenthesis; though Christians, like the heathen, turn it into pride, overlooking its real nature and denying its importance. Nothing but this can account for their designating this period "the sacred calendar and great almanac of prophecy," wholly slighting the fact that far the greater part of the prophetic word bears on the time when God governs the earth immediately from within His people restored and blessed {in the millennium}, instead of merely confiding authority meanwhile to powers which

from first to last He calls “beasts”{[Dan. 7}. The axe may boast against Him that heweth therewith; but saintly minds ought to know better than encourage it.

But it is not true that Dan. 2, any more than Dan. 7, contemplates, as the learned J. Mede fancied, a regnum lapidis, as well as regnum montis (Works, iv. 743, 744, ed. 1677, folio.) It would be strange indeed if the dream of the heathen monarch had a spiritual view presented which was not vouchsafed to the holy prophet. The idea however is quite unfounded. The first action of the Stone (or in the kingdom of God in Christ) was not to accomplish redemption or to found a spiritual kingdom, but to crush to atoms the imperial Gentile system, especially dealing with the Roman empire in its last shape, after which itself spread and filled the whole earth. Not the gospel but divine judgment effects it. See also Isa. 2, 11, 25, 65, 66, and a crowd of other scriptures. Does it not seem odd, by the way, to find Tobit quoted here as an authority, and at yet greater length in iii. 579, 580?

Within this parenthesis, and inside the bounds of its last clause (the fourth empire of Rome), the gospel or Christianity and the church come in. And just as the ruin of the Jews gave the signal for Daniel’s prophecy, so did the failure of the church here below, {give the signal} for the book of Revelation, which, after its seven epistles {Rev. 2 and 3} and the heavenly episode that follows immediately {Rev. 4 and 5}, shows us judgments on the world summed up at length, in its two chiefs, the apostate first and second beasts {Rev. 13} the Roman empire in its last phase, and the false prophet power in the land, with Babylon the great harlot of Christendom {Rev. 17}.

It is here that men, and even the pious if committed to things as they are, find no little difficulty. Men's will can resist stubbornly, their mind easily raising objections to the truth which condemns them. It is this much more than the symbolical style of the predictions which made Daniel's visions unpalatable to the Jew, and the true scope of the Apocalypse unwelcome to many a Christian. They would like to think present circumstances and that history with which they are most familiar {to be} the direct object of God's prophetic survey; they fail to see that its real fulfillment is in the great but brief crisis, after the overcomers (Rev. 2, 3) are taken to heaven, till Christ and they appear in glory to reign, whatever be the light thence derivable for discerning the principles at work all through our earthly pilgrimage before their full manifestation at the close when judgment comes.

The case was complicated too by a few more or less disposed to palliate Rome, who could detect error in the popular view, and facts as to the future not generally recognized, but who availed themselves of all to undermine truths still more important for their moral bearing on souls as well as on the Lord's glory. With the evil principles of Drs. Maitland, Todd, Burgh, etc., one has far less sympathy than with the honest but imperfect and, to say the truth, far from intelligent testimony of Mede or Daubuz or their representatives to this day, able and learned as some of them were in other respects. It is forgotten perhaps equally on both sides, that the church, since apostolic days till the Reformation at least, was not in a condition to use the Revelation in general. Certainly the earliest Fathers applied it substantially as the futurists do.

The great pre-requisite for a safe and wholesome study of the prophetic word is a clear apprehension of the difference between the church called by sovereign grace for heavenly places in Christ and the immediate divine government of the world of which the Jews form the nearest circle on earth round the Messiah, according to the purpose and ways of God (Deut. 32:8). God has set aside the Jews for their rebellious idolatry and at last their rejection of the Messiah; but He will resume His government of them again, an immediate rule on the earth wholly different in nature, character, and results from the powers that be now, entitled though they are to our submission and honour, however little able to deal with the misery and corruptions of mankind.

Adversaries may talk of wire-drawn abstractions and baseless hypothetical systems; but they are themselves blinded by tradition and self-confidence to a change of the profoundest interest and of incalculable moment, against which no sophistry can prevail for those who bow to scripture. It is the more apt to deceive themselves and others where such unbelief works in men who deny not but hold Christ's future reign over the earth in personal presence and power and glory. For this is the government of the earth or "the kingdom," of which both Testaments speak, as distinct as possible from the calling of saints from among Jews and Gentiles to be the body of Christ, not of the world even now as He was not, while the anomalous bestial rule still goes on here below.

The truth of the {earthly} Gentile parenthesis {of judgment on Israel} does not make the scheme of God's moral government a piecemeal and fragmentary thing; but a mass of confusion at issue with all scripture they

make it who do not discriminate God's calling of the church to heaven from His government by law on earth. Nor can any sentence be worse both in ill construction and violation of truth, than that which assumes one uninterrupted chain of divine government, and ignores the revealed facts of God's rupture of His regular earthly government {i.e., the times of the Gentiles}, of an immense interregnum while the beasts rule, and of God's final resumption of that government at the return of our Lord.

But if we limit ourselves to considering God's moral government, its scheme is perfect. Part of it was to blind Israel, while another work proceeds in the richest mercy to the Gentiles. And prophecy reveals the judgments by which the whole result will be brought about according to God. Meanwhile His providential wisdom and power order all, whatever be the anomalies in the phases of the world's history for nearly 2500 years; and we by His word and Spirit make good His will in the measure of our faith, while evil is not yet put down by the intervention of that power which will bring in the sabbatism that remains for the people of God. The confusion of thought, generally prevalent as to this arises from the supposition that God's government has its results now, which it never can have till the manifestation of Christ, in view of whom and for whose glory all has been carried on. To look for its accomplishment in the absence of Christ is a fatal mistake. God's people are not the sun in the solar system of His truth, or of His government; but Christ is. To substitute the first man for the Second is the constant effort and error of the natural mind. It is to prefer guesswork, founded on first appearances, to

demonstrated truth; and to conceive the church to be the center of movement, instead of knowing it in the true Sun, Christ the Lord.

Undoubtedly the work which God has now at heart in the calling of the church, founded on the accomplished redemption of the Son, and accompanied, nay, effectuated, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, while the gospel goes out to every land and in every tongue, transcends all that ever preceded in His ways. But this in no way interferes with the fact that, as the calling of the church is a heavenly parenthesis, so also are "the times of the Gentiles" a still wider earthly one, which fills the blank in the earth's history since God governed in the midst of His people under law, as He will by-and-by when they are under the new covenant.

This is so true, that we hear of the mystery as to Christ and as to the church, hid from ages and generations {Col. 1:26} — hid in God {Eph. 3:9, 10}, not in scripture — not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. It is also said be made known by prophetic scriptures (Rom. 16:25, 26), but these are of the New Testament, and not of the Old — a notion obscured by the English version — "the scriptures of the prophets," which is unequivocally incorrect, and naturally points to the well-known Old Testament writings and writers,3 contrary to the express drift of the context. The apostle constantly cites the Old Testament prophets to vindicate what was not made known there, but what illustrated the truth when the mystery was revealed. Thus proofs of Israel blinded, and of Gentiles called, he does cite as accomplished in the mystery, but in no way as the revelation of it. How do they reveal Christ as the

heavenly Head of all creation, and the church, Jews or Gentiles alike, as the one body, His body? But reasoning is needless; scripture is express that the mystery has now been manifested.

But it is no slight error that the church is connected with earthly arrangements as Israel was, and self-delusion to confound this, with trials, helps, hindrances, and temptations here below, on the one hand, and on the other hand with preaching the gospel, going out to the heathen, social ties and duties, etc. When and how did God connect His church with the earth? Education and habit may account for such a statement; to faith the word of God never gave it. That historically the church thus fell is true; that Satan so sought, and succeeded in doing so, is plain; that in a measure of accomplishment it was predicted as the fornication of Babylon with the kings of the earth {Rev. 17} is not denied; but is the sufferance of such corruption to be regarded as His sanction? Is it the form of things produced by His will as that which He would thus make to answer His mind? The connection of Israel with the earth is God's institution: is Babylon His institution?

Nor is our hope the second advent of the Lord to the earth, as Israel's was His first coming; it is going up to meet the Lord in the air, and so being ever with Him {1 Thess. 4:15-18}. To be with Him in the Father's house {John 14:1-3} is no question of dates or prophetic messages. How anyone could mistake the character of Rev. 1:7, for instance, would be a marvel if one did not know the power of prejudice. It is beyond a doubt the coming again of Christ in judgment, His appearing to the world, to the Jews that pierced Him, and to every eye, in contrast with chosen witnesses and the day of

faith now; so that all the tribes of the earth (or land) mourn because of Him. Is it not strange to hear so solemn a warning styled the main object and desire; and that the apostle contemplates His coming as a whole but with especial reference to his own hope and that of his fellow-christians?

It is an ineffectual effort to reason from an assumed similarity where there is a real contrast. The heavenly character of the Christian and the church is unknown, yet the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Spirit do surely now make that character good to faith. God's providence, though a very different thing from guidance in the Spirit, is most real now, as of old; but that secret control of all circumstances, so that all things work together for good, is quite distinct from the public display of His power of which prophecy treats. Some may have blundered as to the true bearing of 1 Peter 1:10-13; but it is well to heed the distinction there drawn between the predictions of the prophets, the gospel meanwhile declared in virtue of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the full accomplishment at the appearing of Jesus. Receiving soul-salvation now, we await salvation for our bodies and the fulfillment of the glories predicted when He appears.

And this helps to the right understanding of Luke 2:32, as little understood by the Protestant {historicalist} as the futurist. It is a question, not of the church, but of the Gentiles, who were of old in the dark, as Israel now are, while Gentiles are brought to light. They have Christ now a light for their revelation, as by-and-by He will be the glory of God's people Israel. He had overlooked the times of ignorance hitherto, but now enjoins men that they should all everywhere repent.

But it is urged that the church has come into the place of Israel, and that as an election was taken out of them, so now from among the nations of Christendom. This idea, however, in both its parts is erroneous. Secretly there was an election, not only from Israel, but from the Gentiles, as Heber, Rahab, Jonadab, etc.; but Israel was an elect nation governed and owned by God as His people. “My people” never means hidden election; it is the nation in speaking of Israel. But Christendom is not a nation elect or otherwise; in the greatest part of it is Babylon, even for Protestant opinion. Is Babylon elect as Israel was? Whatever might be the stranger spirit of pious Israelites, the elect people had their home on earth. It is a mischievous error, lowering to all christian life in worship and service, to confound our calling with theirs.

Nor is it the church, but the Gentiles, which are grafted into the tree of promise with the true of Israel. For, first, the church is not the “own olive-tree” of Israel; and, secondly, the believing Jews entered the church (see Eph. 2; 1 Cor. 12), as did the believing Gentiles, whereas they abode in their own olive-tree. See Rom. 11, a chapter which proves continuance in promise, but parenthesis in government, and quite distinct from the revelation of Christ’s body, where all is alike of grace and heaven, and above nature — one new man {Eph. 2:15} as new to the Jew as to the Gentile. Blindness in part is happened to Israel until — there the parenthesis ends; and so all Israel shall be saved {Rom. 11:26}. For there shall come forth a Deliverer out of Zion. We look for God’s Son from heaven {Phil 3:21} who will receive us to Himself where He is {John 14:3}. For our blessing

characteristically is in heavenly places, as we are told in Eph. 1:3.

Indeed it is vain to reason on prophecy when it is taken as a basis that Christendom is God's covenant people, and therefore that, as the earlier prophecies all centered around Israel, so do the later ones round the visible church among the Gentiles. Israel were then the covenant people, and so long as they thus remained, all divine prophecy clustered around them, from Moses to Malachi; but it is urged that ever since the days of St. John this privilege has been transferred from them to the visible Gentile church. The kingdom of God, as our Lord assured the Jews, has been taken from them and given to others. Hence the very same principle, which made all Old Testament prophecy center in the Jewish nation, requires that all New Testament prophecy should center around the Gentile church, the actual people of the covenant, who have been ingrafted in their stead, and the appeal to the Old Testament prophets to support an opposite conclusion must be utterly vain. Setting aside a main principle of God's moral government, and destroying a law of His revelation, to sustain a mere circumstance, it infers that God will leave His covenant people for near two thousand years without any distinct light of prophecy, because they always enjoyed that privilege in a dispensation of dimmer light and less abundant grace. Such is the argument in its most plausible shape.

But what proof, what sign, what appearance of truth, is there in such an hypothesis, traditional though it may be? When did God enter into covenant with the Gentiles? God has given Christ, the rejected Christ, for a light to the Gentiles, that He may be His salvation to the

ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6); but He is (ver. 8) a covenant of the people, not peoples. Hence the Gentiles are never said to be grafted instead of the Jews. Generically they are grafted in with the Jews left there in the inheritance of promises, of which Abraham was the stock planted by God in the earth; and they are responsible for the maintenance of blessing. But no covenant was made with them. Even if Matt. 21:43 be certainly applicable, it is only to fruit-bearing, not to covenant, that it applies. And how can this be said of Christendom, unless Rev. 17, 18 be such fruit? But the fact is, that neither it, nor Deut. 31:21, nor Rom. 9:21-25, nor Rom. 11:11-15, say a word about the church coming into the place of Israel, nor of the church as such at all.

Again, it is beyond controversy that the church-state in the Revelation {Rev. 2 and 3} does not go farther than "the things which are," in contrast with the future visions, or "the things which shall be after these," and that its prophecies therefore do not center round any church or people of God whatsoever, but are occupied with judgments on the world, whatever may be the pledges of mercy to the sealed of Israel, or to an innumerable crowd out of all nations and tongues {Rev. 7}. There is no judgment (and the Apocalypse treats of judgment) on a covenant people of God; nor does a people of God on earth, in any case or way, form a center there. It is absurd to contend that the twelve tribes of Israel in Rev. 7 are Gentile, contrasted as they are with a great crowd out of every nation; and it is inadmissible that Christendom is God's covenant people, unless Babylon be such.

Further, not only do Christians possess all the prophetic word, but they have ample and clear and direct light in the Gospels and Epistles (especially 2 Thess. 1 and 2 Timothy, and Jude) supposing the Revelation did not at all apply (which is not affirmed) beyond the wonderful messages of the Lord Himself in the seven Apocalyptic epistles. No one doubts for a moment the sovereign and moral government of God: but to identify this with His ways in Israel, as the popular argument already cited does, is just confusion and ignorance, whatever be the confidence of such as put it forward. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2). All agree that Old Testament prophecies not only left room for the parenthetic interval or blank for Israel when they were Lo-ammi and Gentiles are called, but used pregnant phrases, whereby God’s ways might be confirmed when this state of things arrived; but they never revealed the mystery, which Paul did, while it was made known to all God’s holy apostles and prophets.

And here let me say, though it be only in passing, that the grave point in Eph. 2:20, Eph. 3:5, is, not that the apostles and prophets were necessarily the same individuals, but that they are here viewed as one common company, though distinguished in Eph. 4:11 and 1 Cor. 12:28, 29. The criticism that would separate them here is as erroneous as the interpretation that makes the prophets to be of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New, the one article expressly forbidding the notion of two distinct classes. So far is the church of God from being anterior to redemption, that its foundation is of the New Testament apostles and prophets. The mystery was hid from ages and

generations previously. No prophet in Old Testament times revealed it. A blank was left for St. Paul to fill (Col. 1:26).

As to the utilitarian argument which has been applied to decide the bearing of the Apocalypse on history since St. John's day, as against the crisis, it hardly deserves the notice of serious men. But as some may be influenced by what appeals to natural feeling, without an atom of spiritual weight, one may reply that, in pleading for a more exact fulfillment in the latter day, it is not denied that the book has been accomplished partially all through.

It is in vain to deny that in Protestant hands prophecy was valued chiefly as evidence by its fulfillment to convict the unbeliever, and that this disposed men to enlarge as much as possible the field of fulfilled prediction, in order to increase their arms against infidelity. Now no sober Christian denies this to be a use of prophecy, or its importance for its own end. The reasoning directed against the use of prophecy after its accomplishment was only against this use exclusively. People used very generally to say, as some do still, that prophecy was mainly, not to say only, useful as proof when fulfilled. This was false ground, injurious to saints, and dishonouring to God. "The design of God was (to cite Sir Isaac Newton's applauded sentence), when He gave this book and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but to the end that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event."

Alas! how foolish in the things of God are the wise. The vast mass of prophecy warns of God's final judgments as

ushering in the reign of the Lord. The event will prove their truth, no doubt; but it will be to the ruin of those who did not foreknow and heed the warning. Thus the antediluvians may have argued, and perished in their unbelief. Not so Noah; by faith he, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Not so did Jehovah deal when He said, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” And if he was the friend of God, what are we? and why has Jesus called us His friends? (See John 15). Did this include the apostles only, or has not one of these “friends” of Jesus, when treating expressly of the coming of the Lord, of the destruction of the world that now is, and of the new heavens and earth, said to us, “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware…?”

The men of those days, who had precious faith, did not wait for the events before believing; they did not use the prophecy as a mere confirmation of Christianity; they read, understood, and profited by its warning. The Spirit of truth, according to the Lord’s promise, showed them things to come; and they found the blessing of that sure word which shines as a lamp in a dark place. Sir Isaac Newton was not the least sagacious or sober of Protestant interpreters; yet even he asks us to abandon the gracious purpose for which God gave prophecy to His children, for the lowest application for which human incredulity can require it. Unquestionably prophecy is a weapon of divine temper to confound and, if grace work, to convince the sceptic (though we may question such an effect from the jarring notes heard on the seals, trumpets, and vials); but surely it is its humblest office, instead of being the only wise and all-absorbing one.

May we not ask, “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

Again, when we find Tertullian applying the fifth seal to martyrs, as then in course of slaughter under pagan Rome, surely we may think that he did not understand its full bearing, without saying that such an interpretation was a delusion, destitute of one particle of real truth. Nor would one question that God honoured the German reformer’s testimony against Babylon, founded on a later portion of the Revelation. Does this prove that Luther knew, or that we ought not to learn, a fuller development of the great whore, for which no room is left in the ordinary interpretation?

Singular to say, some who narrow to a single line the Revelation (the deepest and most comprehensive of all prophecies) think it certain that elsewhere, as in Isa. 2, for instance, the Spirit of God intended one reference as well as the other — first, an incomplete and figurative, then a complete and literal fulfillment; and yet they would repeat for the Apocalypse the error of the Futurists, though in an opposite direction. Thus the soundness of the principle is admitted by some on both sides. Apply it to the Apocalypse, and not only are men who stand for the future crisis, without denying the protracted accomplishment, justified by their censors, but the mere Protestant interpretation is condemned by the very reasoning meant to establish it on the ruins of futurism.

Doubtless it is a canon with some whom Mr. G. S. Faber represented, that no single link of a chronological chain of prophecy is capable of receiving its accomplishment in more than a single event or period. But this is not

true even of Daniel, who, as almost all antiquity saw clearly, makes Antiochus Epiphanes the type of a still worse personage at the end. And it would be strange indeed to contend that the final prophecy and profoundest of all should have a scope more confined than a Jewish one. Mr. Mede saw at length that the seven ‘churches’ {Rev. 2 and 3} had a double reference; he might have learnt to his profit that the prophetic portion is not less significant.

Nor is this the only inconsistency in such special pleading. For if the principal use in all cases is the manifestation of the divine glory in the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God, whether before or after the fulfillment, if the use, whether of warning before, or of evidence after, fulfillment, is always secondary and subordinate, the utilitarian argument sinks into little. On this showing its grand object was as much attained during the seventeen centuries the book did not apply (if that ground be taken) as when it did. And is it not strange that the manifestation of the divine glory should be lowered to the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God? One might have looked for some regard to His government in such a question, if righteousness and grace were too much to expect. Yet the reason of their absence is evident: they would suppose contrast of dispensation in principle, and intervention in power; and the wisdom of this age likes and bows to neither.

But, granting the divine glory, in an infinitely richer way than has been before alleged, to be the end, as of all God’s word and ways, so of prophecy which reveals the result of all and the judgment by which it will be effected, still it is so evident as to need no reasoning for

the spiritual mind, that God's direct practical aim in prophecy was the warning, instruction, and comfort of His own before fulfillment; and all Christians should be thankful to be recalled to this precious privilege, of which they had been long deprived. And assuredly the Futurists, spite of defects and one-sidedness and even errors, contributed to this end incomparably more than the Protestant school {historicalists}, engrossed as it used to be, and even now is almost entirely, with fulfilled prophecy.

It is plain that, if the early Christians had regarded the twelve hundred and sixty days as so many years, they must have anticipated such a lengthening out of the ages as the Protestant scheme contends for, which it is certain not one did, so far as we know. Does this, as far as it goes, tell in favour of futurism or historicalism? It is no less plain that the times of Daniel in chapters 7 and 12 (taken up in the Revelation) suppose the Jews in their land and carrying on their worship, but hindered by the little horn — that is, not the long ages of their scattering, but when they return, though not yet owned as a nation by God. Confessedly the early writers on prophecy expected two actual witnesses, and a personal Antichrist, an infidel domination and a fiery persecution of at least three and a half years, and this in Jerusalem at the end of the age whenever it might be. The soundness of all this may be questioned; but it is absurd to argue, as some do, that in these points (wherein, more than any others, they agree) the Fathers substantially approximate to the protracted {historicalist} view of the prophecy. The earlier and central chapters, not to speak of the closing ones, they applied in general as the Futurists do. Even if we

confine ourselves to the future literal application, one cannot allow that it was useless. Was the blessed hope put before the Philippians, “The Lord is at hand,” of no use because it is still unfulfilled? Did the Christians then expect it not to occur till after so long a time? Has it been wholly useless? or is the imputation deplorably unbelieving?

Assuredly it is a mere reverie that the Apocalypse announced to every age of the church, and to each generation of believers, events that were really near at hand, or that in every later age it also contains many predictions already fulfilled, the fulfillment of which has been more or less clearly discerned by thoughtful Christians. The early writers, we have seen, applied the prophecy to a brief and terrible tribulation at the end. Then the whole mass fell into deep and deepening darkness. In the middle ages, when the Apocalypse was used, it was never an intelligent application of earlier parts of it, but, conscience being shocked and alarmed, an imaginative apprehension prevailed that Antichrist was come and the end imminent. It was the dread of being at the consummation which appalled men. That the church used it suitably from age to age, as it was developed into history, is a mere chimera, which can deceive no one acquainted with facts but only those who accept just what they like. If it be meant that the church ought to have so discerned the prophecy, it is a circular argument which amounts to something of this sort:- If the church had held my view (which is demonstrably untrue), they would have profited by it as warning from age to age, and as evidence of things past and fulfilled. Since my view is right, it has been at least possible, and indeed highly probable, that many believers in every age

should have been warned by it of imminent changes, and have had their faith in God's word confirmed by many glimpses of its actual fulfillment. Is this serious either as history or as logic?

Test the facts. If any part of the visions is fulfilled, the seals must have been according to the historic view. Is there a tittle of evidence that the seals announced to any age of the church any one imminent change therein supposed to be predicted? What single individual correctly interpreted a single seal beforehand? To this day the utmost variety of thought exists among the leading Protestants {historicalists} themselves, not in detail merely but as to their general bearing. Can none gainsay the conclusions of Mede or Vitringa, of Faber or Cuninghame, of Elliott or Keith? Can it be said that these men were captious and speculative like the Futurists, who rejected evidence, real and sufficient, if not of that sort which compels assent? Are they not all among the most trusty and familiar of the historical school, and as notoriously discordant in their views at the threshold? Yet of all parts of the book one might, on their principles, expect here the most of agreement, if not unanimity.

But enough. The grand fault of the considerations here examined is that, whilst God is at work to help on His children, they are an effort to lead back believers from that knowledge of the church's true relation, as united by the Spirit, to Christ on high, which is the key to real intelligence in the Christian. It is not merely human reasoning to support what is partial at best, and often erroneous; it is decidedly antagonism to truth of the deepest moment for God's glory, as well as the blessing of His saints. It is also ignorance of what scripture treats

as the proper government of God in the midst of His people on earth when He will arise and inherit all nations. The importance of such prophecies as those of Daniel and John is great; but they must treat for the most part, even the latter, of the times of the Gentiles, not of the “kingdom” in any sense. To lose sight of this as Fathers and Protestants {historicalists} alike have done is fatal to spiritual intelligence on this subject.

The question here, as everywhere, is to whom the prophetic revelations apply, not to whom they are given. The revelation of what happened to Lot was given to Abraham, whilst the communication was made to Lot in time to deliver him out of the judgment, and this with precision as to the execution of it. So the Revelation says, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.” The book was given, as all the scriptures, to the church of God, without distinction of Jew or Gentile — there was none such in the body of Christ; and it could be given to none else.

On the other hand, there is this observation to be made respecting Daniel and the Revelation: that they are the revelation of the consequences, the former of Israel’s failure, the latter of the church’s failure, as witnesses of God here below. Hence we have a far more direct interest and more solemn responsibility, as to the contents of the Apocalypse than as to Old Testament prophecy in general, or even as to Daniel; while, as to times, scenes, and personages, there is doubtless much in common between the two books. But the Babylon on the seven hills [Rev. 17], which the apostle saw drunken with the blood of saints, is to us a thing of nearer and

graver import than the great city which Nebuchadnezzar built on the plain of Shiner.

Furthermore, the time is said, and said repeatedly (Rev. 1, 22), to be at hand; and this as a reason why its sayings were not sealed to John as they were to Daniel {12:4}. The work of redemption being done, Christ gone on high, and the Spirit sent down to be in the Christian and the church, the time of the end is always near to us, as the Lord is ready to judge the quick and the dead. Still the ground taken from first to last is, not that we are in the scenes of the prophecy, but that "the time is at hand," not present. It is very possible that the prophetic warning it contains may be the divine preservative against the sins which at length draw down the closing strokes of God's wrath on the apostasy of Christendom. Into this worst, this rebellious, corruption the professing mass sink during, if not before, the hour of temptation {trial} which is to try them that dwell on the earth {Rev. 3:10}. Out of this hour the Lord has pledged Himself to preserve such as keep the word of His patience. The faithful, His church, will not be in that hour or scene. The Lord keep this promise, full of comfort, before our souls!

3 Rom. 1:2 does prove that the gospel was promised before by God's prophets; but the difference of phraseology answers to the difference of the subject-matter in Rom. 16:26. The mystery was hid, not promised, though now manifested by prophetic scriptures, and according to the commandment of the eternal God made known for obedience of faith to all the nations. It is ignorance to confound them.

The prophecies of holy writ may be divided broadly into these two classes: those like Isaiah's, which were addressed to the people of Israel while standing in recognized relation with Jehovah as His people; and those like Daniel's, which suppose the Jews disowned for a season till grace restore them in the latter day, placing them under Messiah's reign and the new covenant. Of old God had governed Israel as His people, and the pavilion of His presence in their midst was its sign. The present interval, humbling to conscience and solemn to faith, is marked by the departure of the Shekinah till its final return never more to leave the city and sanctuary where the eyes of Jehovah rest continually; and during that space imperial authority is confided to four successive and well-known world powers, the great Gentile empires. This is "the parenthesis," as it has been justly designated; and the term is so suited to maintain a true sense of the peculiarity of the interval, and to hinder forgetfulness of its total difference from the ordinary course of God's direct government of the earth according to the great and regular scheme of prophecy, that it would be most unwise to forego its use because some do not, and others will not, understand it. The "times of the Gentiles" span this remarkable interval, begun by the captivity of Judah under the head of gold, and closed by the destructive blow which the returning Lord, the Little Stone cut without hands, will inflict on the iron-clay feet, reducing the entire image to powder, before the Stone itself expands into a great mountain and fills the whole earth. Then and not before will have come the world-kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ (Rev. 11:15-18; 19; 20).

It is very intelligible that the professing Gentile should revolt at the fact, plainly as scripture reveals it, that, whatever the deep ways and heavenly counsels of grace revealed since Christ came (the whole New Testament indeed), the Gentile empires have merely and precisely the function, under God's sovereign will, of filling up the gap between Israel's fall and their rising again. It is offensive to such as glory in the arts and letters of Greece and Rome, in the sciences and discoveries of modern civilization. Hence wounded feeling proceeds to worse daring, and profanely mocks at this view of the parenthesis, which is the sure representation of God's word, as if it were no more reasonable than a dream of Arabian or Hindoo mythology. But it is foolish to kick against the goad: the fact, humiliating to Gentile conceit and call it as we may, is written indelibly in letters of light.

It is alleged however, in order to reduce the sharpness of the truth and its moral lesson, that, in a sense exactly similar, the whole Mosaic dispensation is itself a parenthesis between the times of the patriarchs and of the christian church; while the millennium is another parenthesis between the dispensation of the Spirit (the reader must overlook so unintelligent a phrase) and the final glory, when the redemption is complete. Now, while in a limited sense this may be allowed of all economic or mediatorial dealings as compared with the boundless infinitude of eternity, the parenthesis was spoken of as such in respect of God's government of the earth, whether partial or complete, past or future; which government all the faithful surely believe to be the only normal condition for the world since God deigned to make it His plan. Not only before the deluge but after it,

till the call of Israel out of Egypt, God did not govern the earth in this way. Men previously had only to maintain His honour, as we see in Job 31:27, 28; but this was soon lost through idolatry, and Abram was called out, the nations being abandoned to walk in their own ways. Hence evidently the patriarch's call was not God's government of the world. On the contrary God, though He left Himself not without witness, as we see in the destruction of the guilty cities of the plain, would not then interfere because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full {Gen. 15:16}; and the wandering patriarchs, so far as they were faithful, had in the land of promise not so much as to set their foot on, though we cannot but discern also, how God suffered no man to do His prophets harm, rebuking kings for their sakes.

But at the Exodus, as is known to all, God judged the nation that oppressed the sons of Israel and brought themselves out of the house of bondage as His people, in whom His government was to be exercised and His ways displayed. And so they were (not merely that secret and ceaseless providence of His which never fails), till by their persistent hopeless apostasy from Himself for idols, subsequently fixed yet more by their rejection of Himself in the person of His Messiah, they were in the just dealing of God, after unwearied patience, set aside as no longer His people, though still providentially kept apart, until He resumes at length His immediate government of the earth {in the millennium}, He will in Christ returning to reign in the last days.

The gap then, since Israel became Lo-Ammi {Hosea 1}, till they are restored again and for ever as His people to His land, as the central sphere of His earthly government, is filled up by the four successive beasts

{Dan. 7} or imperial Gentile powers {Dan. 2}. The regular course of earthly dispensations supposes the throne of Jehovah in Jerusalem; the removal of it when power was committed to the Gentiles is exactly a parenthesis as to His earthly, government, which is true of Israel's history neither before nor after these "times of the Gentiles"; for Israel is the exhibition, in the past of failure under law, in the future of power under the Messiah, in respect of God's proper and immediate government of the earth, whereas the intervening Gentile period is its interruption, whatever the wonderful works of God in His grace meanwhile. Yet God has not lost sight of these parenthetical times, abnormal as they are, but inspired Daniel particularly in the Old Testament, and, John in the New Testament, to write of them, though in view of the blessing at last of the people still under rejection, as well as of the higher and larger things for which that rejection furnishes occasion. It is our Lord too, who in Luke 21 vouchsafed to us that very term "times of the Gentiles," which is only another way of describing the parenthesis; though Christians, like the heathen, turn it into pride, overlooking its real nature and denying its importance. Nothing but this can account for their designating this period "the sacred calendar and great almanac of prophecy," wholly slighting the fact that far the greater part of the prophetic word bears on the time when God governs the earth immediately from within His people restored and blessed {in the millennium}, instead of merely confiding authority meanwhile to powers which from first to last He calls "beasts"{[Dan. 7}. The axe may boast against Him that heweth therewith; but saintly minds ought to know better than encourage it.

But it is not true that Dan. 2, any more than Dan. 7, contemplates, as the learned J. Mede fancied, a regnum lapidis, as well as regnum montis (Works, iv. 743, 744, ed. 1677, folio.) It would be strange indeed if the dream of the heathen monarch had a spiritual view presented which was not vouchsafed to the holy prophet. The idea however is quite unfounded. The first action of the Stone (or in the kingdom of God in Christ) was not to accomplish redemption or to found a spiritual kingdom, but to crush to atoms the imperial Gentile system, especially dealing with the Roman empire in its last shape, after which itself spread and filled the whole earth. Not the gospel but divine judgment effects it. See also Isa. 2, 11, 25, 65, 66, and a crowd of other scriptures. Does it not seem odd, by the way, to find Tobit quoted here as an authority, and at yet greater length in iii. 579, 580?

Within this parenthesis, and inside the bounds of its last clause (the fourth empire of Rome), the gospel or Christianity and the church come in. And just as the ruin of the Jews gave the signal for Daniel's prophecy, so did the failure of the church here below, {give the signal} for the book of Revelation, which, after its seven epistles {Rev. 2 and 3} and the heavenly episode that follows immediately {Rev. 4 and 5}, shows us judgments on the world summed up at length, in its two chiefs, the apostate first and second beasts {Rev. 13} the Roman empire in its last phase, and the false prophet power in the land, with Babylon the great harlot of Christendom {Rev. 17}.

It is here that men, and even the pious if committed to things as they are, find no little difficulty. Men's will can resist stubbornly, their mind easily raising objections to

the truth which condemns them. It is this much more than the symbolical style of the predictions which made Daniel's visions unpalatable to the Jew, and the true scope of the Apocalypse unwelcome to many a Christian. They would like to think present circumstances and that history with which they are most familiar {to be} the direct object of God's prophetic survey; they fail to see that its real fulfillment is in the great but brief crisis, after the overcomers (Rev. 2, 3) are taken to heaven, till Christ and they appear in glory to reign, whatever be the light thence derivable for discerning the principles at work all through our earthly pilgrimage before their full manifestation at the close when judgment comes.

The case was complicated too by a few more or less disposed to palliate Rome, who could detect error in the popular view, and facts as to the future not generally recognized, but who availed themselves of all to undermine truths still more important for their moral bearing on souls as well as on the Lord's glory. With the evil principles of Drs. Maitland, Todd, Burgh, etc., one has far less sympathy than with the honest but imperfect and, to say the truth, far from intelligent testimony of Mede or Daubuz or their representatives to this day, able and learned as some of them were in other respects. It is forgotten perhaps equally on both sides, that the church, since apostolic days till the Reformation at least, was not in a condition to use the Revelation in general. Certainly the earliest Fathers applied it substantially as the futurists do.

The great pre-requisite for a safe and wholesome study of the prophetic word is a clear apprehension of the difference between the church called by sovereign grace for heavenly places in Christ and the immediate divine

government of the world of which the Jews form the nearest circle on earth round the Messiah, according to the purpose and ways of God (Deut. 32:8). God has set aside the Jews for their rebellious idolatry and at last their rejection of the Messiah; but He will resume His government of them again, an immediate rule on the earth wholly different in nature, character, and results from the powers that be now, entitled though they are to our submission and honour, however little able to deal with the misery and corruptions of mankind.

Adversaries may talk of wire-drawn abstractions and baseless hypothetical systems; but they are themselves blinded by tradition and self-confidence to a change of the profoundest interest and of incalculable moment, against which no sophistry can prevail for those who bow to scripture. It is the more apt to deceive themselves and others where such unbelief works in men who deny not but hold Christ's future reign over the earth in personal presence and power and glory. For this is the government of the earth or "the kingdom," of which both Testaments speak, as distinct as possible from the calling of saints from among Jews and Gentiles to be the body of Christ, not of the world even now as He was not, while the anomalous bestial rule still goes on here below.

The truth of the {earthly} Gentile parenthesis {of judgment on Israel} does not make the scheme of God's moral government a piecemeal and fragmentary thing; but a mass of confusion at issue with all scripture they make it who do not discriminate God's calling of the church to heaven from His government by law on earth. Nor can any sentence be worse both in ill construction and violation of truth, than that which assumes one

uninterrupted chain of divine government, and ignores the revealed facts of God's rupture of His regular earthly government {i.e., the times of the Gentiles}, of an immense interregnum while the beasts rule, and of God's final resumption of that government at the return of our Lord.

But if we limit ourselves to considering God's moral government, its scheme is perfect. Part of it was to blind Israel, while another work proceeds in the richest mercy to the Gentiles. And prophecy reveals the judgments by which the whole result will be brought about according to God. Meanwhile His providential wisdom and power order all, whatever be the anomalies in the phases of the world's history for nearly 2500 years; and we by His word and Spirit make good His will in the measure of our faith, while evil is not yet put down by the intervention of that power which will bring in the sabbatism that remains for the people of God. The confusion of thought, generally prevalent as to this arises from the supposition that God's government has its results now, which it never can have till the manifestation of Christ, in view of whom and for whose glory all has been carried on. To look for its accomplishment in the absence of Christ is a fatal mistake. God's people are not the sun in the solar system of His truth, or of His government; but Christ is. To substitute the first man for the Second is the constant effort and error of the natural mind. It is to prefer guesswork, founded on first appearances, to demonstrated truth; and to conceive the church to be the center of movement, instead of knowing it in the true Sun, Christ the Lord.

Undoubtedly the work which God has now at heart in the calling of the church, founded on the accomplished redemption of the Son, and accompanied, nay, effectuated, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, while the gospel goes out to every land and in every tongue, transcends all that ever preceded in His ways. But this in no way interferes with the fact that, as the calling of the church is a heavenly parenthesis, so also are “the times of the Gentiles” a still wider earthly one, which fills the blank in the earth’s history since God governed in the midst of His people under law, as He will by-and-by when they are under the new covenant.

This is so true, that we hear of the mystery as to Christ and as to the church, hid from ages and generations {Col. 1:26} — hid in God {Eph. 3:9, 10}, not in scripture — not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. It is also said be made known by prophetic scriptures (Rom. 16:25, 26), but these are of the New Testament, and not of the Old — a notion obscured by the English version — “the scriptures of the prophets,” which is unequivocally incorrect, and naturally points to the well-known Old Testament writings and writers,3 contrary to the express drift of the context. The apostle constantly cites the Old Testament prophets to vindicate what was not made known there, but what illustrated the truth when the mystery was revealed. Thus proofs of Israel blinded, and of Gentiles called, he does cite as accomplished in the mystery, but in no way as the revelation of it. How do they reveal Christ as the heavenly Head of all creation, and the church, Jews or Gentiles alike, as the one body, His body? But reasoning

is needless; scripture is express that the mystery has now been manifested.

But it is no slight error that the church is connected with earthly arrangements as Israel was, and self-delusion to confound this, with trials, helps, hindrances, and temptations here below, on the one hand, and on the other hand with preaching the gospel, going out to the heathen, social ties and duties, etc. When and how did God connect His church with the earth? Education and habit may account for such a statement; to faith the word of God never gave it. That historically the church thus fell is true; that Satan so sought, and succeeded in doing so, is plain; that in a measure of accomplishment it was predicted as the fornication of Babylon with the kings of the earth {Rev. 17} is not denied; but is the sufferance of such corruption to be regarded as His sanction? Is it the form of things produced by His will as that which He would thus make to answer His mind? The connection of Israel with the earth is God's institution: is Babylon His institution?

Nor is our hope the second advent of the Lord to the earth, as Israel's was His first coming; it is going up to meet the Lord in the air, and so being ever with Him {1 Thess. 4:15-18}. To be with Him in the Father's house {John 14:1-3} is no question of dates or prophetic messages. How anyone could mistake the character of Rev. 1:7, for instance, would be a marvel if one did not know the power of prejudice. It is beyond a doubt the coming again of Christ in judgment, His appearing to the world, to the Jews that pierced Him, and to every eye, in contrast with chosen witnesses and the day of faith now; so that all the tribes of the earth (or land) mourn because of Him. Is it not strange to hear so

solemn a warning styled the main object and desire; and that the apostle contemplates His coming as a whole but with especial reference to his own hope and that of his fellow-christians?

It is an ineffectual effort to reason from an assumed similarity where there is a real contrast. The heavenly character of the Christian and the church is unknown, yet the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Spirit do surely now make that character good to faith. God's providence, though a very different thing from guidance in the Spirit, is most real now, as of old; but that secret control of all circumstances, so that all things work together for good, is quite distinct from the public display of His power of which prophecy treats. Some may have blundered as to the true bearing of 1 Peter 1:10-13; but it is well to heed the distinction there drawn between the predictions of the prophets, the gospel meanwhile declared in virtue of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the full accomplishment at the appearing of Jesus. Receiving soul-salvation now, we await salvation for our bodies and the fulfillment of the glories predicted when He appears.

And this helps to the right understanding of Luke 2:32, as little understood by the Protestant {historicalist} as the futurist. It is a question, not of the church, but of the Gentiles, who were of old in the dark, as Israel now are, while Gentiles are brought to light. They have Christ now a light for their revelation, as by-and-by He will be the glory of God's people Israel. He had overlooked the times of ignorance hitherto, but now enjoins men that they should all everywhere repent.

But it is urged that the church has come into the place of Israel, and that as an election was taken out of them, so now from among the nations of Christendom. This idea, however, in both its parts is erroneous. Secretly there was an election, not only from Israel, but from the Gentiles, as Heber, Rahab, Jonadab, etc.; but Israel was an elect nation governed and owned by God as His people. “My people” never means hidden election; it is the nation in speaking of Israel. But Christendom is not a nation elect or otherwise; in the greatest part of it is Babylon, even for Protestant opinion. Is Babylon elect as Israel was? Whatever might be the stranger spirit of pious Israelites, the elect people had their home on earth. It is a mischievous error, lowering to all christian life in worship and service, to confound our calling with theirs.

Nor is it the church, but the Gentiles, which are grafted into the tree of promise with the true of Israel. For, first, the church is not the “own olive-tree” of Israel; and, secondly, the believing Jews entered the church (see Eph. 2; 1 Cor. 12), as did the believing Gentiles, whereas they abode in their own olive-tree. See Rom. 11, a chapter which proves continuance in promise, but parenthesis in government, and quite distinct from the revelation of Christ’s body, where all is alike of grace and heaven, and above nature — one new man {Eph. 2:15} as new to the Jew as to the Gentile. Blindness in part is happened to Israel until — there the parenthesis ends; and so all Israel shall be saved {Rom. 11:26}. For there shall come forth a Deliverer out of Zion. We look for God’s Son from heaven {Phil 3:21} who will receive us to Himself where He is {John 14:3}. For our blessing

characteristically is in heavenly places, as we are told in Eph. 1:3.

Indeed it is vain to reason on prophecy when it is taken as a basis that Christendom is God's covenant people, and therefore that, as the earlier prophecies all centered around Israel, so do the later ones round the visible church among the Gentiles. Israel were then the covenant people, and so long as they thus remained, all divine prophecy clustered around them, from Moses to Malachi; but it is urged that ever since the days of St. John this privilege has been transferred from them to the visible Gentile church. The kingdom of God, as our Lord assured the Jews, has been taken from them and given to others. Hence the very same principle, which made all Old Testament prophecy center in the Jewish nation, requires that all New Testament prophecy should center around the Gentile church, the actual people of the covenant, who have been ingrafted in their stead, and the appeal to the Old Testament prophets to support an opposite conclusion must be utterly vain. Setting aside a main principle of God's moral government, and destroying a law of His revelation, to sustain a mere circumstance, it infers that God will leave His covenant people for near two thousand years without any distinct light of prophecy, because they always enjoyed that privilege in a dispensation of dimmer light and less abundant grace. Such is the argument in its most plausible shape.

But what proof, what sign, what appearance of truth, is there in such an hypothesis, traditional though it may be? When did God enter into covenant with the Gentiles? God has given Christ, the rejected Christ, for a light to the Gentiles, that He may be His salvation to the

ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6); but He is (ver. 8) a covenant of the people, not peoples. Hence the Gentiles are never said to be grafted instead of the Jews. Generically they are grafted in with the Jews left there in the inheritance of promises, of which Abraham was the stock planted by God in the earth; and they are responsible for the maintenance of blessing. But no covenant was made with them. Even if Matt. 21:43 be certainly applicable, it is only to fruit-bearing, not to covenant, that it applies. And how can this be said of Christendom, unless Rev. 17, 18 be such fruit? But the fact is, that neither it, nor Deut. 31:21, nor Rom. 9:21-25, nor Rom. 11:11-15, say a word about the church coming into the place of Israel, nor of the church as such at all.

Again, it is beyond controversy that the church-state in the Revelation {Rev. 2 and 3} does not go farther than "the things which are," in contrast with the future visions, or "the things which shall be after these," and that its prophecies therefore do not center round any church or people of God whatsoever, but are occupied with judgments on the world, whatever may be the pledges of mercy to the sealed of Israel, or to an innumerable crowd out of all nations and tongues {Rev. 7}. There is no judgment (and the Apocalypse treats of judgment) on a covenant people of God; nor does a people of God on earth, in any case or way, form a center there. It is absurd to contend that the twelve tribes of Israel in Rev. 7 are Gentile, contrasted as they are with a great crowd out of every nation; and it is inadmissible that Christendom is God's covenant people, unless Babylon be such.

Further, not only do Christians possess all the prophetic word, but they have ample and clear and direct light in the Gospels and Epistles (especially 2 Thess. 1 and 2 Timothy, and Jude) supposing the Revelation did not at all apply (which is not affirmed) beyond the wonderful messages of the Lord Himself in the seven Apocalyptic epistles. No one doubts for a moment the sovereign and moral government of God: but to identify this with His ways in Israel, as the popular argument already cited does, is just confusion and ignorance, whatever be the confidence of such as put it forward. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2). All agree that Old Testament prophecies not only left room for the parenthetic interval or blank for Israel when they were Lo-ammi and Gentiles are called, but used pregnant phrases, whereby God’s ways might be confirmed when this state of things arrived; but they never revealed the mystery, which Paul did, while it was made known to all God’s holy apostles and prophets.

And here let me say, though it be only in passing, that the grave point in Eph. 2:20, Eph. 3:5, is, not that the apostles and prophets were necessarily the same individuals, but that they are here viewed as one common company, though distinguished in Eph. 4:11 and 1 Cor. 12:28, 29. The criticism that would separate them here is as erroneous as the interpretation that makes the prophets to be of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New, the one article expressly forbidding the notion of two distinct classes. So far is the church of God from being anterior to redemption, that its foundation is of the New Testament apostles and prophets. The mystery was hid from ages and

generations previously. No prophet in Old Testament times revealed it. A blank was left for St. Paul to fill (Col. 1:26).

As to the utilitarian argument which has been applied to decide the bearing of the Apocalypse on history since St. John's day, as against the crisis, it hardly deserves the notice of serious men. But as some may be influenced by what appeals to natural feeling, without an atom of spiritual weight, one may reply that, in pleading for a more exact fulfillment in the latter day, it is not denied that the book has been accomplished partially all through.

It is in vain to deny that in Protestant hands prophecy was valued chiefly as evidence by its fulfillment to convict the unbeliever, and that this disposed men to enlarge as much as possible the field of fulfilled prediction, in order to increase their arms against infidelity. Now no sober Christian denies this to be a use of prophecy, or its importance for its own end. The reasoning directed against the use of prophecy after its accomplishment was only against this use exclusively. People used very generally to say, as some do still, that prophecy was mainly, not to say only, useful as proof when fulfilled. This was false ground, injurious to saints, and dishonouring to God. "The design of God was (to cite Sir Isaac Newton's applauded sentence), when He gave this book and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but to the end that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event."

Alas! how foolish in the things of God are the wise. The vast mass of prophecy warns of God's final judgments as

ushering in the reign of the Lord. The event will prove their truth, no doubt; but it will be to the ruin of those who did not foreknow and heed the warning. Thus the antediluvians may have argued, and perished in their unbelief. Not so Noah; by faith he, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Not so did Jehovah deal when He said, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” And if he was the friend of God, what are we? and why has Jesus called us His friends? (See John 15). Did this include the apostles only, or has not one of these “friends” of Jesus, when treating expressly of the coming of the Lord, of the destruction of the world that now is, and of the new heavens and earth, said to us, “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware…?”

The men of those days, who had precious faith, did not wait for the events before believing; they did not use the prophecy as a mere confirmation of Christianity; they read, understood, and profited by its warning. The Spirit of truth, according to the Lord’s promise, showed them things to come; and they found the blessing of that sure word which shines as a lamp in a dark place. Sir Isaac Newton was not the least sagacious or sober of Protestant interpreters; yet even he asks us to abandon the gracious purpose for which God gave prophecy to His children, for the lowest application for which human incredulity can require it. Unquestionably prophecy is a weapon of divine temper to confound and, if grace work, to convince the sceptic (though we may question such an effect from the jarring notes heard on the seals, trumpets, and vials); but surely it is its humblest office, instead of being the only wise and all-absorbing one.

May we not ask, “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

Again, when we find Tertullian applying the fifth seal to martyrs, as then in course of slaughter under pagan Rome, surely we may think that he did not understand its full bearing, without saying that such an interpretation was a delusion, destitute of one particle of real truth. Nor would one question that God honoured the German reformer’s testimony against Babylon, founded on a later portion of the Revelation. Does this prove that Luther knew, or that we ought not to learn, a fuller development of the great whore, for which no room is left in the ordinary interpretation?

Singular to say, some who narrow to a single line the Revelation (the deepest and most comprehensive of all prophecies) think it certain that elsewhere, as in Isa. 2, for instance, the Spirit of God intended one reference as well as the other — first, an incomplete and figurative, then a complete and literal fulfillment; and yet they would repeat for the Apocalypse the error of the Futurists, though in an opposite direction. Thus the soundness of the principle is admitted by some on both sides. Apply it to the Apocalypse, and not only are men who stand for the future crisis, without denying the protracted accomplishment, justified by their censors, but the mere Protestant interpretation is condemned by the very reasoning meant to establish it on the ruins of futurism.

Doubtless it is a canon with some whom Mr. G. S. Faber represented, that no single link of a chronological chain of prophecy is capable of receiving its accomplishment in more than a single event or period. But this is not

true even of Daniel, who, as almost all antiquity saw clearly, makes Antiochus Epiphanes the type of a still worse personage at the end. And it would be strange indeed to contend that the final prophecy and profoundest of all should have a scope more confined than a Jewish one. Mr. Mede saw at length that the seven ‘churches’ {Rev. 2 and 3} had a double reference; he might have learnt to his profit that the prophetic portion is not less significant.

Nor is this the only inconsistency in such special pleading. For if the principal use in all cases is the manifestation of the divine glory in the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God, whether before or after the fulfillment, if the use, whether of warning before, or of evidence after, fulfillment, is always secondary and subordinate, the utilitarian argument sinks into little. On this showing its grand object was as much attained during the seventeen centuries the book did not apply (if that ground be taken) as when it did. And is it not strange that the manifestation of the divine glory should be lowered to the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God? One might have looked for some regard to His government in such a question, if righteousness and grace were too much to expect. Yet the reason of their absence is evident: they would suppose contrast of dispensation in principle, and intervention in power; and the wisdom of this age likes and bows to neither.

But, granting the divine glory, in an infinitely richer way than has been before alleged, to be the end, as of all God’s word and ways, so of prophecy which reveals the result of all and the judgment by which it will be effected, still it is so evident as to need no reasoning for

the spiritual mind, that God's direct practical aim in prophecy was the warning, instruction, and comfort of His own before fulfillment; and all Christians should be thankful to be recalled to this precious privilege, of which they had been long deprived. And assuredly the Futurists, spite of defects and one-sidedness and even errors, contributed to this end incomparably more than the Protestant school {historicalists}, engrossed as it used to be, and even now is almost entirely, with fulfilled prophecy.

It is plain that, if the early Christians had regarded the twelve hundred and sixty days as so many years, they must have anticipated such a lengthening out of the ages as the Protestant scheme contends for, which it is certain not one did, so far as we know. Does this, as far as it goes, tell in favour of futurism or historicalism? It is no less plain that the times of Daniel in chapters 7 and 12 (taken up in the Revelation) suppose the Jews in their land and carrying on their worship, but hindered by the little horn — that is, not the long ages of their scattering, but when they return, though not yet owned as a nation by God. Confessedly the early writers on prophecy expected two actual witnesses, and a personal Antichrist, an infidel domination and a fiery persecution of at least three and a half years, and this in Jerusalem at the end of the age whenever it might be. The soundness of all this may be questioned; but it is absurd to argue, as some do, that in these points (wherein, more than any others, they agree) the Fathers substantially approximate to the protracted {historicalist} view of the prophecy. The earlier and central chapters, not to speak of the closing ones, they applied in general as the Futurists do. Even if we

confine ourselves to the future literal application, one cannot allow that it was useless. Was the blessed hope put before the Philippians, “The Lord is at hand,” of no use because it is still unfulfilled? Did the Christians then expect it not to occur till after so long a time? Has it been wholly useless? or is the imputation deplorably unbelieving?

Assuredly it is a mere reverie that the Apocalypse announced to every age of the church, and to each generation of believers, events that were really near at hand, or that in every later age it also contains many predictions already fulfilled, the fulfillment of which has been more or less clearly discerned by thoughtful Christians. The early writers, we have seen, applied the prophecy to a brief and terrible tribulation at the end. Then the whole mass fell into deep and deepening darkness. In the middle ages, when the Apocalypse was used, it was never an intelligent application of earlier parts of it, but, conscience being shocked and alarmed, an imaginative apprehension prevailed that Antichrist was come and the end imminent. It was the dread of being at the consummation which appalled men. That the church used it suitably from age to age, as it was developed into history, is a mere chimera, which can deceive no one acquainted with facts but only those who accept just what they like. If it be meant that the church ought to have so discerned the prophecy, it is a circular argument which amounts to something of this sort:- If the church had held my view (which is demonstrably untrue), they would have profited by it as warning from age to age, and as evidence of things past and fulfilled. Since my view is right, it has been at least possible, and indeed highly probable, that many believers in every age

should have been warned by it of imminent changes, and have had their faith in God's word confirmed by many glimpses of its actual fulfillment. Is this serious either as history or as logic?

Test the facts. If any part of the visions is fulfilled, the seals must have been according to the historic view. Is there a tittle of evidence that the seals announced to any age of the church any one imminent change therein supposed to be predicted? What single individual correctly interpreted a single seal beforehand? To this day the utmost variety of thought exists among the leading Protestants {historicalists} themselves, not in detail merely but as to their general bearing. Can none gainsay the conclusions of Mede or Vitringa, of Faber or Cuninghame, of Elliott or Keith? Can it be said that these men were captious and speculative like the Futurists, who rejected evidence, real and sufficient, if not of that sort which compels assent? Are they not all among the most trusty and familiar of the historical school, and as notoriously discordant in their views at the threshold? Yet of all parts of the book one might, on their principles, expect here the most of agreement, if not unanimity.

But enough. The grand fault of the considerations here examined is that, whilst God is at work to help on His children, they are an effort to lead back believers from that knowledge of the church's true relation, as united by the Spirit, to Christ on high, which is the key to real intelligence in the Christian. It is not merely human reasoning to support what is partial at best, and often erroneous; it is decidedly antagonism to truth of the deepest moment for God's glory, as well as the blessing of His saints. It is also ignorance of what scripture treats

as the proper government of God in the midst of His people on earth when He will arise and inherit all nations. The importance of such prophecies as those of Daniel and John is great; but they must treat for the most part, even the latter, of the times of the Gentiles, not of the “kingdom” in any sense. To lose sight of this as Fathers and Protestants {historicalists} alike have done is fatal to spiritual intelligence on this subject.

The question here, as everywhere, is to whom the prophetic revelations apply, not to whom they are given. The revelation of what happened to Lot was given to Abraham, whilst the communication was made to Lot in time to deliver him out of the judgment, and this with precision as to the execution of it. So the Revelation says, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.” The book was given, as all the scriptures, to the church of God, without distinction of Jew or Gentile — there was none such in the body of Christ; and it could be given to none else.

On the other hand, there is this observation to be made respecting Daniel and the Revelation: that they are the revelation of the consequences, the former of Israel’s failure, the latter of the church’s failure, as witnesses of God here below. Hence we have a far more direct interest and more solemn responsibility, as to the contents of the Apocalypse than as to Old Testament prophecy in general, or even as to Daniel; while, as to times, scenes, and personages, there is doubtless much in common between the two books. But the Babylon on the seven hills [Rev. 17], which the apostle saw drunken with the blood of saints, is to us a thing of nearer and

graver import than the great city which Nebuchadnezzar built on the plain of Shiner.

Furthermore, the time is said, and said repeatedly (Rev. 1, 22), to be at hand; and this as a reason why its sayings were not sealed to John as they were to Daniel {12:4}. The work of redemption being done, Christ gone on high, and the Spirit sent down to be in the Christian and the church, the time of the end is always near to us, as the Lord is ready to judge the quick and the dead. Still the ground taken from first to last is, not that we are in the scenes of the prophecy, but that "the time is at hand," not present. It is very possible that the prophetic warning it contains may be the divine preservative against the sins which at length draw down the closing strokes of God's wrath on the apostasy of Christendom. Into this worst, this rebellious, corruption the professing mass sink during, if not before, the hour of temptation {trial} which is to try them that dwell on the earth {Rev. 3:10}. Out of this hour the Lord has pledged Himself to preserve such as keep the word of His patience. The faithful, His church, will not be in that hour or scene. The Lord keep this promise, full of comfort, before our souls!

3 Rom. 1:2 does prove that the gospel was promised before by God's prophets; but the difference of phraseology answers to the difference of the subject-matter in Rom. 16:26. The mystery was hid, not promised, though now manifested by prophetic scriptures, and according to the commandment of the eternal God made known for obedience of faith to all the nations. It is ignorance to confound them.

The prophecies of holy writ may be divided broadly into these two classes: those like Isaiah's, which were addressed to the people of Israel while standing in recognized relation with Jehovah as His people; and those like Daniel's, which suppose the Jews disowned for a season till grace restore them in the latter day, placing them under Messiah's reign and the new covenant. Of old God had governed Israel as His people, and the pavilion of His presence in their midst was its sign. The present interval, humbling to conscience and solemn to faith, is marked by the departure of the Shekinah till its final return never more to leave the city and sanctuary where the eyes of Jehovah rest continually; and during that space imperial authority is confided to four successive and well-known world powers, the great Gentile empires. This is "the parenthesis," as it has been justly designated; and the term is so suited to maintain a true sense of the peculiarity of the interval, and to hinder forgetfulness of its total difference from the ordinary course of God's direct government of the earth according to the great and regular scheme of prophecy, that it would be most unwise to forego its use because some do not, and others will not, understand it. The "times of the Gentiles" span this remarkable interval, begun by the captivity of Judah under the head of gold, and closed by the destructive blow which the returning Lord, the Little Stone cut without hands, will inflict on the iron-clay feet, reducing the entire image to powder, before the Stone itself expands into a great mountain and fills the whole earth. Then and not before will have come the world-kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ (Rev. 11:15-18; 19; 20).

It is very intelligible that the professing Gentile should revolt at the fact, plainly as scripture reveals it, that, whatever the deep ways and heavenly counsels of grace revealed since Christ came (the whole New Testament indeed), the Gentile empires have merely and precisely the function, under God's sovereign will, of filling up the gap between Israel's fall and their rising again. It is offensive to such as glory in the arts and letters of Greece and Rome, in the sciences and discoveries of modern civilization. Hence wounded feeling proceeds to worse daring, and profanely mocks at this view of the parenthesis, which is the sure representation of God's word, as if it were no more reasonable than a dream of Arabian or Hindoo mythology. But it is foolish to kick against the goad: the fact, humiliating to Gentile conceit and call it as we may, is written indelibly in letters of light.

It is alleged however, in order to reduce the sharpness of the truth and its moral lesson, that, in a sense exactly similar, the whole Mosaic dispensation is itself a parenthesis between the times of the patriarchs and of the christian church; while the millennium is another parenthesis between the dispensation of the Spirit (the reader must overlook so unintelligent a phrase) and the final glory, when the redemption is complete. Now, while in a limited sense this may be allowed of all economic or mediatorial dealings as compared with the boundless infinitude of eternity, the parenthesis was spoken of as such in respect of God's government of the earth, whether partial or complete, past or future; which government all the faithful surely believe to be the only normal condition for the world since God deigned to make it His plan. Not only before the deluge but after it,

till the call of Israel out of Egypt, God did not govern the earth in this way. Men previously had only to maintain His honour, as we see in Job 31:27, 28; but this was soon lost through idolatry, and Abram was called out, the nations being abandoned to walk in their own ways. Hence evidently the patriarch's call was not God's government of the world. On the contrary God, though He left Himself not without witness, as we see in the destruction of the guilty cities of the plain, would not then interfere because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full {Gen. 15:16}; and the wandering patriarchs, so far as they were faithful, had in the land of promise not so much as to set their foot on, though we cannot but discern also, how God suffered no man to do His prophets harm, rebuking kings for their sakes.

But at the Exodus, as is known to all, God judged the nation that oppressed the sons of Israel and brought themselves out of the house of bondage as His people, in whom His government was to be exercised and His ways displayed. And so they were (not merely that secret and ceaseless providence of His which never fails), till by their persistent hopeless apostasy from Himself for idols, subsequently fixed yet more by their rejection of Himself in the person of His Messiah, they were in the just dealing of God, after unwearied patience, set aside as no longer His people, though still providentially kept apart, until He resumes at length His immediate government of the earth {in the millennium}, He will in Christ returning to reign in the last days.

The gap then, since Israel became Lo-Ammi {Hosea 1}, till they are restored again and for ever as His people to His land, as the central sphere of His earthly government, is filled up by the four successive beasts

{Dan. 7} or imperial Gentile powers {Dan. 2}. The regular course of earthly dispensations supposes the throne of Jehovah in Jerusalem; the removal of it when power was committed to the Gentiles is exactly a parenthesis as to His earthly, government, which is true of Israel's history neither before nor after these "times of the Gentiles"; for Israel is the exhibition, in the past of failure under law, in the future of power under the Messiah, in respect of God's proper and immediate government of the earth, whereas the intervening Gentile period is its interruption, whatever the wonderful works of God in His grace meanwhile. Yet God has not lost sight of these parenthetical times, abnormal as they are, but inspired Daniel particularly in the Old Testament, and, John in the New Testament, to write of them, though in view of the blessing at last of the people still under rejection, as well as of the higher and larger things for which that rejection furnishes occasion. It is our Lord too, who in Luke 21 vouchsafed to us that very term "times of the Gentiles," which is only another way of describing the parenthesis; though Christians, like the heathen, turn it into pride, overlooking its real nature and denying its importance. Nothing but this can account for their designating this period "the sacred calendar and great almanac of prophecy," wholly slighting the fact that far the greater part of the prophetic word bears on the time when God governs the earth immediately from within His people restored and blessed {in the millennium}, instead of merely confiding authority meanwhile to powers which from first to last He calls "beasts"{[Dan. 7}. The axe may boast against Him that heweth therewith; but saintly minds ought to know better than encourage it.

But it is not true that Dan. 2, any more than Dan. 7, contemplates, as the learned J. Mede fancied, a regnum lapidis, as well as regnum montis (Works, iv. 743, 744, ed. 1677, folio.) It would be strange indeed if the dream of the heathen monarch had a spiritual view presented which was not vouchsafed to the holy prophet. The idea however is quite unfounded. The first action of the Stone (or in the kingdom of God in Christ) was not to accomplish redemption or to found a spiritual kingdom, but to crush to atoms the imperial Gentile system, especially dealing with the Roman empire in its last shape, after which itself spread and filled the whole earth. Not the gospel but divine judgment effects it. See also Isa. 2, 11, 25, 65, 66, and a crowd of other scriptures. Does it not seem odd, by the way, to find Tobit quoted here as an authority, and at yet greater length in iii. 579, 580?

Within this parenthesis, and inside the bounds of its last clause (the fourth empire of Rome), the gospel or Christianity and the church come in. And just as the ruin of the Jews gave the signal for Daniel’s prophecy, so did the failure of the church here below, {give the signal} for the book of Revelation, which, after its seven epistles {Rev. 2 and 3} and the heavenly episode that follows immediately {Rev. 4 and 5}, shows us judgments on the world summed up at length, in its two chiefs, the apostate first and second beasts {Rev. 13} the Roman empire in its last phase, and the false prophet power in the land, with Babylon the great harlot of Christendom {Rev. 17}.

It is here that men, and even the pious if committed to things as they are, find no little difficulty. Men’s will can resist stubbornly, their mind easily raising objections to

the truth which condemns them. It is this much more than the symbolical style of the predictions which made Daniel's visions unpalatable to the Jew, and the true scope of the Apocalypse unwelcome to many a Christian. They would like to think present circumstances and that history with which they are most familiar {to be} the direct object of God's prophetic survey; they fail to see that its real fulfillment is in the great but brief crisis, after the overcomers (Rev. 2, 3) are taken to heaven, till Christ and they appear in glory to reign, whatever be the light thence derivable for discerning the principles at work all through our earthly pilgrimage before their full manifestation at the close when judgment comes.

The case was complicated too by a few more or less disposed to palliate Rome, who could detect error in the popular view, and facts as to the future not generally recognized, but who availed themselves of all to undermine truths still more important for their moral bearing on souls as well as on the Lord's glory. With the evil principles of Drs. Maitland, Todd, Burgh, etc., one has far less sympathy than with the honest but imperfect and, to say the truth, far from intelligent testimony of Mede or Daubuz or their representatives to this day, able and learned as some of them were in other respects. It is forgotten perhaps equally on both sides, that the church, since apostolic days till the Reformation at least, was not in a condition to use the Revelation in general. Certainly the earliest Fathers applied it substantially as the futurists do.

The great pre-requisite for a safe and wholesome study of the prophetic word is a clear apprehension of the difference between the church called by sovereign grace for heavenly places in Christ and the immediate divine

government of the world of which the Jews form the nearest circle on earth round the Messiah, according to the purpose and ways of God (Deut. 32:8). God has set aside the Jews for their rebellious idolatry and at last their rejection of the Messiah; but He will resume His government of them again, an immediate rule on the earth wholly different in nature, character, and results from the powers that be now, entitled though they are to our submission and honour, however little able to deal with the misery and corruptions of mankind.

Adversaries may talk of wire-drawn abstractions and baseless hypothetical systems; but they are themselves blinded by tradition and self-confidence to a change of the profoundest interest and of incalculable moment, against which no sophistry can prevail for those who bow to scripture. It is the more apt to deceive themselves and others where such unbelief works in men who deny not but hold Christ's future reign over the earth in personal presence and power and glory. For this is the government of the earth or "the kingdom," of which both Testaments speak, as distinct as possible from the calling of saints from among Jews and Gentiles to be the body of Christ, not of the world even now as He was not, while the anomalous bestial rule still goes on here below.

The truth of the {earthly} Gentile parenthesis {of judgment on Israel} does not make the scheme of God's moral government a piecemeal and fragmentary thing; but a mass of confusion at issue with all scripture they make it who do not discriminate God's calling of the church to heaven from His government by law on earth. Nor can any sentence be worse both in ill construction and violation of truth, than that which assumes one

uninterrupted chain of divine government, and ignores the revealed facts of God's rupture of His regular earthly government {i.e., the times of the Gentiles}, of an immense interregnum while the beasts rule, and of God's final resumption of that government at the return of our Lord.

But if we limit ourselves to considering God's moral government, its scheme is perfect. Part of it was to blind Israel, while another work proceeds in the richest mercy to the Gentiles. And prophecy reveals the judgments by which the whole result will be brought about according to God. Meanwhile His providential wisdom and power order all, whatever be the anomalies in the phases of the world's history for nearly 2500 years; and we by His word and Spirit make good His will in the measure of our faith, while evil is not yet put down by the intervention of that power which will bring in the sabbatism that remains for the people of God. The confusion of thought, generally prevalent as to this arises from the supposition that God's government has its results now, which it never can have till the manifestation of Christ, in view of whom and for whose glory all has been carried on. To look for its accomplishment in the absence of Christ is a fatal mistake. God's people are not the sun in the solar system of His truth, or of His government; but Christ is. To substitute the first man for the Second is the constant effort and error of the natural mind. It is to prefer guesswork, founded on first appearances, to demonstrated truth; and to conceive the church to be the center of movement, instead of knowing it in the true Sun, Christ the Lord.

Undoubtedly the work which God has now at heart in the calling of the church, founded on the accomplished redemption of the Son, and accompanied, nay, effectuated, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, while the gospel goes out to every land and in every tongue, transcends all that ever preceded in His ways. But this in no way interferes with the fact that, as the calling of the church is a heavenly parenthesis, so also are “the times of the Gentiles” a still wider earthly one, which fills the blank in the earth’s history since God governed in the midst of His people under law, as He will by-and-by when they are under the new covenant.

This is so true, that we hear of the mystery as to Christ and as to the church, hid from ages and generations {Col. 1:26} — hid in God {Eph. 3:9, 10}, not in scripture — not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. It is also said be made known by prophetic scriptures (Rom. 16:25, 26), but these are of the New Testament, and not of the Old — a notion obscured by the English version — “the scriptures of the prophets,” which is unequivocally incorrect, and naturally points to the well-known Old Testament writings and writers,3 contrary to the express drift of the context. The apostle constantly cites the Old Testament prophets to vindicate what was not made known there, but what illustrated the truth when the mystery was revealed. Thus proofs of Israel blinded, and of Gentiles called, he does cite as accomplished in the mystery, but in no way as the revelation of it. How do they reveal Christ as the heavenly Head of all creation, and the church, Jews or Gentiles alike, as the one body, His body? But reasoning

is needless; scripture is express that the mystery has now been manifested.

But it is no slight error that the church is connected with earthly arrangements as Israel was, and self-delusion to confound this, with trials, helps, hindrances, and temptations here below, on the one hand, and on the other hand with preaching the gospel, going out to the heathen, social ties and duties, etc. When and how did God connect His church with the earth? Education and habit may account for such a statement; to faith the word of God never gave it. That historically the church thus fell is true; that Satan so sought, and succeeded in doing so, is plain; that in a measure of accomplishment it was predicted as the fornication of Babylon with the kings of the earth {Rev. 17} is not denied; but is the sufferance of such corruption to be regarded as His sanction? Is it the form of things produced by His will as that which He would thus make to answer His mind? The connection of Israel with the earth is God's institution: is Babylon His institution?

Nor is our hope the second advent of the Lord to the earth, as Israel's was His first coming; it is going up to meet the Lord in the air, and so being ever with Him {1 Thess. 4:15-18}. To be with Him in the Father's house {John 14:1-3} is no question of dates or prophetic messages. How anyone could mistake the character of Rev. 1:7, for instance, would be a marvel if one did not know the power of prejudice. It is beyond a doubt the coming again of Christ in judgment, His appearing to the world, to the Jews that pierced Him, and to every eye, in contrast with chosen witnesses and the day of faith now; so that all the tribes of the earth (or land) mourn because of Him. Is it not strange to hear so

solemn a warning styled the main object and desire; and that the apostle contemplates His coming as a whole but with especial reference to his own hope and that of his fellow-christians?

It is an ineffectual effort to reason from an assumed similarity where there is a real contrast. The heavenly character of the Christian and the church is unknown, yet the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Spirit do surely now make that character good to faith. God's providence, though a very different thing from guidance in the Spirit, is most real now, as of old; but that secret control of all circumstances, so that all things work together for good, is quite distinct from the public display of His power of which prophecy treats. Some may have blundered as to the true bearing of 1 Peter 1:10-13; but it is well to heed the distinction there drawn between the predictions of the prophets, the gospel meanwhile declared in virtue of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the full accomplishment at the appearing of Jesus. Receiving soul-salvation now, we await salvation for our bodies and the fulfillment of the glories predicted when He appears.

And this helps to the right understanding of Luke 2:32, as little understood by the Protestant {historicalist} as the futurist. It is a question, not of the church, but of the Gentiles, who were of old in the dark, as Israel now are, while Gentiles are brought to light. They have Christ now a light for their revelation, as by-and-by He will be the glory of God's people Israel. He had overlooked the times of ignorance hitherto, but now enjoins men that they should all everywhere repent.

But it is urged that the church has come into the place of Israel, and that as an election was taken out of them, so now from among the nations of Christendom. This idea, however, in both its parts is erroneous. Secretly there was an election, not only from Israel, but from the Gentiles, as Heber, Rahab, Jonadab, etc.; but Israel was an elect nation governed and owned by God as His people. “My people” never means hidden election; it is the nation in speaking of Israel. But Christendom is not a nation elect or otherwise; in the greatest part of it is Babylon, even for Protestant opinion. Is Babylon elect as Israel was? Whatever might be the stranger spirit of pious Israelites, the elect people had their home on earth. It is a mischievous error, lowering to all christian life in worship and service, to confound our calling with theirs.

Nor is it the church, but the Gentiles, which are grafted into the tree of promise with the true of Israel. For, first, the church is not the “own olive-tree” of Israel; and, secondly, the believing Jews entered the church (see Eph. 2; 1 Cor. 12), as did the believing Gentiles, whereas they abode in their own olive-tree. See Rom. 11, a chapter which proves continuance in promise, but parenthesis in government, and quite distinct from the revelation of Christ’s body, where all is alike of grace and heaven, and above nature — one new man {Eph. 2:15} as new to the Jew as to the Gentile. Blindness in part is happened to Israel until — there the parenthesis ends; and so all Israel shall be saved {Rom. 11:26}. For there shall come forth a Deliverer out of Zion. We look for God’s Son from heaven {Phil 3:21} who will receive us to Himself where He is {John 14:3}. For our blessing

characteristically is in heavenly places, as we are told in Eph. 1:3.

Indeed it is vain to reason on prophecy when it is taken as a basis that Christendom is God's covenant people, and therefore that, as the earlier prophecies all centered around Israel, so do the later ones round the visible church among the Gentiles. Israel were then the covenant people, and so long as they thus remained, all divine prophecy clustered around them, from Moses to Malachi; but it is urged that ever since the days of St. John this privilege has been transferred from them to the visible Gentile church. The kingdom of God, as our Lord assured the Jews, has been taken from them and given to others. Hence the very same principle, which made all Old Testament prophecy center in the Jewish nation, requires that all New Testament prophecy should center around the Gentile church, the actual people of the covenant, who have been ingrafted in their stead, and the appeal to the Old Testament prophets to support an opposite conclusion must be utterly vain. Setting aside a main principle of God's moral government, and destroying a law of His revelation, to sustain a mere circumstance, it infers that God will leave His covenant people for near two thousand years without any distinct light of prophecy, because they always enjoyed that privilege in a dispensation of dimmer light and less abundant grace. Such is the argument in its most plausible shape.

But what proof, what sign, what appearance of truth, is there in such an hypothesis, traditional though it may be? When did God enter into covenant with the Gentiles? God has given Christ, the rejected Christ, for a light to the Gentiles, that He may be His salvation to the

ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6); but He is (ver. 8) a covenant of the people, not peoples. Hence the Gentiles are never said to be grafted instead of the Jews. Generically they are grafted in with the Jews left there in the inheritance of promises, of which Abraham was the stock planted by God in the earth; and they are responsible for the maintenance of blessing. But no covenant was made with them. Even if Matt. 21:43 be certainly applicable, it is only to fruit-bearing, not to covenant, that it applies. And how can this be said of Christendom, unless Rev. 17, 18 be such fruit? But the fact is, that neither it, nor Deut. 31:21, nor Rom. 9:21-25, nor Rom. 11:11-15, say a word about the church coming into the place of Israel, nor of the church as such at all.

Again, it is beyond controversy that the church-state in the Revelation {Rev. 2 and 3} does not go farther than "the things which are," in contrast with the future visions, or "the things which shall be after these," and that its prophecies therefore do not center round any church or people of God whatsoever, but are occupied with judgments on the world, whatever may be the pledges of mercy to the sealed of Israel, or to an innumerable crowd out of all nations and tongues {Rev. 7}. There is no judgment (and the Apocalypse treats of judgment) on a covenant people of God; nor does a people of God on earth, in any case or way, form a center there. It is absurd to contend that the twelve tribes of Israel in Rev. 7 are Gentile, contrasted as they are with a great crowd out of every nation; and it is inadmissible that Christendom is God's covenant people, unless Babylon be such.

Further, not only do Christians possess all the prophetic word, but they have ample and clear and direct light in the Gospels and Epistles (especially 2 Thess. 1 and 2 Timothy, and Jude) supposing the Revelation did not at all apply (which is not affirmed) beyond the wonderful messages of the Lord Himself in the seven Apocalyptic epistles. No one doubts for a moment the sovereign and moral government of God: but to identify this with His ways in Israel, as the popular argument already cited does, is just confusion and ignorance, whatever be the confidence of such as put it forward. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2). All agree that Old Testament prophecies not only left room for the parenthetic interval or blank for Israel when they were Lo-ammi and Gentiles are called, but used pregnant phrases, whereby God’s ways might be confirmed when this state of things arrived; but they never revealed the mystery, which Paul did, while it was made known to all God’s holy apostles and prophets.

And here let me say, though it be only in passing, that the grave point in Eph. 2:20, Eph. 3:5, is, not that the apostles and prophets were necessarily the same individuals, but that they are here viewed as one common company, though distinguished in Eph. 4:11 and 1 Cor. 12:28, 29. The criticism that would separate them here is as erroneous as the interpretation that makes the prophets to be of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New, the one article expressly forbidding the notion of two distinct classes. So far is the church of God from being anterior to redemption, that its foundation is of the New Testament apostles and prophets. The mystery was hid from ages and

generations previously. No prophet in Old Testament times revealed it. A blank was left for St. Paul to fill (Col. 1:26).

As to the utilitarian argument which has been applied to decide the bearing of the Apocalypse on history since St. John's day, as against the crisis, it hardly deserves the notice of serious men. But as some may be influenced by what appeals to natural feeling, without an atom of spiritual weight, one may reply that, in pleading for a more exact fulfillment in the latter day, it is not denied that the book has been accomplished partially all through.

It is in vain to deny that in Protestant hands prophecy was valued chiefly as evidence by its fulfillment to convict the unbeliever, and that this disposed men to enlarge as much as possible the field of fulfilled prediction, in order to increase their arms against infidelity. Now no sober Christian denies this to be a use of prophecy, or its importance for its own end. The reasoning directed against the use of prophecy after its accomplishment was only against this use exclusively. People used very generally to say, as some do still, that prophecy was mainly, not to say only, useful as proof when fulfilled. This was false ground, injurious to saints, and dishonouring to God. "The design of God was (to cite Sir Isaac Newton's applauded sentence), when He gave this book and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but to the end that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event."

Alas! how foolish in the things of God are the wise. The vast mass of prophecy warns of God's final judgments as

ushering in the reign of the Lord. The event will prove their truth, no doubt; but it will be to the ruin of those who did not foreknow and heed the warning. Thus the antediluvians may have argued, and perished in their unbelief. Not so Noah; by faith he, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Not so did Jehovah deal when He said, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” And if he was the friend of God, what are we? and why has Jesus called us His friends? (See John 15). Did this include the apostles only, or has not one of these “friends” of Jesus, when treating expressly of the coming of the Lord, of the destruction of the world that now is, and of the new heavens and earth, said to us, “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware…?”

The men of those days, who had precious faith, did not wait for the events before believing; they did not use the prophecy as a mere confirmation of Christianity; they read, understood, and profited by its warning. The Spirit of truth, according to the Lord’s promise, showed them things to come; and they found the blessing of that sure word which shines as a lamp in a dark place. Sir Isaac Newton was not the least sagacious or sober of Protestant interpreters; yet even he asks us to abandon the gracious purpose for which God gave prophecy to His children, for the lowest application for which human incredulity can require it. Unquestionably prophecy is a weapon of divine temper to confound and, if grace work, to convince the sceptic (though we may question such an effect from the jarring notes heard on the seals, trumpets, and vials); but surely it is its humblest office, instead of being the only wise and all-absorbing one.

May we not ask, “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?”

Again, when we find Tertullian applying the fifth seal to martyrs, as then in course of slaughter under pagan Rome, surely we may think that he did not understand its full bearing, without saying that such an interpretation was a delusion, destitute of one particle of real truth. Nor would one question that God honoured the German reformer’s testimony against Babylon, founded on a later portion of the Revelation. Does this prove that Luther knew, or that we ought not to learn, a fuller development of the great whore, for which no room is left in the ordinary interpretation?

Singular to say, some who narrow to a single line the Revelation (the deepest and most comprehensive of all prophecies) think it certain that elsewhere, as in Isa. 2, for instance, the Spirit of God intended one reference as well as the other — first, an incomplete and figurative, then a complete and literal fulfillment; and yet they would repeat for the Apocalypse the error of the Futurists, though in an opposite direction. Thus the soundness of the principle is admitted by some on both sides. Apply it to the Apocalypse, and not only are men who stand for the future crisis, without denying the protracted accomplishment, justified by their censors, but the mere Protestant interpretation is condemned by the very reasoning meant to establish it on the ruins of futurism.

Doubtless it is a canon with some whom Mr. G. S. Faber represented, that no single link of a chronological chain of prophecy is capable of receiving its accomplishment in more than a single event or period. But this is not

true even of Daniel, who, as almost all antiquity saw clearly, makes Antiochus Epiphanes the type of a still worse personage at the end. And it would be strange indeed to contend that the final prophecy and profoundest of all should have a scope more confined than a Jewish one. Mr. Mede saw at length that the seven ‘churches’ {Rev. 2 and 3} had a double reference; he might have learnt to his profit that the prophetic portion is not less significant.

Nor is this the only inconsistency in such special pleading. For if the principal use in all cases is the manifestation of the divine glory in the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God, whether before or after the fulfillment, if the use, whether of warning before, or of evidence after, fulfillment, is always secondary and subordinate, the utilitarian argument sinks into little. On this showing its grand object was as much attained during the seventeen centuries the book did not apply (if that ground be taken) as when it did. And is it not strange that the manifestation of the divine glory should be lowered to the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God? One might have looked for some regard to His government in such a question, if righteousness and grace were too much to expect. Yet the reason of their absence is evident: they would suppose contrast of dispensation in principle, and intervention in power; and the wisdom of this age likes and bows to neither.

But, granting the divine glory, in an infinitely richer way than has been before alleged, to be the end, as of all God’s word and ways, so of prophecy which reveals the result of all and the judgment by which it will be effected, still it is so evident as to need no reasoning for

the spiritual mind, that God's direct practical aim in prophecy was the warning, instruction, and comfort of His own before fulfillment; and all Christians should be thankful to be recalled to this precious privilege, of which they had been long deprived. And assuredly the Futurists, spite of defects and one-sidedness and even errors, contributed to this end incomparably more than the Protestant school {historicalists}, engrossed as it used to be, and even now is almost entirely, with fulfilled prophecy.

It is plain that, if the early Christians had regarded the twelve hundred and sixty days as so many years, they must have anticipated such a lengthening out of the ages as the Protestant scheme contends for, which it is certain not one did, so far as we know. Does this, as far as it goes, tell in favour of futurism or historicalism? It is no less plain that the times of Daniel in chapters 7 and 12 (taken up in the Revelation) suppose the Jews in their land and carrying on their worship, but hindered by the little horn — that is, not the long ages of their scattering, but when they return, though not yet owned as a nation by God. Confessedly the early writers on prophecy expected two actual witnesses, and a personal Antichrist, an infidel domination and a fiery persecution of at least three and a half years, and this in Jerusalem at the end of the age whenever it might be. The soundness of all this may be questioned; but it is absurd to argue, as some do, that in these points (wherein, more than any others, they agree) the Fathers substantially approximate to the protracted {historicalist} view of the prophecy. The earlier and central chapters, not to speak of the closing ones, they applied in general as the Futurists do. Even if we

confine ourselves to the future literal application, one cannot allow that it was useless. Was the blessed hope put before the Philippians, “The Lord is at hand,” of no use because it is still unfulfilled? Did the Christians then expect it not to occur till after so long a time? Has it been wholly useless? or is the imputation deplorably unbelieving?

Assuredly it is a mere reverie that the Apocalypse announced to every age of the church, and to each generation of believers, events that were really near at hand, or that in every later age it also contains many predictions already fulfilled, the fulfillment of which has been more or less clearly discerned by thoughtful Christians. The early writers, we have seen, applied the prophecy to a brief and terrible tribulation at the end. Then the whole mass fell into deep and deepening darkness. In the middle ages, when the Apocalypse was used, it was never an intelligent application of earlier parts of it, but, conscience being shocked and alarmed, an imaginative apprehension prevailed that Antichrist was come and the end imminent. It was the dread of being at the consummation which appalled men. That the church used it suitably from age to age, as it was developed into history, is a mere chimera, which can deceive no one acquainted with facts but only those who accept just what they like. If it be meant that the church ought to have so discerned the prophecy, it is a circular argument which amounts to something of this sort:- If the church had held my view (which is demonstrably untrue), they would have profited by it as warning from age to age, and as evidence of things past and fulfilled. Since my view is right, it has been at least possible, and indeed highly probable, that many believers in every age

should have been warned by it of imminent changes, and have had their faith in God's word confirmed by many glimpses of its actual fulfillment. Is this serious either as history or as logic?

Test the facts. If any part of the visions is fulfilled, the seals must have been according to the historic view. Is there a tittle of evidence that the seals announced to any age of the church any one imminent change therein supposed to be predicted? What single individual correctly interpreted a single seal beforehand? To this day the utmost variety of thought exists among the leading Protestants {historicalists} themselves, not in detail merely but as to their general bearing. Can none gainsay the conclusions of Mede or Vitringa, of Faber or Cuninghame, of Elliott or Keith? Can it be said that these men were captious and speculative like the Futurists, who rejected evidence, real and sufficient, if not of that sort which compels assent? Are they not all among the most trusty and familiar of the historical school, and as notoriously discordant in their views at the threshold? Yet of all parts of the book one might, on their principles, expect here the most of agreement, if not unanimity.

But enough. The grand fault of the considerations here examined is that, whilst God is at work to help on His children, they are an effort to lead back believers from that knowledge of the church's true relation, as united by the Spirit, to Christ on high, which is the key to real intelligence in the Christian. It is not merely human reasoning to support what is partial at best, and often erroneous; it is decidedly antagonism to truth of the deepest moment for God's glory, as well as the blessing of His saints. It is also ignorance of what scripture treats

as the proper government of God in the midst of His people on earth when He will arise and inherit all nations. The importance of such prophecies as those of Daniel and John is great; but they must treat for the most part, even the latter, of the times of the Gentiles, not of the “kingdom” in any sense. To lose sight of this as Fathers and Protestants {historicalists} alike have done is fatal to spiritual intelligence on this subject.

The question here, as everywhere, is to whom the prophetic revelations apply, not to whom they are given. The revelation of what happened to Lot was given to Abraham, whilst the communication was made to Lot in time to deliver him out of the judgment, and this with precision as to the execution of it. So the Revelation says, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.” The book was given, as all the scriptures, to the church of God, without distinction of Jew or Gentile — there was none such in the body of Christ; and it could be given to none else.

On the other hand, there is this observation to be made respecting Daniel and the Revelation: that they are the revelation of the consequences, the former of Israel’s failure, the latter of the church’s failure, as witnesses of God here below. Hence we have a far more direct interest and more solemn responsibility, as to the contents of the Apocalypse than as to Old Testament prophecy in general, or even as to Daniel; while, as to times, scenes, and personages, there is doubtless much in common between the two books. But the Babylon on the seven hills [Rev. 17], which the apostle saw drunken with the blood of saints, is to us a thing of nearer and

graver import than the great city which Nebuchadnezzar built on the plain of Shiner.

Furthermore, the time is said, and said repeatedly (Rev. 1, 22), to be at hand; and this as a reason why its sayings were not sealed to John as they were to Daniel {12:4}. The work of redemption being done, Christ gone on high, and the Spirit sent down to be in the Christian and the church, the time of the end is always near to us, as the Lord is ready to judge the quick and the dead. Still the ground taken from first to last is, not that we are in the scenes of the prophecy, but that "the time is at hand," not present. It is very possible that the prophetic warning it contains may be the divine preservative against the sins which at length draw down the closing strokes of God's wrath on the apostasy of Christendom. Into this worst, this rebellious, corruption the professing mass sink during, if not before, the hour of temptation {trial} which is to try them that dwell on the earth {Rev. 3:10}. Out of this hour the Lord has pledged Himself to preserve such as keep the word of His patience. The faithful, His church, will not be in that hour or scene. The Lord keep this promise, full of comfort, before our souls!

3 Rom. 1:2 does prove that the gospel was promised before by God's prophets; but the difference of phraseology answers to the difference of the subject-matter in Rom. 16:26. The mystery was hid, not promised, though now manifested by prophetic scriptures, and according to the commandment of the eternal God made known for obedience of faith to all the nations. It is ignorance to confound them.

## Appendix B

The Jewish and Christian Expectation of Christ Briefly Contrasted I am not without hopes that, under the gracious teaching of the Spirit, the simple statement of the distinction we are going briefly to examine may be blessed to souls. Happy is it when we are brought to ponder on the riches of grace which God has lavished on us, and that in the spirit of children, not desiring to prove our own notions, but to learn the thoughts, purposes, and ways of God; happier still when, in the communion of Him who dwells in us, our delight is to be shown, and to adore the Lord Jesus Christ in His various glory.

His various glory, I repeat; for this the natural mind relishes not, but it is exactly what the Spirit loves and leads into (John 16:13-15). Hence it is that to unbelief the scripture is a blank without heights, without depths. The purity of its sentiments, and the simple grandeur of its style, may be allowed and admired. But there are no landmarks, no chart, no star of Bethlehem to direct and cheer the unbeliever’s way. His conscience is not in the presence of God, and therefore there is no true Christ in his heart. The Bible to him may be a very wonderful book, but this is all: if it seem to be owned practically as that which reveals the divine way of salvation, almost everything in it is made to bear on this one point. Warnings, threatenings, exhortations, invitations, instructions, commands, prayers, ordinances — nearly all that Old and New Testaments utter is made to converge on what, to the flesh, really amounts to this — God helping us by His Son and Spirit to save ourselves.

From this quagmire God has mercifully extricated all His people; He has taught all His children, with more or less intelligence, to rest upon the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then it is that the vast field of the written word opens apace, the different displays which God has made of His character, and the effect of these dealings upon believers and unbelievers in the several dispensations, summed up in the person of Christ, whether viewed once here below, now in heaven, or by-and-by returning again. Thus the child, led of the Spirit, grows in knowledge, and begins to see the revealed past, present, and future, in their just proportions, because he begins to learn all in Christ, whose mind he has (2 Cor. 2). In few words, he is learning to prove the things which differ.

Now it may be a narrow, but certainly it is an important, part of the things which differ that is suggested by the title to this paper. Nor would I pretend to sketch minutely the ways in which the estimate formed, by a godly Jew respecting Christ's advent is distinguishable from the hope set before the church in His future presence. Let us content ourselves with certain, broad essential differences, which are nevertheless often confounded by Christians to the obscuring of their proper portion, and so far to the detriment of their souls. The testimony of scripture is so full and distinct, that little reasoning is necessary; still its importance may well demand ample quotations.

The advent of a glorious Messiah to the earth was characteristically a Jewish hope. I speak not of traditional fables, but of the truths which the Jews saw and held fast in their scriptures. To such believing Jews Messiah was the centre and security of the promises

made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; He was the accomplisher of all righteousness, blessing, and peace in their land — Immanuel's land. By Him they expected to be saved from their enemies and from the hand of all that hated them; that so they might serve Jehovah without fear all the days of their life {Luke 1:68-79}. He was to cut off all the horns of the wicked, and to exalt the righteous; to save Zion, and build the cities of Judah, that they might dwell there, and have it in possession, and thus the seed of His servants should inherit it, and they that love His name dwell therein. This, as is plain in the Psalms, is the character of the deliverance pleaded by the Jewish remnant — not a rapture out of the earth, but a destruction of their enemies in it; a divine vengeance upon their enemies here below, not a gathering to the Lord in heaven. They looked, and will look, for Jehovah to go forth and fight against the nations He will gather at the latter end against Jerusalem; they will look for His feet to stand upon tho Mount of Olives, and Jehovah shall be King over all the earth. There, with David their king over Israel, restored, as it were, from the grave, and Ephraim and Judah united perfectly and for ever under the rule of the true Beloved, they expect to dwell in their land, and the heathen shall know that God Jehovah sanctifies Israel when His sanctuary shall be in their midst for evermore. They might read of a Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, but their hope was the presence and reign of the Messiah here below, in special connection with the Jewish nation and land. The following texts will still more plainly show the truth we have been stating:

Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art

my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (Ps. 2:6-9). "For Jehovah most High is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet" (Ps. 47:2, 3). "Great is Jehovah and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion: on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge" (Ps. 48:1-3; 65; 67; 68). "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised. There shall be an handful

of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things and blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen" (Ps. 72:4-19). I need not go more minutely through the Psalms, beyond directing attention to Ps. 128, as evidently in accordance with the remarks already made. So also Ps. 132:13-18. The inspired praises of Psalms 146-150 will then have their literal fulfilment. It is earthly joy under Messiah's dominion, and all is in unison with the thoughts, feelings, associations, hopes, and triumphs of His people Israel.

The prophets are equally explicit. "In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when Jehovah shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And Jehovah will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-

time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain" (Isa. 4:2-6).

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this" (Isa 9:6, 7).

One might transcribe almost all Isa. 11. "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from

Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together; they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And Jehovah shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out the land of Egypt (Isa. 11:4-16).

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when Jehovah of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously (Isa. 24:21-23). “And in this mountain shall Jehovah of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is

spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and Jehovah God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is Jehovah; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For in this mountain shall the hand of Jehovah rest, and Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill (Isa. 25:6-10). “He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Jehovah in the holy mount at Jerusalem (Isa. 27:6, 12, 13). “Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off. Thine heart shall meditate terror. Where is the scribe? Where is the receiver? Where is he that counted the towers? Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Jehovah will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship

pass thereby. For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king: he will save us (Isa. 32:17-22).

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom, abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of Jehovah, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a feeble heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isa. 35:1-10).

The whole of Isa. 60, 61 and 62 are closely in point, but can only be referred to now. “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be

remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah (Isa. 65:17-25). "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you: and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall

flourish like an herb: and the hand of Jehovah shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For, behold, Jehovah will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will Jehovah plead with all flesh: and the slain of Jehovah shall be many (Isa. 66:10-16).

Jeremiah, the prophet of affliction, speaks no otherwise. “And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith Jehovah, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of Jehovah; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers (Jer. 3:16-18). “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that they shall no more say, Jehovah liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but Jehovah liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall

dwell in their own land (Jer. 23:5-8). To this we may add, as most express, Jer. 31-33.

For other prophets we need not cite express words: the following selected references may suffice. In Ezekiel the reader may consult chapters 16, 20, 36, 37, 39, 40-48; also Daniel 7, 8, 9, 12; Hosea 1-3; Joel 2, 3; Amos 9; Obadiah; Micah 4, 5; Habakkuk 3; Zephaniah 3; Haggai 2; Zechariah 2, 8-10, 12, 14; and Malachi 3, 4.

Another distinction which may be briefly noticed is, that the Jews had the revelation of outward circumstances and ordered dates whereby to regulate their expectations. We need do little more than refer to the communications of God made to Abraham in Gen. 15, as well as others subsequently, for illustrations of this. “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards shall they come out with great substance (Gen. 15:13, 14). Now it will not be disputed that the father of the faithful rejoiced to see Christ’s day, and he saw it, and was glad (John 9:56); but it was through, and at the end of, a long course of years and trying vicissitudes as regarded his seed. Abraham was in no way waiting for that day as if it might happen in his own life, or shortly after. He was perfectly certain that the day of Christ could not come for some centuries at least. Full well he counted upon that day bringing in deliverance to his family, and hence his joy. (See also Gen. 49:10.)

Again, passing over intermediate predictions, the word sent by Gabriel to Daniel is even more detailed, and with

chronological points of a very defined character. “Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined (Dan. 9:25, 26). Hence it is plain that, if we suppose a godly Jew of that age to have understood the prophecy of the seventy weeks, he could not expect Messiah to come and be cut off till the expiry of nearly five hundred years. Ignorance might seek the living among the dead, but no believer with intelligence of this divine prediction could possibly look for the arrival and cutting off of the Christ previously to the revealed epoch. It would have been faith in him to have said, “I expect the Messiah after so many years, not before; for so hath the mouth of the Lord spoken.”

With the church, on the contrary, the case is wholly different. Her hope is not the times of restitution of all things, but to be with the Lord in heaven as His bride: and as her hope is unearthly, so is it wholly unconnected with the times and seasons {Acts 1:7} which characterized the expectations of Israel. Not that we are ignorant of these dates and epochs; but we know perfectly that the day of Jehovah so cometh as a thief in the night {1 Thess. 5:2} — a day of destruction whence there is no escape. But we are not in darkness that the day should overtake us as a thief. We are already children of that day, and when the day arrives we shall

come with the Sun of righteousness {Mal. 4:2} who ushers it in. We shall have been with Him before the day breaks, for we know Him as the bright, the Morning Star {2 Peter 1:19}, and the morning star He will give to him that overcomes {Rev. 2:28}.

Certain times and seasons, we are quite aware, must precede the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1). Thus we know that one week remains out of the seventy of Dan. 9, when the prince that shall come — a Roman prince — shall confirm covenant with the mass of the Jews for seven years. But, like another traitor and son of perdition, he shall put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him; he shall break his covenant (Ps. 55:20). The covenant with death shall be disannulled (Isa. 28). “In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” This is followed by the abomination of desolation for the allotted term, “even until the consummation.” (Compare with Dan. 9, 7:19-26.) “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be (Matt. 24:21). “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it (Jer. 30:7). “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; 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, every one that shall be found written in the book” (Dan. 12:1). The church knows these revealed periods, but knows them as connected, not with herself, but with Jerusalem and the Jewish people, Daniel’s people.

The church does not wait to be gathered under a Messiah on earth, but to be caught up to meet Him in the air, and be ever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4); with Him in His Father's house; with Him when the successive judgments (symbolized by the seals, trumpets, and vials) are falling on the earth; with Him when the marriage-supper of the Lamb is celebrated above; with Him when He wars with the beast and the false prophet; with Him when we reign together for a thousand years; and with Him in the subsequent eternal state. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Surely it is a blessed hope that the appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ is to set to rights all things here below which are now out of course. Creation shall be delivered into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, and Israel no longer blinded but seeing. All Israel shall be saved when the Redeemer comes out of Zion, and turns away ungodliness from Jacob {Rom. 11:26} And if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?

Yes, and if we look above, the long usurped possession of the air (Eph. 2:2; 6:12) shall be rescued from Satan and his angels; no longer shall he be permitted there to accuse the brethren of Christ in the presence of God (Rev. 12); no longer will there be conflict with wicked spirits there. That old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, shall be bound, and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, before the last vain struggle when he is cast into the lake of fire.

But not any nor all these things are our proper hope, which is to be caught up and to meet the Lord Himself {in the air and to be taken to} in heaven. As it is said in John 14: “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” Is this on earth, or in heaven? Is it merely the honours of a displayed kingdom? or is it not nearer and higher intimacy with the Son of God in the home of the Father on high? The disciples did not ask, nor did the Lord indicate, when these things should be.

But in Matt. 24 He does give the sign of His coming, and of the consummation of the age. He is meeting the inquiries of the disciples from their own Jewish point of view; He enters into full particulars respecting Jerusalem, Judea, the temple, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, etc., which were but the beginning of sorrows. The end was not yet, nor should it come before the gospel of the kingdom was preached in all the habitable earth for a witness to all the nations. Then He describes minutely the particular marks of the closing crisis, up to His manifestation to all the tribes of the earth, or land, and the complete ingathering of His elect (Israel) from the four winds.

Of His elect earthly people this gathering must be; because when Christ, our life, appears, then shall we also appear with Him in glory {Col. 3:4} — the church and Christ are manifested at the same time in glory; whereas the elect described in Matt. 24 are only gathered after the Son of man’s appearing, and cannot therefore be the church. All the context, the more it is examined, proclaims them to be Jewish disciples, who, at the signal of the setting up of the abomination, flee,

and so escape the unparalleled tribulation of these days and scenes of the end; for their simple trust is in the man of God's right hand, "the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself" (Compare Ps. 79, 80).

But the passage in John's Gospel has nothing to do with Jerusalem, nor the earth, nor earthly circumstances. John never speaks of a special tribulation for Jewish disciples at a particular time and place, but of the constant tribulation we should count upon in the world at all times (John 16:33). So the coming is not merely deliverance to a persecuted Jewish remnant on earth, but to receive us to Himself in heaven, without one hint of time, place, or circumstance.

Doubtless the church is to reign over the earth, the bright witness of the Father's love; for the world shall then know that He loved her as He loved His Son, both being displayed in the same glory. And how blessed the ministry of the church in that day, serving the gladsome earth according to the grace which has called, kept, and glorified herself on high, the bride, the Lamb's wife! We shall inherit the earth; we shall judge the world and angels too, in that administration of the fullness of times, when all things shall be gathered together in one in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth [Eph. 1:10]; even in Him in whom we also have obtained an inheritance. Joint-heirs with Him, we share all that He will rule as the exalted Man. And God has put all things under His feet. Though we do not yet see all things put under Him, we do see Himself exalted; and when the day arrives for Him to take the dominion, it will be manifested that He is head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all {Eph. 1:22, 23}

The Old Testament prophecies are full of the earthly glory. In the New Testament we have the mystery of God's will made known to us, involving the inheritance of things in heaven, as well as things on earth, and the church co-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, as His body and God's children (Eph. 1:9-14).

No prophets of ancient times had ever uttered such thoughts. It is not merely that such a portion was not understood, but it was not revealed. It was kept hid in God, and now revealed {Eph. 1:9, 10}, we are told, unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. The old prophets had spoken of times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, when Israel, or at least a Jewish remnant, repent and are converted; they had largely depicted the times of the restitution of all things, when Messiah comes from the heavens which now receive Him (Acts 3). No doubt they foretold the rule of the heavens (Dan. 4), and anticipated the joy and peace of the world under that kingdom. But they never predicted, much less did they know, that Christ will have a heavenly body and spouse associated with Him, and enjoying all His love and glory in the heavenly places; though they did celebrate the time when the land shall be married, and Jehovah shall make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The bride they sing of in the Canticles {Song of Solomon} and the Psalms is an earthly bride. Very different is the church of which Paul speaks in Eph. 5. Very different the marriage of the Lamb of which John tells in Rev. 19, as far above the espoused one of the Old Testament as the heavenly glory of Christ exceeds His earthly, though all be perfect in its place.

Further, be it noted that, whether it be deliverance in mount Zion and Jerusalem (Joel 2), whether it be

judgment of the Gentiles in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3), with both we find wonders displayed in the heavens, and in the earth blood and fire and pillars of smoke: the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. Nothing of the kind is ever connected in scripture with the catching up of the church, whose only sign is the descent of the Lord Jesus to summon her into His presence in the air. His descent, and her consequent rapture, are nowhere described as events which the world is to behold. To them that look for Him, Christ appears, but to none else, so far as scripture shows, until He is revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ {2 Thess. 1:7}. His public revelation, in order to judge, is called “the day of the Lord,” “the appearing,” etc.; and it is certain that many signs will precede that day, and manifestation to every eye. The apostasy must be ripe, and the Lawless One manifested without hindrance; and the great tribulation out of which comes the innumerable Gentile multitude of Rev. 7, as well as the future unparalleled tribulation in Judea.

Outward signs precede. But this is not all. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from

the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. 24:29-31).

But I would not dwell further upon these points of contrast, only praying that we may remember, day by day, that our place, the church's only right and befitting place, is to wait for Christ from heaven. It is not judgments that we expect to be in; it is not the hour of temptation we have to await and dread (Rev. 3:10), for we shall be kept out of it in the grace of Christ. Our business is to wait, as a heavenly bride, for our heavenly Bridegroom. Those who link the church with earthly circumstances will be misled in their ways now, and at times pass on miserably disappointed. Not so the hearts which the Spirit directs, animates, and sustains in the longing cry, Come, Lord Jesus. May it be so with us, beloved, increasingly as the moment, unknown to us, draws nearer! Amen.

# Appendix C

Remarks on 1 and 2 Thessalonians Connected with the Revelation As further evidence of the immense importance of rightly seizing the christian hope, not only for the soul's fellowship with the Lord but for the due intelligence of prophecy, I present to the reader two letters I had from the late Mr. E. B. Elliott in 1851. From them it is plain enough how very defective were his views, not merely in detail but fundamentally; yet was he the acknowledged leader of the Protestant {historicalist} school in our day. But the reader will judge for himself, perusing first the paper which was given him to read, and his remarks with my comment; for I regret that I am unable to furnish the answers sent at the time.

There are few simple-minded Christians who, in searching into the prophetic word, have not felt the difficulty of reconciling the undoubtedly normal posture of the church in daily waiting for Jesus with the long train of successive events presented in the Revelation. The principle, if not the measure, of the difficulty is the same, whether you understand the Revelation to be fulfilled in a brief eventful crisis, or to extend over a course of many hundred years. In either way, I cannot truthfully expect Jesus from heaven from day to day if I am looking out for a series of numerous, and some of them unprecedented, and all of them solemn, incidents to occur on earth, the gradual and accumulative evidence of His approach.

But it is certain that in the apostolic times, when the grace of God was proclaimed in its real power and

freshness, when His word was most prized and best understood, and when it produced its loveliest effects, the saints were habitually expecting Jesus to come. In Him they had redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, and they knew it. They were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise {Eph. 1:13}. Were they therefore satisfied? Was not the Spirit Himself, blessed divine Comforter though He be, yet was not He the earnest of still greater blessings? Doubtless they received Him as the Spirit of sonship, and not as a spirit of bondage unto fear (Rom. 8); but, instead of His leading them into rest and contentedness here below in the absence of Jesus, in the same chapter it is said: "Ourselves also, (besides the groaning creation) which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." It is the groaning of those who are justified by faith and have peace with God. It is the groaning of those who have the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, and bearing witness with their spirit that they are the children of God. It is the groaning of the adopted, earnestly yearning for the full results of adoption: of those who, because they have known God's grace in redemption forgiving their sins, look for more, for all, — for the redemption of the body in the actual presence of the Saviour, that they may be like Him and with Him for ever.

The aim, however, of these remarks is not to prove that the personal coming of the Lord was the hope of the church — proofs easily found elsewhere. My desire is rather to convince those who know what is and was meant to be the hope of the church, that God by no concurrent or subsequent revelation ever interfered

with the practical power of that hope. That He might give fuller details as to the growing iniquity of man, of the Jew and especially of the outward professing body, and as to His own judgments upon each before the millennial reign; that He might describe in greater minuteness the circumstances of that reign and the events that succeed it, is not only possible but that which He has done. But that He, on this or any other theme, corrects in one part of His word what is affirmed in another, is that which every Christian ought surely to repudiate from the bottom of his soul, in whatever modified form it may be insinuated.

The word of our God needs no apologies from man. Unhesitatingly believed, every part of it will be found to be perfectly true, though (from the narrowness and imperfection of our apprehension) patient waiting on God is necessary to avoid the systematizing of the human intellect, and to discover in what order God puts things together. Haste in deciding such questions only leads to forcing scripture, which will not yield; and hence the danger of framing one-sided hypotheses, which are only tenable by shutting the eye to the plainest scripture which contradicts them as hypotheses, though there may be elements of truth in them.

To apply this to the matter in hand, it is undeniable that the apostle Paul (to say nothing of others) invariably speaks of the coming of the Lord to take the church to Himself as that which might be at any moment, however Jesus might tarry; but no necessary detention — no chain of occurrences involving a period virtually — no certain lapse of time — is ever presented to the church as keeping Him in heaven. On the contrary, if he writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15), it is: “Behold, I show you

a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Admitting that "we" is a representative word, not the persons addressed merely but those standing in the same privileges: still, will any one say that the apostle or the Corinthian saints knew that the moment would be deferred till they had fallen asleep? Was it not calculated, beyond all cavil, to keep them in simple constant expectancy of the Lord? And the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1), who were trained, from their birth to God, in looking for their Deliverer, were they mistaken enthusiasts? Or did not the blessed work of the Spirit in their case consist in turning them from idols, not only to serve the living and true God, but to wait for His Son from heaven? Did that wise and faithful servant, who knew what it was to mingle the service of a nurse with the affectionate care of a father — did he consider that blessed hope to be unsuited food for such babes? So far from it, that when he writes to them supplying some things that were lacking, the Holy Ghost impresses this great doctrine in so repeated and different modes as to demonstrate how cardinal a truth it is in the mind of God, and how influential as regards the walk and communion of His saints. It ramifies both epistles, being not only found at least once in every chapter, but in some chapters occupying the most conspicuous place. (See 1 Thess. 1:3, 10; 1 Thess. 2:19, 20; 1 Thess. 3:13; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Thess. 5:1-10, 23, 24; 2 Thess. 1:5-10; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; 2 Thess. 3:5.) They had rejoiced in this hope of our Lord Jesus Christ from their earliest christian career; they had patiently continued it through the Spirit, and the blessedness of such patience was sweet to the absent apostle, even as their work of faith and labour of love. True, they needed further light as to its circumstances, and the Lord granted it. So

immediately were they awaiting the Lord, that the decease of some of their number plunged them into sorrow — not, I apprehend, that they for a moment doubted of the salvation of those who were gone. No one knowing the gospel in word only (much less knowing it in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as it came to them,) could have such a doubt. But they feared that death had severed their departed brethren from the glorious hope they had so brightly burning before them, of being caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. They were gone — doubtless were happy; but would they not be absent from that crowning joy for which they themselves were waiting? Here was the place, if they had been mistaken in so waiting, to have corrected it. Here was the place for the apostle to say: We have been all wrong in living with our eyes heavenward till the Son of God comes to take us to Himself. He is not coming soon. We need not expect Him, for many ages must expire before He comes. Besides He has already given you some, and He now adds more signs of His advent. You have not seen these signs yet. You must wait for them, and not for His Son. But there is the exact reverse. The Holy Spirit deliberately keeps them in the same attitude of waiting which He had previously wrought, and sanctioned in them, though He gives them a comfort of which they were ignorant as to their brethren who had been put to sleep by Jesus. “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [that is, go before] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and

remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

But it may be said, If the Holy Ghost did not here correct the excited notions of the Thessalonians, He did in the second chapter of the second epistle. I answer that the true question is, Does the Holy Ghost correct Himself? He may supply that which is suited to correct the undue sorrow of the believers in one epistle, or their fears in another epistle; but I insist upon it in the strongest manner, that, if the church is set in the position of waiting for Christ's coming in one part of scripture, no other part can possibly alter such a position. It is necessarily right, whatever increase of instruction may be given. Let us only be well assured in the perfectness of every word of God, and we shall soon see how little the passage warrants the notion that the apostle Paul, in the second epistle, dissuades them from expecting Him, whom the first epistle had confirmed them in expecting.

In the first place, it is generally assumed that the day of Christ (or "of the Lord," for this is the true reading ) is identical with "the coming ( παρουσία, presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ" in the verse before {2 Thess. 2:1, 2} But it is a groundless idea. If it be affirmed, let proofs be adduced. It is quite clear to me that the day of the Lord is a distinct though connected thing. In its full, ultimate sense, and no one disputes that such is its force here, it supposes the presence of the Lord; it is the judgment consequent upon that. But the presence, or the coming of the Lord, by no means necessarily supposes judgment. Is there a word of judgment, or wrath, or destruction, expressed or implied in the full description

given in 1 Thess. 4 of the Lord's coming for His own? So when the apostle says, "what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (1 Thess. 2:19, 20). Where is the word of judgment on evil? On the other hand, when the day of the Lord occurs, it is, whether used in a full or limited application, habitually connected with judgment and its consequences (compare 1 Thess. 5:24; Zeph. 1-3; Zech. 14; Mal. 3, 4). I conclude therefore that, though the coming of the Lord may include the day of the Lord, as the whole includes a part, the coming of the Lord {1 Thess. 4:15-18; 2 Thess. 2:1; etc.} is in itself presented in an aspect of grace, not of judgment, and that the terms and things are not be confounded.

In the second place, while it is true that the day of the LORD cannot come before the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin arrive {2 Thess. 2:3}, which are to be judged in that day [of the Lord, at its beginning], yet is there a serious error in the English rendering of the last clause of 2 Thess. 2:2, "is at hand." The word usually rendered "at hand," "near," or "nigh," is ἐγγύς or ἐνέστηκεν, as is known to scholars. The present word åç æ, on the other hand, is never so rendered in the New Testament, save in the passage before us. On the contrary, occurring several times, it is used invariably in a way which excludes the possibility of such a rendering (more especially when it is, as here, in the perfect tense). Let us briefly examine.

1. The first occurrence is in Rom. 8:38. It is evident that here ἐνεστῶτα cannot mean things at hand. It is contrasted with μέλλοντα, that is, "things to come." It

signifies only and emphatically “things present,” and is so rendered in the common Bible.

2. See the same words and the same contrast in 1 Cor. 3:22.

3. Again, in 1 Cor. 7:26,

διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην is properly translated “for the present distress.” A distress not actually come, but only at hand or coming, would spoil the meaning.

4. The next is Gal. 4, “this present evil world,” the only possible meaning of the word here. The next world, or age, will not be evil, and therefore “at hand” or “imminent” is shut out.

5. Compare also Heb.9:9,

εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα “for the time then present,” not “at hand,” which cannot be the true force. All these are instances of the same tense as 2 Thess. 2:2.

6. The only other occurrence is 2 Tim. 3:1,

ἐνστήσονται, in the future middle. Here the English version renders it, “shall come.” Still the meaning indubitably is not “shall be at hand,” which could have no point, but “shall be present.” To be impending merely was little: the grave thing was, that perilous times should be actually there in the last days. It may be concluded therefore, from an induction thus complete, that in all the other instances the Authorized Version is right, but in 2 Thess. 2:2 it is wrong. It is not conceivable to uphold both; so that, if right in 2 Thess. 2:2, the version must be wrong everywhere else. But we have seen, from the intrinsic meaning of the word, as well as from the sense imperatively demanded by the context, that in all the other cases the translators are

justified. They are therefore mistaken here, and the proper rendering, in conformity with their own translation of the word in the same tense elsewhere, ought to be “as that the day of the Lord is present.”

The Thessalonian saints had from the first known much affliction. They had notoriously suffered from their own countrymen, and this to such a degree that the apostle, in his earnest and watchful interest about them, sent Timothy to establish and to comfort them concerning their faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions. They knew that “we are appointed thereunto.” Nevertheless, they needed comfort. The apostle had warned them before, that “we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and ye know.” “For this cause when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.” But Timothy brought good tidings of their faith and love, and the apostle could break out into thanks and joy for their sakes before God, and he lets them know it in his first epistle.

The tempter however was not to be discouraged nor diverted from his wiles. They had been already taught that the Lord Himself was to come, and the saints, sleeping or living, were all to be changed, and be caught up together to meet Him in the air, and so to be ever with Him. They also knew that the day of the Lord (or Jehovah) was one of destruction and terror, unlooked for by the world: “Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” {1 Thess. 5:2}. Accordingly he appears to have distracted the saints by the harassing statement that the day of the Lord was actually there {2 Thess. 2:2}, thus seeking to

rob them of all profit and joy in the persecutions and tribulations which they were then enduring. Nor let any think it strange, if, in a time of perplexity for the world and persecution of the church, the fears of saints might be wrought upon; particularly as they knew that the day of the Lord in the Old Testament by no means necessarily implies the personal presence of the Lord, though it looks onward to that anticipatively. (Compare, for instance, Isa. 13, where God's judgment of Babylon and the Chaldeans is so designated:) "Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty," etc. (See also Joel 1:15; Joel 2:1-11; Amos 5:18, 20; Zeph. 1:7, 14, 15, etc.)

In the second epistle, the Holy Ghost conveys the needed instruction. "We ourselves," says the apostle, "glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer; seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" {2 Thess. 2:4-9}. The time of retribution is not when Jesus comes {for us}, but when He is revealed. For though at His coming

the church is caught up, there is nothing yet of a retributive character. It is favour, not a process of judgment. Whereas the revelation and the day of the Lord are, as is manifest, associated with judgment, and hence there is the public award of God then for the first time manifested to the world; “seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed.” Doubtless there is a tribulation, and even the great tribulation, in the time of Antichrist, previous to the revelation of Jesus; as obviously there is rest to those who sleep in Jesus now, and there will be rest in a fuller sense when our bodies are changed, and we are caught up to be with Him. But both are wholly distinct from the divine retributive tribulation and the rest here spoken of. It is the day of punishment with everlasting destruction to the adversaries, as it is the day when Christ comes, not to present the faithful to Himself, nor to take them to mansions {abodes} in the Father’s house, but to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believed. For when Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory {Col. 3:4}. It is the public judicial dealing (not the hidden joy or blessedness before then, or afterwards), which here enters into the scene.

Next the apostle turns to the source of their agitation. “We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled.” Assuredly, the consolation administered here is not that Christ’s coming was a distant thing! Can it be that theologian upon theologian has desired to make of this

fancied long and far-off absence of the Lord a balm for the tried and fearful? Can it be that the poor church has but too willingly sipped the cup, and, heedless of His words, cheers herself on the delirious career of worldliness and folly, and of faithlessness to Him? “Lord, how long?”

Not so the Thessalonians. Full well they knew that His coming was to end their sorrows and crown their joys. Under apostolic guidance they had looked, and the Holy Ghost had commended their looking, for Christ. Was it not the part of the evil servant to say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming? {Matt. 24:48}. But Paul was a blessed faithful servant, and never says anything of the sort. He uses the fact of the coming of the Lord and their gathering together unto Him as a comfort against the anxiety created by the idea that the day of the Lord was already arrived — nay more, as a proof that such an idea was false. His ground of entreaty is twofold. He urges a reason connected with the Lord and heaven, and a reason connected with earth and the man of sin. There must be our gathering above {2 Thess. 2:1}, and the falling away below {2 Thess. 2:3} In the first place the Lord was to come, and they were to be gathered together unto Him, in order that He and they might bring in the day and appear together from heaven. This had not taken place, and therefore they were not to be disturbed as if that day had come, or could come, previously. In the next place he presses the point that the evil must first be developed completely which that day is to judge. “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come the falling away (or the apostasy, αποστασία) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who

opposeth, and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or object of worship; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" {2 Thess. 2:3, 4}. But the apostasy was not then come, nor the man of sin revealed, and therefore the day of the Lord, the day of vengeance upon these evils, is yet to come. "And now [if one may translate the apostle's word a little exactly] ye know what hindereth that he might be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work: only there is one that now hindereth till he be taken out of the way. And then shall that 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" {2 Thess 2:6-8}.

No! the Thessalonian believers were not mistaken in waiting for the Son of God. It is not wrong to believe that "the Lord is at hand," ( ἐγγύς) as the apostle pressed upon the Philippians when drawing to the close of his career. It is not wrong to stablish our hearts because the coming of the Lord draweth nigh ἤγγικεν, James 5:8). Nor does the language of the Spirit in the passage before us depict excitement from a too eager anticipation of this glorious event — alas! that Christians should suppose we could too earnestly desire it. The expressions in v. 2 denote fright and agitation. The enemy sought to instill the idea that the day, the judgment, was come, and that they were obnoxious to its terrors. Where then was their hope to be caught up to the Lord and to come along with Him? Would it have been sorrow and fear if Christ had come and they had been translated to meet Him in the air? Rather would it have been their chiefest joy, as it had been the object nearest their heart since their conversion. Their faith

was growing exceedingly, and the love of every one of them all toward each other abounded; and, far from weakening that which he had already taught, the apostle prays for them in the last chapter of the second epistle, that the Lord would direct their heart into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ. That is, he confirms them in their expectancy of the Lord.

But the deceiver had affrighted them, not of course by presenting the coming of the Lord as an imminent thing, which was what the Holy Ghost had done, and which is for the church a hope of unmingled comfort, but by the report that the day of the Lord was actually present — "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness." The apostle had already told them (1 Thess. 5) that they were not in darkness, that that day should overtake them as a thief. The tempter disturbs and confounds them with the thought that, as a thief, it was really come upon them; using it would seem some false spirit, or word, or letter {2 Thess 2:2}, to give to it the colour of the authority of Paul himself. And how does the apostle defend them from such assaults of others, and fears of their own? For, let it be repeated, it was not high-wrought feeling as though Christ were at hand, but terror arising from their giving heed to the false representation that the day of the Lord was present, and they in tribulation on earth, instead of being caught up to Jesus above. The apostle at once brings them back to the coming of the Lord and their gathering together unto Him {2 Thess. 2:1} as their ground of comfort and protection against the alarms of the day of Jehovah. As if he had said: the Lord Himself is coming, and you will be gathered to Him. When His day comes, you will be with Him. You are the children of the day: you will come

along with it, for you will come with Him who ushers it in. You therefore need not be troubled; be rather in peace. That day is not come. You will go to meet Him whom the church knows as the bright, the morning star (Rev. 22:16, compared with Rev. 2:28); so that, when the day breaks and the Lord appears, you too will appear with Him in glory. You will introduce the day together — that day of retribution, when those who trouble you shall have trouble, and you, the troubled, shall have rest with us, when Jesus is revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance.

In harmony with this, it is written in 2 Thess. 2:8, that the lawless one will be destroyed, not simply by the coming of the Lord, but by a further step of it, by the appearing or manifestation of His coming. This scene is given at length in Rev. 19:11-21, where the seer beholds, in the prospective vision, the heaven opened, and the rider, the Word of God, upon the white horse, issuing to judge and make war. “And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” — the righteousnesses, not of angels, but of saints (compare Rev. 19:8). The saints are already with Him. They follow Him out of heaven, as His army. Christ therefore must have come before this to take them to Himself, for they have been with Him in heaven and leave it together, preparatory to the battle with the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies. This then is not merely the coming of Christ. It is Christ appearing, and we with Him in glory. It is His revelation from heaven, taking vengeance. It is the day of the Lord, when sudden destruction comes. It is the shining forth of His presence, or the brightness of His coming, which destroys that lawless one.

Matt. 24:23-31 falls in with this view: “For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” It is His coming in connection with His earthly rights. Rejected of this generation as the Christ, He comes as Son of man (in which capacity He is never presented as coming to take the church). “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” The elect, here gathered together by the angels of the Son of man from the four winds, are demonstrably not the church, because they are gathered subsequent to His appearing.

The church, on the other hand, had been translated before. For when Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory {Col. 3:4}. Our manifestation in glory cannot be after His manifestation. Christ and the church are manifested together. Hence the signs specified in this chapter {Matt. 24} are to elect Jewish disciples indices of His appearing. They are not to be regarded therefore as interfering with the posture of the church in continually waiting for the Lord from heaven. They are signs for a remnant in special relation with Judea, who will be awaiting the coming of the Son of man. No signs of this or of any other description were ever put before the church, as such,

whereby to judge of the near approach of Christ to take her to Himself. On the contrary, what the Holy Ghost taught the church is, to a simple mind, inconsistent with such indications: she was to be expecting always because she knew not the moment of His coming. The apostle (1 John 2:18) would have even the babes to know that it is the last time {hour}; and this, not from the spread of the Spirit of Christ, but from the presence of many antichrists. But, although they had heard that the antichrist should come, no signs to be seen, no evil to reach its climax, no specific tribulation, are ever put before them, as events necessarily retarding the coming of the Lord to take the church. For the bride, the one heavenly sign is the presence of the Bridegroom Himself. But for a converted remnant of Jews, of whom the Lord has graciously thought in the instructions of Matt. 24, there are signs which will be given before the coming of the Son of man.

Now it is precisely here that the Revelation affords so distinct a light, showing us the position of the church in heaven, Christ having come and taken her to Himself, and afterwards, during the interval of her absence in heaven before she appears along with Him, God’s dealings, testimonies, judgments, and deliverances, on earth. The epistles give us simply the fact of the rapture of the church, but did not inform as to the length of the interval before the appearing and the kingdom. That such an interval existed might have been gathered; but whether long or short, or how filled up, does not appear in the epistles. The Revelation furnishes that which was lacking upon the subject and connects, without confounding, the church caught up to the Lord on high,

with certain witnesses to be raised up during the closing term of the age on earth before He appears in judgment.

As for the relative bearings of the different portions of the New Testament, it may be said in general that the Gospels have a character peculiar to themselves. It is not certainly an exclusively Jewish condition, neither is it a proper church condition, but a gradual slide, in John more marked than in the others, from the one to the other. The Lord Jesus, rejected, was with His disciples here below. The Holy Ghost, who of course was then, as ever, the faith-giving quickening agent, was not yet given, that is, in any new unprecedented way, because that Jesus was not yet glorified {John 7:39}. Hence the disciples, although possessing faith and eternal life (John 6:35, 47, 68, 69), were not yet baptized by the Holy Ghost into one body (compare Acts 1:5 with 1 Cor. 12:13). In a word, the church was not yet built nor begun to be built: “Upon this rock,” says the Lord, “I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18).

But the Acts historically, and the epistles doctrinally, point to a different state of things as then existing: Jesus absent and glorified in heaven; the Holy Ghost present and dwelling on earth in the saints, who were hereby constituted the body, the church. Christ had taken His place as head of the body above, and the Holy Ghost sent down was gathering into oneness with Him there, into membership of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Such is the mystery of Christ which it was emphatically given to the apostle Paul fully to make known. And as the Gospels may be regarded as the preparatory transition out of Jewish relations to the blessed elevation on which the church rests, the Revelation answers as the corresponding transition from

the church one with Christ in heavenly places, by various steps or stages, down to those Jewish relations which for a time dropped out of sight in consequence of the calling of the heavenly body.

The doctrine of the church is clearly at the root the ONE HOPE, which is found in the intermediate part of the New Testament. For along with the truth of the peculiar calling of the church, as the body commenced by the descent and indwelling of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and thenceforward guided and perpetuated by Him — along with this truth, it will be found that the peculiar aspect of the coming of the Lord, for which I have contended, stands or falls. None of the school of interpreters commonly called “the Protestant school” {historicalists} understood by the church anything more, at best, than the Augustinian notion of an invisible company from the beginning to the end of time. None of them therefore has an adequate idea of the new and heavenly work which God began at Pentecost by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The consequence is that, if they read of saints in Daniel, in the Psalms, or in the Revelation, they are at once set down as of the church. If they read of “this gospel of the kingdom” in Matt. 24, or of “the everlasting gospel,” — it is to their minds the same thing as what Paul calls “my gospel,” the gospel of the grace of God preached now. Hence follows, and quite fairly too, a denial of any specialty in the walk and conversation of the saints since Pentecost, and a general Judaizing in doctrine, standing, conduct and hopes. It is also a simple and natural result of this, that all Protestant interpreters [historicalists], if they admit a personal advent at all to introduce the millennial reign, present as the hope of the church that

which is, in fact, the proper expectation of the converted Jewish remnant, namely, the day of Jehovah, the Son of man, seen by all the tribes of the earth, coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Nor is the truth of the church unknown to the Protestant interpreters only; it is equally an object of dislike to many of the Futurist school. And it is my conviction that the two baleful heresies which have brought such shame upon the revival of prophetic study towards the beginning and the close of the last twenty years, are intimately connected with the rejection of this grand truth. For an error touching the church cannot but affect Him whose personal presence is what is so essential to it; and that which dishonours the Spirit goes far, in the long run, to disfigure or deny the person and work of Him of whom the Spirit is the vicar.

In the epistles, it is beyond doubt that the church is continually addressed, as if there were no understood, and fixed or necessary, hindrances to the rapture at the coming of the Lord. How could this be if the church be the same body as those saints who are described in Daniel, the Psalms, etc., as being destined to certain fiery trials still future from a little horn and his satellites who are yet to appear? How comes it that the apostle Paul, when he speaks of the coming of the Lord, never hints at this tribulation, as one through which the church must pass; but always presents the advent as an immediate thing which might occur from one unknown moment to another? That the apostle Paul understood the just application of these prophecies, better than any since his day, is that which few Christians will question: they were scriptures long revealed and familiar to Jews; and the Lord Jesus, in Matt. 24, had very significantly

linked His fresh revelations upon that occasion with the predictions of Daniel. Yet the Holy Ghost, in His constant allusions in the writings of the apostles to the anticipations of the church, never once refers to these terrible circumstances as a future scene wherein the church is to enact a part: on the contrary, the way in which the coming of the Lord is put before the church, as a thing to be constantly looked for, seems incompatible with it. We have examined the only statement in the epistles which might appear to interpose such a barrier, and we have seen that, so far from contradicting the thought of immediateness, the apostle seeks to relieve the Thessalonian saints from all uneasiness about the day of the Lord and its troubles, by the blessed hope of His coming and their gathering unto Him, which are in his mind indissolubly bound together: a gathering unto Him which must be before He appears to the world, and judges it, because He and they are to appear together. It is certain, moreover, that there must arrive the apostasy and the revelation of the man of sin (not before the coming, but) before the day of the Lord.

The prophecy of Daniel had already revealed the leading features of the interval during which “the prince that shall come” plays his terrible role. “And he shall confirm a covenant” (see margin and compare Isa. 28:14) “with the many” (that is, of Daniel’s people, the Jews) for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations there shall be one desolating, even until the consummation” (or consumption, as in Isa. 28:22), “and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate” (Dan. 9:27). That this prince is not “the Messiah the prince” is manifest, not

only from the fact that the former is described as one "that shall come," after the latter has already come and been cut off, as is plain from verse 26, but also from the certainty that "the prince that shall come" is the prince of the Roman people: his people "shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." We know who destroyed Jerusalem and the temple — the people of this future prince. The latter part of verse 26 does not continue the thread of the history, further than the general expressions "and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." In the last verse we are transported to the epoch of "the prince that shall come," and his actings during the last week of the age. This period is shown to be broken into two parts, during the former of which, according to covenant, Jewish worship is resumed, but "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."

If Dan. 7 be consulted, it will be seen that there is a certain little horn rising after the ten horns of the fourth Roman beast, before whom three of the first horns fell — "that horn that had eyes and a mouth, that spoke very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows" (v. 20). "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High [or of the high places] and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time" (v. 25). Is it not evident that in Dan. 7 is a horn or king whose blasphemous pride brings judgment upon the beast, or Roman empire, and whose interference with times and laws, that is, with Jewish ceremonial order, continues for three years and a half? and that for the same space of time, or the last half week, "the prince that shall come,"

the Roman prince of Dan. 9, overthrows this ceremonial worship?

But the Revelation not only takes up the last half of Daniel's week (Rev. 11-13) but shows what is the place of the church during this period — a truth which it was not given to the Jewish prophet to reveal, because it was that which supposed and fitly followed the revelation of the mystery hidden from ages and from generations. Paul had shown us the church waiting for the presence of the Lord. What is it that the Holy Ghost adds by John? What is the great outline given in the Revelation?

After the vision of the Lord Jesus, in Rev. 1, we have "the things that are," epistles to the seven churches {Rev. 2 and 3}, so conveyed as to apply not only at that time but as long as the church subsists on earth, and then the properly prophetic part, the things which should be after the church-condition had passed away. Throughout the prophetic portion of the book the church is never described as being on earth. At the close of Rev. 3, it altogether disappears from earthly view; and, instead of its course being any longer traced here below, a door is opened in heaven and the prophet is called up to see the things which must come to pass after these, that is, after the things which are, or the church regarded in the completeness of its varying phases on earth. Besides other things (the throne and One that sat upon it being the centre of the vision), John sees, not seven candlesticks, but, suited to the new circumstances of heaven, four and twenty thrones, and upon them four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment and upon their heads golden crowns {Rev. 4}.

Here we have, in vision, the place and functions of the church after it shall have been taken up to meet the Lord, and before its manifestation with Him in glory. And for this simple reason, that the way in which He and they are here represented emblematically is totally different from what is revealed as connected with either, when the moment comes to leave heaven, for the purpose of judgment upon the beast, etc.; or from what is revealed touching the reign for a thousand years subsequent to that judgment: that is, in Rev. 19:11 and 20:4-6. Nor can the scene in Rev. 4, 5 be interpreted consistently with any view, save that of the church being actually caught up and completed in the presence of God. It is quite a distinct thing from our sitting in heavenly places in Christ {Eph. 2:6}: this is the subject of the epistle to the Ephesians. Neither is it the same thing as the boldness which the partakers of the heavenly calling {Heb. 3:1} have even now to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. Such is the subject of the epistle to the Hebrews, where the high-priesthood of Jesus is dwelt on at length, and the liberty which we have in consequence to draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith; for it is still faith, and not actual possession, however it may be, through the power of the Holy Ghost, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

The purpose of Revelation is to disclose the dealings of God, whether the facts be expressed or understood, but dealings which involve a certain condition of things, which was future if considered in relation to the circumstances looked at in the epistles, as actually

subsisting at the time — the things in short which must be after these. Nor can this chapter {Rev. 4} be supposed to describe the blessedness of the spirits of the saints previous to the coming of Christ for the church, because the departed who are with Christ could not be symbolized by twenty-four elders; that is, by an image evidently borrowed from the full courses of Jewish priesthood. The whole church, and not a part only, is comprehended in the symbol. But this can only be after the dead in Christ rise first, then we which are alive and remain, are caught up together with them in the clouds, and so are ever with the Lord. Accordingly here they are represented in heaven, the Lord being also there, and although made kings and priests even when on earth, still the time is not yet come for the exercise of government. In beautiful harmony, therefore, with this peculiar and transitional period during which they are removed from the world, they worship above. But the saints below are not forgotten. Those above have golden harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sing a new song, celebrating the worthiness of the Lamb to take the book and open the seals, not only because He was slain and had redeemed themselves, but had made them, that is, these saints, to their God, kings and priests. They should reign over the earth. The fulfillment is seen in Rev. 20:4-6: the reigning with Christ not merely of those symbolized by the elders, but of the Apocalyptic saints also.

Moreover, it is clear on the one hand, that the lightnings and thunderings suit neither the day of grace nor the millennial state. Earth is certainly not yet brought under the power of the blood of Christ, when these symbols will find their accomplishment. On the other hand, it is

equally clear that there are saints on earth, while the twenty-four elders are before the throne above. That is, it is neither the millennial nor the present state; but an intermediate period of peculiar nature, in which we have the throne, not of grace as now, nor of displayed glory as by-and-by, but clothed with what has been justly termed a Sinai character of awful majesty attached to it.

But those above exercise their priesthood in the presence of God as the full completed church. Hence the symbol of twenty-four elders round the throne, at a time when, as all confess, earth is still unreconciled, however there may be, in the next chapter, the anticipative song of every creature. If this be true, it follows that the Lord's coming to meet the saints takes place between Rev. 3 and 4 (if the thought be pursued, which I doubt not, that chapters 6-19 will be fulfilled in a rapid crisis), room being left there for the coming described in 1 Thess. 4 and elsewhere. Then the main action of the book goes on subsequently to the removal of the church, and after this another character of testimony from that of the church properly is announced, and God Himself is revealed in ways different from those which He is displaying now; that is to say, not as showing the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus, but in the chastening judgments of the seals, trumpets, and vials, preparatory to the great day of the Lord which Rev. 19:11 ushers in. On this state of things Daniel compared with the Revelation will be found to cast and to receive much light, for it seems plain that the saints of the Most High, or heavenlies, of whom we read in Daniel 7, identify themselves with the saints who suffer under the beast, after the rapture of the church and, before the Lord's appearing. They keep

the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, which, be it noted, is the spirit of prophecy, and though they are not of the twenty-four elders, they will have their blessed and holy part in the first resurrection. And here let it be remarked, that the term has nothing to do with the question whether all are raised at the same time; it simply describes the condition of those who rise and reign during the thousand years, as distinguished from those who do not rise till that period is ended. How true this is, is manifest from the fact that Christ has part in the first resurrection, who nevertheless rose before the church more than eighteen hundred years {ago} at least. Hence the thought is not forbidden of certain saints being raised who stand and suffer after the church is gone.

The symbol of the twenty-four elders continues unchanged throughout the course of the book, till Rev. 19. They enter into God’s ways and judgments, as interested in whatever affected His glory, as may be seen in Rev. 4, 5, 7, 11, 14, 19.

But in Rev. 19 there is a striking change. After the opening scene of the rejoicings over Babylon the elders no longer appear, but the time for the marriage being come (and how evidently the church therefore is still viewed in the Revelation as unmarried), the bride, the Lamb’s wife is announced as made ready.

The heavenly joy and the Bridegroom and His bride being thus incidentally glanced at, He takes a new aspect, for the day is about to break upon the world; and so do we, for we will have gone long before to be ever with the Lord, and if He is about to appear, so are we along with Him in glory. Hence, in Rev. 19:11, the

prophet sees heaven opened, and a white horse, and He that sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. In unison, therefore, as He thus comes to smite and rule, the armies which are in heaven follow the Lord of lords and King of kings; and they that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful, which expressions are sufficiently clear to determine who are meant by the armies, if any one should have a doubt. It is the church which was in heaven following Christ in the capacity of His hosts, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Contrasted with the marriage supper of the Lamb, all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven are invited to the great supper of God. The prophet sees the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and His army. The result all know.

Next follows the angelic binding of the dragon for a thousand years, and the parenthetic revelation of the sitting on thrones, or at least, of the living and reigning with Christ during that period, of such as had part in the first resurrection. They will not cease to be priests of God, though their office may be discharged in a different way from what we saw as to some of them in Rev. 4 and 5, but they all reign with Christ for a thousand years {Rev. 20}.

It is a prominent feature of the book, that in it is traced the sovereignty of God, not only in His purposes regarding the church properly so called, but in His gracious ways with an election from among Jews and Gentiles subsequently. Thus, after the church is seen in its completeness in heaven, under the symbol of the twenty-four crowned elders (Rev. 4, 5), we hear in Rev.

6:9-11 of saints suffering, yet crying for vengeance; and the announcement to them that they should rest yet for a little, until their fellow-servants and brethren, doomed to be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. Vengeance should not arrive till then. These are evidently not the church, but saints on earth after the church is in heaven, whose sufferings and cries to the Lord accord much with the experience detailed in the Psalms. Still, whether Jewish or Gentile, they are not named here.

But in Rev. 7 we have distinctly brought before us a numbered company out of all the tribes of Israel sealed with the seal of the living God, and after this an innumerable multitude out of all nations, etc., who are characterized as coming out of the great tribulation, and as having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. These bodies are evidently distinguished from, if not contrasted with, each other: and they are still more markedly shown to be different from the church; for we have the facts not only of a certain defined tribulation out of which these said Gentiles come, but of the elders, that is, the confessed symbol of the glorified being still represented as a separate party in the scene (ver. 11).

Under the trumpets again we find the prayers of saints alluded to, who are of course supposed to still be on earth (compare Rev. 8:3, 4, with Rev. 5:8), and an implication of the sealed Jewish remnant being in the sphere, though saved from the effects of the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:4).

In Rev. 11 are seen the two witnesses, prophesying in sackcloth, and killed. In Rev. 12 the woman is persecuted by the dragon, who wars with the remnant of her seed that keep the commandments of God and have

the testimony of Jesus Christ, which is accomplished in the beast of Rev. 13 who makes war with the saints and overcomes them.

Rev. 14 is clearly a sevenfold sketch of the dealings of God, which brings the crisis to a conclusion: the hundred forty and four thousand associated with the Lamb on Mount Sion; the everlasting gospel summoning all to fear and worship God because of the proximity of His judgment; the fall of Babylon; the declaration of torment to the bestial worshipers; the blessedness from henceforth of those dying in the Lord: the harvest of the earth, out of which were redeemed the one hundred and forty-four thousand, as the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb; and lastly, the vintage of the earth. The reader has only to weigh verses 12, 13, in order to have the foregoing remarks confirmed. Even here we have the patience of saints described just before the harvest; the portion, too, not of the church (for we shall not all sleep), but of a special class of saints here below, while the church is hidden above.

In Rev. 15 (preparatory to Rev. 16, that is, the seven outpoured bowls of the wrath of God), is heard the song of the conquerors of the beast, celebrating the works of the Lord God Almighty and the ways of the King of nations. Compare also Rev. 16:5, 6, 15; Rev. 17:6; Rev. 18:4-6. To those who kept the word of Christ’s patience (Rev. 3:10) the promise was to be kept (not in or during, but) out of the hour of trial, out of that fearful tribulation which is in store for the dwellers upon earth.

In the preceding scriptures it is clear that after Christ has fulfilled His promise in the translation of the church to heaven, there are saints on earth, both from among

Jews and Gentiles who suffer throughout the tribulation. And these Apocalyptic sufferers are described in Rev. 20:4, as having part, equally with the church, in the first resurrection. For that text discloses first, the general place of the glorified in the millennial reign, “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them”; secondly, those killed in the earlier persecutions of the book (Rev 6:9-11), “And I saw the souls of those that were beheaded because of the witness of Jesus, and because of the word of God”; and thirdly, the later witnesses for God, “and those who had not worshipped the beast,” etc. (Rev. 15:2). Those saints who were called and suffered after the rapture of the glorified, are emphatically mentioned, because it might have appeared that they had lost all by their death. Not members of Christ’s body before He comes for the church, they share not in the rapture; not protected from death during the prevalence of the beast, they cannot be the living nucleus of Jews or of Gentiles, saved to be the holy seed on earth during the reign of Christ. They suffer, are cut off, but are not forgotten. “They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

Thus the truth brought to light in the epistles to the Thessalonians, is assumed in the view which the apostle John was the honoured servant to enunciate, namely, the blessed condition and holy employ of the church round the throne and the Lamb, after the removal from earth, but previous to the appearing with Christ in glory.

The central part of the Revelation then appears to corroborate on an irrefragable basis, the truth that the church will be taken away and fulfil the symbols we have been noticing, previous to the day of the Lord, during

the same time that other saints are still groaning and shedding their blood like water here below (Ps. 74, 79).

Such seems to be the main key which unlocks an important portion of the book and confirms the view, so sweet to the renewed mind, of going to meet the Lord without one earthly obstacle between: keeping unblunted the point and energy of a truth only revealed in the New Testament. For the Old Testament spoke of His coming with all His saints, not for them; of His appearing in glory to the confusion of His enemies, and not of His descending to meet His friends, when we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed and caught up together in the clouds. And hence it would seem, the emphatic language of the apostle, conscious that God was by him revealing a new thing to faith. For in 1 Cor. 15 he says, “Behold I show you a mystery”; and in 1 Thess. 4, “This we say unto you by the word of the Lord.”

How sweetly do the closing appeals tell upon the heart of him who has an ear to hear! “I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.” It would be to lose the blessedness of keeping the prophetic sayings of this book, to have any other thought than that Jesus is coming quickly (Rev. 22:7). It is well to read in their light the signs of the times: knowing the closure, we can thus detect the principles now at work. But it is a mistake and a misuse to construe of such signs obstacles to the coming of the Lord: to say, until I know the arrival of this or that precursor, I cannot in my heart expect Jesus. Blessed be God! such is not the language of the Spirit. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” Are these the words of mere

feeling, unguided by spiritual understanding of the mind of God? As a fact, we know that the Lord has delayed; but He is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But who will say that it is conceivable to be looking for the Lord, wholly uncertain of the time of His advent, and at the same time have the revealed certainty of a number of events which determine the year, or, it may be, the day?

That Jesus will arise, the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings (Mal. 4), is clear, and we know that the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13). But this same Jesus is more than the supreme power of righteous government on earth. He is known to the church, at any rate, as the bright and morning Star. Blessed light of grace, ere the day breaks, to those who watch for Him from heaven during the dark and lonely night! “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.”

“He that testifieth these things saith, Yea, I am coming quickly. Amen! come, Lord Jesus.” Here are the letters with remarks on each:

[Letter I., Sept. 1, 1851.

Dear Mr. Kelly,

I have read your paper on 2 Thessalonians 2. I cannot but think that it would be advisable to express your views more simply and plainly for uninitiated readers like myself. If I rightly understand you, the sum and substance of your view and argument is to the effect following: — The Thessalonian Christians could not be distressed or affrighted at the thought of their Lord’s

coming being at hand. It was the chief object of their hope. Nor does the passage in question imply anything of the kind. First, “the day of the Lord,” spoken of in it as ἐνεστως, is not identical in sense with the παρουσία, or coming of the Lord, spoken of in the verse preceding, being only that part of the era of His coming which is devoted to judgment, a previous epoch and act of it being that of His gathering of His saints to Himself. Secondly, ἐνεστηκεν does not mean, and may not be explained in the sense of being near, or at hand, but only in the sense it bears elsewhere, of being actually present. Hence, and from these two premises, it is to be inferred that the trouble of the Thessalonian Christians arose out of the idea of the latter part of the era of His coming, that of judgment, having come, and consequently of their having not had part in the previous gathering of His saints to Him.

Supposing this to be your meaning, it of course follows that they thought St. Paul, as well as themselves, to have been similarly overlooked by Christ, and left to the trials of the judgment-day. Is this credible? Is it not enough of itself to set aside the interpretation?

But what, then, of the

ἐνεστηκεν? Is not its proper meaning, “is present.”? No doubt, just as παρεστι, and such similar words, mean “is present.” But they are words which, in every language that I am acquainted with, are susceptible, if the context requires it, of the meaning, close at hand. I have little doubt that my friend, Mr. Kelly, when looking out from some height in Guernsey [where we both of us were at the time of the correspondence] for the steamer, in which he was expecting a friend, has sometimes, when

he saw her steering into port, made use of the common exclamation, “Here she is!” And what would he have thought, had a friend who heard him looked carefully at every part of the ground within twenty yards of the speaker, and said, “She is not here?” “The Master is here” ( παρεστιν), said Martha to Mary, in John 11:28; and yet, adds verse 30, “Now Jesus had not yet come into the village,” that is, the village where Martha spoke to Mary.

Thus our translators seem to me to have been perfectly right in translating the word ἐνεστηκεν as they have in 2 Thessalonians 2:9, the day of the Lord there spoken of being clearly that epoch of time which would be marked by two grand events — one of mercy, one of judgment, the gathering of saints to Himself, and the destruction of the man of sin — as may undoubtingly be inferred from comparison of verses 8 and 1.

As to the words,

σαλευθηναι ἀπο του νοος and

θρεισθαι, they are surely most naturally to be explained, not as meaning “frightened,” but of that agitation of mind and feeling which would indispose them to the calm and proper discharge of the common duties of life. Compare, in Matthew 24:6, the μη θροεισθε. I see nothing whatsoever in this inconsistent with the looking unto the coming of the Son of God. And I am sure I should feel somewhat of its indisposing effect to the common routine of daily duty, had I the fixed persuasion that the Lord had appointed to take me to Himself on the morrow of the present day, whether by the stroke of death, or by His own personal advent.

Yours very faithfully,

E. B. Elliot.]

Is it not singular that a paper which many comparatively unlettered Christians have found clear and helpful should have been unintelligible to, and misunderstood by, a man of Mr. E.'s caliber and attainments? Why was this? In my opinion his own erroneous system of thought, along with the lack of the habit of expecting in the word of God perfect accuracy and nice shades of difference, apparently made not the style only but the subject and the evidence difficult to his mind. It is well to note this, the blinding effect of error, even on a saint, as I do not doubt my friend was. How many suffer thus, as little as he suspecting the true cause!

If the words of the apostle in the text most under examination are to be accepted simply and fully, it is certain that the source of agitation and trouble for the Thessalonian brethren, alleged by the Holy Spirit, was the statement, imputed to the apostle himself, not that the Lord's coming was at hand, but that His day was actually there. This is as unequivocally the sense of the apostle's very precise language, as it is the certain truth of God. He is not conjuring them by that concerning which he was about to teach them, but, on the contrary, he entreats them, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him (which he presents, not as two distinct objects, but as a united idea before the mind by the one article, τῆς), that they should not be soon shaken in mind ("from their mind" may be literal, but is not idiomatic English), nor yet troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as by us [that is, as if it were by us], as [or to the effect] that the day of the Lord is present. That is, he entreats them, by or for the sake of our blessed hope in Christ, who will

gather us to Himself on high, that they should not be soon disturbed, or thrown off their balance, nor yet alarmed by the report, falsely attributed to him and a higher than him, that the day of the Lord, the day of judgment for man and the earth, was actually come.

This I believe to be the only possible sense of the verses, which also maintains the force of each clause and word as precisely as it exhibits a wise and worthy aim in the sentence as a whole. Mr. Elliott's view confounds that hope by which Paul is beseeching the brethren with the dread scene of judgment, which had been misrepresented and misunderstood as {if it had} already arrived. The true view sustains the Authorized Version of ὑπέρ, "by," which is not only grammatically tenable but exegetically demanded here, if not elsewhere, in the New Testament. It was not the παρουσία but the ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου, which had been misused; and the comfort of the Lord's coming is employed as a motive and means for counteracting the uneasiness created by the false representation that the day was there.

No doubt the preposition may, and does often, mean, "in regard to," or "on behalf of," a little stronger than περί. But the question is the meaning of ἠπέρ, neither in itself, nor in other constructions, but with such words of entreaty as ἐρωτάω as distinguished from ἐρωτάω περί, where the sense of "in the place of," or "instead of," is excluded, as here. To me it appears that the precise meaning of ἐρ. ὑπέρ, in such a case as the present, can only be "by reason of," or briefly "by,"' and, if motive be made more prominent, "for the sake of," or briefly "for."

Now the apostle had been setting out in 2 Thess. 1 that retributive hour of God's righteous judgment, when He will render tribulation to those that trouble the saints, and to the troubled saints repose at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God, and on those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus. It is His coming, not to receive the saints, and present them to the Father in His house above, but to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believed in that day. It is, beyond question, that day of ever-lasting destruction from the Lord's presence and the glory of His might, the day of the Lord, which was said (on the Spirit's warrant, and not a revelation only, but a pretended Pauline epistle) to have even then set in {arrived}, so that the saints in Thessalonica were shaken in mind (which is the true English idiom, as ἀπὸ τοὺ νοός is the Greek), and troubled. Clearly therefore the contradistinction comes out more and more plainly. It was not the excitement of a premature hope, but the agitation and fear produced by the rumour, and on quasi-apostolic authority too, that that terrible day had really begun. The apostle beseeches them, by the comfortable hope of the one, not to be soon shaken and troubled by the false cry that the other, the day of judgment on the quick {the living}, was come.

Mr. E. reasons against his supposed necessary but inadmissible consequence, that the Thessalonians must in such a case have thought that they, and Paul too, had been left behind by Christ at the first act of His coming, and exposed to the horrors of the second. But it is entirely a mistake, and his own solely. The Thessalonians had no adequate light up to this second epistle on the

relative order of these events. From 1 Thess. they knew of Christ's coming (1 Thess. 4), and of the day (1 Thess. 5); but they may, till they got the second epistle, have thought, as so many Christians do even in our day, and did in all ages, that the tribulation of the last times precedes the translation of the saints, and that His day therefore accompanies, if it too does not precede, His coming. Even Bengel affirms the whimsical idea, refuted by this very chapter, that the appearing of our Lord's coming may happen before His coming itself. Now the nature of the thing, as well as its accompaniments, bear a testimony exactly opposed. For the Lord might come without appearing to every eye, but He could not appear without coming. Just so we read in the first verse of this chapter that He will come and gather unto Himself the saints; whereas it is not His coming, but the revelation or appearing of His coming, which is to destroy the lawless one or man of sin. Such is the true moral order, and proved by other scriptures also, as Rev. 17:14; 19:14. He first receives His own, His friends, to Himself by His coming or παρουσία; He afterwards executes judgment on His enemies by the appearance of His coming, τῃ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ. The glorified saints are with Him when He brings in the day, following Him out of heaven as His hosts or armies (Rev. 19:14), before the judgment of the beast and the false prophet, instead of being caught up coincidently with it or after it. Hence, when Christ our life is manifested, it is written that then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory {Col. 3:4} (not translated to heaven then or subsequently).

Plainly then the Thessalonians had not the least suspicion that Christ had come and taken up the apostle

or any one else, nor is this at all the delusion which the apostle is refuting, but what was not at all unnatural for any like them ignorant of the mutual relation of His coming and His day. They feared that that day of darkness and clouds had dawned; and the agitating influence of this the false teachers sought to bring on their souls, availing themselves of a pretended communication of the apostle. We can readily understand that the Christians then were troubled by a panic which has often repeated itself since, even to our own day. One sees in the Old Testament the judgment of a city or land (as in Isa. 13 or 19) called the day of the Lord on Babylon or Egypt. So might these unscrupulous teachers seek to use the afflictions of the Thessalonians, which even in his former epistle the apostle feared might furnish an occasion to the tempter. And this apparently they did. See (they might have said) what troubles overwhelm us! It is the day of the Lord already begun. The apostle corrects this — first, by the motive of our hope, the Lord's coming to gather us unto Himself; and, secondly, by elaborate proof, not that His "coming" may not be at any time, but that "the day or appearance of His coming" cannot be till the apostasy (for it is much more than "a falling away") and the man of sin be revealed, which that day is to judge. It was now for the first time to be inferred that the coming precedes the appearance of His coming, as it was afterwards still more manifestly shown in Rev. 4 compared with Rev. 19, 20.

And this is corroborated by every word in detail, as well as by the general issue. See the violent but ineffectual effort to get rid of the force of ἐνέστηκεν, the word so unfaithfully rendered "is at hand" by our translators,

and even so inconsistently with their own rendering of it in every other occurrence of the same form. Indeed Mr. E. is obliged to own its proper meaning to be “is present” But, argues he, so it is with πάρεστιν, and such similar words. “They are words which in every language that I am acquainted with are susceptible if the context requires it, of the meaning, close at hand.” And then he illustrates the case, with his usual ingenuity, from the language of common life, which he endeavours to confirm by John 11:28-30.

But it is not true that the meaning of “presence,” is interchangeable with mere “nearness” in any language; they are different ideas, and are expressed by distinct words. We have seen that the New Testament occurrences of the word ἐνέστηκεν do not sustain this notion; nor do any in the LXX, any more than the instances in Liddell and Scott’s Lexicon, as the Dean of Rochester has allowed to me. It is wrong therefore to give pending, save in the sense of present, begun, if “pending” will bear it. It is time present, not instant. And so of all exact versions now, German or of English, as of Meyer, Dean Alford, Bishop Ellicott, etc.

But what strikes one as peculiar is, that Mr. E.’s illustration and use of John 11 proves nothing, save against his argument. For, according to his own showing, the person or thing had actually removed from the place where either had been, had traversed the space that separated, and had arrived at the place where the person was whom it was proposed to reach, though not to the precise spot on which he stood. To take the case used, my friend would have really steamed from England (or France, as it might be), crossed the sea, and entered Guernsey roads, when one might

exclaim of the packet {ship}, Here she is! So in the scripture cited: our blessed Lord had left where He stayed two days after receiving the message, had traversed the way which constituted the distance thence to Bethany, and had reached the locality or district, though not yet in the village.

Now it was precisely the error of those who were then misleading the Thessalonians to say that the day of the Lord had thus come, ἐνέστηκεν. Mr. E. wishes to show that they taught it would soon be coming, or was impending, a sense in which neither πάρεστιν nor ἐνέστηκεν is ever used in any correct writing, sacred or profane. A vast change is supposed to have taken place in both cases, which it is his thought and aim to deny. There is therefore not the least ground for his reasoning in the text or the illustration. They destroy his own argument, and leave our translators wholly unjustified in rendering ἐνέστηκεν “is at hand.” Even if the laxity of common life allowed of our saying, Here he is! when he had not begun to move from a distant land (which is the true way of stating the question, not when he had come to the immediate neighborhood though not the exact spot), how strange that such looseness of language should be transferred to an apostle’s inspired repudiation of an error!

Nor is there, so far as I am acquainted with the subject, the smallest ground from scripture to affirm that the day of the Lord includes the gathering of the saints to Christ, though Mr. E. ventured to say that clearly it is thus marked. Not so; the day of the Lord brings judgment on man’s evil on earth, and is never said to gather saints to Christ in heaven; and the comparison of 2 Thess. 2:1 and 8 proves the difference of “the coming”

from “the manifestation of the coming” or day of the Lord. Where are the scriptures which connect the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord? I know of none. It is assumption and error.

Again, it is unfounded that

σαλευθῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ νοός and

θροεῖσθαι have the most distant reference to the excitement of hope, as the ordinary misinterpretation implies; they mean just such disturbances of mind as in Matt. 24:6; Mark 13:7. Mr. E. says “not as meaning frightened”; but far better scholars than he say the express contrary. “The verb θροέω, derived from ΘΡΟΕΜΑΙ, and connected with τρέω; compare Donalds. [Cratyl. sec. 272] properly implies ‘clamorem tumultuantem edere’ (Schott), and thence by a natural transition that terrified state ( ταραχίζεσθαι Zonaras), which is associated with, and gives rise to, such kind of outward manifestations” (Bp. Ellicott’s Comm. in loc.). To suppose the Christian’s joy in the anticipation of meeting the Son of God, the Bridegroom of the bride, to be expressible by the same terms as those of perturbation or alarm which might be produced by hearing of wars and rumours of wars, affliction, tribulation, etc., is not to me the evidence of a sound judgment in divine things, but of the reverse. And I trust the Lord was better to my late friend ere he was called away than to leave him under that lack of peace and happy expectation and rest in His love, which his last sentence discloses. Indeed it is the conviction that this confusion of the day with the coming of the Lord is as destructive to the soul’s enjoyment of the Lord, as it is to real intelligence in scripture and notably in the

prophetic word, which makes one feel the importance of showing how it wrought even in so pious a soul as the late Mr. E. B. Elliott. Need there be any delicacy now in using his words for the profit of the living?

[Letter II Sept. 5.

Dear Friend,

You ask, with the emphasis of italics to the question, where are “the scriptures which connect the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord?” I should suppose 1 Cor. 1:8; 2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16, may be regarded as obvious examples in point. It is to the day of our Lord Jesus Christ that the Corinthians are to be preserved blameless. It is at the day of Christ that the Philippian converts are to be the boast of the apostle Paul. And so on.

Thus I see nothing in your remarks to alter my opinion as to the παρουσία of Christ, the day of Christ or day of the Lord being used with reference to the same era in 2 Thess. 2.

Nor, again, do I see reason from your remarks to doubt of the parallelism of παρεστι and the ενεστηκεν, or of the θροεισθε in Matt. 24 with the same word in 2 Thess. 2:2. And the argument you urge, from the fact of unstable men having been drawn by heretical teachers into heresy, to the fact of faithful believing men, like the Thessalonian Christians, being seduced into grievous heresy, seems to me unmaintainable.

Thus, on the whole, I remain in the clear conviction that the usual view of the apostle’s meaning in 2 Thess. 2:2 is the correct one.

But, dear friend, I like to dwell on the points in which we agree rather than on those on which we differ. I trust I may be found united with you in “the day of Christ.” And in that hope I beg you to believe me Yours very sincerely, E. B. Elliott.

We leave to-morrow morning. I write this, as I may not find you at home when I call to take leave. I return the books you were so kind as to lend me, with my thanks, retaining what I think you kindly allowed me to retain.]

* * * * * My remarks on the second letter need not be long. Not a single word in a single text referred to by Mr. E. connects the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord. We have in 1 and 2 Cor. 1 their manifestation as unimpeachable in that day, and the apostle’s joy in them then, whatever the exercises and need of patient grace now. Still less does Phil. 1:6, 10 touch the question, which is rather Paul’s confidence in God’s completing in them the good work begun unto (or, as we say, for, and even against) that day; but not a hint of “gathering” them to Christ then. Again, Phil. 2:16 is the earnest desire of the devoted servant of Christ that the saints at Philippi should be a boast for him in Christ’s day that he had not run nor laboured in vain. In short, the manifestation of our responsible walk and services, and hence the joy and reward of faithfulness will be in that day; but of our gathering to Christ in these texts (no doubt the most apt Mr. E. could find) not a whisper. To my mind the serious thing is the insensibility of such a man to their force. For the same confusion which made him imagine that these texts connect the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord prevented him from even

comprehending the bearing of 2 Thess. 2:1, as distinguished from 2 Thess. 2:2 and 8.

The argument I urged on Mr. E. from 2 Tim. 2 must have been somewhat to this effect. It is evident that later on Hymenaeus and Philetus, and the like, had, as to the truth, so far missed the mark as to say that the resurrection had taken place already. They probably resolved it into resurrection with Christ (or possibly "higher life") as a present state, denying the true and blessed hope, and so had settled down into a life of ease, a millennium now, instead of awaiting Christ from and for heaven in suffering and testimony meanwhile. Thus was the faith of some overthrown. And so, in all likelihood, it may have been in Thessalonica. The misleaders were really bolder there, since they alleged the Spirit, nay, a word, and even apostolic letter, for the alarming impression that the day of the Lord had arrived. But it is as easy to conceive a quasi-spiritual or figurative force given to that day as to the resurrection, and real believers being upset by either. I can only suppose that Mr. E. did not take in the idea; else he must surely have admitted that the analogy is plain, and not maintainable only but rather irresistible, unless I greatly deceive myself.

One thing is certain, that, even among real scholars, not to speak of enlightened Christians, "the usual view" of the last clause of 2 Thess. 2:2 is now abandoned generally as incorrect and untenable in every point of view, Mr. E. being one of its latest defenders among men of any weight. The "usual view" had so filled my friend's mind, that he never could get a clear apprehension of the overwhelming weight of proof against it. Another "usual view," endorsed even by Hammond, Bishop

Newton, Paley, and others, that the clause before the last means that the Thessalonians were misled through a misconstruction of the first epistle of the apostle is of less consequence but equally mistaken. It was a suppositious epistle, forged to convey the error that the day of the Lord was present. Such is the only meaning fairly deducible from the words, ἐπιστολῆς ὡς δι᾽ ἡμῶν: and so even Chrysostom, πεπλασμένην [not πρώτην ]

ἐπιστολὴν ἐπιδείκνυον ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ Παύλου. (Comment. in Epp. Pauli, Hom. iii., v. 465, ed. Field.) As to this point the late Mr. G. S. Faber is quite right, I see, in his “Sacred Calendar,” iii. 436, 437.

Our proper hope is the Lord’s coming to receive us to Himself, and to be with Him in the Father’s house. We shall also appear with Him in glory, and reign with Him over the earth. But, in order to appear with Him when He appears in glory, scripture shows that we shall be caught up to join Him above. Then that a very grave work in judgment, but not without mercy, for Jews and Gentiles, proceeds on earth, while we are with Him there, is taught in Rev. 4-19, before He appears, and we with Him, in glory and to judgment.

# Part Six: Miscellaneous Texts and Subjects

## Israel’s Millennial Temple

(Ezekiel 40-48) In the last section of the Book of Ezekiel the orderly arrangement of the restored nation of Israel is foretold along with a view of the sanctuary of Jehovah in the midst of the holy city, Jerusalem, then to be seen in all its millennial beauty and holiness. And I think there is no reasonable ground whatever for assuming that hitherto these prophetic chapters have in any degree been fulfilled. I deny entirely that they have any direct application to the Christian Church. I also deny altogether that the chapters may be understood to have what is called a spiritual significance. In these denials I am not referring to the whole of Ezekiel’s writings. Truths having a general application are found in previous chapters. For example, Jehovah’s promise that He will sprinkle clean water upon the house of Israel, give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them (Ezek. 36:25, 26) is of wide application, including the present day. Indeed, I have sought to preach the gospel from it, although I have not attempted to do so from the valley of dry bones! As to these closing chapters of Ezekiel, I am convinced that there is no possible way in which they can be applied to the spiritual blessings that by faith we have found to be embodied in the church, that is, found to be in Christ Jesus for the possession of the church. And I will give reasons to support this view. Jehovah’s New Temple in Jerusalem. The central feature of these last visions granted to Ezekiel was the return of the Shechinah of Jehovah to dwell again in the midst of

His people in Jerusalem (Ezek 43:1-6). As related in his first chapters, the prophet had seen the abandonment of the city of Jerusalem as the abiding-place of that glory on earth. Now he beholds the return of the glory-cloud of the God of Israel “from the way of the east,” a sight never known in this world since the day of the captivity of Jehovah’s people in Babylon.

The prophet began to see these “visions of God” when among the captives by the river Chebar in the land of the Chaldeans (Ezek. 1:1-3). Ezekiel says that in these visions “brought He me into the land of Israel,” that is, Ezekiel was merely transported there in spirit. The apostle John speaks similarly in the Revelation: “I became in the Spirit on the Lord’s day”; “he carried me away in spirit to “a desert”; “he carried me away in the Spirit, and set me on a great and high mountain” (Rev. 1:10; Rev. 17:33; Rev. 21:10). So we may say that it was the power of the Spirit of God that brought Ezekiel from the land of the Chaldeans to the land of Israel (Ezek. 40:2).

Then we learn that Ezekiel was shown a man who measured the various parts of the buildings the prophet saw. He names the outer court and the inner court, the wall and the windows, and the chambers, with which the structure was abundantly supplied. We have also the porch with two tables on one side and two on the other for slaughtering the burnt-offering, the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering, with other tables, making eight in all. Details are also given of the apparatus for other sacrificial service (Ezek. 40:5-43).

At the close of this chapter, we learn of the accommodation in the building made for the priests who

had charge of the house and of the altar. There were two chambers or cells, one at the north gate and one at the south gate. The prophet was told what branch of the Aaronic family will occupy these cells for the millennial temple-service.

The sons of Zadok will be chosen in that day for approach to Jehovah in ministry (Ezek. 40:46; Ezek. 43:19; Ezek. 44:15; Ezek. 48:11). This was the branch of Aaron's line that came forward in the day of David (1 Chron. 12:28). For hundreds of years the wrong line had usurped the high-priesthood. Eli belonged to the younger branch of Aaron's family which unlawfully possessed themselves of the high-priesthood in spite of Jehovah's solemn promise to Phinehas (Num. 25:12, 13). But there was a restoration in the person of Zadok in David and Solomon's time, for Jehovah is faithful in spite of man's failure and enmity. And in the latter day of which Ezekiel speaks, we find the sons of Zadok will reappear in the priestly line, and Jehovah's original "covenant of peace" with Phinehas will be maintained (Ezek 40:44-46). Is this merely a Symbolic Vision? Now I take it the language of this chapter is not merely figurative in meaning. There will be literal priests of Aaronic descent who will offer literal sacrifices as stated. Whether people understand it or not, the word of God on this matter is perfectly plain. Difficulties only arise because so many reason solely from the Christian thoughts and Christian truths. But is God to have none but Christians in His purposes and future dealings?

Further, is not God to be allowed the liberty of acting according to His own counsels and plans for His own people, whether earthly or heavenly? Is it not possible for Him in the future to accept sacrifices and offerings in

an appointed place? I am convinced that it would be rank apostasy for a Christian to offer sacrifices and burn incense. On this ground, many feel that those chapters in Ezekiel ought not to be taken literally for the church, the Christian body. This is true; but why should they not be for the nation of Israel when converted and settled in the holy land?

When the nation repents and receives the Messiah Whom they crucified, but Whom God has glorified, they will no longer pervert but obey what God has established by His word. The sacrifices to them will be memorials of Christ's one sacrifice, the burnt-offering from one point of view, the meal-offering from another, the sin-offering another, and so on. I take it, therefore, that these scriptures in their strict literal import apply not to the Christian assembly, but to Israel in the future, and indeed to the Gentile nations of that day also.

The New Testament scriptures that are often used to deny this interpretation are those addressed exclusively to present day Christians. They say that the Bible says, There is no more offering for sin (Heb. 10:18, 26). But this scripture applies to Christians not to the Jews. The Jews will have the remission of their sins, but they will have also sacrifices appointed as reminders of the one effectual sacrifice, of Christ, offered and accepted once for all.

I know it has been said that the offering of millennial sacrifices would be a going back in the ways of God. But this is not true. The sacrifices of Israel in the future will differ fundamentally from those in the past. Those of old were types of what Christ was coming to do sacrificially, but in those future days they will be the appointed types

of what Christ has accomplished by His single sacrificial offering and death.

Thus, the establishment of sacrificial testimony to the atonement made by Christ through His crucifixion and death will ensure a continual tribute of praise to the Messiah of Israel throughout His millennial reign. The revival of sacrifices and feasts in Jerusalem will not be a retrograde step in the divine dispensations for this earth, but will rather mark the climax of His dealings with the present heavens and earth, when “all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto Jehovah” (Ps. 22:27).

Then, after the measurements of the court and the porch (Ezek. 40:47-49), dimensions of various parts of the temple and the sanctuary are given in the next two chapters (Ezek. 41, Ezek. 42:20). Much silver and gold were used in the construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness, and of the temple by Solomon; but both metals are absent from Ezekiel’s description of the future temple. This absence, however, does not absolutely imply that neither metal will be used.

In Ezek. 41:22, it is said of the table of wood upon which the showbread was displayed before Jehovah, “This is the table which is before Jehovah.” (This designation also occurs in Mal. 1:7, 12). In Ezek. 44:7, the fat and the blood of the sacrifices are spoken of as Jehovah’s “bread.”

In Ezek. 43, Ezekiel records his vision of the return of Jehovah to the earthly city of His choice. Having described his sight of the temple-buildings (40-42), he now describes the glory of God coming to fill them. “And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way

of the east... And the glory of Jehovah came into the house by the way of the gate whose front was toward the east... and behold the glory of Jehovah filled the house" (Ezek. 43:2-5).

Moreover, the prophet learns that this restoration of Jehovah's presence will not be of temporary duration, but will last for ever: "Son of man, this is the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever; and the house of Israel shall no more defile My holy name (v. 7).

Details follow of the "law" of the house, as well as of the altar and its ordinances. It is confirmed that of the Levitical priests, those of the seed of Zadok will be chosen by Jehovah to draw near to Him and to minister unto Him (v. 19). For the sacrifices and consecration offerings will be required before the burn-offerings are offered and blood sprinkled upon the altar for seven days. "Upon the eighth day and onwards the priests shall offer your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord Jehovah" (vv. 8-27). A Prince of the House of David At first, the prophet saw the gate open, but now he sees it closed. And he brought me back toward the outer gate of the sanctuary which looked toward the east; and it was shut" (Ezek. 44:1). By His own sovereign right Jehovah, the God of Israel, had entered the sanctuary to dwell there. And the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah." By Jehovah's command, the gate was to be shut, and no one was to enter by it, save the prince, who should sit in it to eat bread before Jehovah; "he shall enter by the way of the porch of the gate, and shall go out by the way of the same" (Ezek. 44:2, 3).

It is important to observe that Israel in the millennial kingdom will have a prince upon earth who will go in and out of the sanctuary. Who is this prince? Certainly not the Lord Jesus, the Messiah Himself. He will be the earthly representative of Jehovah and His Christ, and of Him we learn more in Ezek. 45 and 46. Doubtless he will be a direct descendant of David, God's chosen king of Israel. In ch. 46, he is associated with the people in their sacrificial offerings to Jehovah.

This chapter to the end (Ezek. 44:4-31) deals with the ordinances of the house and the priesthood. The Lord Jehovah rebukes the iniquities of the past in connection with His sanctuary where above all other places on earth His holiness should have been upheld. The past failures of the Levites and the priesthood are recounted as a solemn warning for the future. Sundry regulations are also given for the conduct of the priests, the sons of Zadok, who will be chosen to present Jehovah the fat and the blood of the sacrifices (vv. 15-31).

Ezek. 45 introduces a feature in the division of the holy land during the millennium, which will be a new one. "When the land is divided by lot for inheritance, a portion shall be presented to Jehovah for a heave-offering. This will be the "holy portion of the land." It will be reserved for the service of the priests who do the service of the sanctuary (Ezek. 45:1-4).

Further details follow of the future agreements to be observed for the various services of the sanctuary (Ezek. 45:5-17), and these are followed by details concerning the sacrificial offerings to be made at the various feasts of the year (Ezek. 45:8 - 46:24). There were to be offerings on the first day of the first month in the year to

purge the sanctuary. On the fourteenth day of the same month they must keep the Passover, a feast of unleavened bread for seven days; and the prince also must offer the appointed sacrifices (Ezek. 45:8-24). On the fifteenth of the seventh month the feast of tabernacles was to be kept with the appropriate offerings (Ezek. 45:25). No reference is made to the day of atonement on the tenth of the seventh month.

It is remarkable that no mention is made of the feast of weeks or Pentecost. Its absence from the list of feasts seen in Ezekiel's visions is an indication that it relates to what will be Jewish and not to what is Christian. The result of the Spirit's descent at Pentecost was that believers from every nationality were baptized into one body, national distinction disappearing. But in the millennium, though the Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh, Israel and the Gentiles will retain their separate nationalities. This is beyond question, but the absence of the feast of weeks from Ezekiel's list is often overlooked.

In Ezek. 46, the visions seen by the prophet relate to the prince, to the people, and to the priests in their worship. The ritual for the new moons and the Sabbaths is also revealed.

The rules applying to the prince are noticeable. In Ezek. 44:3, he has the right of entering and of leaving by the gate of the sanctuary, and also of sitting there "to eat bread before Jehovah." No one else uses this gate but himself, for he is the prince of the house of David (cp. Ezek. 44:2-3). But on the feast days he goes in for worship with the people in order that he should not exalt himself overmuch. "The prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate... and he shall worship at the

threshold of the gate" (Ezek. 46:2). He thus takes his place with the people of Israel in rendering homage to Jehovah.

It is evident that we could not apply this regulation for the prince to the Lord Jesus without irreverence. But the prince is His delegate, and in that office he is alone, yet as one of the chosen nation of Israel he takes his part in the offerings and sacrifices of the people.

Then again, the same distinction is observable in the regulation for any disposal of the prince's property (Ezek. 46:16-18). The prince's inheritance shall be to his sons, and shall remain in the family. If he bestows any property to his servants, it must return to the family in the year of jubilee. It is impossible to think of such a rule applying to the Lord Jesus. It applies, however, throughout the millennial kingdom to His representative on the earth, who will be a scion of the house of David discovered and brought forward by Jehovah, as He discovered the sons of Zadok in the Aaronic line, and rewarded their faithfulness to Him (Ezek. 48:11).

Lastly, the prophet sees the cooking places or kitchens where the priests will boil the sin and the trespass offerings, and bake the oblations for the sacrificial meals of the people (Ezek. 46:19-24). The Flow of Healing Waters Ezekiel is next shown a remarkable phenomenon in the land of Israel which will characterize the introduction of millennial blessedness with its mitigation of the primeval curse (Ezek. 47:1-14). The prophet sees a miraculous stream of waters issuing from the threshold of the house and flowing eastward towards the Dead Sea, changing the face of the countryside from barren desolation to luxuriant fertility (Ezek. 47:1-9).

Previously to Ezekiel's vision, the prophet Joel had foretold the coming of these miraculous waters: "a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah, and shall water the valley of Shittim" (Joel 3:19). A later prophet also spoke of the same millennial marvel: "It shall come to pass in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the hinder (western) sea: in summer and in winter shall it be" (Zech. 14:8). Like material blessing will of course spread from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. The Dead Sea and its neighborhood represent symbolically the utter ruin which man by his sin brought into the world bestowed upon him as his dominion (Gen. 1:28-30). But "the wages of sin is death."

However, then "it shall come to pass that every living thing which moveth, whithersoever the double river shall come, shall live" (Ezek. 47:9). The fish of the sea shall also be multiplied. But not every part of the earth will be fully restored by the "healing waters." "Its marshes and its pools shall not be healed; they shall be given up to salt" (Ezek. 47:11). The fullness and absolute perfection of the new heavens and the new earth in the eternal state will not be realized during the millennium. Here we read of the "great sea" and of "the great multitude of fish"; but no sea will exist in the eternal state when God will tabernacle with men; the present earth with its land and sea will then have passed away for ever (Rev. 21:1-3). A New Distribution of the Tribes The close of the Book of Ezekiel describes a fresh division of the land among the twelve tribes of Israel (Ezek. 47:13 - 48:35). In the millennial kingdom, the tribal inheritances will be arranged in parallel strips of

territory extending eastward from the Mediterranean Sea to the River Jordan. The whole land from north to south will consist of twelve belt-like portions, divided in the neighborhood of Jerusalem by Jehovah's portion, called the holy oblation or heave-offering which will be for the prince, the priests and the Levites, the sanctuary being in the midst (Ezek. 48:8-22). In the allotment of the land among the tribes, Jehovah said, "Joseph shall have two portions" (Ezek. 47:13), that is, one for Manasseh and one for Ephraim. Levi is not included with the twelve, but has his share in the sacred heave-offering, of land devoted to Jehovah's service (Ezek. 48:13, 14). The land of Gilead and Bashan to the east of the Jordan, originally occupied by the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh (Joshua 22) is not included by Jehovah. These tribes made a mistake originally in seeking a premature settlement outside the Holy Land. Their error will be rectified when the millennial kingdom is established.

The centre of that kingdom will be the City of Jerusalem with its twelve gates. But the city will have a new name in that day of righteousness and peace. It will be known as Jehovah-Shammah, the LORD is there (Ezek 48:30-35).

Note on the Same Subject The future temple will have double-leaved doors instead of a screen, and a veil then renewed. Yet the sons of Israel and even the prince have no entry into the house only the priests. There is no question of going within. Still the differences are marked and instructive. There will then be no evening lamp; for Jehovah their light is for ever risen upon Zion. No candlestick is needed any more, but the altar within is Jehovah's table; and no high-priest ministers. There is

no Pentecost any more, for it is already consummated in the church. There is no feast of trumpets, for the earthly people have already been summoned and gathered; and there is no longer an atonement day for the work was done, and the people had afflicted their souls when they looked to Him Whom they pierced. The Red Heifer disappears. But the Passover abides as the memorial of redemption, and the feast of Tabernacles will mark their place and blessing. The altar of holocausts or burnt offerings has an absolutely central place, though of course outside the sanctuary; for seven days atonement is made for it; and on the eighth onward the priests offer Israel's burnt offerings and peace offerings. Sabbaths and new moons are still celebrated as witnesses of rest come and of Israel's regaining their place. No table with the twelve loaves is seen, for Israel's tribes were them selves before Him; no candlestick, for the True Light was seen. In the Holiest is no sign; no ark is needed; Jehovah fills the house alone. From unpublished MSS. Taken from The Bible Monthly, vol. 26 (1952).

## The Little Horn of Daniel 7

Q. — Can the little Horn of Dan. 7 be the last Roman Emperor? Is he not rather the Jewish Anti-Christ? On the one hand the ten Horns are not the beast, nor is the little Horn which comes up among them, and destroys three of the first Horns. And as the Beast was destroyed because of the great words the Horn spoke, their distinction is clear on the other. Taking the little horn as the Wilful King, or the Anti-Christ, he is the Beast's minion, and corresponds more with the Second Beast of Rev.13. He has. all cunning (eyes like those of man),

pleases the Beast, and represents him, though a distinct personage.

(condensed from) L.P. A. — It is quite true that John's Anti-Christ (or wilful king of Dan. 9:36 et seqq.), being the subordinate of the Beast as to earthly power, is the Second Beast or false prophet {of Rev. 13:11-18}, the highest pretender to spiritual eminence and energy, answering to the man of sin in 2 Thess. 2. They are, one no less than the other, worshipped, and they perish together in the lake of fire (Rev. 19). But the Roman empire, or first Beast of Rev. 13, has a chief; and this clearly the little Horn, which came up after the ten, dispossessed three, and became the dominant power, to which the rest gave their kingdoms as vassals. Dan. 7 alone gives the historic details. It is the once little Horn become great, whose pride and blasphemies brought judgment on the imperial Beast as a whole. In the Revelation, which gives character rather than history, it is the Beast that said and did what its last ruler said and did. Compare Dan. 7:8-11, 20, 21, 24, 25, with Rev. 13:4-7. This solves the difficulty. The Revelation therefore does not distinguish this last Horn as such like Daniel, but attributes to the Beast in its last form what Daniel predicated historically of the little Horn. So true is this, that Rev. 17:11 identifies the Beast or Roman empire with the eighth resurrection head, which answers to Daniel's little Horn; and in v. 12 takes no notice of the then fallen Horns. John speaks of the characteristic ten Horns. There is the clearest guard against confounding him with the second beast, the lawless king in Judea (Anti-Christ).

There is no doubt that the Roman imperial Horn is said to have "eyes like the eyes of a man"; but this only

symbolizes his extraordinary intelligence and insight humanly. The second Beast pretends to give breath and speech to the inanimate, as well as to call fire from heaven in the sight of men — the crucial proof of Jehovah as God against Baal in Elijah's day. Again, it is certain that the Roman prince in Dan. 9 causes sacrifice and oblation to cease in the temple; so that his thinking to change times and laws was quite consistent with Dan. 7, instead of bringing the Anti-Christ into what belongs to the Roman power. But as they are confederates, it is easy to identify them mistakenly.

We must also beware of the still more prevalent confusion of the little Horn of Dan. 8 with either the Emperor in Rome or the Anti-Christ in Jerusalem. He is the enemy of both, being "the Assyrian" of the prophets in general, and the "king of the north," whose last doings and end we read of in Dan. 11:40-45. He is destroyed no less signally than the Beast and the False Prophet soon after their awful catastrophe.

### The Bible Treasury, New Series 2:32.

Daniel 7:1, 6, 17, 24 The book of yours which I have by me is, Lectures on the Book of Daniel, second edition.

Q. 1. I cannot reconcile some passages in it with Scripture. On page 103 I read: "The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings." There, beyond question, we have the empire of Babylon (and on page 33) Babylon was first made an empire of in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, who here includes, as it were, those that were to follow. Surely the description in Dan. 7:2, 3, "… behold the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from the other" in no way applies to

Nebuchadnezzar's accession to the throne of Babylon. Was not his father Nabopolassar king of Babylon before him?

Q. 2. In pages 106 and 107 Alexander's (the Grecian) kingdom is represented (you say) in the vision by the Leopard which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads. [You add] There you have not so much what was found in Alexander himself, but rather in his successors. Why do you say so? The scriptures must be correct. The leopard appeared with four heads, not with one which was replaced by four, like Alexander's one kingdom which was divided into four! The interpretation of this vision in Dan. 7:17 ("These great beasts which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth") was given within some three years of the fall of the Babylonian empire. And yet you say, "The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings." There beyond question we have the empire of Babylon (p. 103). The interpretation given to Daniel says "shall arise," while the Babylonian empire began (p. 33) in Nebuchadnezzar some (?) sixty-six years before.

J. S. O. A. 1. The book of Daniel is itself the nearest and weightiest help to explain the difficulties of its several parts. Thus Dan. 2 and 7 reflect light one on another. There is a manifest unity in the colossal image seen in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which has its answer in "the four great beasts" that "came up from the sea" in Daniel's vision during the first year of Belshazzar's reign. In the visions all were thus seen at once, though in historical fact they were to succeed each other; as the rest of the chapter would plainly enough indicate. It was not a question of what Babylon had been, or of

Nebuchadnezzar's succeeding Nabopolassar, but of God's gift of world-empire to these four successive powers. They begin with Nebuchadnezzar, and are terminated by the judgment to be executed on the final form of the fourth or Roman empire by the Stone cut without hands, i.e. God's kingdom wielded by the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. Nabopolassar was doubtless king of Babylon; but in no way head of the image or imperial system which commenced with his son Nebuchadnezzar, to whom God gave this place expressly. He, not his father, could say though arrogantly, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" as he built enormously besides. His foreign conquests were great, yet less momentous than his energetic home policy. But his overthrow of the Jewish kingdom in its last stronghold was the turning-point, and in him the Gentile imperial system began. Dan. 2:37, 38 affords light clear enough for beginning with Nebuchadnezzar and excluding his father or any other before him; as no reasonable mind doubts the parallelism of the two chapters. Compare Jer. 27, Ezek. 12, 17. A. 2. Here the comparison of Dan. 8:21, 22 simply and fully solves the difficulty as to Dan. 7:6. So one must say because scripture so explains. The later vision of Dan. 8 beast on important details of the second and third powers, laying aside all reference to the first and fourth in Dan. 7. "It is written again" is of the greatest moment when "It is written" is misapplied. Scripture is everywhere consistent as well surely correct. The fourth beast appears with ten horns; yet we know from other scriptures that these mean ten kings at the very close of the last empire, in no way that they were so found when that empire first began. The same remark applies to the four heads of the leopard or Macedonian empire. Each

vision gives characteristic differences without in the least implying that they all appeared from the start. Other or subsequent statements correct such an inference as unfounded and contrary to fact.

So “shall arise” in Dan. 7:17 must in fairness be taken as a whole, connecting the three powers to come with the Babylonian though already in being and tottering to its fall. To construe the words with such rigid technicality as to exclude the Babylonish empire from answering to the lion with eagle’s wings is, not a difficulty for my exposition, but really a setting of Dan. 7 in opposition to Dan. 2 and a groundless upturning of the plain fact. From a full consideration of these scriptures I hold that truth calls one to interpret the “four kings” which “shall arise” as comprising the beginning to the end of these earthly bestial systems, but not so as to exclude the first beast from Nebuchadnezzar’s day; for this would set scripture against scripture and thus disproves itself as erroneous. “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.” One cannot fairly use this to deny retrospect, but must include Babylon from Nebuchadnezzar. For the object is to give the imperial system relative unity; whilst “the first” and “another,” etc. in vv. 4-7, gave also succession adequately, as indeed had been done yet more plainly in Dan. 2. Dan. 2:11, 12 contrast a prolonging of the three previous beasts after the loss of dominion; whereas the fourth is utterly destroyed when it ceases to be an imperial power at the close. Scripture therefore sustains the statements questioned, without meddling with the ordinary version of the passages; it shows that the difficulty lies rather in divorcing one text from another, instead of receiving all. Scripture cannot be broken. The

prophetic manner also must be borne in mind. A priori expectations of what or how God should reveal are sure to be disappointed. Our blessing is to own His wisdom and goodness in what He gives or withholds. The Holy Spirit, as He wrote all in view of Christ's glory, so works in giving us to expound aright just go far as we have His glory in view, the true safeguard of explaining aright.

Even the incredulous Gibbon in his Letter to Bp. Hurd (Hurd's Work, V. pp. 365, 366) says, 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 vast monarchy into four kingdoms, one of which is mentioned by name, their various wars and intermarriages, the persecution of Antiochus, the profanation of the temple, and the invincible arms of the Romans are described with as much perspicuity in the prophecies of Daniel, as in the histories of Justin and Diodorus. From such a perfect resemblance the artful infidel would infer that both were alike composed after the event. He argued that the author of the Book of Daniel was too well informed of the revolutions of the Persian and Macedonian empires, supposed to have happened long after his death; and that he was too ignorant of the transactions in his own times: in a word, that he was too exact for a prophet, and too fabulous for a contemporary historian.

It is enough to reply that the book is no less distinct in Dan. 9 about Christ's death and the destruction of Jerusalem; and that the alleged contemporaneous history is declared to be at "the time of the end" when Israel are to be delivered, and therefore, as future, necessarily unfulfilled prophecy. Hence, to say

“fabulous” is not only premature but ignorant, as it will be surely proved to be the baseless scepticism of Gibbon, in the wake of Porphyry. But even they took no exception to the Four Empires as laid down in Dan. 2, 7, and saw no such force in Dan. 7:2, 3, 6, or 17, as to enfeeble that interpretation. Now there was no empire of Rome until long after the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, where it pleases unbelief to imagine the writing of the book of Daniel. Yet the book not only speaks of a fourth or Roman empire, but dwells with peculiar fulness on its last phase, not yet accomplished, when its blasphemy is to draw down the holy vengeance of the Son of man. Then will follow, not the white throne judgment when the wicked dead shall arise from their graves for judgment, but the kingdom which He shall previously exercise over all peoples, nations, and languages. This therefore clearly presupposes the earth, when it shall be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. Indeed even before that kingdom the latter part of Dan. 11 shows us “the time of the end,” in which Antiochus Epiphanes has no place whatever. But three kings figure: “the king” (Dan. 11:36-40) in the land, who will be so distinct from the then “king of the north” and the “king of the south,” that they will both attack him at the same time. Dan. 11:41-45 are occupied exclusively with “the king of the north” in that future. day, who becomes an especial object of divine wrath as “the king,” we know from elsewhere, will have been before him. Thus minutely writes the prophet on the solemn crisis at “the end of the age,” which future detail is clearly after the gap where Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees are done with.

## The Bible Treasury 15:367, 368.

The Little Horns of Daniel 7 and 8: Not the Same

Q. — J. C. asks whether the little horn of Dan. 8 is distinct from that of Dan. 7.

A. — First, the very language differs. The prophet, who wrote in Aramaic from ch.2:4, returned to Hebrew after ch. 7. The course of the four world-powers is given in a most instructive two-fold form, one Nebuchadnezzar's vision (2), the other Daniel's (7), with corresponding differences, in the language of the first empire, the captor of Judah. The chapters between contribute important moral features needed to fill up the divinely given picture. From Dan. 8. we receive special details which concern the Jews, which are a accordingly given in Hebrew.

Secondly, Dan. 8 deals with the second and third of the world-powers, Med.-Persia, and Javan or Greece the first great ruler of which was to have his vast kingdom broken into four in due time after his death, and of course with inferior power. One of these was to meddle disastrously with the Jews and their religion and worship above all, whether in the type that is fulfilled, or in the antitype of the latter time "when the transgressors are come to the full.

Thirdly, the empire of Babylon, the lion-like beast with eagle's wings, had a unity peculiar to itself. The Medo-Persian ( a bear in ch. 7, a ram in ch. 8 with two high horns of which the higher came up last) answers truly and solely to the second of these world-powers, which, fierce and devouring in general, was mild and generous toward the Jews, as indeed was the notable horn of the Macedonian power, Alexander the Great. In this third

empire the marked and settled partition after its founder's death was four-fold, which no historian can question.

But the no less marked division of the fourth or Roman power is into ten horns, of course contemporary, with one small at its rise which plucks up three by the roots, as remarkable for its intelligence as for its pride and blasphemous audacity. Here however we are in presence of that which awaits its fulfilment, even admitting a partial application to past history. For that horn by its lawlessness brings on, not providential loss of dominion as in the case of the earlier beasts, but direct, distinctive, and divine judgment at the appearing of God's kingdom in the person of the Son of man. How can these things be? The Revelation answers by the rising again of the fourth or Roman empire, when its imperial head (slain unto death) is healed to the wonder of the whole world (Rev. 13:3), the beast that was, and is not (its present negation), and shall be present, having emerged from the abyss. For it will be the brief destined hour of the dragon's wrath, power, and authority. Here also is shown that the Roman beast had distinctively seven successive forms of government or heads, besides (at the close, if not before also) ten contemporaneous horns or kings. Cp. Rev. 17:8- 12 with Dan. 7.

Clearly then it is no question in Dan. 8 of the Roman power of ch. 7, whose last horn, little at first, greater afterwards, is to wield and direct the whole force of the empire, so as by his blasphemies to meet destructive judgment from God. He will be the immediate precursor of the Son of Man's coming in his kingdom. Even the unspiritual Josephus could not but see this, though he was prudent enough to be reticent on a future so

repulsive to his Roman patrons. But Dan. 8 speaks not of the west but of the east, even of the Graeco-Syrian king dom and its persecuting profanation in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes, of whom we have ample details in Dan. 11:21-31. Indeed the prediction is so exact as to surpass what. any ancient historian extant furnishes; so much so that the heathen Porphyry betook himself to the same refuge of unbelief which the destructive critics of late days affect — the pretense of a writer in Maccabean times, who personated Daniel in Babylon! The vision in Dan. 8:9-14 dwells on what is now history; the interpretation, in 23-25, mainly on what is yet to be fulfilled.

It is well to observe that Dan. 8:11 and the first half of 12 are really a parenthesis. The change of gender “he,” faithfully owned in the A. V., is slighted in the R. V. Its aim seems to have been to make the personality stronger, and here therefore to refer rather to the antitype than to the historical horn, which before and after the parenthesis is called “it.” In the interpretation nothing is said of the “2300 evenings-mornings,” or 1150 days, and of treading down the sanctuary, which may therefore be accomplished already. This period is known to be approximately near: none can deny its absolute exactness, of which the believer is sure. Prophecy interprets history, not the converse. The one is absolutely reliable, as from God; the other imperfect at best, often partial and prejudiced, too often adverse to the truth. The historical horn did not play the Solomonic part of “understanding dark sentences” to deceive the Jews, reserved for the antitype, who is also to be “mighty, but not by his own power.” This can hardly be said of Antiochus Epiphanes. The future apostate ruler

of Turkey in Asia, the enemy of Israel, will be sustained by a mightier monarch still farther north. See Ezek. 38, 39.

As to unfulfilled prophecy, superstition (slave of tradition) is dull and dark, rationalism is blind and hostile to God. Superstition is not faith and therefore incapable of understanding beforehand; rationalism is in principle antagonistic to the truth, for it denies that prophecy is ever specific, and especially on the remote future. Hence, as superstition is unbelieving and unexercised, so rationalism offers nothing but futile interpretations to blot out the glorious future of God's kingdom by any little earnest in the past. But this falls so short as to give the willing impression that the prophets exaggerated or lied, like the poets or politicians of the day. Who but the unintelligent could confound the little horn of Dan. 8 with that of ch. 7? or either the western or the north-eastern chief with the wilful king, to reign at the time of the end in Palestine, described in Dan. 11:36-39? The last no doubt is the Antichrist, here viewed politically, in 2 Thess. 2 religiously as the man of sin opposed to the Man of righteousness, Who will appear from heaven to destroy him. There are many antichrists; but this does not justify the pretentious ignorance of scripture, which jumbles all three into Antiochus Epiphanes. For he was but a type of the final representative of that power, the enemy of the Antichrist whose ally is the last chief of the Roman empire: all to perish for ever in the day of Jehovah.

### The Bible Treasury 19:207, 208.

Daniel 8:14

Q. — Dan. 8:14. The meaning of this verse is enquired; and the question is raised if the “2,300 evenings-mornings” apply to the desolation since the Roman destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. F. F. T. (Dublin).

A. — It helps to clear the book and its particular visions if we observe that the last Beast in Dan. 7 is the western Empire; and Rev. 11-13, 17 enables us to say the Roman Empire revived but pointedly distinguished from Babylon the Harlot, viewed as a great city as well as the great corruptress of Christendom. Here the Beast and the ten horns, his vassal kings, unite to destroy; but they are themselves destroyed by the Lamb when He returns with His glorified saints from heaven (Rev. 17:4, 19:14). No ingenuity can make these revealed facts fit into the Protestant interpretation, as I showed many years ago in reviewing the last edition of Mr. Elliott’s Horae Apoc. before he died.

One main defect of that hypothesis is that it neglects the final future crisis for the Jewish people and the land before the Lord appears in glory and judgment. Another is that the proper Christian and church hope is not appreciated by this school, but mixed up with the Jewish. The times and seasons, which wholly pertain to the earthly people, are misapplied to Christians. These are not of the world and are called to be ever expecting the Lord Jesus, to take them to Himself and the Father’s house, before the unaccomplished measures of time begin to apply to the Jews and the powers of the world at the end of this age.

This chapter however brings to light a power in the east, not Roman, but from the Seleucid quarter of Alexander’s divided empire. And we have to distinguish the general

vision of which v. 14 forms the close from the interpretation which deals with the future catastrophe and goes from v. 19 to v. 26. For the interpretations given by scripture add fresh light, and enable us to discriminate the part accomplished in Antiochus Epiphanes from the final enemy of Israel in the N.E. Of him we hear much in Dan. 9, “the king of the north” at the end, who is to be judged no less awfully than the Roman emperor of that day, and his antichristian colleague, the false prophet-king in the land. This N.E. power is the same predicted by “the Assyrian” of Isaiah, Micah, and other prophets.

There are no dates attached to Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of the four great Gentile empires raised up successively on the apostasy of the Jews, and set aside by the kingdom of God figured by the little Stone. But in the corresponding vision of the four Beasts, judged and superseded by the universal kingdom of the Son of man when the saints of the heavenly places appear, and the people of those saints, we have the well-known formula of “a time, times, and half a time,” i.e. three years and a half, during which times and laws will be given into the hand of their western enemy. Dan. 8. is occupied with the east, and “the daily” is taken away “by reason of transgression”; and the peculiar term occurs of “2,300 evenings-mornings,” which I see no reason to doubt was literally accomplished in Antiochus Epiphanes of whom we hear so much, in Dan. 11:21-32. But the special object is the enemy “at the last end of the indignation.” In Dan. 9 we have another sort of computation — by “Weeks,” or periods of seven years; and there the Roman capture of Jerusalem is plainly set out, though in the general interval without date after the cutting off of

the Messiah. But the last week, severed from the chain, awaits its completion in the doings of both the Western emperor and his eastern antagonist at the end of the age. In Dan. 11:36-39 the Antichrist (who is to reign over the land and be the object of attack “at the time of the end” to both the king of the south and the king of the north) is seen. And the last chapter gives a variety of dates but all bearing on that future crisis, our Lord in Matt. 24:15 directing particular attention to verse 11.

### The Bible Treasury, New Series 1:319.

Translation of Daniel 9:26, 27

Q.- Dan. 9:26, 27. Is Young’s version correct, or that of the A. and R. Versions? The latter substantially agree; but Young changes the sense by confounding Christ with the one who confirms in v. 27. Have the English translators forced the Hebrew? or is Young without warrant? I greatly desire information. G.A.S. — N. J., U. S. A.

A. — There need be no hesitation in accepting the general sense of the A. V., modified by the Revisers. The article of reference is due to “sixty-two weeks,” after which Messiah was to be cut off and “have nothing,” as the Genevese E. V. had already rightly said. But the force of the next clause is utterly missed by Dr. R. Young. It really means, “And the people of the prince that shall come [in contrast with Messiah the Prince already come and cut off] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood [or overflow], and even to the end war — desolations determined. And he [the coming prince] shall confirm a covenant with the many [the apostate mass of the Jew] for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall

cause sacrifice and oblation to cease; and because of sheltering [lit. wing of] abominations [or idols] a desolator, [shall be], even until the consumption and that determined shall be poured out upon the desolate." So in fact the Roman people (not yet their coming prince) did come, and destroy the city and the temple [or holy place], followed by a flood of desolations on the guilty people and on Jerusalem for ages. But the time hastens, when the thread must be resumed and the last or postponed week of the 70 be accomplished. Then the coming Roman prince, in his incipient form, shall confirm covenant with the ungodly majority of the Jews, "the many," but break it by putting down their worship, and protecting idolatry and the Antichrist as we know. from elsewhere. This will bring on the closing scenes of the Assyrian, or king of the north (Isa. 10, 28, 29; Dan. 11:40-45), "the desolator"; and the last word of predicted judgment will be accomplished on Jerusalem. The death of Messiah broke the chain; but that closing link has yet to be joined, and all will be fulfilled in due season. The attempt to foist in the gospel is baseless. To translate the last verse, as Wintle does, following ancient versions, may be grammatically possible, but is unaccountably harsh, if not absurd: "Yet one week shall make a firm covenant with many, and the midst of the week shall cause the sacrifice and the meat offering to cease" etc. With what propriety or even sense could "one week," or its half, do these remarkable things? The coming Roman prince is to confirm a covenant with "the mass" of Jews for seven years; and then breaks it when half the time expires. How strange to attribute either to the Messiah! "The many rejected Him and shall receive the Antichrist. "Many" and "the many" are by no means to be confused in Daniel, any more than elsewhere.

Translators (the Revisers among the rest) have not heeded the distinction, nor have commentators generally. It is the few, or the remnant, who receive the Messiah in faith, and in due time (when their wicked brethren, “the many” meet their doom) become the “Israel” that “shall be saved” {Rom. 11:26}. This plainly and powerfully refutes the assumption that the last verse alludes to Christ’s covenant. It is rather a covenant with death and hell; as Isa. 28:15 also lets us know. This will be fox seven years, but broken.

## The Bible Treasury 20:255, 256.

Daniel 9:27 I believe that it is impossible legitimately to connect the death of the Messiah with the Covenant confirmed with the mass, or many, for one week (i.e. 7 years) in this passage; and that for several reasons. First, the Messiah was already regarded as “cut off”‘ at the close of a previous division of the weeks, viz. after the first 7 + 62 = 69 weeks = 483 years. Secondly, the disastrous end of the city and the sanctuary is supposed to have come before the seventieth week begins. (Compare the conclusion of v. 26.) After the Messiah was cut off and before the last week, it will be noticed by the careful reader that there is an interval of indefinite length, filled up by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and a course of war and desolation which is not yet terminated. Thirdly, after all this, comes the last or seventieth week, which has to do with Antichrist as clearly as the first 69 weeks bring us down to Christ’s death, the interruption of the chain being left room for, and supplied in the latter part of verse 26. Fourthly, it is clear that when the Messiah has been cut off, another personage is spoken of as “the prince that shall come,

whom it is absurd to confound with the Messiah, because it is His people who ravage the Jewish city and sanctuary: that is, it is a Roman prince, and not the promised Head of Israel. Fifthly, as this future prince of the Romans is the last person spoken of, it is most natural, unless adequate reasons appear to the contrary, to consider that verse 27 refers to him, and not to the slain Messiah: “and he shall confirm covenant” (not “the” covenant, as the margin shows). Sixthly, this is remarkably strengthened by the time for which the covenant is made {confirmed}, namely, for seven years, which has, in my opinion, no sense if applied to anything founded on the Lord’s death, but exactly coincides with the two periods of 1,260 days (Rev. 11) and 42 months (Rev. 13), during which the Roman beast acts variously in the Apocalypse. Seventhly, it is yet more fortified by the additional-fact that, when half the time of this Covenant expires, “He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease,” just as might be gathered from Rev. 11 and other Scriptures.

## Christian Annotator 4:71 (1857).

The Antichrist

Daniel 11:36 “The king,” in Dan. 11:36, is, without doubt to my mind, the political side of the same Person whom St. John designates religiously or irreligiously as “the Antichrist.” It is clear from Daniel that his seat of power is “the Holy Land” the object of attacks at the close from the powers of the South and of the North (i.e. Egypt, Syria or Turkey of our days). However, his destruction is reserved for the Lord Himself, appearing from heaven (2 Thess. 2:8, Rev. 19:20). It is of the Syrian power (whoever then may hold it) that the last verses of Dan.

11 speak. He also falls by Divine judgment (see Dan. 8:25, 11:45).

The relation of Daniel to the Revelation is a wide subject; but this I may briefly say, that, as Daniel reveals the results of the failure of the earthly people Israel, so Revelation presents the consequences of the failure of the heavenly testimony through out Christendom and the world at large. This remark may help to show the analogy and the difference between the two prophecies. What the former was to the Jew, the latter is to the Church.

Daniel 12:11, 12

I do not think that this passage has the slightest reference to Antiochus Epiphanes; but I am of opinion that Dan. 11:31 was accomplished then, and of this the first and second books of Maccabees treat. Of course there is a strong analogy between the two texts and the evil described, as there will be between that which Antiochus did and “the king” who is to perpetrate even greater abominations in the latter day. It is of this last only that Dan. 12:11, and to this text, not to the former, our Lord referred, in Matt. 24:15. For, clearly, a future scene of iniquity is predicted in the gospel; and this, necessarily, sets aside reference to a monarch who died more than a century and a half before the Lord was born. May I add to Mr. E. B. Elliott’s remark about the absence of the article in Dan. 12:11, while it occurs in Dan. 11:31, that there is this difference also: the text in ch. 11 strictly means “the abomination of the desolator” (polel. part.), whereas in 12 it is simply desolate, making desolate, or, of desolation (kal. part.). Both forms occur in Dan. 9:27, which strictly runs, I

suppose, “and for the wing (i.e., protection, or overspreading) of abominations (idols), there shall be a desolator, even until the consummation, and the decreed sentence be poured upon the desolate.” It is quite impossible to maintain that this was accomplished in the siege of Jerusalem by Titus; for in no sense were the 1290 days (taken either as days or years) followed by the final and eternal blessing of Israel, which the prophecy imports. It is to a future crisis, then, that the prediction applies; and even Mr. Elliott, keenly opposed as He ordinarily is to futurism, allows that these dates may be, as I am entirely persuaded they will be, literal days. The symbolical adjuncts of Dan. 7, 8 are wanting: all here is conveyed in plain and unfigurative terms. Compare with this Matt. 24:22, and indeed the context before and after, which, though partially accomplished, awaits the same times for its fulfillment. The 30 and 45 days, in addition to the 1260, may refer to the ingathering of the Jews and Israel, or, to other changes, after the power of’ evil is overthrown, preparatory to complete blessing

## Christian Annotator 3:272 (1856).

Many:

Daniel 12:2

Many Christians... apply this passage to a literal resurrection. But they are involved in difficulties, from which ingenuity essays in vain, as I think, to extricate them. Instead of commenting on what appears to me mistakes, let me state my firm conviction that a national resuscitation of Daniel’s people, i.e. Israel, is in question here, as in Isa. 26 and Ezek.37. This being understood the entire context is plain. It is at the time of their

deepest distress that Michael stands up, and not merely are all those elect Jews delivered who have been glanced at in the previous parts of this prophecy, but many who are dispersed, as it were buried, or at least slumbering, among the Gentiles, awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Compare Isa. 66, sub finem.). Then follows the peculiar blessedness of the “Maschilim,” i.e. the understanding ones, that instruct the mass in righteousness, who, instead of going out like the moon, though it may appear again, shine as the stars for ever and ever. This figurative application of a resurrection to Israel’s circumstances at the close of the age, is of course perfectly consistent with a real bodily resurrection of saints before, and of the wicked after, the millennium, as in Rev. 20:4-12.

I am aware of the assertion that the phrase — is never used elsewhere in Hebrew as distributive of a general class previously mentioned. But I believe it to be unfounded. The reader has only to examine Joshua 8:22, and he will see that the pronoun is used in a similar way, Israel being the general class, and the same expression as here taking it up distributively. Accordingly, our English Bible in both cases, and in my judgment rightly, translates “some and some.” Of course, it is not denied that in certain circumstances “these” and “those” would well represent the meaning. My opinion is that the other is an equally legitimate rendering, wherever required by the context, as I conceive it to be in both the texts cited. And such, I find, is the view of the Vulgate and Luther as to Dan. 12:2.

Again, I have no sympathy with those who apply this verse to mere temporal deliverance. But it is not a

necessary inference, on the other hand, that the words “everlasting life” imply a resurrection-state. People forget that the saved Israelites in question are supposed to possess eternal life, which certainly may be before any change as to the body. It may help some readers to notice a somewhat parallel case, both in good and evil, as respects the Gentiles in Matt. 24:46.

Plainly, they are the nations at the beginning of the millennium discriminated as sheep and goats, and dealt with by the king without delay. “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.” So, when Israel reapears in that day, sad examples are to “whose worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh”; while others are to be brought an offering to the Lord, who shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. These awake to everlasting life; the others are abandoned to shame and everlasting contempt, apart from the question of {literal} resurrection. It will be a time, not of national deliverance merely, but of signal mercy and judgment from God; and this for Israel after their long sleep among the Gentiles, as well as for such Jews as will have figured more in the previous crisis in the land. The Maschilim seem to be a special class still more distinguished (Dan. 12:3).

## Christian Annotator 2:378 (1855).

Zechariah 12… The “idol shepherd” is Antichrist, whom retributive judgment is to raise up in the land of Judea in the last times. “If another shall come in his own name,

him ye will receive." He shall in the end suffer the sternest vengeance of God. This is no modern opinion....

There is no reason that I see for identifying the stone in Zech. 12:3, with that in Matt. 21:44. The former evidently means Jerusalem itself, the latter the Lord Himself in two positions answering to the two advents. First, in His humiliation, He is a stone as it were in the ground, and "whosoever shall fall on it shall be broken," verified in all unbelievers, but especially in the Jews; next, He is exalted to heaven, and coming again in power and great glory, He will execute destructive judgment — on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." (Cf. Dan. 2, 7; Rev. 19). "A burdensome Stone" is another idea, and will be true of Jerusalem in the latter day, when the Assyrian heads a great Gentile confederacy after the Antichrist is disposed of, which is the subject of Zech. 12:2-6, 14:1-3: also Isaiah, Micah, Daniel, and other prophets, treat of this closing king of the North.

There is no intermingling of the Church or Christian body with the subjects of this prophecy. There may have been some partial application in the past, as there will assuredly be a complete fulfillment in the future; but it is Judah and Jerusalem that are in question, whatever profit the Church or Christian may and ought to draw from this as from all Scripture.

The double reference of John 19:36, and Rev. 1:7, is simply to link both advents into the prophecy, which mainly bears on the second, but presupposes the first, "They shall look on me whom they have pierced." But Rev. 1:7 is so far from intimating a general conversion of mankind previous to the return of the Lord, that it

plainly enough insinuates their then unbelief, for “all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” He will be unwelcome to them.

The mourning of godly awakened consciences, when Jehovah-Jesus is seen, to the final deliverance of Jerusalem, and the total overthrow of all their Gentile foes, is most strikingly described in verses 10-14, but it is in terms which exclude the revival in Ezra’s time, save as being a feeble earnest. Each felt alone with the Lord; and those families are specially named who represent prominent classes in Israel from the beginning, and throughout their history.

## Christian Annotator 3:76 (1856).

Matthew 13 and the Present Hope

Q. How may Matt. 13 be reconciled with 2 Thess. 2, upon the following points? In the prophetic teaching of the Lord Jesus, when on earth, in Matt. 13, there is no present hope, but a prolonged exhortation, at the end of the age, when the wheat is gathered into the garner; whereas, in the teaching of the Holy Ghost from the ascended Lord, the Church is besought “by the coming of the Lord and our gathering together unto him,” as a present hope. Were the Thessalonians “wheat”- or rather are Christians, as such, in Matt. 13 as well as in the epistles? If so, how can the same persons have a present hope, and a protracted one?

B. A. I am not aware of anything that justifies the contrast thus drawn between the parable of the wheat and tare-field, and the instruction in 2 Thess. 2 and elsewhere. The angelic intervention under the authority of the Lord is to gather together first the tares and bind

them in bundles with a view to their yet future destruction, before the wheat is gathered into His barn. but why should this be styled a prolonged expectation? Why should it interfere with the constant hope of the coming of the Lord to receive us to Himself? This parable, like all others, is constricted, as it appears to me, expressly to keep up the habitual looking for the closing scene. One could not collect from it anything to forbid that first generation of disciples expecting to be called away to their heavenly mansions. Of course, the same thing applies to all that followed. Thus I see no reason to doubt that the wheat includes the Thessalonian believers with all other Christians. “In the time of harvest” is not a single point of time with previous events protracting the hope, but the general season of gathering in the saints, executing judgment on the tares already disposed by the angels with a view to it, and then the appearing of the saints in glory, which closes this age and introduces the new one.

### The Bible Treasury 7:64.

The Ten Virgins Matthew 25:1-13

Mr. Weekes’s interpretation appears to me not merely to rest on insufficient and misapplied evidence, but to contradict the general teaching of God’s Word. Whether the lamps had gone, or were only going out, makes no real difference as to the grand teaching of the parable; and, as far as this goes, either the one or the other is quite compatible with the absence of oil. Mr. Weeks’s statement that the foolish “have some oil” is most objectionable: not a word implies it; nay, what is said both by the wise virgins and the Lord would imply the reverse, even if we had not the plain and positive

declaration that the foolish “took their lamps and took no oil with them.” Why might not wicks be lit, and relit, without oil? I agree with Mr. W. that “are going out” is a more correct rendering than the ordinary version; but it in no way shows that the virgins had oil, or that they were more than professors without the Holy Ghost, though responsible for and designated according to the position they assumed. As to the unconverted being called “virgins,” there is no more difficulty there than in the “servant” of the preceding parable. In either ease they took that place, and were judged accordingly. There are Christians who love Christ’s appearing in the midst of much ignorance as to its details There are professors who talk much of the Second Advent, and hold it to be premillennial. But I assuredly believe that the former, if they are alive and remain till the coming of the Lord, will be caught up to meet Him, and that the latter, if they abide unregenerate, must have their portion outside, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

As unfounded is the idea that

ταγματι in 1 Cor. 15:23, means “company,” “band,” “regiment,” while fully admitting of course that such is a frequent signification in profane authors. But here the context is decidedly adverse, whether το τελος be applied, as by Mr. T. R. Birks, to the wicked dead, or, as by Mr. W., to Christians instructed in the Lord’s second coming and kingdom. All or most of the versions at all known and accurate (as the Syriac Vulgate, Beza, Luther, De Wett, Diodati, Martin, Ostervald, the Lausanne, etc.) seem to agree with the authorized version in giving “order.” Indeed, the way in which our Lord’s resurrection is introduced appears to me of itself to exclude such a translation; for His resurrection is the

first step, which perfectly agrees with “order,” but not with “company.” Again, such a view necessitates the harshest possible construction of “the end” ( το τελος), which, by a figure, must be tortured to mean the good (or bad) who are raised then; whereas, in truth, it is most plain that “the end” is really after the kingdom is given up, and, à fortiori, subsequent to all judgment. The white-throne judgment of the dead is one of the closing acts of the kingdom, after which cometh “the end.” Lastly, it would be incongruous to suppose with Mr. W. that after “they that are Christ’s” rise, another regiment of Christ’s should remain to rise. Not a class, but an epoch, is meant by “the end”; an epoch subsequent to the resurrection of the wicked and their judgment.

## Christian Annotator 3:174

Does the Parable of the Ten Virgins Refer to the Jewish Remnant?

Q. Matt. 7:22, 23; Luke 13:25-28. Do these texts warrant the inference that the parable of the virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) refers to the Jewish remnant, rather than to Christendom? J. D. B.

A. — It is a mistake in interpreting scripture to conceive that similarity in one point or more establishes identity, many of which however striking would be of no weight against a single irreconcilable difference. The context (and not verbal analogies even if far stronger than in these instances) is alone decisive. It is worth remarking, just to shew how precarious this ground is, that a well-known living commentator and critic contrasts Matt. 7:23 with ch. 25:12. The truth is, that in the day of the Lord all will be judged who have not been saved, and on similar though not identical grounds; for the Lord will

deal with Jew, Gentile, or Christian profession on their own footing, but in His light. The passage in Luke is proved by the context to be the judgment of the Jews who refused the urgent proffers of Jesus. The passage in Matt. 7 need not be so restrained, though no doubt applying there and then. But the parable of the virgins, both contextually and in its own statements, applies not to the Jews (who have already been fully treated of in the preceding two chapters, nationally and as a remnant), but to professing Christendom consisting of disciples real and unreal. The Jewish remnant will be rather the earthly bride than virgin going out to meet the Bridegroom; neither will they from the first possess the gift of the Spirit (the "oil in their vessels") like the wise virgins; nor will any of them be "foolish" like these, but "the wise"; nor will they go to sleep during their awful hour of trial.

## The Bible Treasury 7:64.

1 Corinthians 6:9 and Partial Rapture

Q. — Does not 1 Cor.6:9 with many like scriptures warrant the inference that Christians who fail in faith or fidelity will be excluded from inheriting the kingdom of God, though saved at the end from the second death?

Mathetes. A. — In no way is this true, but wholly opposed to the mind of God in His word, and productive of nothing but confusion like any other serious error. On the face of this text itself, how can any taught of God allow that one born of the Spirit is to be classed among the ἄδικοι or unrighteous? Compare also the rest of the verse and the following verses, where not failure in a believer is in question, but unqualifiedly wicked characters are denounced, with the very different

statement that “such were some of you, but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” Take one of the strongest apparently for such a construction, Luke 12:45, 46, “But if that bondman should say in his heart, My lord delayeth to come, and begins” etc. We may see from the corresponding parable in Matt.24:48 that it is no case of a believer excluded but of an “evil” servant, a hypocrite. Nor indeed need we travel beyond the further words of Luke to arrive at the same fact; for his lord is said to cut him in twain and appoint his portion with the faithless ( ἀπίστων). Will the Lord so deal with any born of God? It is indeed a far other lot than missing the reign though blessed for eternity, a portion assigned to not a single Christian in a single scripture. That the language of our Lord, and also for the apostle in this Epistle and elsewhere, implies it of professing Christians is true and solemn. “That bondman,” in fact, seems expressly intended to warn of this tremendous issue.

But Christians in the genuine sense, as the query supposes, stand on other ground. If they discerned themselves, they should not be judged. If they grow careless in self-judgment, the Lord does not fail to deal with them. Yet when judged in this way, they are chastened by the Lord, that they should not be condemned with the world, as say the scriptures in the text queried. The doctrine behind the query is wholly false and evil.

### The Bible Treasury, New Series 1:352.

Saints and Believers 2 Thess. 1:10

Q. — 2 Thess. 1:10. What is the difference of saints and believers? and why is the Lord to be glorified in the one and admired in the other? I have asked a good many, and all see the difficulty: if you could throw a little light on it, I should be very thankful. E. C.

A. — The careful reader will note that two classes of enemies are brought before us in v. 8: those that know not God, Gentiles; and those who, if they could not in the same way be said to be ignorant of God, do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, Jews. They were both such as should pay the penalty of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His might, when He shall have come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all that have believed. It is not the moment of the translation of the saints to heaven, but of the appearing or day of the Lord, when He shall come, not to receive them to Himself, but "to be glorified in his saints." This, however, being comparatively vague — for He might be glorified simply in their glorification, and this wholly outside the ken of the earth, — we have greater precision in the next clause, "and to be wondered at in all that have believed." Here display to others is more prominent. It is no question of those who shall be brought to know His glory on earth after He is thus come, but of all those that have believed previously; and as "the saint" in whom He is said to be glorified would fully apply to those of the Old Testament, so I think, "all that have believed" more properly belongs to the present time, when faith has its largest exercise and fullest development. Those of old were separated to God, and though they had faith practically, yet the especial character in reference to God and Christ was hope or trust. Now that redemption

is accomplished, it is in the strictest sense faith. And this seems to be confirmed by the appended parenthetic application to the Thessalonians: “for our testimony to you was believed.” “In that day” belongs, of course, to their manifestation with Christ in glory.

### The Bible Treasury 6:336.

The Catching Up of the Man-child — Revelation 12:5

Q. — Rev. 12. Is the man-child caught up to God and His throne yet future? If so, how do we account for no mention of death and resurrection?

C. R. A. — From Rev. 11:19 is a fresh start in the book, as the seventh trumpet in a general way brings us down to the end. This closes the first volume of the Revelation. The second, beginning with that verse which should introduce ch. 12, tells us, not of “a door opened in heaven,” but of “the temple of God that is in heaven opened.” God’s ark was seen now, the ark of His covenant, though there followed, not only lightnings and voices and thunders, but an earthquake and great hail also. Then were seen signs in heaven: the mother, not the bride, (with supreme government, reflected authority subordinate, and full power in man) yet in travail; and the dragon, wielding the power of the Roman empire, and seeking to devour her child destined to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But the vision omits that work which is the basis of redemption and divine right, and at once shows us Him caught up on high, whilst the woman flees into the wilderness for 1,260 days. It is a mystical presentation of Christ with Whom the church is hidden, as in O.T. figures, caught up to heaven, without date, save that the woman’s flight into the wilderness is measured out, during which she is

protected but has in no way the glory and power on the earth that is to be her portion. But heaven meanwhile is cleared of the great enemy and his angels; which is plainly future, and cannot be till after the rapture of the saints on high. The accuser of the brethren is not yet expelled. For the N.T. recognizes that our wrestling is against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies. But Satan and his emissaries shall surely be cast down, never more to regain access there as now; and the contest for the earth is decided in due time, when He Whose right it is shall unite heaven and earth and all things under His away. Thus the ascension of Christ is mystically identified with that of the heavenly saints; just as what is said of Messiah in Isa. 1 is applied to Christians in the later verses of Rom. 8. Still more easily is this understood in the symbols of a prophetic book like the Revelation. The signs being seen in heaven does not mean that the object in view is heavenly for the woman any more than for the countless crowd of Gentiles in chap. 7. The mother is as clearly the earthly people, as the heavenly bride is the church.

### The Bible Treasury, New Series 2:287-288.

The Fall of the Dragon and His Hosts — Rev. 12

Q. — Matt. 24:29. Is there any ground to identify the shaking of “the powers of the heavens” (or, as in Mark 13:14 the powers that are in the heavens”) with the fall of the dragon and his hosts from heaven in Rev. 12? The time does not at all agree. If not, what is meant? C. L.

A. — The difficulty suggested as to the date can have no place whatever. Other questions may arise as to the force of words. In Rev. 12 Satan is cast down, clearly before the last great tribulation, greatly enraged,

because he knows he has but a short time, and persecutes the woman for the time, times, and half a time. In the passage in the gospels, where the mark of time seems precise (Matt. 24, Mark 13), the shaking of the powers of the heavens is after the tribulation. That is, the casting down of Satan in Revelation 12. is before, and introductory to the last tribulation; in Matt.24 and Mark 13 the shaking of the powers of the heavens is after the tribulation.

Thus, as events, they have nothing to do with one another. In Luke 21 the expression is vague and gives a general ground for what happens.

The enquiry then is simply, without any reference to the fall of Satan from heaven, what these terms mean.

It seems to me that in Luke there is mixed metaphor; in Matthew and Mark it is more in the style of O.T. prophecy. I have little doubt that the scene will be as mixed as the metaphor — terrible signs actually given (compare Luke 21:11); and, besides that, an actual disruption of all existing powers, and terror on every heart, with the tumultuous swellings of peoples. Compare Ps. 93 where I do not believe it is mere literal waters. Further, I find in Dan. 8:10 the host and the stars clearly refer to rulers (Jewish priestly rulers) on the earth. Now I do not doubt the shakings and subversion of the future (before the great and terrible day of the Lord) will be much greater and more terrible than what is in Daniel 8; but this gives an inlet into what those expressions mean. I would not confine this tremendous breaking up of existing powers and rule to Jewish ones there, though it is in Dan. 8, because Gentiles and Jews are all mixed up together, the sacrifice

taken away, and idolatry come in. But there will be more than a revolution — a subversion and upsetting of all manifested and organic powers. There is an analogous upsetting of all powers in Rev. 11, supposed by the inhabitants of the earth to be the great day of the Lamb's wrath, which it is not, but only a precursor of it. I refer to it to show that such subversions of all constituted powers are so spoken of, without any raising of the question whether Satan is cast down from heaven or not. This is before the trumpets and the vials; the end of the last tribulation comes after it — somewhere at the end of the second woe-trumpet, and then God's judgment by Christ Himself. The beast and the final tribulation are a special subject, besides the general government under which these, shakings come; and they are so given in the Apocalypse. The general government of God applies to the nations at large; the beast is in connection with the rejection of Christ and enmity to Him. They go on concurrently, but the latter is a special matter.

The Seven Heads and the Seven Kings — Rev.17:9-11

Q. Rev. 17:9-11. How are we to understand "the seven heads" and "seven kings?" Is it legitimate to take "the seven heads" as 1, Egypt; 2 Assyria; 3, Babylon; 4, Medo-Persia; 5, Greece; 6, Rome; 7, Israel in its apostate state? And is it correct that "the seven kings" can be, 1, Pharaoh; 2, Sennacherib; 3, Belshazzar; 4, Antiochus Epiphanes; 5, Herod; 6, Nero; 7, Napoleon; 8, anti-Christ? F. R. G. S.

A. — One of the most important helps everywhere for right interpretation is a firm adhesion to the context. In the present case the object before us is the Beast or

Roman Empire, which the Holy Seer beholds in its last form before it goes into perdition. The seven heads are doubly interpreted. They are seven mountains (or hills), whereon the woman sits (cp. v. 18). Rome is the seat geographically, not Jerusalem, nor the plain of Shinar. But they are seven kings, or differing forms of ruling power. The Beast is thus distinguished. There had been, 1, kings; 2, consuls; 3, dictators; 4, decemvers; 5, military tribunes; who held successively and constitutionally the imperium. And these five were fallen. The sixth was actually then in power — emperors. The seventh had not yet come; and it was to be transient. "And the Beast that was and is not, himself also is an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition." Thus the context fixes the heads, not only in connection with a Roman seat, but to the peculiar and complete changes of its ruling powers, explaining that the last is an eighth, and yet one of the seven. It is the imperial form, which had been wounded to death (Rev. 13:3), revived by the dragon as the resurrection-head of the empire rising up at the close against the risen Lord of glory. The introduction of other kingdoms or empires, south, north, and east, long before the Roman empire began, is out of the way imaginative; still more so the strangely unconnected episode, as that of the queried list of kings. Even in the heads, as here mistakenly separated from the kings, to make apostate Israel the seventh head of the Roman empire is a singularly wide if not wild conjecture. Hengstenberg followed by the late Dean Vaughan so took six of the heads, but the seventh to be the ten horns in a cluster! a not much happier guess than Israel, though somewhat more homogeneous. The context suffices to correct all such thoughts. The proposal was to explain the seven heads, which we have

in vers. 9-11; then the ten horns, which follow in vers. 12-14.

### The Bible Treasury, New Series 2:15-16.

Fine Linen Rev. 19:8

Q. Rev. 19:8. What is the meaning of the inspired explanation of the symbolical “fine linen?”

B. A. Observe, first, that it is said to be the righteousness “of saints,” not of God, but of His people. Secondly, it is not exactly their righteousness, but their “righteousnesses” ( δικαιώματα). This it is impossible in any just sense to understand of the righteous standing which is made ours in Christ. God’s righteousness in Him is the same for all saints. But each saint here will have his or her own righteousness. Hence it is no question of taking up the saints to heaven, which will be the crowning act of grace, nor of our presentation in the Father’s house way suitable to His grace. We must therefore distinguish between the white raiment of Rev. 4 and the fine linen of Rev. 19. The one was the clothing of pure grace, the fruit of divine righteousness in Christ. But in ch. 19. it was given to the bride to be arrayed in “fine linen” which is expressly said to be the saints’ righteousness. It is in view of our appearing with Christ before the world, and consequently when all the righteous results of the ways of the saints shall be manifested.

### The Bible Treasury 7:160.

Translation of Revelation 20:5.

Q. T.C.J. (N.Y.) sends Zion’s Watch Tower, Vol. 4, No. 12, and asks whether the following paragraph (p. 2, col. 2)

is true. “It is an important scripture; and a line on the subject would be appreciated by many of us.”

“Rev. 20:5, first clause, which reads, “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” is the subject of dispute. We showed conclusively that the above text has no support from any authority older than “the middle of the fifth century.” It is not found in any of the older MSS. — it is not in the Syriac — and the confessedly oldest, most complete, and best of all Greek MSS. of the New Testament, the Sinaitic — does not contain those words. It is wanting too in several of the more recent MSS., among which is the Vatican, No. 1160, a MS. of special clearness and harmony with the most ancient ones.”

A. The criticism, there need be no hesitation in saying, is unfounded; of which there can scarce be conceived a better proof than the fact that out of more than 500 editions of the Greek New Testament not one known to me exhibits the text desired. All present the clause which these manuscripts and the Syriac V. omit. Every editor of the most ordinary information knew of the various reading in question; yet not a single man of judgment has ever doubted that the omission is an error owing to one of the most fertile sources of variants, homoeoteleuton, as it is technically called. The clause before (end of v. 4) closed with the words χίλια ἔτη; and so does the first clause of v. 5. This naturally misled the eyes of weary scribes. So the critical editors in all lands and times have judged. But it “has no support from any authority older than ‘the middle of the fifth century’“! Can the Ed. of Z.W.T. have weighed his own words? There is but one MS. of the Revelation older, the Sinaitic; which is often and notoriously faulty, and no

where more so than in this Book. Thus in Rev. 20 only, ἐκ τοῦ οὐρ. in v. 1 is omitted; the precisely same sort of error as in 5 occurs in its form of v. 2, 3, from αὐτόν to αὐτόν being omitted. In v. 6 it adds καί in error. In v. 8 it omits wrongly τῆς γῆς τόν; and it wrongly adds πάντα, and καί after M. In 9 there is the corrected insertion in error of ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, and in 10 ὅπου is falsely repeated. In 11 there is the mistake of ἐπανω for ἐπ, as the article is wrongly dropped from 12, with ἐπί for ἐνώπιον, with the absurd correction of both inserted later. In 13 is the misreading against all authorities of κατεκρίθησαν. In 14 καί is added wrongly and ὁ is wrongly left out. In 15 the future supplants the aorist. Now large as this list is, all the blemishes of the Sinaitic text of this one chapter are not here registered, but enough surely to prove how little the real character of that document is known, and how precarious it would be to demand support from authority older than the middle of the fifth century.

Next, though the Peschito Syriac was made in very early days, we have no MS. of any great antiquity; and even if we had, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, with Jude, are supplied from a later version, and the Revelation from a copy in the Leyden library, whose age is so uncertain, and character of text so doubtful, that it ranges very low indeed in a critical point of view.

The Alexandrian Uncial (A) is a capital authority as to the Rev.; and so is the Eph.. Reser. of Paris (C), but here we do not hear its voice after 19:5. But the Alex. is, like it, of the fifth century and is supported by the Basilian Vat. 2066, a MS. of far greater weight than the cursive 40 (=Vat. 1160), by an adequate number of cursives of which more than twenty have the same defect here as. All the ancient versions, save de Dieu’s Syriac, confirm

the clause, as well as the early commentators, Greek and Latin.

Further, the clause is so entirely in keeping with the context that, if we had not these words at the opening of v. 5, the same truth is conveyed, or supposed, by the first resurrection of the righteous who reign with Christ for a thousand years (vv. 4-6), followed by the little while of Satan's last deceit and war of the external nations, and the standing before the great white throne for eternal judgment of the dead, who had had no part in the resurrection of life and glory.

## The Bible Treasury 16:96.

Where Will the Heavenly Saints Reign? Revelation 20

Q. — A friend of mine says that the living and reigning with Christ refers to those beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and cannot apply to a reign on earth. It is, he says, a vision in heaven. Would you kindly refute this error in "The Bible Treasury" for August? Yours truly, A SUBSCRIBER.

A. — The reign of Christ and the glorified saints is heavenly, but over the earth. Only the old Chiliasts, and their modern followers, treat it as "on" the earth, as is wrongly said in the Authorized and even the Revised versions of Rev. 5:10. The local dwelling is properly ἐν, the sphere of rule is ἐπί, a distinction maintained in Hellenistic Greek, as in the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament. The vision being "in heaven" determines nothing as to actual place, as we may see from Rev. 12 and elsewhere. Nor is it confined to those beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, but comprehends, first the general body of saints in those seen seated on

thrones, then those beheaded, and lastly such as refused the worship of the beast and his mark. The first general class was already risen; the two other companies only now lived, in order to reign with Christ, as all of course are to do. “Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?... Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Cor. 6:2, 3).

### The Bible Treasury 16:128.

Application of Revelation 22:17

I do not wonder that Mr. Haskins finds difficulties in accepting the interpretation of those who apply this verse exclusively to the Lord, or to sinners. The truth is, that the former portion refers to the one, and the latter to the other. Nothing can be sweeter nor clearer, when seen. Jesus had just announced Himself as not merely the root and the offspring of David, but the bright and morning star. Immediately the Church, with the bridal affections, says, Come. It is the Bridegroom that thus awakens her desires that He should come. He is the first object of the heart, and lest it should be thought to be a thought to be a mere human, unsanctioned longing, it is added, “the spirit and the bride say, Come.” But there are many who have heard His voice and been washed in His blood who yet feebly know their privileges in Him; they little if at all appreciate what He is as the Bridegroom, what they are as His bride. Are these to be silent? Nay, “let him that heareth say Come.” They may know His love but imperfectly: but let them not fear to say, Come. But does not such a hope, such a waiting of the heart, hinder one’s yearning after poor souls? Enemies have said so; mistaken friends may have thought so; but God links the two most blessedly

together. If the bride, if the individual saint, owe the first love of the heart to Him who is coming to meet us in the air, so much the more can we turn round to the needy world and invite him that is athirst to come (not to say, Come, which to him, indeed, were but judgment). Nay, even if I meet a soul who perhaps has not yet known deep soul-thirst, yet is willing, I can bid him freely welcome, “whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.” It is a perfectly beautiful scene, which the Lord grant us better to know and enjoy by the Holy Ghost!

## Christian Annotator 3:51 (1856).

Will the Church Escape the Great Tribulation?

By E. Shackelton. Sec. Ed. With Suppl. London: J. F. Shaw.

As this pamphlet has been sent for notice, it is almost enough to say that it is Newtonian {B. W. Newton} prophetically, with the ignorance of the distinctively intimate as well as heavenly relationship of the church to Christ, which characterizes that school. The author must be strangely unacquainted with “Dissenters,” if he believes that what he calls “the secret-rapture view” originated among people most of all indifferent to the church and its hopes, as well as to prophecy; perhaps he only means persons who left the English Establishment, or, who, at any rate, were outside it.

He is also surprised that truth so important should only of late have been learnt from scripture. How could Mr. Shackleton expect such a thing in the early fathers, if he is really acquainted with their writings? Which of them escaped the Galatian leaven? Now it is remarkable that this Epistle {Galatians}, which aims at clearing the

churches of that country from a misuse of the law — the bane of the patristic writings generally, is precisely that in which the apostle never speaks openly of the Lord's second coming. What was the use to those who had lost the virtue of His first coming? The Reformers were too absorbed in contending for justification, as well as against Popery, to search into prophecy or the church. And what real advance has been made since? I fear there has been in general a departure from much that was then recovered. Our appeal must therefore be to scripture only. The fathers invented the miserable system of expunging Israel and Judah from O. T. prophecy: for them, all was "the church"; and so with most Anglicans, and almost all "Dissenters," to this day. Their lucubrations therefore about the Antichrist and the great tribulation are worthless. The Protestant scheme went farther astray in denying the individuality of the Antichrist, as well as his literal place in the temple at Jerusalem in the consummation of the age, and converting the days into nothing but years. But both alike Judaized the church by blotting out Israel's true hopes, through misappropriating Jewish scriptures; and Mr. S. is not clear of this error, through which he is bitter against those who would distinguish what is Christian from Jewish.

In vain you adduce some absurd individual, who counted 2 Timothy Jewish, and only Eph. and Col. applicable to the church. After knowing the Christians to whom he seems to refer widely and well for more than forty years, I can affirm that no such folly has ever existed among them to my knowledge, without denying the fact of Mr. S.'s unhappy experience. The only writer I ever heard of that applied all the Rev. to Jews was an English

clergyman. Mr. S., one presumes, allows that Israel and the Jews as such have a large place in the book. Does he hold that God carries on the church on earth at the same time that he works savingly in that nation as a distinct object? Surely this were confusion and error. That God should save Gentiles as such, simultaneously with His renewed dealings with the chosen people, is exactly what the Rev. attests; whilst all this time the church is never spoken of as on earth, but its symbol is seen in heaven. Here all is harmony, yet so little does Mr. S. understand the matter, that he cites Mosheim and Milner against Origen's allegorising; whereas be ought to know that, whatever their differences in detail, all three (with the mass of medievals as well as moderns) agree in the blinding error of putting the church, instead of Christ, as the object of the divine counsels in scripture. Take Christ as the true center of all, and room is left for the Jews, and the Gentiles, as well as for the church of God, each in its own time and true relation to Him. Then Zion is Zion, and the church is itself. None more opposed to the vicious spiritualizing of Mosheim, Milner, Origen, and the theologians generally, than those he combats.

If Mr. S. desires to read an anticipative answer to almost all his arguments in his pp. 15-83, he can find them in the B. T. 1 (second edition) 203, 218, 231, 232, 243, 249, 259. Let me, if I may, recommend to him, however, and others also, the only satisfactory course: instead of arguing, to read, with prayer and care, scriptures which treat of the future tribulation, with this question throughout before God: — Of whom in each passage does the Holy Spirit clearly speak? After all, the texts, as has been shown in this journal already, are neither many

nor obscure: Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21; (and Mark 13:19); Rev. 3:10, and 7. Now, beyond controversy, the first four treat only of the Jews, and the sixth expressly of the Gentiles; whilst the fifth, which alone certainly speaks of the church, gives the promise of being kept, not in or during, but “from the hour of temptation,” which no doubt includes the last tribulation.

Let Mr. S. shake off his new bias and face these scriptures with simplicity. He will not then misapply John 17:15, to deny the plain force of Rev. 3:10; nor will he confound the sheep and the goats with the brethren of the King {Matt. 25:31-46}, still less with the glorified saints; and he will get to understand the translation of 2. Thess.2:2 exhibited by the Revisers and all scholars, instead of giving it up as “almost unintelligible.” The apostle beseeches the saints for the sake of ( ὑπέρ) the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him (Whom they were waiting for, as the bright object of hope), to the end that they should not be quickly shaken, nor yet troubled, by any kind of influence, as that the day of the Lord had set in (or is already come). This, and this only, is the true meaning; which Mr. S.’s mistaken theory prevents him from even apprehending. It is the effect of error to exclude the truth. Where God’s word is thus made null and void, it ought to raise in a grave spirit the fear of being under some withering tradition of man.

## The Bible Treasury 16:223, 224.

The Two Parts of the Lord’s Coming

Q. — Can the Parousia (Coming in Person) of the Lord be separated from His Epiphaneia (shining upon); or from His Apokalupsis (Revelation)?

A. — Without doubt, the first is distinct in character and even in time, if scripture is to decide, as it surely ought. Add two other words, Hemera (day) and Phanerosis (manifestation), to give a substantial form to the verb often used in this connection. For the truth is that "coming" or "presence" ( π.) as applied to the future of our Lord does not involve display {in glory, at the appearing}, unless modified by other links such as "Son of Man," (as in Matt. 24:27, 37, 39), or by a term which openly adds it (as in 2 Thess. 2:8), or by facts like 1 Thess. 3:13. These accompaniments unquestionably intimate not "presence" {parousia} only, but its display. Now such texts as 1 Cor. 16:17; 2 Cor. 7:6, 7; 2 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 1:26; 2:12; as well as the 2 Thess. 2:8, simply prove the general fact of a personal arrival or presence; and 2 Peter 3:12 is not exactly our Lord's own coming, but that "of the day of God," though no doubt our Lord will then have come also.

It is not contested that Parousia is applied very frequently to our Lord's corning again, as in both Epistles to the Thessalonians, in the First to the Corinthians, and in those of James, Peter, and John. And all admit that Epiphaneia means "appearing" (as it should be in 2 Thess. 2:8), and apokalupsis "revelation," both applied often to the manifestation of the Lord, like φανερόω, in His "day." But how do these scriptures prove to a demonstration that Parousia is not distinct in character as well as time from the words indicating display? Mr. B. assumes, but never even approaches, the proof. He marshals the various occurances, and

forthwith states his conclusion without a reason. What is the worth of this ?

The intelligent reader sees that, where grace is in question, the coming, or presence, of the Lord is set out; where responsibility and its results, it is “the appearing,” “day,” etc. This disposes of Mr. B.’s first effort at an argument in p. 15, whilst the revelation of Christ will still be the full favor of the saints in its display. Instead of confounding Christ’s Parousia and the connected gathering of the saints unto Him in 2 Thess. 2:1 with the Epiphany of His Parousia which annuls “the man of sin,” the pointed difference of the phrase ought to have led him to distinguish them. If His coming to gather the saints together to Himself were necessarily visible, where is the force of adding the appearing of His coming {2 Thess 2:8} when it is a question of destroying the Antichrist? But there is much more when we take in the light afforded by the second verse, and the context generally. For the error which the Thessalonian misleader taught was that “the day of the Lord was actually present.” This the apostle dissipates, first, by beseeching them by, or for the sake of, the Lord’s coming ( παρουσία) and our gathering together unto Him; secondly, by the declaration that that day was not to be unless the apostasy first came and the man of sin were revealed, whereas a hinderer acted as yet till he should go. Mr. B.’s confusion not only makes the added epiphaneia {v. 8} meaningless, if Parousia in itself is a display, but it renders the motive, urged in v. 1 against the delusion of v. 2, not only powerless, but unintelligible. For if the Lord’s coming and His day coalesce, as they do absolutely in Mr. B.’s view, there is no sense in the passage; whereas to recall the saints to

their hope was calculated to guard them from the false rumor that the day had set in. Then we have the plain disproof that follows: the cup of Christendom's iniquity was not yet full, as it must be before the Lord Jesus judges it (not at His coming, but) at the appearing of His coming. What he calls "the secret rapture" deserves to fall, if assumption, and arguments like these {of Mr. B.}, dispose of it completely.

Mr. B. has to learn that Matt. 24, 25 is a large prophecy, which deals with the Jews first, with Christendom in the central parables, and finally with all the Gentiles alive in that day. Hence "Son of man" (Christ's judicial title) is His title with the Jews and the Gentiles, but disappears in the part that relates to the Christian profession. The critics. (Tregelles, like the rest) little knew the service they were rendering to the truth in striking out the spurious clause at the end of Matt. 25:13. The Parousia of the Son of Man is judicial for the earth; the Parousia in 1 Cor. 15:23 is to raise the saints that sleep for heaven, though all admit they will be manifested with Him in glory at that day. Mr. B. also ignores the fact that the "shout" of the Lord in 1 Thess. 4 is word quite peculiar and of special relationship, as of an admiral to his sea-men, or of a general to his soldiers. There would be no propriety in employing such word if it were a shout for everybody. It is no question of shaking earth and heaven, though this will be also; and it is amazing to see Ps. 50:4,5; Jer. 30:30; Hosea 11:10; and Rev. 1:7 classed with so wholly different an aim. Those that come out of the great tribulation in Rev. 7 are expressly distinguished from the elders and the four living creatures, who symbolize (one or both) the saints seen glorified in heaven from Rev. 4 and onward. And Rev.

20:4, in the grand description of those saints who share the First Resurrection, gives three classes: those already enthroned (embracing the O.T. saints, and the church), who followed Christ out of heaven; the early Apocalyptic sufferers (Rev. 6:9); and their brethren who were to be killed as they, after the Beast and the False Prophet ravaged beyond example, as we see also in Dan. 7. “The consummation of the age,” in Matt. 13, is not an epoch, but a period or season, in which distinct operations take place, beginning with the severing of the darnel and the gathering from the field of the wheat, and ending with the burning of the darnel, the lawless ones, when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, that is, in the heavenly sphere which sovereign grace gave them to share with Christ. The just application of Luke 21:25-36 will be manifest from the context, and is in perfect accordance with the title of the Son of Man seen coming in a cloud with power and great glory. If we fail to distinguish things that differ, only confusion and error can ensue.

## The Bible Treasury 16:222, 223.

When Will the Saints be Caught Up?

Q. — Will the saints be caught up before Lord comes in glory and the tribes of the earth mourn because of Him?

A1. Matt. 24. Here there is no hint of the Church’s escaping the great tribulation, except by sudden flight; nor of any other παρουσια except that which we are to expect after the tribulation. (See vv. 23, 27, 29.) Nor of any gathering of His elect unto Him except in v. 31, after the great tribulation. In vv. 32, 33 we are directed to “know that it is near, even at the doors, when we shall

see all these things," i.e., those which are described in vv. 7-29.

A2. 1 Thess. 4. The living will not be changed before the dead in Christ are raised (v. 15); then (1 Cor. 15:51) we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (literally, for the trumpet shall sound) — all, not same only, of those who believe. And the trumpet mentioned in Matt. 24:31, when all the elect are to be gathered together, cannot be subsequent, or the other would not be the last trump.

A3. The caution of 2 Thess. 2:1-12 seems to imply that the Church must witness the full revelation and ενεργεια of the wicked one, and then expect the immediate coming of our Lord.

Q. It is true, we are to be continually looking for the coming of our Lord; but is this inconsistent with the expectation of a previous tribulation? Q.Q.

A. — The Old Testament saints and the Church, which is being now formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, will be caught up to meet the Lord before His coming as Son of man in power and great glory, when all the tribes of the earth (or the land) lament. This necessarily follows from the doctrine laid down in Col. 3:4 compared with 1 Cor. 15:23, 1 Thess. 4, 2 Thess. 2, and other scriptures, and from the prophetic intimation of Rev. 4, 5 compared with Rev. 17:14, Rev. 19:14. For if Christ and the glorified saints appear together at the self same time in glory, it is evident that the saints must have been caught up, changed into His likeness, before that common manifestation of Him and them. Besides, the Revelation indicates their presence above, after their translation there, and before their appearing along

with Him, under the symbol of the crowned and enthroned elders, who are seen in heaven when the seven churches disappear (Rev. 2, 3), and before the pre-millennial judgment of Rev. 19, and the millennium of Rev. 20. This interval is occupied here below by God's preparation of Jews and Gentiles (separate from the glorified) who will be to His praise on earth, as the Old Testament saints and the Church will be in heaven when the administration of the fulness of times is put under Christ, the Head of all things heavenly and earthly.

1. This helps to render Matt. 24:15-41 perfectly plain. Certainly there is no hint of the church's escaping the tribulation by sudden flight here; for those spoken of are a remnant of converted Jews who will be found in Jerusalem, in connection with the temple and the Sabbath in the latter day. What possible ground is there to predicate this of the Church of God, which is neither Jew nor Gentile, and which, save at its first origin, is found everywhere under heaven? What reason to take it away from the last days of this age, when God will again be savingly at work among the Jews in their land, protecting a remnant from the last fiery tribulation which the Antichrist will occasion, and fitting them as a people for the Lord, when He comes for their deliverance in the clouds of heaven, and the mass being apostate will be filled with terror and mourning and shame at His sudden glory which flashes on the world? That the elect of Matt. 24:31 cannot possibly mean the Church is evident, if it were only from the passage itself; for the sight of the Son of man appals all the tribes before He sense His angels to gather these elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now if you apply this to the same scene and persons as

Col. 3:4, you set one scripture against another — the unerring proof of error. Distinguish between the saints already caught up, to be glorified with Him on high, and these elect gathered from all places of their dispersion here below, to be blessed under His reign here below, and the balance of truth is preserved. No doubt, the gathering of the elect here, then, is after the great tribulation, but it is also after His appearing. It is therefore not the Church which appears with Him when He appears in glory, and which is promised (in Rev. 3:10) exemption not only from the place and circumstances of the great coming temptation, but also from its hour. The signs are, as usual, for the Jewish saints, who were wont to ask such things as evidence of the approaching accomplishment of their hopes.

2. 1 Thess. 4. No one contends that the living will be changed before the dead in Christ are raised. It is clear that, the latter being raised, and we who are then alive being changed as they, all together will be caught up to the Lord. The “last trump” of 1 Cor. 15 is an allusion to the final signal of the break up of a Roman camp for its March. It has nothing whatever to do with the loud sound of trumpet in Matt. 24 (with which cp. Isa. 27:13), any more than with the seven trumpets of Rev. 7-11.

Undoubtedly when the Lord at His coming or presence (

παρουσία) gathers the changed saints to Himself in the air, it is all, not some only, of those who up to that time have believed (compare πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύσασιν in 2 Thess. 1:10. But how does this present a difficulty to such as see from Scripture that others subsequently are to be converted, kept through the tribulation and blessed in the millennial kingdom of the Lord? It is the

querist's system which is at fault, not leaving sufficient room for all the elements, and of course therefore both leading to confusion in the various parts, and presenting a defective result. 1 Cor. 15 presents (and so I may add 1 Thess. 4) our last trump, because the question is of the risen saints; Matt. 24:31, presents, if you will, the last trump of the Jewish saints then scattered over the earth. How does this identify the two, even if the trumpet in Matt. 24 had been styled the last trump, or "his elect," were called "all the elect," neither of which is the fact? Is it a contradiction if the historian speaks of the last trump sounding for the tenth legion in Gaul, and of the trumpet gathering the twelfth legion in Syria?

3. 2 Thess. 2:1-12 cautions us against the error of those who confounded the coming of the Lord to gather His saints on high with His day upon the lawless one. The misleaders of the Thessalonian believers sought to alarm them by the false cry that the day of the Lord was already present ( ὡς ὅτι ἐνέστηκεν ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου). This the apostle dispels, first, by a motive of consolation for the heart, as well as, secondly, by an express prophecy. First, he beseeches them, by the coining of the Lord and their gathering together to Him, not to be shaken or troubled by this pretense (for which they feigned a revelation and even a letter of the apostle). The first act of the Lord, bound up with His very presence, is the translation of His own beloved ones to Himself. But, secondly, that day (mark, he does not say the Lord's παρουσία, but His day) should not come till the full development of the evil which His day is to judge. The mystery of lawlessness is now restrained: when he who hinders its outburst is withdrawn, then shall be revealed the lawless one whom the Lord Jesus

will destroy by the breath of His mouth and annul by the appearance of His coming. Observe the striking difference between the terms in vv. 1, 8. When it is a question of gathering the saints, the phrase is simply His coming or presence; when it is a question of His day or dealing in judgment with the lawless one, it is the shining forth of His coming — not παρουσία only, but ἐπιφάνεια τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ. The real caution of the chapter would have preserved the querist from an error kindred in principle, though not in form, to that which wrought among the Thessalonians. We are then to be continually expecting the Lord, apart from either external signs or the final great tribulation, which Scripture connects with others, not with us, after we have been translated to heaven.

## The Bible Treasury 6:159, 160.

When Are O.T. Saints Raised?

Q. — When will the Old Testament saints be raised ? Are they included in “them that are Christ’s at his coming” (1 Cor. 15:23), and raised when the Church is caught up? (1 Thess. 4) in which case they would be said to “sleep through Jesus,” and to be “the dead in Christ.” Or, do they wait some little time longer, and only raised on the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15-19), where “thy servants the prophets” are spoken of together with others (the seventh trumpet being the final one of this dispensation, and thus in keeping with the word to Daniel in ch. 12:13, “Go thy way till the end be; and thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days”)? And still more striking is that which Job says (Job 19:25-27), “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth... in

my flesh shall I see God." Was not this expecting Him on the earth, as Christ will be in the millennium? (Zech. 14; Acts 1). H. W. T.

A. — I see no reason to doubt that all saints who have died will be raised up when Christ comes and changes us, the living, that remain to the moment of His presence, and both shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. "Those that are the Christ's," in 1 Cor. 15:23, seem to me a category put in an expressly large style so as to embrace the saints before the Church as we as such as compose it. Compare Heb. 11 {: 40}. And this is confirmed by the special communication which begins at 1 Cor. 15:51; "Behold I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Here there is a secret beyond the Old Testament which revealed no more than the resurrection and the coming with the Lord in the day of' His appearing. (Job 19, Zech. 14). But the apostle was inspired to add both the manner of raising the dead saints and especially the change of us, the living, then found here below, who shall all be alike changed, and, according to 1 Thess.4, caught up to meet the Lord above. Hence in this latter scripture "those put to sleep through Jesus" may be said of dead Christians (the occasion of the need of comfort to the living), while the next verse speaks with greater comprehensiveness of those fallen asleep in general. Again, "the dead in Christ" need not be restrained to those since redemption; it is in contrast with the dead in Adam or after a merely natural sort.

There is nothing said of raising saints from the dead under the seventh trumpet, though I do not object to the conclusion that, as it is the winding up of God's appeals to the world and the introduction of the world-kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, so it announces the judicial recompense in broad terms up to the end. The time of award to His servants the prophets, and to the saints, etc., does not fix it as the moment of their resurrection — they may well have been raised before, At any rate nothing of the kind can he built on a passage which is silent as to that for which it is alleged.

Nor is there the least warrant to connect "the seventh trumpet" with "the last trump" of 1 Cor. 15, nor even with the "great sound of a trumpet" in Matt. 24. "The seventh" is of course the closing one of the Apocalyptic series and of the general course of the book up to the kingdom. "The last trump)" of 1 Cor. 15 means simply the final summons when the heavenly saints leave their earthly sojourn to join the Lord — a figure, like others in the chapter, taken from familiar military matters. The trumpet in the gospel is rather connected with the divine call to gather Israel from all lands according to the prophets. There is no doubt that when this point is reached all the departments of the kingdom, heavenly and earthly, will be occupied and displayed by Christ, the risen saints, and the people of' God, nor will it cease till every creature, even of the lost, bows and confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Daniel and Job will be there, of course, among the rest.

The scripture which is most to the point (of proving saints raised just before the millennial kingdom begins) is Rev. 20:4; but I see no reason to doubt that the first class already enthroned includes the Old Testament

saints with the Church, while the two classes particularly described and then raised in addition to the foregoing are only the apocalyptic confessors. This then gives no countenance to the view that the Old Testament saints are reserved till then. The sufferers at the end of this age are specified as then made to live and reign with Christ: else they might seem to have lost all, as regards the kingdom. No others are said to be raised at that time.

### The Bible Treasury 7:80.

Looking for the Appearing

Q. — If the Church is with the Lord, caught up to Him at His coming, how can any Christian love or look for His subsequent appearing? 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:13. So 1 Thess. 2:19, 23 seem to teach, not a secret previous coming for Christians, but the same as 1 John 2:28; Rev. 1:7; Mark 8:38. So that revelation, appearing, and coming seem to me synonymous and synchronical. A resurrection from out of the dead and a change of the living saints visibly going up to meet the Lord seems to me a more sober idea, if I may speak, and to do less violence to ordinary scripture statement, than a secret rapture, which seems to be both unnecessary and based on a very few and not very distinct scriptures. They are all (as I think) the same event, though many acts are folded up therein. J. L.

A. — The presence (

παρουσία) of Christ is His coming, or rather state of being present, in contrast with His absence, and is in itself equally compatible with being visible or not at His pleasure (as we see after His resurrection). The solution

of the question depends on other scriptures and cannot be decided by the bare word “coming” or “presence.” One of these scriptures is the comparison of 2 Thess. 2:1 with v. 8. On the face of it, verse 1 binds together His coming or παρουσία with the gathering together of the saints to Himself. This is the motive for comfort against the terror of the day of the Lord, which the false teachers were seeking to bring on the souls of the Thessalonians. The false rumour that His day was actually arrived, or present ( ἐνέστηκεν), was effectually dispelled by the sweet information that that day of awful associations for the world should not be there before the full development and open display of that lawlessness, which was already at work in secret ways. For the day of the Lord is ever the predicted period of judgment on man’s evil, which it is to put down and cleared away, in order that the good of God’s kingdom may be no longer hidden or hindered but shine out to His everlasting praise. Hence it is said that the lawless one (for so it will end) shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy, or annul, by the appearing of His coming with the Lord’s presence to assemble His saints to Himself, but with His judicial action on the Antichrist.

Plainly, the coming or presence of the Lord is the great general truth. It embraces indeed His appearing as one of its acts or characters, but it includes much more. Hence, when precision is sought (as here to counteract a false impression, which the enemy sought to endorse with the apostle’s name), we have the παρουσία distinguished from the epiphany, or shining forth of that παρουσία. Now it is evident that, if the coming of Christ necessarily implies visibility to all the world, there is no

force in the distinction; if, on the contrary, He might come to gather His saints without appearing to any beyond themselves, and then subsequently cause His coming or presence to be manifest in the destruction of the lawless one, nothing can be more appropriate or exact than the phraseology here employed.

There is no difficulty, accordingly, in apprehending how Timothy or others could be exhorted in view of Christ's appearing, spite of the gathering of the saints on high previously. The act of translating the saints above is no open vindication before the world either of Christ or of themselves; the appearing, revelation, or day of the Lord is this precisely. Not till then will be seen the consequences of faithfulness or the lack of it in His service; not till then will the madness of the world's hostility against Jehovah and His anointed be proved. Hence, when it is a question of exhorting to earnest, devoted, holy labor and endurance, scripture habitually speaks not of the coming simply but of the appearing of Christ. Then will be the reward of toil and suffering; then must the haughty world be humbled, apostate Judaism and Christendom be judged, and righteousness be established over the earth, the glorified saints reigning with Christ over it, and the Jews restored to their promised supremacy and blessedness here below. This makes evident the reason why the hearts of the saints, in present sorrow and shame, feeling their own weakness and the temporary triumph of the enemy in the world, are always urged to look on to the appearing of Christ. Their own removal by His coming does not, could not, satisfy the desires of those who are bent on the making good of His glory universally, and the final

total overthrow of Satan, and the blessing of all creation.

This, then, in my judgment, entirely and simply meets the scriptural statements which speak both of the Lord's coming and of His appearing, etc. Timothy is enjoined to keep the commandment, laid on him by the apostle, spotless, irreproachable, until the appearing of our Lord, which in its own time the blessed and only Potentate shall show (1 Tim. 6:15). It is a question of responsibility in service; and this attaches, not to the rapture of the saints at all, but to the manifestation of Christ. When the Lord appeared the first time, God's grace was made manifest, and life and incorruption were brought to light by our Saviour. When He appears again, glory will be revealed; fidelity during His absence will be no longer a matter of denial, detraction, or debate, and evil will hide its head. A faithful royalist could not be satisfied till not merely the arrival of the exiled king, but his coronation and the public exercise of his prerogative. Still more evidently does this principle apply to 2 Tim. 4:8: "Henceforth the crown of righteousness is laid up for me, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me in that day; and not only to me, but also to all that love ( τοῖς ἠγαπηκόσιν, characterized by their love for) His appearing." That this demonstrates the justice of what has been already remarked, I need scarcely say. The coming of Christ to receive us to Himself and be with Him in the Father's house would not at all suit the requirements of the passage; because that is the pure fruit of His own grace, removing us into the scene of His Father's love and glory, but in no way vindicating His servants, by a just requital of all faithful there is a reward for the righteous; verily He is a God that judgeth

in the earth. Rapture to heaven previously would not meet this exigency, though, of course, perfectly consistent with it. We must believe all that is revealed, not a part only; and a main point of real progress is that we learn to distinguish things which differ.

Titus 2:13 quite falls in with the two texts we have examined, the only question being whether “that blessed hope” does not look rather to the point of personal joy when we are caught up to be with the Saviour, and “the appearing of the glory” to the later and public display. If so, this scripture would connect the two things, as one combined object in the mind of the Spirit, leaving it to be decided by other testimonies whether the two things happen at the same time or with some interval.

In 1 Thess. 2:19 and v. 23, it is simply a question of Christ’s presence or coming, entirely independent of manifestation. The first scripture is the expression of the apostle’s affections for the objects of his devoted labours. Circumstances might and do separate them now for a little in person, not in heart; but they should be together before our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming, “our glory and joy. This would not cease but, on the contrary, appear when Christ is manifested, but the fact is before the apostle; and this is true at the coming of Christ and even before His manifestation, of which nothing is said here. So in 1 Thess. 5:23, he prays that their whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, if verified then, this would be also true at His appearing; but the other sufficed and indeed was more comprehensive. On the contrary, where it is a question of the world being judged (as in the beginning of the same chapter), “the day of the Lord,” and not simply His

coming or presence, is spoken of; for that necessarily supposes judicial action and display. So even in 1 Thess. 3, where we have the coming of our Lord with all His saints, not them caught up to Him, as in 1 Thess. 4, in order to God's bringing those who sleep with Him.

But John 2:28, Rev. 1:7, and Mark 8:38 are wholly distinct in tone from the simple presence of the Lord and His saints. In the first of these texts, manifestation is express. It is a question of the workman not being ashamed before Him at His coming, through the souls they laboured for abiding in Him now. The coming of the Lord alone would not decide this, and therefore manifestation is added. Again, Rev. 1:7 has nothing to do with the translation of saints to heaven but is the solemn threat of impending judgment for the world, especially for Israel (i.e., those who pierced Him). "Every eye shall see him," defines the character and time most fully. So Mark 8:38 describes the Lord coming with His holy angels in His quality of Son of man which notoriously attaches to Him as executor of judgment (see John 5).

I cannot doubt, therefore, that coming or presence is never in itself synonymous with appearing, revelation, or manifestation. This does not decide the question of their agreeing or differing in point of time. But it tends so far to maintain the definiteness of scripture language, which is indispensable to all real intelligence and progress in the truth.

That the removal of the saints from earth to meet the Lord does not synchronize with their appearing in glory along with Him, is, to my mind, certain from a variety of scriptures. First, Col. 3 declares that when Christ, our life, appears, "then shall ye also appear with Him in

glory.” The context would convince any fair mind that rigorous precision is here intended. The basis is the identification of the Christian with Christ. Is He dead and risen? So are they. Is He now hid with God? So are they now with Him. But this will not be always. He is about to be manifested in glory: when He is, then shall they too be manifested in the same glory with Him. This is decisive against the hypothesis of Christ first appearing, then translating the risen and changed saints, and bringing then and thus His day on the world. For in this case, Scripture must be broken, as Christ would have appeared in glory without His saints and before them. Their rapture (to use a word which used to be more familiar with divines than it seems to be of late) cannot then be when He is manifested; for they are all, Christ and the saints, manifested together.

Besides, the same result follows from the scriptures which speak of His coming with the saints. They must have been, then, caught up before in order to come with Him.

Further, the great book which puts together in an orderly way so many elements scattered over the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, the final prophecy of the New Testament, has it no light for us on this vexed question? Much every way, but this chiefly — that thence we learn how the saints are seen glorified in heaven under the symbol of twenty-four elders not to speak of the four living creatures from Rev. 4; that they are seen there kept out of the hour of temptation which comes on all the world to try them that dwell on the earth; that during this hour God works in Jews and Gentiles, who alone are spoken of as being on earth, without a hint of the Church or churches after Rev. 3

(save in the exhortation at the end when the prophetic part is concluded); and that when the Lord does come to judge, the saints are with Him, and come out of heaven, not from earth, for the closing scene, when executing vengeance on them that know not God and them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus, He comes to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that have believed in that day. Then and not before, will be the public retributive dealing of the Lord, when His saints shall be vindicated and their enemies shall be troubled worse than any tribulation they inflicted on the faithful. The Lord's coming simply to receive the saints to be with Himself above is no doubt the joy of grace; but it is not all, and does not supersede the importance of the scene of manifestation (which is itself a part of His coming or παρουσία), when all questions of responsibility in good or ill will be solved and made apparent.

The best sobriety of the saint is to believe the scriptures — not some, but all; sacrificing the truth neither of our manifestation and reward when Christ comes in judgment, nor of the scenes of horror, when God will give the Jew and man in general to taste the result even in this world of rejecting the true Christ and receiving the false one; but when He will make ready once more, by an Elijah testimony, a people prepared for the Lord on earth, that when He does appear in glory, He may have not only a risen glorified Bride with Him, suited to the heavenly places and the Father's house, but also an earthly people, the nucleus for the blessing of which will follow the execution of judgment on all His enemies. It is the same παρουσία but ἡ π. as such, and ἐπιφανεία τῆς π. are quite distinct in character and time.

The

παρουσία of the Lord, then, is not a mere act of coming, but the state of being present in contrast with His absence. The epiphany or shining forth of His παρουσία most naturally intimates that this presence in itself is not necessarily visible.

## The Bible Treasury 6:239, 240.

The Bride

Q. 1. — Was not the truth of Christ and His members — one body — the mystery hid in past ages and revealed to Paul? 2. — Was the truth of "the Bride" a mystery? Was it hid in the Old Testament? Is not Rebekah a type of "the Bride"? Was not Eliezar forbidden to take a Gentile bride for Isaac? 3. — Where is the Church — the body — ever spoken of as "the Bride?" I. W. S.

A. 1. — The mystery hid from ages and generations consists of two parts:

(1), the supremacy of Christ over the entire universe of God, of all things, whether in heaven or on earth; and (2) of the Church, His body, composed of Jews and Gentiles baptized by the Holy Ghost, united to Him as head over all. It was revealed to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, but in fact revealed by Paul to us. 2, 3. — It is evident from Eph. 5, Rev. 19, 22, that the figure of the Bride, the Lamb's wife," equally applies to the Church. Eve, in Gen. 2, and Rebekah, in Gen. 24, etc., revealed nothing of the mystery. They told their own profitable tale of old, but nobody ever did or could draw from them alone the union of the Church with Christ in heaven. When the truth of the Church, Christ's body and bride, came to view, then these scriptures yielded a further

deeper meaning in God's wisdom, though even then the union of Jew and Gentile in one new man, the body of Christ, the head of all things in heaven and earth went far beyond any or all these types. But the reference is distinct in Eph. 5 to Adam and Eve on this point. "It is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." The point forbidden in Gen. 24 is not a Gentile bride, but a daughter of the Canaanites (i.e., the type of a wicked spirit in the heavenlies). In Eph. 5 the point is the wife or bride as much as the body.

That there will be an earthly bride, according to the Psalms, Prophets, and Canticles, does not clash with the truth that there is a heavenly bride, married to the Lamb before the appearing of Christ and distinct from the blessed guests who are to be at the supper (the Old Testament saints, I suppose). Rev. 22:17 is conclusive to my mind that "the bride" of the Apocalypse is none other than the Church, now waiting for Christ with the Holy Spirit dwelling in her and prompting the precious word, "Come." Far different will be the relation and attitude of the Jewish remnant, before the Lord appears for their deliverance.

### The Bible Treasury 5:320.

America, Australia, etc., in the Coming Crisis

Q. — What will be the position of the Continents of America, Australia, etc., with their populations in the coming crisis? Will they be under the Roman Beast?

A. — I am not aware of any distinct reference to the continent of America in the scriptures. But in a general way it appears to me that "the waters," on which the great Harlot Babylon sits (as in Rev. 17), include its

population on all sides of the world. It was, we do not doubt, peopled not only by migratory hordes of Chinese, etc. across Behring's Straits, but by Icelanders, Norwegians, etc., who are believed on sufficient grounds to have made their way there little after A.D. 1000, and therefore many centuries before its discovery by Christopher Columbus, who opened it to the enterprise of Europe.

But it seems plain that the American or the Australasian lands and races cannot find themselves under the Roman Beast. For it, as I understand, is exclusively western, and does not comprehend even Greece or Macedonia, still less the properly Medo-Persian or Babylonish empires. Hence in Dan. 2 the gold, the silver, and the brass, are seen at the end when Judgment falls, no less than the iron and clay, the symbol of the Roman empire. Cp. also Dan. 7:12. It is an error to make the range of the Beast, and of his Jewish ally, the Anti-Christ, universal. We must leave room for a great adversary in the king of the north or the Assyrian, and for Gog, the chief of the Russian races, behind that king, and after him.

It may however be well to add that the late Mr. E. B. Elliott (in the Horae Apoc. ii. 73, fifth edition) imagined that there is a more direct allusion to the discovery of America, if not of Australasia, in Rev. 10:2 (latter clause). He naturally says little, and is somewhat indefinite, but as usual confident. It is the end of footnote 3, though the reference in the General Index might lead one to expect more. "Dr. S. R. Maitland thinks it strange that no notice should have been taken in the Apocalypse of the discovery of America, supposing it a prophecy of the history of Christendom. (Remarks on

Christian Guardian, p. 120). If I am correct in my understanding of the vision before us, the supposed omission does not exist." This is all the notice I can find in his four large volumes.

## The Bible Treasury, New Series 2:47-48.

Abraham and Christians

Q. — Will you do me the great favour to direct me as to the reconciliation of your views of the parenthetical nature of the Christian Dispensation with the passages in the New Testament which seem to teach that Abraham and Christians are one in relation to all the benefits that flow from the mercy of God through the Redeemer? If the Scriptures alluded to did not seem so plainly to contradict your distinction of heavenly and earthly, I could adopt your view. But with only the light I have now, there is nothing for me but painful uncertainty. Lexington, Va., Dec. 30, 1881. F. P. M.

A. — The passages of the New Testament to which our correspondent refers are doubtless such texts as Rom. 4:11, Gal. 3, and Heb. 11. The reason why they are supposed inconsistent with the special privileges of the believer now, is that the distinctive place of the Christian, and yet more the church, is not apprehended. People seem that to be born of God, and to be justified by faith, are the sum and substance of present blessing. But it is not so. All saints are necessarily born of the Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit was never enjoyed till Pentecost; and on this depends the body of Christ. Compare Acts 1:2 with 1 Cor. 12:13. And the gift of the Spirit, as thus over and above the new birth, as it could not be before redemption, was to be the permanent privilege of the Christian. The comforter or Paraclete

was to abide with the disciples forever. Even as to justification by faith, Rom. 4 makes this difference between Abraham and us: he believed that God was able to perform His promise; we believe on Him that raised up from the dead Jesus our Lord, after accomplishing His work in death for our offence. The Old Testament had promise; we rest on accomplishment; so that there is a grave difference at the threshold. Then Gal. 4 shows that even the true saints of old were in servitude; but that now it is a question of the adoption of sons, the Spirit of the Son being sent forth into the hearts of the sons, crying Abba, Father. The inheritance of promise is common ground; but this quite consists with fresh and inferior {sic, superior} blessing consequent on redemption. If we think not of the individual, but of our corporate relationship, the difference is at least as marked. The olive tree of testimony according to promise is not at all the same as the house of God, or the body of Christ. There is continuity in the olive tree, even if some of the natural branches were broken off for unbelief to let in the Gentile wild olive graft; and the Gentile, if not continuing in goodness, is to be cut off, that God may ingraft again the natural branches no longer abiding in unbelief. “And so all Israel shall be saved” {Rom. 11:26} in the depth of God’s wisdom and mercy. But this is quite distinct from Eph. 2, where the two are formed into one man, in which is neither Jew nor Gentile; and we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief cornerstone. During the Old Testament the middle wall was not broken down, nor were both made one. Even in the Lord’s ministry here below, “Go not,” said He, “into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not”: dead and risen, He sends

them to any or all. How could the house be even began before the foundation, not of prophets and then apostles, but “of the apostles and prophets” whom the ascended Head gave as gifts? And the body is formed in union with Him by the Spirit sent down from heaven.

Thus, if there are benefits which all saints enjoy from God’s mercy through Christ, which is thankfully owned, there are fresh and unspeakably great privileges which flow from redemption, and the presence of the Holy Ghost, who associates us in unity with Christ on high. In these last lies the peculiar blessings of the Christian and the Church. When Christ comes, the worthies of faith will, no doubt, receive the promise; but God has none the less provided some better thing for us {Heb. 11:40}, though we and they shall together enter on glory in that day.

## The Bible Treasury 14:32.

Earthly and Heavenly Spheres During the Millennium

Q.- It is acknowledged that the Lord will reign in Zion (Ps. 2, 99; Isa. 2, 8, 12, 24, etc.; Zech. 2, 8, etc.). Yet it is drawn from the N.T. that His or our especial scene of glory will be in heaven. How can this be? R.

A. — Few truths are more important, whether one thinks of Christ or of the church. It is a question of the purpose of God, hidden in the ages and dispensations, but now brought to light formally and fully by the apostle Paul. Take Eph. 1:9-11 as a grand unfolding of it, where we learn that for the administration of the fulness of the times (or seasons) God will gather together (or head up) in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him in Whom also we obtained

(or were given) inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. This rises incomparably beyond the kingdom in Zion, or the yet larger dominion of the Son of man, both of which will assuredly be accomplished “in that day.” It is even beyond all the promises to which the O. T. saints have just claim, and wherein no disappointment shall ever be. But grace gave to the apostle to reveal the divine counsel of setting Christ at the Head of all creation, the Heir as the Creator of all, now His (as the Epistle to the Colossians shows) on the ground of reconciliation. He is thus constituted the glorified Head over all, as we now know by faith. And “that day,” which proclaims Messiah’s reign over the land of promise with Israel renewed as His people, and all nations and tribes circling round Israel and subject to the Son of man, will make known the still more wondrous glory of our Lord over all things heavenly, angels, principalities, etc., with the church in the same glory His bride as now His body.

When this characteristic truth of the N.T. dawns on the soul, a crowd of scriptures confirm it. Thus in Matt. 6 our Lord taught His disciples to pray for “Thy” (i.e. the Father’s) kingdom to come, as well as His will to be done on earth. The Father’s kingdom is as distinctly heavenly as the Son of man’s is earthly: so Matt. 13:41-43 clearly proves. The risen saints shine as the sun, which is not earthly, in their Father’s kingdom; whereas the Son of man by His angels executes judgment on all offences and unrighteous persons in His kingdom as manifestly on earth. But it will be the day for His exaltation manifested on high as well as here below, being the Son

of the Father and set by God over all things heavenly and earthly.

Then John 14 is unmistakable that our special hope of blessedness is not merely reigning with Christ, as all suffering saints shall, but that He is coming to receive us to Himself in the Father's house where He now is. And the great N.T. prophecy shows us (Rev. 21:9 to the end) the bride the Lamb's wife the centre of heavenly and universal glory; as the O.T. is equally clear that Zion will be for all the peoples of the earth, then owning Israel to be the seed which Jehovah has blessed and set at the head of all nations under the Great King, Himself Jehovah-Messiah.

So Rom. 8:16, 17, designates the Christians as God's children. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." This goes far beyond the earth; as Rom. 5:17 cannot be limited to the millennial reign.

Again, 1 Cor. 6:2, 3, teaches that we shall judge the world — nay more, judge angels. And 1 Cor. 15:48, 49, distinctly calls us even now "heavenly" in title, after the pattern of the Heavenly One, and points on to our bearing that heavenly image, as we have now borne the image of the earthly (Adam's). But instead of gathering up other intimations, look at the glorious type of that day furnished by Gen. 14 where Melchizedek meets Abram victorious over the foe in the hour of their short triumph and pronounces him blessed of the most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; as he blesses the most High God Who had delivered his enemies into his hand. Christ is even now, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches, priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek; but He will exercise its privileges in the blessings of that

day of blessing. One might add many a glimpse in the types of Joseph, and of Moses, as well as in that of the sanctuary. But enough is said to show the blank left by looking no higher than the earth for the Lord in that day. If nature abhors a vacuum, the Christian in hope awaits glory in the heavens for Christ and the church, while fully assured that glory of Jehovah and the knowledge of it shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.

## The Bible Treasury, New Series 2:79-80.

Millennial Conversion

Q. — Where in the Psalms or Prophets is justified the belief that there will be conversions in the Millennial age? J. C. J. (U. S. A.).

A. — Almost every where that we find the work of divine goodness contemplated. Take Ps.2:12: “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry... Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” All conversions past, present, or future, are in this way and no other. They alone are the righteous who fear God then as now. The gospel, which actually goes out in indiscriminate grace, the apostle vindicates to the Jewish objector in Rom. 9, 10 by testimonies from the Law, Psalms, and prophets which anticipate that day. It will be the harvest. We are but a sort of first-fruits, though called to “some better thing,” as Heb. 11:40 speaks, as compared even with “the elders.” But the ingathering great as to extent awaits that day. All must bow to the Lord, “King over all the earth,” as well as “Head over all things”; but all are not converted even then, as Isa. 65 shows, and on a large scale Rev. 20:7-10. They will previously have rendered but a feigned obedience. Cp. Ps. 18:44.

## The Bible Treasury, New Series 2:240.

The Separate State And the Resurrection

When we have learned a truth, even in power from God, such is the narrowness of the human mind, that we are in serious danger of making it a shut-door against other truths, and thus of stopping short of the largeness of God's thoughts. Indeed, the more important a truth, the greater is the peril of its becoming all-absorbing. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, (blessed, divine remedy!) whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" {John 14:26}. "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth" {John 16:13}.

Thus, when Jesus, after speaking of the many mansions in His Father's house, and of going there to prepare a place for His own, said: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there may ye be also" {John 14:3}, it is clear that He did not mean death, nor the end of the world, nor the destruction of Jerusalem. He who was going away promised to come again: if it was a real, personal departure of Jesus, it was to be as real and personal a return, not to reign over them in their place, but to take them to His place, that He and they might be there together. Right, therefore, it is, that our hearts should feel that our going to Him is a thing very distinct from His coming to receive us unto Himself in such sort as this.

Again, our souls may have drank somewhat into the triumphant strain of the Apostle, when he cries: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy

victory?" {1 Cor. 15:55}. Hades is not our joy, but He who has won the victory-He that liveth and was dead, and behold He is alive for evermore, and hath its keys! It is true that the Christian can say that all is his, life or death; still, death is not, and ought not to be, the object of his affections. Christ is the Bridegroom; not Christ known after the flesh, for henceforth know we no man thus: we know Him the risen man, the Lord from heaven. And by the energy of the Holy Ghost, knowing Him risen, we long for that which will but speak His worth, His power, His glory — above all, His love. We long for His coming and for the resurrection — the resurrection of them that are Christ's, at His coming. Happiness, no doubt, it is to be rid of this clog and burden, this body of sin and death — happiness far deeper is the assurance that we depart to be with Christ; but, led of the Spirit, we long for His triumph, for His joy. Our death and consequent separate state, however to us "far better" through His grace, is far from being His triumph No! it is "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory" {1 Cor. 15:54}.

Nevertheless, let none depreciate the blessed portion of those who, absent from the body, are present with the Lord. When the word of truth in its fullness and simplicity is respected, this may not be touched. To the dying thief, who prayed the Lord to remember him when He should come in His kingdom, Jesus said: "Verily, I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise" {Luke 23:42, 43}; that is, He proffers something beyond and better than he asked, something

which, to the renewed mind, is more prized than any outward governmental display, however glorious — the joy of being with Christ Himself, and that very day too, without waiting for His coming in His kingdom. I do not mean, nor believe, that, in the kingdom, the element of the presence and companionship of Christ will be wanting, nor can it be supposed that we shall be less able to appreciate this blessed association, when that which is perfect is come. Surely not. Yet, strictly, it is not what constitutes the character of the kingdom, for it existed, as we have seen before the kingdom, and it will continue after the kingdom shall have been delivered up. But when one has felt even a little of the affections of Christ, it needs few words to show that no conferred honour, no recompense, however right, (and God forbid that we should disparage the recompense of such a Lord!) can approach the joy of being near Him, and with Him, and, blessed be God, for ever!

The saints, then, which sleep in Jesus, (or rather who were put to sleep by Jesus, τοὺς χοιμηθέντας διὰ τοῦ

Ἰησοῦ — 1 Thess. 4:14, ) death shall not be able to separate from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. so Stephen, stoned, calls and says, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” {Acts 7:59}; and Paul could say “to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” “... For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better” {Phil. 1:21, 23}. There was not, and could not be, a doubt, whether to choose death or resurrection. The hesitation was about “living in the flesh,” not about resurrection, which was incomparably more blessed than either to live or to die: “if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead.” To abide in the flesh might be more

needful for others; but as far as the servant of Christ, individually, is concerned, to depart and to be with Christ is far better. (Phil. 1.) Nevertheless, the third chapter of this same epistle declares that we have another and sweeter hope. We look for the Saviour from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ; who, instead of giving to our spirits only the joy of being with Him, shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. And the Apostle, in 2 Cor. 5, speaking of Christian position and judgment as to these things, utters our confidence and willingness to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord, though, even here, he shows that there is another thing closer to the heart. “We groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven... For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed (i.e., death and the separate state,) but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” {2 Cor. 5:2}: the result and complement of the resurrection of Christ. “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies because of His spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8. 11-23).

The Prospect 1:16.