Behold the Bridegroom

W. T. P. Wolston

Public domain. As published on plymouthbrethren.org.

Also online at https://plymouthbrethren.org/node/12173

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

Behold the Bridegroom

Ten Lectures

On The

Second Coming And Kingdom Of The

Lord Jesus.

Preface to Behold the Bridegroom

Preface To Third Edition.

The rapid sale of two large editions, rendering a third so quickly necessary, is happy evidence of the wide-spread interest in the glorious truths connected with the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In no respect does this edition differ from the first, but I take this opportunity of endeavouring to clear up a point briefly touched on in Lecture 6, p. 133, concerning which inquiry has been made, viz., Who are the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb? Of them it is written, “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” These clearly are not the Bride, but are “the friends of the Bridegroom.” I judge them to be all the heavenly saints—all the risen and glorified saints—other than the Church, which, as being the body—the Bride of Christ—is composed only of believers from the day of Pentecost to the rapture of the saints. Old Testament saints—who are specifically alluded to in Heb. 12:23 as “the spirits of just men made perfect,” will, I apprehend, greatly rejoice in the day of the Lamb’s joy, though they be not in the peculiar place of intimacy, which, as the Bride, grace now gives to those who know the Lord, and are, by the Holy Ghost, united to Him in this, the day of His rejection. John the Baptist already anticipated this unselfish joy when he said, “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled” (John 3:29). So,

again, will it be when the heavenly guests sit at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Well may we sing—

“O day of wondrous promise,

The Bridegroom and the Bride

Are seen in glory ever:

O God! how satisfied.”

May the gracious Lord yet further deign to use this little volume to awaken interest in His own near return.

W. T. P. W.

Edinburgh, Feb. 15, 1895

Preface To First Edition.

The origin of the following little volume is this. A year ago a short course of Lectures, on the Lord’s Second Coming, was given. Great interest in the subject was evinced, and, by many, a desire expressed, that the truths ministered, might appear in a permanent form, for quiet perusal. As, however, no notes either preexisted, or were taken, this was then impossible. This spring the Author again felt led of the Lord, to take up the subject of His return, going more into detail, and the shorthand notes, then taken, are now in the reader’s hands. They have been revised, and emended, as well as the leisure of a Physician’s busy life afforded—subject as it is to constant calls, and interruptions, which do not lend themselves to literary work. To erudition, or scholarship, the book has no claim, and makes no pretensions. That the truth is in it, the Author has no doubt, and the only thought before his mind, in publication, is the profit of souls, if unsaved, and the helping of some of the Lord’s dear children, to a better

understanding of His prophetic Word, and, a more simple daily waiting, for Him, who says, “Behold, I come quickly.”

Delivered, as these Lectures were, to large, and mixed audiences, of believers, and unbelievers, the felt, and often, expressed need of the latter, made the introduction of the simple Gospel, a necessity, as well as a joy to the speaker. These statements, and appeals, have not been eliminated, for the book may fall into similar hands, and the Lord may be graciously pleased to use the printer’s mark, as He did the living voice, to thereby awaken the careless, and bring rest to the troubled. May He do so for His name’s sake!

None can be more conscious than the Author, of the many imperfections that exist in his treatment of his subject, so immense is it. But he trusts his attempt, to give a somewhat connected view, of yet future events, will lead the reader to imitate the Bereans, who, when they heard the same testimony as the Thessalonians—the near coming of the Lord—“searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

The Lord grant to reader, and writer, to be “like unto men that wait for their Lord” (Luke 12:36).

W. T. P. W.

46 Charlotte Square,

Edinburgh, June 4, 1891.

The Morning Star

1st Cor. 15; Heb. 9:24-28

Lecture 1

There are three positions in Scripture where I the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us, and all three we have in these few verses of Heb. 9 which I have just read. In the most forcible, and yet the tersest possible language, has the Spirit of God condensed, in these closing verses of Heb. 9, these three positions, in which we behold the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, viewed of course as a man. What He was in eternity is not the question here,—although that was all true,—but we have Him, in these verses, seen in this world, on the cross, dying, yea, dead. You have Him then gone up into heaven, at God's right hand, where He now is; and, finally, He is presented as coming again. You have therefore the whole truth of Christ—known in this world, seen in this world, and to be seen—brought out in this passage. Of course there are many others, which I must refer to, in which the actions of the Lord Jesus Christ are brought before us, but I want just simply to fix this scripture upon the mind first of all. You have here Christ's three appearings.

In verse 26 we find:—"But now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Then in verse 24 we find this:—He "is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." For us is an exceedingly blessed word. Whom does it mean? Those of whom the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians speaks, when it says,—"They that are Christ's at his coming." He now

appears in the presence of God for us. He represented us once in death; He represents us now in life; and what is the next thing? “Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.” He is coming to take us to glory. The truth of the Lord’s coming is one of the happiest things possible for the Christian, while it is a very solemn thing for a man who is not a Christian. By Christian I mean a real believer; I do not mean what you call a professor. When I say Christian, I mean the real thing, one who knows Christ, —one who really knows the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. What a blessed thing to look for that Saviour! People may say,—“But you do not expect the Lord to come yet, do you?” That is exactly what I do expect; and the testimony of Scripture is so clear, and distinct, as to the Lord’s second coming, that I desire, with His help, to indicate the salient points thereof.

If you take the trouble to search the Scriptures, you will find that, of the twenty-seven sections of which the New Testament is composed, no less than twenty-two speak to you of the return of the Lord Jesus. All the gospels, the Acts, every epistle of Paul (saving three), James, Peter, Jude, John (except his two minor epistles), and the Revelation, testify to it. Thus in almost every part of the New Testament Scriptures His return is always presented to us, as that which should be daily expected.

But why the exceptions, and what are they? The exceptions are these,—the epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Philemon, and the two minor epistles of John. These do not refer to the Lord’s second coming, and the reason, I think, is not far to seek. Why not the Galatians? Because they did not understand the value of His first coming. They were not clear about the Gospel,

about redemption. They were going to be saved by law, by works, and therefore Paul has to begin de novo, and tell them the value and efficacy of Christ's first coming. Then why not the Ephesians? Because you are exactly at the other end of the line of truth. The blessed truth brought out in the Ephesians is this, that the believer is already "accepted in the beloved"; for, as the 2nd chapter says,—"God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The Christian, the believer, is viewed, according to the truth of Ephesians, as now being in Christ, where Christ is, in heavenly places. Then Philemon is a loving little pastoral letter, from the beloved apostle, to a master, about a runaway slave, whom, he sends back to his duty. A very nice, good thing to do, and therefore I should not expect Paul to refer to the Lord's second coming in such a case. The two minor epistles of John, similarly, are occupied with specific instructions addressed to an individual.

The teaching of the book of Revelation, above all, its, that the Lord is coming back, and that He is coming back for His people first, and then to set the earth right. I know that the general thought abroad is, that when the Lord comes back, the next time, it is for the purpose of judging the world. There is no doubt He will judge. There is no doubt that the return of the Lord Jesus to deal with the earth is perfectly certain; but let me say this about it—and It was a great help to my own soul when I saw this point—that the return of the Lord, in that character, is connected with what Scripture treats of as prophecy. That is not the Christian hope. The

Christian hope is totally distinct from the “sure word of prophecy” (2 Pet. 1:19). We find plenty of prophecy in the Old Testament Scriptures; but, observe, all prophecy relates to the earth, whereas the Christian hope relates to heaven. Now the Lord Jesus Himself has gone, as man, into heaven, and He proposes to take up to Himself there those that belong to Him.

I repeat, then, that the hope of the Christian is not the earth being set right,—although, thank God, it will be set right,—but the hope of the Christian is Christ Himself, and Christ as coming for His blood bought people. Why have we the Lord presenting Himself to us as the “Bright and Morning Star” in Rev. 22:16? Every person understands what the morning star is. It is not daylight. You never saw a man wakened up in the morning by the morning star. You must get up early to see the morning star. What wakes people up in the morning is the sunlight,—it is daylight. What you have in this passage is, that the hope of the Christian is Christ, now known in heaven as the Saviour, and as the One who is coming back for His own people, and the manner of our going up to be with Him is most blessed. The Morning Star is Christ for the watching Christian, while the world is buried in slumber.

This expression occurs three times in the New Testament. You will find an allusion in the book of Isaiah to the day-star, but the day-star of the Old Testament is the enemy of Christ, not Christ Himself. The expression is, “O Lucifer! [day-star, see margin), son of the morning” (Isa. 14:12). He is Christ’s enemy, and is to be judged and destroyed. The morning star of the New Testament is always the blessed Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The apostle Peter is the first to speak of it, in

his second epistle. He says, referring to the mount of transfiguration (2 Pet. 1:16). “We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star [morning star] arise in your hearts.” What did Peter see on that mount? There was the blessed Lord Jesus, with Moses and Elias, the type of two classes,—Moses, a man who had died, and who appears in glory; Elias, a man who never had died, but who passed up to heaven without death. There are these two men with the Lord in glory. Then you have Peter, James, and John, round about, figures of men upon the earth. This is the picture, in miniature, of the coming kingdom of Christ. You have the heavenly side, and the earthly side, of the coming kingdom of the Lord.

One of the most wonderful sides of the Gospel is this, that the believer has title to pass into glory without death, because the One, on whom death had no claim, went down into death for us. This you see prefigured in Elijah. But Peter adds, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp that shines in a dark place.” A lamp is all very good for a man in a dark night, but lamp-light is not daylight. I can turn to prophecy, which is the lamp, and the light of prophecy will show me how to pick my way

through this world, which is under judgment; but there is something better than that. As Christians now, we are brought into the full light. We are children of the light, and of the day. Thus daylight dawns in the heart of the Christian before the day shines on the world; and the day-star—Christ Himself in heavenly grace—is apprehended by the soul, in this character, before He arises as the Sun of righteousness. The lamp of prophecy is good; the light of Christianity is infinitely superior.

Again, in the 2nd chapter of Revelation, the Lord Jesus says to the overcomer in Thyatira, “I will give him the morning star.” What is the meaning of that? He Himself, the coming One, gives the Thyatiran overcomer the morning star. It was the darkest age of the Church’s declension, and then it was that the hope of the Lord’s return was first presented, to cheer the heart of the overcomer.

I turn you now to what the Lord says in the last chapter of Revelation (22:16), “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” He presents Himself, His own blessed, glorious person, and “the Spirit and the bride say, Come” to Him immediately. This is the Spirit’s cry in the whole Church, and shows what should be the attitude of the Church to the end.

Can you, dear friends, say to the Lord Jesus to-night, “Lord, come”? “Oh, but,” you say, “that would be a very serious thing.” It would, if you are not ready. But I will ask you that are ready, Would you not like to meet your blessed Saviour? You that love the Lord Jesus, would you

not like to meet Him? That is the very thing our hearts are waiting for. Of course it is for the heart that loves Him. The heart must be first won for Christ; and where there is affection for the Bridegroom, but hitherto lack of intelligence, the Spirit adds, “Let him that heareth say, Come.” It is not only that the intelligent is entitled to say “Come,” put he who “heareth,” for the first time, is also to say “Come,” i.e., “Lord, come!”

The immediate return of the Lord Jesus is that which is, above all, grateful and suitable to the heart that really knows and loves Him; and in one way or another, nearly all through the New Testament, the coming of the Lord Jesus is thus presented. I will not take you through the Scriptures, because it will take a great deal more time than I have at my disposal to turn to all the passages. Suffice it to repeat, that in every section of the New Testament, save the five I have already mentioned, the truth of the Lord’s second coming is presented to us as the next thing before the believer, and nothing is supposed necessarily to intervene to defer that coming.

I will touch briefly on the 14th chapter of John, because there the Lord unfolds this truth most simply, and sweetly, just as He was leaving the earth. “In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And 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.” Now people say, “I thought that meant death.” I never heard anything so curious in my life. Death has not gone away. “No,” you reply, “but I thought that was the Lord coming to the saint in death.” The saint, passing away, gets the sweet sense of the Lord’s presence, that he may not taste death, which is a very

blessed thing; but He says here, “If I go away, I will come again.” The truth is this, there is the blood-bought mansion, the blood-bought home, the scene of light and glory, in the Father’s house on high, bought for us by the blood of the Saviour, and at the fitting moment, He will come, to take up those who are His own—raising the dead, changing the living—and they will be with Him, and in His likeness for evermore. This is the Christian hope.

But, then, what is the basis of the Christian hope? The basis of that hope is the wonderful truth unfolded in the scripture, which I first read this evening, and I ask you therefore to go back to the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, because it is absolutely impossible that either you, or I, can quietly, or simply wait for the Lord Jesus, or think of His coming peacefully, and joyfully, if our souls are not clear before God, as to the value, and effect of the work which He has wrought. It is perfectly impossible for any person to think of the return of the holy, blessed Saviour, unless the conscience is purged, and the heart at rest, in the sense that all sins are forgiven. Now this chapter unfolds the Gospel most simply, and develops the truth of the resurrection, and what was connected with the resurrection. You will see, therefore, what is the basis of our hope, as Christians. By our, I mean the whole family of God’ I mean every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The hope of the Christian is what Scripture presents as the blessed desire of every heart that knows the Lord Jesus Christ. It rests on the fact of His death and resurrection; and therefore I invite your attention to this scripture, to note the way in which the Spirit of God couples the death of Christ, and His resurrection, and the rising of the saints,

at the second coming of the Lord, all together. The latter are all connected with Him who died, on whom death had no claim.

What is the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ comes? “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” Will the world see, or be aware of that coming? I do not think so. The coming of the Saviour, as the Bridegroom, is for the bride, it is for the saved—His own beloved people.

Let us get hold clearly, and distinctly, of the object, the nature, the effect, and the value of the first coming of the Saviour, and then this truth is as clear as possible. Now see, at Corinth, they had evidently given up the clear hold of the Gospel. Satan came in and denied the resurrection of the body. But observe Paul’s argument: Give up the resurrection of the body, and what do you do? You give up Christ. Satan’s object always is, in some way or other, to lower the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul therefore, refutes this error by relating the Gospel, saying, “I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved.” The Gospel, when received, saves men, out and out. But why does he say this:—“By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain”? What does he mean by “in vain”? He means this. If all this was a myth, or a fable, then there was nothing to rest upon. But, do you not see, it was not a fable, but is the truth, and therefore he repeats it,—“How that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures.” Wonderful news in a world of death! Christ died. “How that Christ died for our sins.” Well, I believe that. Are you clear of your sins? Are they forgiven? He died for our sins. Suppose I were deeply in debt, and you

undertook to go, and did go, and pay all that debt for me, what should I be? I should be accounted clear. Of course, that is the very object for which you paid the debt, you wanted to deliver me, and did so.

Christ, then, was “delivered for our offences.” He “died for our sins according to the scriptures.” The judgment of God upon man for his sin is that he dies. Consequently men say, There is only one thing you are sure of, and that is death. I stand here, and I say boldly, that is the very thing I am not sure of. And why? Because I fully believe the lovely tidings that Christ died for me. Every believer is entitled to say, “He died for me.” “He died for our sins, according to the scriptures.” Quite true, that the wages of sin is death, but then what does the 9th of Hebrews say? “So Christ was once offered.” Look at the “as” and the “so.” “As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” There we see the inevitable consequences of man’s sin—death, and judgment at the hand of God. But what has taken place? Blessed be God for the news! After our sin, and before the day of judgment, when the whole question of our sins must be raised between God and our souls, what has taken place? The blessed Son of God has stepped in, and He has died for us, for our sins, for sinners. And what is the result? You, who believe in Him, have now crossed the frontier, you have crossed the boundary line, you stand on the other side of death and judgment. It is a wonderful thing to know that.

The man who knows Christ, stands on the very ground where the fire has been. I suppose you all know how to act, if you are in a prairie on fire, and you discover the devouring element coming up behind you. The fire is

coming rapidly along. It will not do to run. There is only one way of sure escape,—get the spot upon which you stand burned; set fire to the grass with your own hand. And what is the result? Up comes the devouring flame, and there is nothing to touch, nothing to burn, it has all been consumed. Now, apply that to yourself. How are you going to face God about your sins, if you cannot rest upon Christ? But here is wonderful tidings for sinners—anxious sinners—Christ "died for our sins," and took the consequences thereof, death and judgment, which were our due, and He was buried, and He was raised again the third day, according to the Scriptures. Paul says, "He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once;…And last of all he was seen of me." I have seen Him in glory, and you come to tell me that there is no resurrection? Why, how can that be? "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not raised." I think that a most wonderful conclusion. He reasons from us to Christ; because He was once as dead as any man in this audience ever can be. Blessed news! I learn that the One on whom death had no claim whatever, who "knew no sin," whom the Father proclaimed His "beloved Son," goes at length, in the grace of His heart, to the cross, and there, in the darkness of that scene that no eye could ever penetrate, He takes up, between God and Himself, the whole question of our sins—our guilt before God. "For man the Saviour bled." He dies, on whom death had no claim, in the room and stead of the poor guilty sinner. And what is the consequence? Life and blessing for the one who clings to Him, and who looks to Him. The love of Christ constrains the heart to simply trust Him.

Now note, if there be no resurrection of the dead, then, says Paul, “Christ is not raised”; and he argues immediately that if Christ be not raised, our preaching is vain, and, more than that, we have been telling lies about God, for we said that God had raised Him. “And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” But what is the converse? If Christ be raised, for every person who trusts Him, then you are not in your sins. That is the Gospel. That is the Gospel I believe in. Thank God, I know my sins are forgiven. Moreover, this forgiveness, this salvation, has been bought for us by the dying agonies of the Son of God; and I love to speak of that blessed Saviour who. has gone into death—into the very dominion of death. And what has He done? He has met the claims of God in righteousness, He has glorified His nature about sin, He has defeated Satan, and broken his power, annulled death, and risen from the dead. Christ has won a victory, that sets every soul that clings to Him free, and brings that soul into the enjoyment of the spoils of the victory which Jesus has wrought for us. What demonstrates the power and the fulness of the Gospel? That the One who died for us is raised from among the dead. If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins; but if He be raised, what then? The two consequences of sin—death and judgment—the blessed Saviour took on the cross, and the result is this, that the veil is rent, the way right up into God’s presence is laid open, and there is the blood of atonement that gives you title to draw near to God.

Before this is apprehended there will be a work in the soul. It must be brought to feel itself of no importance—a sinner; and the moment the heart bows before God, with the sense of its guilt, there is the blessed unfolding,

by the Spirit of God, of the atoning suffering, and the value of the blood-shedding, of the Lord Jesus Christ. That once finished work avails absolutely, and to the uttermost, for every soul that simply believes in Him, who died and rose again. Why not turn to Him now? Look at that risen Saviour, who has gone up, with the trophy of His victory by His side. He has gone right down into the depths of death, that He might deliver, and bring out every soul that simply believes and confides in His own blessed name.

But the apostle adds,—"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." The point is this, that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was the proof, and evidence of the absolute favour of God, towards that blessed One. There are two resurrections spoken of in the New Testament,—there is the resurrection unto life, and the resurrection unto judgment (John 5:29). The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the pattern of the resurrection of those that belong to Him. As the first man brought in death, by man also came resurrection from among the dead. How? Because Jesus was a man upon whom death had no claim whatever; He goes down into death, and takes the sting out of it—is the conqueror and victor over it; and is the risen Saviour. What is the root of the persecution in the 4th chapter of Acts? Why were the apostles put in prison? "Because they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from among the dead." You tell people that there is a general resurrection, and that all the dead will rise together, by-and-by, and that then things are going to be settled, as to whether they are to be saved or not, and that will be accepted, as very nice, orthodox doctrine; but tell them this, that the

resurrection of the Lord's people will be after the pattern of Christ's, and one thousand years before the resurrection of the unbelieving dead, and what will be stirred up? Sometimes a good deal of feeling.

But that is just what Scripture tells us. That is the first resurrection, of which Christ Himself was the first-fruits. In Revelation we read, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." What about the other resurrection? "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (chap. 20:5, 6). And observe, the Holy Ghost does not call that the second resurrection. What He calls it is "the second death" (see verses 6, 14). God save every soul here from such a resurrection as that, because, mark, it is "the resurrection unto judgment." Nowhere in Scripture is there found the dogma of a general resurrection of saved, and unsaved, all together. The resurrection of the saints is before the millennial reign of Christ. The resurrection after His millennial reign is a "resurrection unto judgment," and the Holy Ghost stamps that as "the second death." I think to die once is quite enough. But I rejoice to stand here this evening, and tell out good news to the man who is troubled about death. There is no need, if you are a Christian, that you should die at all. I do not say, I shall not die. All I say is, I am not waiting for it. Death may come, not must. The Lord will come. Death may come; not will, not must. The blessed tidings is this, that Christ has gone into death for us, and has come up out of it; and, therefore, those who belong to Him, redeemed with His blood, are brought to God, and stand before Him, on the ground of the work Jesus has accomplished. His resurrection is the proof of the value of that work; and

the resurrection of Christ is the pattern of the resurrection of those that belong to Him, in the day of His coming again.

More than that, this very 15th of Corinthians tells us "we shall not all sleep." When does Christ become the head of His body? Not till He is alive from the dead, and gone into glory. It is the risen Christ that your heart turns to. It is not merely that the blessed Saviour died. Quite true; but He rose again. The stone is rolled away, and now He is risen. All who belong to Him are to share the fruit of the wonderful work that He has accomplished. Christ is become the first-fruits of them that slept. Suppose the Lord came to-night—and there is no reason why He should not—what would be the result? All "that are Christ's" must rise to meet Him. There are many in the grave, there are many who have passed away, but they will be raised in the likeness of the blessed Saviour. It is those that are Christ's at His coming, and only those that are Christ's, that have part in the first resurrection. You must be quite clear about that.

But then, when will that be? No one knows. I am not here to indicate to you, in the slightest degree, that any moment can be fixed for the return of the Lord Jesus, but only to point out this, that the hope of the early Christians was the return of the Lord, and our hope is the same. Look at the 51st verse: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Nothing can be more clear than that "We must all die," people sometimes say. No; "we shall not all sleep," is the distinct testimony of the Holy Ghost; and supposing that blessed Bridegroom were to come this evening in the air, and call up His blood-bought, and

tenderly loved Bride, then we should not fall asleep, but we should all be changed, because “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” “We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” No warning! The trumpet shall sound, but that trump is not the trump that is going to raise all by-and-by. No, it only calls those “that are Christ’s at his coming.” What then? “The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (verses 52-54).

What about those that are not Christ’s? The scripture is very plain. “The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” It is an awfully solemn thing not to be Christ’s; and therefore, with all the fervour of my heart, would I say, Oh! my friends, decide for Christ; believe on Christ; come to Christ Turn to Him, and be ready for His coming. In the twinkling of an eye that trump may be heard, and then? The Gospel door closes. No more will news of grace—heavenly grace and pardon—fall on the ear of the sinner. No more Gospel preaching then. The door of heaven is shut, and its ambassadors called home. What a fearful agony of surprise will possess the half-decided soul, that discovers this, just after the Lord has come, and all chance of salvation is for ever lost!

The manner of the Lord’s coming is most distinctly developed in 1st Thessalonians, chapter 4 In the 13th verse Paul says,—“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye

sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 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 [i.e., anticipate, or 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." When He comes back in glory, then He will bring His people with Him, but, before that, He comes into the air, and gathers His own to Him. There are two stages,—His coming as the Bridegroom into the air, and our rising to meet Him; then the coming of the King, in the day of His glory, when He returns to deal with the earth. We rise, at the call of the Bridegroom, and meet the One we love in the air. A little while afterwards, when He appears on earth as Son of Man—as King of kings and Lord of lords—He brings with Him all His heavenly saints.

If her Majesty, coming into Edinburgh from the south, were to send a message, that any, who wished to show their loyalty to her person, were invited to go out and meet her at Portobello, and join her retinue, would not many go to meet her, and come to Edinburgh in her train? Without any doubt. Similarly the blessed Lord is coming, by-and-by, to deal with this earth, but, before that, He is coming into the air, and He gets His followers, true and real,—those "that are Christ's at his coming,"—to meet Him there. I ask you now, Are you

sure that you will be “Christ’s at his corning”? Oh! make sure, for this moment of rapturous joy draws near. It is most graphically described:—“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.” Not a word about the wicked dead—the unbelieving, the unrepentant dead. “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.” I know no greater comfort, than to think that before the clock strikes eight we may meet the blessed Lord in the air. I am persuaded that every Christian in this room would delight to meet the Lord this evening.

But you say,—“I do not know that I am ready.” Well, get ready. “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Have you never drunk of the water of life? Drink it while you sit, to-night. Turn to Jesus. What are you living for? I ask you solemnly, before God, with eternity before you, and the coming of the Lord in view, is it only for self? Ah! turn to Him, and live for Him who died for us. That is the only really right thing to do. Turn to the Lord Jesus, or else what must happen? Why, just what happened in the striking parable in the 25th of Matthew, where we have the coming of the Bridegroom, and the history of the ten virgins. There were ten virgins, five wise, and five foolish; five ready, the others not ready. They all went to sleep while the Bridegroom tarried. The hope of the Lord’s coming has been lost sight of for nearly seventeen hundred years, but now the Spirit has sent forth the midnight cry,—“Behold, the Bridegroom

cometh!" Why? because the Bridegroom is just coming; because the Lord is coming. Are you not ready yet? What will be the result? Listen:—"At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps." What took place? The foolish found they possessed no oil. They had the lamp, quite truly, in their hands—the lamp of profession.

I suppose the great majority of my hearers present to-night are professors,—but, are you possessors of Christ? Are your sins forgiven? If you cannot answer that question honestly, you will be surprised in the day of the Lord's coming. You will be stirred up, and you will turn and say,—"Give me of your oil." But the answer will be, —"Go and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came." Content with a name to live, and yet dead; content to live without knowing the real Name, they learn He knows them not Do not lay your head on the pillow to-night without having the matter of your soul's eternal salvation settled,—really, and definitely, and solemnly settled before God. Why? Because the Lord is coming; "While they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut'' Ah! how many of us are ready in this hall this evening? Are you ready? Are all ready? Am I ready? Through infinite mercy, yes, through the blood of the Saviour, who died for me and rose again. Dear unsaved one, come now, drink of the living water, and then you will be one of the ready ones; and in the moment when you hear the shout, you will rise and meet the blessed Lord, and say,—This is the Lord that I have been waiting for.

This, then, is the Gospel, and our hope. Christ has died, put away our sins, annulled death, endured judgment; and we, believing in Him, stand on the other side of death and judgment, and just wait for Him. When He came the first time, He took our sins away; when He comes the next time, He will take us away to scenes of rest and glory, to be the everlasting partners of His joy. As the bright and morning star, He presents His own coming as the next thing before us. May each one be really waiting, and watching for Him.

The Apostasy And Antichrist

1st Thess. 1:8-10; 2nd Thess. 2

Lecture 2

The burden of these verses in the 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians is the Christian hope,—the coming of the Lord Jesus as the Bridegroom, as the Saviour. Most simply, yet beautifully, does the Spirit of God, in addressing the Thessalonians, bring out this hope. Nothing could be more plain, simple, or distinct. The apostle, a few months after he had been at Thessalonica, where he had preached the Gospel for three weeks, and where many had believed it, writes unto them to confirm their faith, and to comfort them concerning some that had fallen asleep, and he says that wherever he went in the district he had no need to speak, because “they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols.” Turned to God from idols, that is conversion of the right stamp. Observe, it is not from idols to God, it is “to God from idols.” It is the attractive power of the love of God, it is the attractive blessed power of the grace of God, that touches the heart, and leads a man to drop the things that have been an idol—things that have never really filled him, or really blessed him. To turn to God from idols is blessed indeed, but yet there is more. What? “To serve the living and true God,”—a wonderfully happy thing to do in this world,—and that is what we are called, and saved for—to serve the living and true God. Christianity does not suppose that when a man is brought to God, when his soul is saved through grace, that he then sits down, and folds his arms, and

says, “Well, I am saved for glory, and that is the end of it” Not at all. He turns to God from idols, to serve the living and true God. Mark, every person who hears my voice to-night, is either serving the living and true God, or serving the god of this world, the devil. Your service is either rendered to the living God, or else you are dominated by the god of this world, who carries men on, in their lusts and passions, to perdition.

There is nothing more grand than to be a Christian—no greater privilege than to serve the living God. I know many a young man thinks it is a dull thing to be a Christian. I will tell you what I think, it is a very dull thing not to be a Christian. Oh! it will be a very solemn thing—a very terrible thing—for a man to find out, at the end of his course, that he has been all wrong, to wake up, in eternity, and find out that his whole past on earth, has been a grand mistake, from end to end. And that is what many a man will find out by-and-by. But, oh! how blessed is it to know the God of all grace, and then to serve Him, the living and true God, and “wait for his Son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” It is a far brighter, and happier side of my subject, to think of that which is now the portion of the soul,—present salvation, and deliverance from wrath,—than to indicate coming sorrows. Paul cannot speak of the Lord’s second return without weaving in something connected with His first coming. Jesus, he says, is the One you are waiting for. What is Jesus to you? Is He coming as a judge? Thank God, no. Is He coming to deal with our sins? Thank God, no. “Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come” is the One we wait for. Christians are already a delivered people.

The simplest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is delivered—he knows it—is delivered from the wrath to come, by that which has already come—perfect grace in the person of the blessed Son of God, become a man in this world, and gone down into death, that He might redeem and bring to God, in absolute righteousness, all who trust His blessed name. The immediate hope of the already delivered Christian is the return of the Lord Jesus in the character of the Bridegroom. I know people say, “Of course, the Lord is coming by-and-by,—nobody knows when,—and then it will be a matter of judgment.” Yes, He will come, and He will judge. That is all quite true, but, before the day when He comes to judge the world in righteousness, He comes and meets His own people, and gathers them up out of this world. He comes first for His own loved ones,—some who have fallen asleep, and are in the grave, others living on the earth at the moment of His coming, alive, waiting, watching, serving, and happily looking for His return, and He comes into the air with the assembling shout, “with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ 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.”

Now, I defy you to give me anything brighter, or better than that. I challenge you, men of the world, to give me anything to eclipse that. “Oh!” but some one says, “you will have to go through death!” I don’t deny that I may have to, but I absolutely deny that I must, and I truly confess that I am not looking for death, but waiting for Jesus from heaven. The early Christians were called to wait for the Son of God from heaven, and they were

waiting. Quite true, while they waited some fell asleep, and therefore the apostle writes to comfort those whose friends had fallen asleep; but, nevertheless, it is apparent that the dominant hope of the Christian, in that day, was the immediate return of the Lord Jesus Christ, in this character, and nothing could be more blessed. He is coming as the Bridegroom, and we saw last Lord's Day evening, at the close of the 25th chapter of Matthew, where the Lord describes what the end of this dispensation will be, when He does come back, that Christendom will be after this sort: "five were wise, and five were foolish," and the wise—"they that were ready"—went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut, and the others were left outside, very busy trying to get ready. No doubt they got thoroughly roused, and were very desirous to be ready; and I have no doubt, dear friends, that if the Lord came to-night at eight o'clock, you would be uncommonly anxious at nine o'clock to get ready; but mark, you would be too late. Too late! What a thought! Therefore I say, with all sincerity of heart and affection to every person here now, You get ready. "Trim your lamps and be ready." Why? Because the midnight cry has gone out, and the Lord is coming.

But when will He come? say you. Scripture never sets a moment as to when He is to come. No date or no time is ever given. Why? Because if it fixed a date, it would necessarily put the Lord's coming off to the date that had been fixed. Now-a-days some—wiser than Scripture—have been foolhardy enough to fix a date. Now where are such, and all their followers? They have got into the company of those of whom the Lord speaks in the 24th of Matthew, "That evil servant shall say in his heart, My

lord delayeth his coming." I ask you, would you like Him to come to-night? Let us put it to ourselves clearly, and simply. "No," you say, "I would like it put off for a bit." Then I say you are arm in arm with the evil servant. The evil servant says in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," and what is the next thing he does? He begins "to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken," i.e., he gets into the world. Then the Lord comes, and appoints him his portion with the hypocrites, because he said, I am waiting for Christ, whereas in his heart he was not doing so. The Lord give you grace to be really ready; get you hold of the wonderful atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and whosoever will is welcome to come to Him, to receive Him, to believe Him, and to know Him. Then what is the next thing? We rise and meet Him in the air, and we pass into the scenes of rest, and life, and joy, that He has prepared for us in His infinite grace; we go to the Father's house, and eternal rest; and oh, what a wonderful thing to be sure about! Can you be sure? Indeed you may. He died that you might be sure. Look at this verse, "Who delivered us from the wrath to come." We have got it,—the believer has eternal life; he has his sins forgiven. He is ready.

But some person may say, "I thought the world had to be made ready, I thought the whole world had to be converted, and put right, in order to the introduction of the Lord's reign." How do you propose to effect it? I anticipate your answer, "By the preaching of the Gospel." Let us hear Scripture.

The reason why I read the 2nd chapter of 2nd Thessalonians, was to bring to your notice to-night, the distinct and definite statement of the Spirit of God, as to what will be the absolute condition of Christendom,—

what would be the condition of Edinburgh—not to go outside of our own circle—if the Lord came into the air, and every Christian was taken up to be with Himself? What would be left? Face the thing, what would be left? A seething mass of lifeless corruption. Christian profession in abundance, without one spark of Christian life, for every real Christian will have been caught away to glory. I know perfectly well that many a man is full of the idea that the world is to be put right by the. Gospel. But what is the effect of this notion? You are playing into the hands of infidels. The man who holds that theory has not got any foundation in Scripture for it, and plays unwittingly into the hands of infidels. In what way? The infidel turns round and says, “You are a fine lot, you Christians; are you getting this world made much better?” The Christian is obliged to own that it is not. I am not expecting it. I am looking to get men turned to God, and brought, by the Gospel, out of the world, which is only ripening rapidly for judgment. I admit I want your heart for Christ, but why, because that will fit you for His coming. You see, if I think of the world getting better, I have to inquire, Is it better? Is commercial morality higher to-day? Are morals more elevated? Is society more chaste? Are husbands more true, wives more loving, children more dutiful, friends more reliable, servants more faithful? I see lots of you shaking your heads. We have to admit that as regards the world it may be outwardly somewhat whitewashed, but when people talk of progress, I grant you it is progressing, but it is progressing towards judgment. But, thank God, before the judgment comes, Jesus comes. That is exactly what the Christian wants. We are going to be taken out of it.

Look how the apostle argues in the 2nd chapter of 2nd Thessalonians. He does not make a new revelation of the truth of the Lord's coming, but he draws a most beautiful argument from it. He says, "I beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." It is a wonderfully happy thing to get a good big gathering of Christians down here. What a warming your heart will get, one of these days, when we have this great big gathering. When that gathering comes, there will be no break up. Ah! you say, that will be glorious. You are right, it will be grand, to be gathered up, by and to the Lord. Look at the words, "I beseech you, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is present (set in)." Why does he beseech them? The reason is simple. The Thessalonians were passing through tremendous persecution; they had received the Gospel, they had owned it, they had confessed it, and young converts were preaching it. We are, however, I fear, all too fond of relegating to other people that which the Lord has committed to us, for if I receive Jesus as my own Saviour, it is my privilege, as well as my responsibility, to tell you about Him. What did Andrew do when he was converted? He went and brought Peter to Jesus. When the soul receives Christ, it communicates the good tidings. That is the way it spreads. Conversion is like scarlet fever. When it gets into a family, it is wonderful how it will spread. No doubt, the proper plan is to keep the fever out, but by all means let the conversion in, for if conversion gets into one member of the family, thank God, it will soon spread, because the heart that really receives Christ,

will be telling the others about Him. So, when Paul came into Macedonia and Achaia to tell them the Gospel, they said, We have heard it already from these Thessalonians. A beautiful testimony, indeed, as to what their life was.

What is the next thing? Persecution comes, down right, bitter, stern, terrible persecution for Christ's sake. What then? The devil comes in, and he says to these young, uninstructed Thessalonians, "Ah! you have missed it, you have missed the coming of the Lord, and the day of the Lord has set in." Do you not think they knew what the day of the Lord meant? Do you know what the day of the Lord means? The apostle beseeches "that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is set in." What is the day of Christ? The day of Christ is a terrible word for a wicked man. It will be a terrible day for the world in its ungodliness. What the devil was doing, was by means of false letters. Satan, at the best, is only an imitator. The first Epistle to the Thessalonians, had been written by the apostle to comfort them concerning the brethren that had fallen asleep. They thought that some who had fallen asleep would miss coming with Christ in His glory. No, he says, "them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." He will come with all His saints. But he goes on to tell them how it will happen, in order that they, who fall asleep, may come back with Him in glory. He, as it were, says, I will tell you something that never was revealed before, that the Lord is going to come into the air, that He is going to raise the dead, and take up the living that are His, and then, you and they, we all, shall come back again with the Lord when He comes, as Son of Man, and King of kings.

Well, comforted by this word of the apostle, they continue in their testimony, and then persecution comes, and now the devil, who hates all Christians, says,—I will terrify them. There is nothing the devil likes better than to terrify people. So he writes a letter to say that the day of the Lord has already set in. What did that mean to them? Said they, It is perfectly clear that we have missed the rapture; we have missed what we were looking for; and they got into a great state of anxiety. Paul, therefore, writes this second epistle to assure them that the day of the Lord had not come, because, as you will see, if you turn back to chapter 1. of the 2nd epistle, the portion of the saint in that day is given in the 7th verse,—"rest, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels" (verses 6-9). Paul carries them on to the moment of the revelation. Christ comes in absolute glory, with His people, in that day. The day of the Lord is marked by this, that the righteous shine as the sun, and the wicked are troubled. But what was going on just then? Why, he says, you who are the righteous are troubled now, you are troubled by the wicked—the day of the Lord cannot have come, because the day of the Lord is marked by this, that the righteous are blessed, and the wicked are to be troubled, 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."

I should like just to clear the subject, by turning to one or two Old Testament passages, that you may distinctly see what "the day of Christ" means in Scripture. Turn to the 13th chapter of Isaiah, verse 6:—"Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction

from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel, both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir."

Now look at another witness, Joel, 2nd chapter:—"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness" (verses 1, 2). Mark its character—"a day of darkness and of gloominess; a day of clouds and of thick darkness." Then in the nth verse:—"And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army; for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" Who can abide it? None but a saint. I recommend you, sinner, not to risk it. The great day of His wrath is coming, and who shall be able to stand?

Look now at Amos:—"Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness and not light. As if a man did flee from a

lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" (5:18) No brightness! The day of the Gospel is all brightness, and light. Thank God we are in the day of the Gospel; thank God, we are here now, while bright light, and heavenly glory are streaming upon us. There is no gloominess now. Thank God. It is all brightness, and gladness, and peace, when you are brought to know the heavenly Saviour. This is the day of grace. But the day of the Lord —these scriptures surely will convince any grave person —will be an awful day for the ungodly.

Let us come back to 2 Thessalonians 2, and observe what precedes, and ushers in that day. The apostle goes on:—"Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (ver. 3). Nothing could be plainer than that. The day of the Lord, the day of Christ, the day of which the Old Testament Scriptures speak so abundantly, that day, says the Spirit of God here, cannot come, until there come first of all a falling away—an apostasy—and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. You have three things here,—an apostasy instead of Christianity; "the man of sin" instead of Christ; and you will find a little lower down in the chapter, the devil instead of the Holy Ghost. That is what is coming. You have apostasy instead of truth, the man of sin instead of the ministry, and presentation of the man of God—grace; and you have also the power of Satan, instead of the living power of the blessed Spirit of God. That is what is before Christendom; that is what will be the inevitable,

manifested consequence of the rapture of the saints. By the “rapture,” I mean the moment of the Lord’s people being taken away to glory. Every Christian goes up; I mean every converted man. Every believer of the Gospel goes up; and then comes to pass the statement,—“truth is fallen in the street” (Isa. 59:14).

The Lord has come into the air, and gathered out of the world His own people. And what is left? Apostasy. What a solemn thing! You say, What is that? It is really leaving first estate, giving up what God has conferred in goodness; but, in effect, it is the blinding judgment that God will pass over this land, and many another land, where the light of the Gospel has been, and where, alas! it has been neglected and slighted. Nothing can be more solemn than the way in which the Spirit of God describes Christendom’s state here. It is the widespread giving up of the truth,—that is apostasy. What God has given to the Church in responsibility, that she utterly gives up. When the real saints are gone, when the true living believers are gone, what is left behind? The carcase of an effete, lifeless religiousness; and only judgment can fall on Christendom’s wide area of lifeless, and utterly Christless profession. It is a dead system; and, after death, it is not long before it is a putrid corrupt thing. I know the devil will do his best to make people say things are all right, when they are all wrong; but God’s Word shows that Christendom is the spot upon which the deepest and direst judgment of God must fall, because Christ, and truth have been refused, and slighted, and cast out.

The apostasy surely comes apace; and I do not think there is any sober person in this audience to-night, carefully looking for himself, who will be able to

contradict the apostle's statement, as he says, lower down in our chapter (ver. 7), "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." I should like to ask some of you who have now grey hairs, What is the state of things, as regards the truth, compared with fifty years ago? You know how the very Scriptures of truth have been undermined in your own land. You know that some, whom you thought would be the conservators of the truth of God, are the very men, who, carried away by human reasoning, have ruthlessly taken the axe of modern scientific criticism, and cut out first one, and then another piece of the Word of God, until, if we were to believe these learned neologians, there would only be some small shreds of the Bible left for faith to feed upon. Thank God, faith knows better than dark unbelief what is of, and from God, and so it holds on to the blessed Book of books, from cover to cover. Nevertheless, this is the beginning of the end,—"the mystery of iniquity doth already work." But when the Lord comes, and the Spirit and the Bride are taken up out of the scene, things will ripen for evil with unprecedented rapidity. I believe that the world will proclaim a general holiday when they have got rid of every testimony for Christ. That is what the Holy Ghost speaks of here as the apostasy.

But you, who think that, if the Lord were to come, you might still get the Gospel afterwards, I would like you to weigh carefully what the Spirit brings out here. The testimony to a heavenly Christ has ceased ere the moment of the apparition of "the man of sin." Some one says, "But I thought the man of sin had appeared long ago." I do not deny the principle of it in the papacy, but that is not the fulfilment. Let us look at this "son of perdition." His names are pretty abundant in Scripture,

and I would like just to indicate, what I believe to be the testimony of the Word of God, as to the person spoken of here,—the man of sin. He is antichrist,—the one who tries to arrogate to himself the divine attributes, and characteristics of Christ. There are a good many allusions to him in Scripture, and under several names. Go to the Psalms, for instance; the 10th Psalm and 17th verse: “Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart; thou wilt cause thine ear to hear; to judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.” When antichrist comes, he is “the man of the earth,” he is the true descendant of the first man. Look at Jesus. What does Jesus do? He comes from heaven, dies to fit you for heaven, and then takes you to heaven; He is the heavenly Man. But what about this man, he is “the man of the earth.”

The Spirit of God describes him also in Isaiah 30:30, “Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for The King Also it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.” He is the “king” here, while his end is also predicted. This fully accords with, and in fact, I presume, is alluded to in the book of Revelation, chapter 19:20, 21. Go to the 57th chapter of Isaiah, where he is again spoken of. God is reproaching His earthly people because of their idolatry, and departure from Him. Their greatest sin is this (9th verse), “And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.” This may allude to the incense offered to the idol, “the image to the beast” of Rev. 13, for which the king

will be responsible. Doubtless in the day when this is reached, the claims which antichrist will make, to be the long looked for Messiah, will have acted on many; and, regardless of the Lord's words, "If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew signs and great wonders" (Matt. 24:23), there will be many going to the king with ointments.

If you now turn to the 11th of Daniel, you will again find him brought before you most strikingly. In the Old Testament, he is presented as "the king," because he will get his seat in Jerusalem, and he will have dominance, and kingly authority over the Lord's then earthly people, the Jews, who will have been brought back to their own land ere he arises. "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers [Jehovah], nor the desire of women [Christ], nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all" (Dan. 11:36, 37). Here is another characteristic of him; he has no sense of his dependence upon God, the will of his own heart is that which governs and dominates him. Then in John 5 our Lord Jesus Christ marks him out most distinctly. Pleading with the Jews, He had said to them that He had come that they "might be saved." They would not have Jesus, and refused every testimony to Him. The Lord cites the four-fold testimony to Himself, John the Baptist (ver. 33), His own works (ver. 36), the Father (ver. 37), and the Scriptures (ver. 39). He says then, "Ye search

the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life”(verses 39, 40). “I am come in my Father’s name [He had no business on earth, but the Father’s will and wishes], and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (ver. 43). Solemn prediction—antichrist comes in “his own name,” and is received.

Then if we turn to the 1st Epistle of John, we shall find the Spirit of God indicating not alone the name and character, but the features and the action, of this one (chap. 2:22)—“Who is the liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is the antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” The first is what he will do in view of the Jew; there is what I may call Jewish infidelity. He denies that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, and God stamps him as a liar. Next, “he is the antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” That is what is now more than ever coming up,—the dark and ever-widening river of rationalism. It is the denial that we have a revelation from God. It is the denial of the revelation of the Father and the Son; and, in this being, this “man of sin,” it will by-and-by all culminate. And what does he do? He denies the Father and the Son,—that is, he sweeps every remaining vestige of Christianity aside, for the great truth of Christianity is the Father and the Son. He denies the Father and the Son, and he denies that Jesus is the Christ. That is a setting aside of what is a special truth for the latter day Jews; and now you will find that this exactly concurs with what the apostle Paul brings out in his wonderful description of this man,—for a man he is; it is not a system merely.

There are yet two other strikingly descriptive names that he gets. Turn to the book of Revelation, and you will see the closing testimony of the Spirit of God as to this man (chap.13:11):—"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." He is the imitation of Christ, —"two horns like a lamb." "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." You see he exercises immense power, and here he is called a "beast," a "wild beast" truly, though simulating the characters of Him who is God's Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you look at the 19th chapter, you find his last title, and unspeakably awful doom. At the 20th verse we read, —"And the beast [the Roman imperial head] was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." In the Old Testament there were two men—Enoch and Elijah—who went up to glory without death; in New Testament times there are two men who go to the lake of fire without death, and they are here. The beast with ten horns is the head of political opposition, and the false prophet the head of the ecclesiastical opposition, against God in that day. Why is he called a false prophet? It is very simple. There are three beautiful characters in which the Lord Jesus Christ is presented. He is prophet, priest, and king. When He was on earth, He was the prophet that Moses spake of; but now in glory, He is the priest; and

by-and-by He is going to be the king. This one will imitate Him absolutely; he is the false prophet, the tyrant-king; and more than that, he will be, not exactly priest, but anti-priest—he goes utterly against the true people of God of that day.

This man seeks to arrogate to himself what belongs to Christ. And now, if you refer once more to 2nd Thessalonians, you will find, that it is not only that there is this daring simulation of the Lord Jesus Christ, but he has the audacity to take the place of God (2:4):—"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." He actually claims divine prerogative. "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time." What is the hindrance now? I doubt not the hindrance, at the present moment, is the active working of the Holy Ghost. He is the hinderer, but the moment the completion of the Church, the body of Christ, arrives, and the rapture occurs, the Holy Ghost, who forms, and indwells that Church, is removed from the earth. He came down at Pentecost to form the Church, and He will go up with the Church.

When He who hinders the opening of all the floodgates of iniquity is "taken out of the way," and ceases to work in His present way, what takes place? The floodgates of wickedness are let loose, flung wide open, and out comes this "man of sin," who takes the place of Christ; nay more, sits in the temple of God. Let me say, in passing, that St Peter's at Rome was never the temple of God, nor ever will be. It has been called such, but it never could be. There will be a day when the Jews will

rebuild Jehovah's temple at Jerusalem, and then this arrogant being springs up, and takes the place, not only of Christ—he asserts that he is Christ—but he usurps the place of God likewise. But what is his end? Isaiah 11:4 foretells it briefly, while fuller detail is given here: —"Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." Oh! I love to think of that, of the One that is going in that day to deal with this proud oppressor of God's earthly people, who has deceived many, while denying the truth of Jehovah, and the truth of Christianity. Satan thought he had done a wonderful thing when he got the Jews cast out of Palestine; he will think he has done a better thing still, when he has got the truth cast out, and the Word of God set aside, and his man exalted to the uttermost.

But then comes the moment, when the One who was the humble, lowly, self-emptied, dependent man, comes out, and is the consumer and destroyer of this wicked one! Yes, it is Jesus, my Saviour, that is going to do that. Is he your Saviour? Mark, you will have to be on the Lord's side, or you may be among those that are caught in the snare of the devil in that sorrowful day. Read the verse once more,—"Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders." Suppose the Lord came to-night, and you are left behind, unconverted, because unbelieving, do you think you will escape the snare? I do not believe it, because there will be such wonderful power and testimony. He will do what Jesus did. Compare Acts 2:22—"Jesus of Nazareth, a

man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him”—and you will find that what Jesus did, this man essays with “the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.” The very same words are used in each case. Remember Elijah, with the prophets of Baal, when the question was put to them, “How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” Let it be settled by fire, says Elijah, —“the God that answereth by fire, let him be God.” The votaries of Baal cried and prayed all day, and cut themselves with knives, but no answer came. Then what happened? Why, Elijah builds his altar, and souses it with water, that there might be no appearance of deception, and he cries to the Lord, and fire comes out from heaven. This man will do the same (see Rev. 13:13).

You will not escape the snare, my friends, if you are on the earth in that day. I recommend you to believe the truth now, because the apostle says he shall come “with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.” I believe that when the antichrist comes there will be a wonderful number of conversions. Have you heard the news? will be the query. What? Christ has come! The tidings will spread; tile news will be gladly received of the advent of a wonderful Christ. But what about the judgment to come? Oh! that is all a delusion; that myth to frighten fools has long been exposed and. exploded. The Christ has come, the world’s Christ, the Christ that men want, and there is no word about judgment; we may live as we like. Numbers of converts flock to the standard. They need not much persuasion; and, sinner, you, who might have been converted to the Christ of God, will be taken with the wiles and lies of a false Christ—the devil’s

Christ. If men will not believe the truth, they will have to believe a lie. Man is not self-supporting, or self-existing, and infidelity is such a dry, dreary, heartless thing, that in a while men will get tired of sheer infidelity; and when something comes with display and power, you will say, Oh! that is beautiful; that will suit me exactly. The bubble bursts, with appalling results. What results? "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness," is God's verdict, already gone out, against the hell-lured convert of antichrist. Let me say to you plainly, there is nothing but damnation ahead of you, if you do not turn to God, and get salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The coming of the Lord is the next thing for us who are saved; and then, if we are taken up—if the saints of God are called up,:—there is nothing but this dark terrible delusion left for Christendom's Christless masses of unconverted professors of a Saviour they never have known, and then never can know! Do you suppose that if you have not believed God in the day of the Holy Ghost, if you have not believed the Gospel now, in the day when God is telling of His love, when the Holy Ghost is here working and pointing you to Jesus, if you do not receive the Gospel, and believe it now, when everybody is desirous for your blessing,—do you suppose that, when every possible influence and power under heaven, and out of hell, and on the earth, is against you,—do you suppose that you will believe the truth then? Listen. "That they all might be damned who Believed Not The Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Oh, may God save you from this terrible, strong delusion. Far better have the truth now. Christ is the truth; and the apostle goes on to say, "We are bound to give thanks

alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and Belief Of The Truth" (2 Thess. 2:13).

How sweetly the warm-hearted apostle addresses the simple believers, and says, I have portrayed the dark future of the unbeliever, but I now turn with joy to what belongs to you. You have believed the truth, and you are entitled to know yourselves among the possessors of salvation. I would not stand here to-night, and not be a Christian, for ten thousand worlds, with all their wealth ten thousand times told. Nay, but I say to you to-night, if you never were a Christian before, come, seize your opportunity, turn to the Lord, believe in His name, rest on His blood, come to His loving open arms. Thus be ready for the Lord's return; and then, when He comes, you will be taken to be with Him, and you will be like Him, and with Him, for ever and ever. What a prospect! I say again, if you have been lingering or halting till to-night, come, and "join Christ's waiting band," for that band has a title to glory without a flaw, and a prospect without a cloud

The Times Of The Gentiles

Daniel 2-7

Lecture 3

What are we to understand by the expression, “the times of the Gentiles”? Turn to the scripture where the phrase occurs. It is found in the 21st chapter of Luke (ver. 24), where the Lord Jesus is describing to His disciples the imminent destruction of Jerusalem. It is the last day of His public life. When I say that, I mean the last day of His public ministry. If you have never gone over the last week of the Lord’s life, I recommend you all to do it, and you will be wonderfully struck with the amazing amount of ministry which took place during that time. On the first day of the week He was anointed in Bethany (John 12:1-11). He is made much of—and that is what we have the privilege of doing now—the first day of the week. The Jew gave Him the last day of the week, the Christian gives Him the first. The next day (Monday) He comes into Jerusalem in triumph, riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass (Mark 11:1-11). The next day (Tuesday) He curses the fig tree, and cleanses the temple (Mark 11:12-19). The next day (Wednesday) occupies from Mark 11:20 to verse 11 of chapter 14 (see also Matt. 22 to 25, and Luke 20,21). The ministry that took place that day is simply enormous. Into it I cannot go now; you must trace it out for yourselves; but from early morn to dewy eve, that day, the blessed Lord seems to have been pouring out His marvellous ministry.

What took place on the Thursday is given us in Mark 14:12-72 It is most noticeable that nothing is recorded, save what relates to the Passover being prepared—no

ministry. He spent that day apparently with God alone till eventide. Then on Friday (Mark 15) He died,—thank God, for me! In the grave He lay all the Sabbath day, and He rose, the triumphant Saviour, on the first day of the new week. It is on the Wednesday that He is telling His disciples what is coming on Jerusalem, and, as we get down towards the end of the discourse, we read, —"These be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until The Times Of The Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22-24). I need not stay to tell you how absolutely this solemn prediction was fulfilled. Jerusalem was soon after overthrown. God, in patient grace, waited a little, He did not destroy it the day after the death of His Son. Nay, for sixty years He waited on His rebellious people, who first rejected their Messiah, and then resisted the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51, 52). At length He sent forth His edict; and, if I may so say, the scavenger came upon the scene, and swept the carcase away. Judaism, as a system of religion, came to an end before God, when Christ was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14); but the Jews clung fast to their city and their religion, until the Romans, like the scavenger with the broom, came, and swept it and them away.

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," was the Lord's statement, and every one knows what a bone of contention that city, and Palestine have been from that day to this. Almost all the fighting in Europe, and Asia,

has been connected, in some way or other, with Jerusalem, and it has all along been trodden down, and will be till “the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

What, however, are we to learn from the expression “the times of the Gentiles”? Go back to the book of Daniel, because the prophecies of Daniel are a simple and distinct answer to that question. They unfold to us, in a remarkable way, what the Lord calls “the times of the Gentiles.” Observe that Daniel opens with an account of Nebuchadnezzar destroying Jerusalem the first time. It was in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, that Nebuchadnezzar besieged it, and took it: —“And the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes; children in whom was no blemish, but well-favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans”(1:3, 4).

I read these verses, because we have thus absolutely fulfilled the solemn prediction which, you will remember, God sent by the lips of Isaiah to King Hezekiah, as recorded in the 39th chapter. Hezekiah had been sick, and when he recovered, the King of Babylon sent up letters and a present, and congratulated him upon his recovery,—a little bit of courtesy on the part of the world. It is ever a dangerous thing to a saint of God when the world begins to be courteous to him. What does Hezekiah do? He opens his house and shows the ambassadors the “precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all

the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures." Then Isaiah comes to Hezekiah and says, "Hear the word of the Lord of hosts; behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon" (Isa. 39:5, 6).

"The times of the Gentiles," let me then repeat, begin with that which Daniel describes here, when Nebuchadnezzar, as the servant of God, went up and took the city,—where the throne of the Lord God had been, where the temple of God was, and where the worship of God was still nominally offered,—took it, and razed it to the ground, because of the sin, and iniquity of its inhabitants. God had forsaken His people. Ezekiel describes how the glory of the Lord gradually forsook the place (chapter 10:4, 18, 19); and then the next thing, in God's righteous government was, that He passed His earthly people, the Jews, into the hands of the enemy, and "the times of the Gentiles" began. That is why all through the book of Daniel you find God called "the God of heaven." He has given up the earth, and while I do not at all, for a moment, deny that there is a providence of God working now, as a matter of fact, God has left the earth alone, and the potsherds of the earth are striving with the potsherds thereof.

In the 2nd of Daniel it is to be noticed that, at the 18th verse, Daniel desires "mercies of the God of heaven;" 19th verse, "blesses the God of heaven;" 28th verse, declares "there is a God in heaven that revealeth

secrets;" 37th verse, informs Nebuchadnezzar "the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom;" and, 44th verse, prophesies, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." The reason of this is that Daniel, by the Spirit of God, is bringing out, for the instruction of God's people, the wonderfully solemn truth, that, for the time being, God's kingdom upon earth is in abeyance. He has retired—given up the earth. Well, but you say, Afterwards He sent His Son—Jesus came by-and-by. True, but what did man do? Sent Him back again, by the way of the cross. As far as the world is concerned, God has got no place in it. I quite admit that some people would be, and are, what is called religious, but if you go to the world, and talk about God, what will they do? They will very soon let you know what they think; "Not this man, but Barabbas," was the world's choice eighteen centuries ago, nor are things really different now. "Crucify him, crucify him!" That is the world expressing its heart—what it would like—viz., Get rid of Jesus. And I tell you more, what Scripture unfolds is this, that the day is drawing near, when apparently, they will get rid of every bit of testimony for God and His Son, and they will then delight in the thought, We have got rid of Him altogether; and that is just the moment when the storm bursts, and the God of heaven re-enters the scene.

Now here, then, we learn in Daniel that "the times of the Gentiles" begin in this way, by God retiring, and Jerusalem being captured; and when you come to chapter 2, you find Nebuchadnezzar commencing the history of the Gentile empire. I do not mean, of course, that there were not Gentile kingdoms before; but, to inaugurate "the times of the Gentiles," Nebuchadnezzar

is suffered—yea, helped of God—to get into a place of absolute supremacy, and earthly power. That comes out distinctly in the 2nd chapter of Daniel.

I may say, for those who would like to study the book of Daniel a little carefully, that it is divided into two great parts—the first six chapters, and the last six. The first part gives us all Nebuchadnezzar's visions, what he saw, and Daniel's interpretation. God begins in the 7th chapter, and thenceforward we get what Daniel sees. It is what God reveals, and makes known to His servant. The reason seems to be this,—the first six chapters are occupied in showing what I may call the moral features of the Gentile empires, what they really were, and what they did. Beginning with the 7th chapter, God shows us the circumstantial appearance of these powers, how He looks upon them, what He sees in them, and thinks about them. Chapters 2 to 6 show what the kings think about themselves, and the 7th and succeeding chapters, what God thinks of them.

In chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, and then forgot them, like many another person; but, being a tyrant, he calls in his wise men, and says, Tell me my dream. They say, "Tell thy servants the dream, and we will show thee the interpretation." The king replies, "The thing is gone from me; if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces." Then they say they were never asked before to interpret a dream which they had not heard, and thereon the furious autocrat "commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon" (ver. 12). The news of this harsh decree gets abroad, and Daniel, being involved in it, goes to God in prayer. The Lord makes known to him what Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed. And

what is the next thing he does? Runs away and tells the king? Oh, no! “Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven,” and said, “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding; he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king’s matter” (verses 19-23).

Daniel’s course is beautiful. He first of all got hold of his brethren, and had a prayer meeting. “He made the thing known to his companions” (ver. 17) But his resource was God. Then, instead of going straight off and telling all abroad what he had learned, he has, what I may venture to call, a worship meeting; he comes and thanks the Lord. Very fine this. There is a great moral lesson here. First he thanks the Lord, saying, “Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever and ever.” His heart runs over in thankfulness to the Lord first, and then he goes in to the king and says, I can tell you your dream.

“Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass. His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay”(verses 31-33). It was deteriorating as it came down, and as to the figure there was no doubt as to its meaning, because he tells

us what it is. He goes on, “Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold”(verses 34-38).

Mark, God did not give Nebuchadnezzar the fish of the sea. Why? Because the Man of the 8th Psalm had not yet come, who had the power over the fish of the sea. You must go to the 17th chapter of Matthew for that, where Peter was troubled, and wanted money for tribute. And the Lord said to him, “Go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee” (Matt. 17:27). It was only the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man, who had power over the fish of the sea. Nebuchadnezzar’s power and dominion was in that sense limited; but as regards the children of men, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, he is told, “God hath made thee ruler over them all.” It is very simple. God unfolds to Nebuchadnezzar the fact that, in His sovereignty, He would allow him to raise the

Babylonian empire, in his own person, to universal supremacy, and we know as a matter of history it was so.

But Nebuchadnezzar is further informed, “After thee shall rise another kingdom inferior to thee”—the Medo-Persian; “and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth;” clearly Greece, as every schoolboy knows. “And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise” (verses 39, 40). Here we have the last empire, the Roman, under which the Lord Jesus died,—because of course it was Pilate, as the official representative of Caesar, who authorised the death of the Son of God, when His own people, the Jews, had delivered Him into his hands. Therefore the utmost importance, all the way through, is attached to the last kingdom, the last empire, and so we find, at the close, that the stone, cut out without hands, falls on the feet of the image. It is upon the last empire that the stone falls, and then becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth. Without doubt that is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, plainly foretold in the 44th verse, where we read, “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure” (verses 44, 45).

Thus quickly, and startlingly, will be introduced the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom man has despised and cast out; He will yet come into this world, and come in a way that will mark the fact that God has sent Him. Though the Roman empire be the one He may first deal with, it is to be observed that all the other kingdoms will come under His solemn, and crushing judgment. In the gospels the Lord Jesus speaks of Himself as “the stone which the builders rejected” become “the head of the corner.” He then adds, “Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder” (Matt. 21:42, 44). The Jewish nation fell over Jesus, whom they could not receive in His humiliation, and lowliness, and was thus broken; but it is the proud Gentile powers upon whom the crushing stone, the now rejected Christ Jesus, will fall by-and-by. It is the proud infidel Gentile, that will not receive the gospel of a heavenly Saviour, upon whom that stone will fall, and grind him to powder. No figure of utter judgment could be more apt.

Nebuchadnezzar’s first vision gives, then, in consecutive history, the four empires, terminating in the Roman; and the end is the introduction of the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, as King of kings, and Lord of lords. Thus, what I may call the general view of Gentile imperial power, or “the times of the Gentiles,” you have developed before you in the 2nd chapter of Daniel.

Glance now, for one moment, at the four following chapters, because they give us, in detail, what we may call the moral features of these Gentile kingdoms. What marks them—what marks man when he gets earthly power away from God? In the 3rd chapter, you will find

that Nebuchadnezzar, elated with the position of supremacy which God had given him, makes an image of gold, and demands that every one shall worship that image. In plain language, idolatry is the great salient point of that chapter. That is what is coming in again by-and-by. What will really bring down the crushing judgment of God upon antichrist, and Christendom, will be the solemn fact, that idolatry will spring up, once more, among those who profess to be the earthly people of God. In the 12th chapter of Matthew this is foretold by the Lord Jesus. He says,—"When the unclean spirit [idolatry] is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (Matt. 12:43-45). Idolatry was repudiated by the Jews, when Jesus was here; but, as they refused to own Him (see Matt. 12) who was their real God, as well as their Messiah, He shows that they would yet fall into the old trap of the enemy—idolatry—as Daniel (chaps 9 and 12) also informs us. You may get rid of idolatry, but unless you really have the truth, though you have your house swept and garnished, it is empty, and Satan will bring in what is false to fill it; and therefore the Lord says, "the last state of that man is worse than the first." The point is this, idolatry will yet be revived in Israel.

Daniel's 3rd chapter shows the fact of compulsory idolatry; and you will find, in Revelation 13:15, that antichrist will "cause that as many as would not worship

the image of the beast should be killed." The day is coming when the civil power in the world will compel idolatry. History simply repeats itself. Nebuchadnezzar gives us a prophetic picture of it. Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego will not bow down; they are faithful to God. They are cast into the fiery furnace; but it only burned off their bonds, set them free, and put them in the company of the Son of God. Faithfulness toward God always leads to the deepest blessing to the soul.

In chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar, conceited and full of his own thoughts, has visions of a great tree. Daniel alone is able to tell him what the meaning is. I do not now unfold it; but we read that what takes place is this:—"At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee," etc. (verses 27-31). In the same hour he was driven from men, and became as a beast. It was a remarkable thing, but it was God's solemn way of dealing with the pride, and self-exaltation of man. When man gets into power, he exalts himself. There is only one Man that can really be trusted with power—the Lord Jesus Christ; and that is why, in the 5th chapter of Revelation, the song of the universe by-and-by is this: —"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Give any other man power, and what will he do with it? Give any other man riches, and what will he do with them? I love to think that the song

in glory is this, that the only One worthy of what men are rushing after here—the only One worthy of all—is the Lord Jesus Christ. Here Nebuchadnezzar has power to exalt himself, and God abases him.

Now the next chapter goes a step further, we have there the grossest impiety and sacrilege. It is Belshazzar's banquet, and the solemn judgment in connection therewith. In that night Belshazzar dies,—God casts him down.

In the 6th chapter, we get apostasy. At the death of Belshazzar, Darius the Mede gets the kingdom, and they come up and say in terms to Darius, Now we want you to make an edict that nobody shall pray but to you; and I have no doubt Darius was flattered, and he puts out the edict, that no prayer shall be made to any god, or man, but to himself, for thirty days. It will be exactly the same in the day that is coming. God has, so to speak, sketched the history in this book. In the 3rd chapter we have the idolatry that will come in compelled by civil power; in the 4th, self-exaltation; in the 5th, impiety; and in the 6th, what I may call apostasy—that is, giving up first estate, and departing from all dependence upon God. That is the general view of "the times of the Gentiles,"—what man does when he possesses power given him by God.

In the 7th chapter—which I read this evening—we get God's view of these four empires. There you will see that these four consecutive kingdoms are brought before us again, in a different way. In the first vision of chapter 7 we have the three earlier kingdoms, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Grecian, under the figures of the three beasts. The fourth kingdom is the subject of a

separate vision: verse 7, “After this I saw in the night-visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” This fourth beast, I have no doubt at all, is the Roman empire,—not as it is now, but as it will be revived in the day that is very near at hand. You may turn and say, Where is the Roman empire now? It is at present nonexistent; but it is a striking thing that in the 12th verse it says, “As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.” I can show you the kingdom of Greece just now; I can show you the Shah of Persia; and I suppose in a certain sense there is that which might possibly be the vestige of the Babylonian kingdom. But where is the Roman? I will tell you what you can see,—you can discover the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided. It broke up, as you know, into that number. Daniel sees the ten horns—always in Scripture a symbol of kingly power; and now, if you read a little lower down in the chapter, you will see that it is in connection with this beast that Daniel sees the “thrones set up” (for this is the true reading, not “cast down”) in the 9th verse. “I beheld till the thrones were set, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream

issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7:9-11)

I repeat, for the sake of clearness, the Roman empire does not exist at this moment. The ten kingdoms into which that empire was divided are existing, though difficult, perhaps, to exactly identify and delimit; but we see in the book of Revelation that they will all have a separate existence, as kings (chap. 17:12), while, at the same time, the empire will be revived, and reconstituted. Daniel sees the beast having ten horns; he saw it in its original character, and what it was going later to become; but in the book of Revelation, you will find that John sees it possessing imperial unity, while separate kingly power existed in the ten horns. It is revived and re-energised entirely by Satanic power. What is very striking in the 7th of Daniel is, that it is because of "the little horn" (ver. 8) that the judgment comes. He wields the beast. In Revelation 13 you will see that there are two beasts coming, the one having ten horns (ver. 1), and the other two horns like a lamb (ver. 2) have no doubt that the one having two horns is really antichrist. While there are two systems of wickedness, one political, the other ecclesiastical, they play into each other's hands. This "little horn" that Daniel sees, is the leader or head of the revived Roman empire, who works in conjunction with his tool, antichrist, to "change times and laws" (ver. 25), and practically speaking, he dominates the beast. It is all the doings of the little horn,

and it is because of the wickedness of the little horn that the judgment falls upon the beast. “I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame” (Dan. 7:11). There you have the same thing as we find in Revelation 19:20, where the beast, and the false prophet, are cast into the lake of fire.

Coming again to the latter part of the 7th of Daniel, you will find that we get more light upon the subject. You always find in Scripture, that, whether it be a parable, or a direct statement of God, if He goes on to expound or explain, there is always something added; and this you will observe, when you come down to the 17th verse, where the interpretation is made known to Daniel. “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (Dan. 7:17-22).

Notice the words “brake in pieces.” This feature is that which has marked the history of the Roman empire from first to last. By the “saints” here, we must not understand the saints that belong to the Church,—not the Christians of the present moment; because we shall all be carried out of the scene, we shall be with Jesus, in glory, before this scripture can be fulfilled; but in that day God will have some earthly saints. The Spirit of God will work again amongst the Jews, and it is against them that all the hatred and energy of this horn is expressed. We shall have to look at Scripture another night to see the great tribulation, and those who pass through it. They are the saints, I have no doubt, named here: —“Judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” How remarkable is the language of Scripture! We all thought that by-and-by we were going to be judged; but even the book of Daniel says, that so far from the saints being judged, they are going to be the judges. “Judgment was given to the saints, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (ver. 22).

Then he says, “The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and 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, and 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 most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart" (verses 23-28).

There are three things that this horn does. (1.) He "shall speak great words against the most High," that is, he blasphemes God. (2.) He "shall wear out the saints of the most High." (3.) He shall "think to change times and laws," that is, the revived feasts, which the Jews will have, when they are gathered back into their own land, the Passover, etc. Now observe, "They shall be given into his hand,"—not the saints, thank God, no,—but God will let him have dominance for the time being, and he will delight to persecute the godly, and he will be able to change their "times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time."

You have here what Daniel speaks about in connection with his seventieth week (see chap. 9:27), where there is a sudden, and unlooked for break of the covenant, and for three and a half years there is tribulation and distress. For the space of three and a half years—forty-two months (Rev. 11:2), or twelve hundred and sixty days (Rev. 11:3), or "a time, and times, and half a time" (Rev. 12:14)—this "prince that shall come" will persecute the saints of God, and then "the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end" (Dan. 7:26).

Thereupon you behold the introduction of the kingdom of Christ, “and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” That is, there is a setting aside of all earthly power, by the introduction of the blessed kingdom—wonderful moment!—of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

What Daniel gives us briefly, and prophetically, the Spirit of God recounts in the book of Revelation in much detail. Look at chapter 13: “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from

the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (Rev. 13:1-10).

"The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." The same empire is seen by John that Daniel saw, only a new feature is observable in the source of power—the dragon, Satan. In the 5th verse:—"There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." Forty-two months is the same time as three and a half years. Now, in the 7th verse, "It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." That will be an awfully solemn day, "for all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him,"—idolatry again,—"whose names are not written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear."

Then in the 11th verse, John says, "I beheld another beast." That is antichrist. In various ways God presents him:—"He exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak,

and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six" (Rev. 13:12-18). If you are alive on the earth in that day, my unconverted hearer, there is one of two things before you. You will either have to bow down, and worship the image of the beast, or you will pay the penalty of your hardihood with your life; and I do not believe an unconverted man will do that—not a bit of it.

The "strong delusion" has gone out, and so great will be the glamour, and so wonderful will be the power, and so magnificent will be the display, that men will be caught, trapped, and carried away by that which appeals to the senses, and to the eye. There will be no Gospel then. You will have what people are aiming at now. You will have your continental Sunday; there will be no kirks, and no meetings; and you will have your fill of what the world wants, and what the devil will furnish; and you will have to do that which is most awful in the history of a man, viz., bow down, and worship before the image of another man, as sinful as yourself.

Now let us look at the 17th chapter, which shows the sequel of all this frightful condition of matters in that day. The 7th verse:—"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou

sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world), when they behold the beast that was, and is not —("Was," when John wrote, "is not" now)—but shall be present." That empire is non-existent, as I speak, but it will arise out of the bottomless pit. It will be revived; the Roman empire will be re-gathered again. You know, that Charlemagne strove for it; and it was the supreme object of the first Napoleon's life to get the Roman empire together again, and he very nearly did it. People told the late Napoleon that he was the "beast," and he was flattered. There is, however, coming a man, who will gather the Roman empire together again, in the sense of the Scripture here. It "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition (true brother, and companion of Judas), and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder." Of course they will, when "they behold the beast who was, and is not, and shall be present." The "yet is" of verse 8 should be, "shall be present."

This fallen empire will come up again, and look what follows:—"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (ver. 12). That is, God, by-and-by, will so work, that I have no doubt that these kings, who will be the leaders of the ten parts of the Roman empire, will all be made to bow down, and one of the ten will be exalted to imperial power, and that will be the moment when things will be headed up. The early part of this chapter shows, that upon the back of this beast, there was sitting a woman, and I have no doubt that you have there the false

Church. Is that awful thing what we call the Church of God? Yes, and she is carried on by the world's power, till it turns and rends her. The fact is, beloved friends, men will get tired of priest craft, and they will be tired by-and-by of everything except the energy of their own will. And what will be the result? They will hate the whore, and rob her first, and then eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. Already they are taking away as much as they can of church land. The stream has set in. Already the thing has begun; but by-and-by man will become utterly infidel, and say, No, no, away to the winds with everything that has even the semblance of God, or that bears the name of Christ upon it. The result will be that everything will be swept aside, and the apostasy become full-blown. The 18th chapter of Revelation shows you the fall of Babylon; and the 19th, the destruction of the beast, and the false prophet,—that is the Roman empire, and the antichrist. Then the Lord will come. Of that we will speak a little more fully another night. I trust you have been able to see, from the Word of God, what is the meaning of "the times of the Gentiles." It is the period during which God puts earthly power into the hands of the Gentiles; and Scripture has shown us how man uses that earthly power, viz., to exalt himself, persecute the saints of God, blaspheme God Himself, and at length he falls completely into the power of Satan. The revived Latin empire, energised by Satan, is the full-blown expression of daring revolt against God, and His Christ.

The Great Tribulation

Matt. 24:1-44; Dan. 9:24-27

Lecture 4

The subject before us this evening is the Jew in relation to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The question is often raised, Has God cast off His ancient people? The apostle Paul answers most distinctly in the 11th [chapter] of Romans, No, He has not, but they have come under His lash. They have come under His judgment for their guilt, and so will Christendom likewise come under the governmental judgment of God, in a day very near at hand, because of their sin. But the Jew is not "cast off" in the sense in which Scripture uses the word,—as final rejection,—because there is the most abundant testimony that the day is coming, when the Lord will re-gather His ancient people,—the house of Israel and the house of Judah,—and He will plant them in the land which He gave to them, and their fathers, for God has plainly said, "One king shall be king to them all," and "David my servant shall be king over them" (Ezek. 37:22, 24),—a beautiful allusion to Christ!

To-night, therefore, it will be my business to show you, if I can, from the Word of God, that this will really take place, as well as to point out the relation which this, at present, despised, and apparently cast-off people, has to the Lord Jesus, in the day of His reappearing. I have read these closing verses of the 9th chapter of Daniel for this reason, that they give us clearly, a bird's eye view of the situation. I may say also, very simply, to any person in this audience, that if you and I do not understand the end of the 9th chapter of Daniel, we shall never

understand the prophetic Scriptures. I have not got the key that unlocks to me the Old Testament prophetic Scriptures, just as in the New Testament, if I do not comprehend the definite import of the parables of the 13th of Matthew, I shall fail to understand the Scriptures that relate to the kingdom of heaven, and the Church. The 13thof Matthew is, dispensationally speaking, the key to the New Testament, and the end of the 9th of Daniel is the key that unlocks the storehouse of Old Testament prophecy with relation to the Jews. Therefore, I dwell just a moment on it, because it is impossible to get on, unless we have correct thoughts of what God is going to do. If we conclude, as many do, that God has cast off the Jew for ever, and that we—Christians—are only going to be blessed, we are running full in the face of, and practically counter to, the testimony of Old Testament Scripture.

What has led us into error is this, that we have been reading Old Testament Scriptures with New Testament spectacles on, and when we found something about the blessing and enlargement of Israel, we began to apply it to ourselves, instead of really seeing of whom God was writing. We do not need to poach upon Old Testament Scriptures for what our souls need. God has blessed us wonderfully—not the Gentiles generally, but the believers in Christ. You see the character of our blessing is most wonderful, because God brings us to heaven in Christ. The Jew will get blessing by-and-by, but what does he get? He gets the earth. We have got heaven, and that is far better. And so, I say that those who go to the Old Testament and say, “That applies to us,” are very like poachers. You know poachers are never very easy in their work, they are always afraid of being disturbed;

and so if I have to go to the Old Testament Scriptures to find what belongs to me, it is perfectly clear I am not distinct, in my own soul, as to what belongs to me as a believer.

But before going further, permit me just to ask you, Are you a Christian? Oh, you say, that is a very plain question. Then let it have an honest answer now. But what do you mean by a Christian? you ask. I mean by a Christian a person that really knows Christ—not a person that knows something about Him, but a person that really knows Christ as his own Saviour. A Christian man is one who knows the rejected and once slain, but now raised, and glorified Saviour at God's right hand, and is connected with, and united to, that risen Saviour, where He now is. A Christian is a man who is born again of God, whose sins are all forgiven—all blotted out, and who has received the Holy Ghost, and knows it. If you can only say, "I hope this is all mine," you are not a true Christian in the proper sense of the word; and, let me tell you frankly, you have not got hold of the real essence of Christianity yet.

A Christian is a man that is indissolubly connected with the victorious risen Saviour. He is linked to the One who went down first of all into death for him, bore his sins, blotted them all out, met all the claims of God, in righteousness, in respect of those sins, and that Saviour is risen without a single sin, and has gone into God's presence, to prepare a place, and take him to it.

The blessing of the believer is this—he knows his sins are forgiven, he knows he is saved, and knows God is his Father; he has the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, and he is a person standing on the other side of death and

judgment, waiting, at the return of the Bridegroom, for glory. Do you not see, that if your heart is perfectly at peace before God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the enjoyment of what Christ has wrought for you, you are free to turn round then, and see how God is going to bless other people? The reason why we can happily think of Israel's restoration is because we know ourselves so wonderfully and absolutely blessed of God. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ you are loved eternally, and, more than that, you are fitted for glory, and you belong to that Saviour, who is coming to take you to the spot, where He Himself is. You see the Christian has everything perfectly clear for eternity, he has a title to glory without a flaw, and he has a prospect before him without a cloud. Are you, I repeat, a Christian? Have you that title to glory without a flaw? What is that title? The precious blood of Christ—nothing more, and nothing less. If you say, I am resting on that blood, then thank God that you have such a title. And there is something more—a prospect without a cloud. But, you say, there is judgment coming. Not for you and me, not for us. Whoever may go through the tribulation, the Church of Christ never will. The Lord's word is distinct upon that point. There is not a cloud in our horizon. Why? Because everything is settled. Every possible question that could be raised between the soul and God is settled, and the only thing we are waiting for, is the Saviour to come for us, and receive us to Himself. I do not want a better prospect. You cannot give me one. That is what entrances the heart.

I tell you that my Saviour may be here to-night, and that I may meet Him in the air. What can be more blessed than that? But if you do not know the Saviour, and do

not possess that title, then your prospect has got nothing but clouds in it, and I am going to show you some of them. If you are an unsettled, and hesitating soul, if you do not yet know the Lord, remember, that while I speak of that which specifically relates to the Jews, it may have distinct application to you also. You will find that although the hottest bit of the furnace of tribulation may be at Jerusalem, yet the tip of the flame will touch all the world. There will be no mercy in that day for the man who has refused the Gospel. Now is the day of mercy. I recommend you to get it.

Turn now to the prophecy itself (Dan. 9:24-27) for a moment, and we shall see what was unfolded to Daniel, as he was looking to God about his people. He hears this, “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people.” Look what an immense amount is to take place in these seventy weeks—I believe they are weeks of years, not weeks of days. You find, “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, (1) to finish the transgression, (2) and to make an end of sins, (3) and to make reconciliation for iniquity, (4) and to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) and to seal up the vision and prophecy, (6) and to anoint the most Holy,”—to replace everything that the godly Jew desired; and as this opened out before Daniel’s soul, I can imagine how his heart was filled, to have it all brought about in seventy weeks; the Temple rebuilt and the Holy of Holies there. But listen, “Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto 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.” When was that commandment issued? It was in

the days of Nehemiah. It was in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, that this took place, four hundred and fifty-four years before the birth of Jesus. For the detail of this edict read the 2nd chapter of Nehemiah, verses 5-9, The first seven weeks (forty-nine years) were really occupied with the building of the city and the wall, “in troublous times,” after the coming back of the remnant from Babylon. “And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and have nothing” (margin). That is, counting from the end of the first seven weeks, right on to the end of the sixty-ninth week, you come down to Messiah’s death, four hundred and eighty-three years from the date of Nehemiah’s commission.

Four hundred and eighty-three years from the going forth of the edict to build the wall, was the very time when was fulfilled the word, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zech. 9:9). Jesus presented Himself thus to the Jewish nation, “lowly, and riding upon an ass,” and was “cut off and had nothing.” He came into Jerusalem fulfilling prophecy. He came in on the Monday of the last week of His life. He had been anointed in Bethany over night by Mary—she knew the King—and the children say, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” but the chief priests and the scribes “were sore displeased.” Ah, the children knew what the parents did not. Three days afterwards He was betrayed, and on the following day was slain, and what took place? Israel’s hopes were dashed to the ground, for the Messiah was cut off, and had nothing.

The next prophecy evidently refers to the Romans and to Jerusalem, “And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” Observe, it is “the people of the prince that shall come” The prince, I apprehend, has not yet come, for he is to be the chief actor in the seventieth week, which has not yet arrived, but his people (the Romans), nevertheless, came and destroyed Jerusalem, but not until A.D. 70 “And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm a (not the) covenant with the many 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 he shall make it desolate (or, a desolator), even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate;” (9:26, 27).

Now, you might turn and say, that week is fulfilled. No, because what Scripture brings out is this, that with the death of Christ, God ceases altogether to count time, God’s relations with His earthly people were stopped, the link was snapped, the chain was divided, and there has come in the long interval of Christianity, commencing with the descent of the Holy Ghost, and closing with the coming again of the Lord Jesus, as the Bridegroom, to gather up His bride, the Church, to meet Him in the air. When that takes place, when this parenthesis, in which you and I live, is over, you will find that Daniel’s seventieth week will be fulfilled; the links of the broken chain are picked up, and God puts the two ends together, and what do you find then going on again? Israel’s history. Get clearly and distinctly in your mind what I mean. I hope everybody understands. I have no doubt in my own mind as to what God means. The

point to note, is this, that after the sixty-ninth week Messiah was cut off, and then Israel was for the time being set aside, and the secret thought of God from eternity—the Church—came out. God's work, since Pentecost, has been but little among the Jews—and that not nationally, but chiefly among the Gentiles, calling souls out of each, and forming them into "one new man,"—the Church; but the moment this work of grace is over, and there is brought in the last soul that believes the Gospel—and it might be this night that the last believer in Jesus is being laid hold of by the energy of the Spirit of God,—then the Lord Jesus will come again, and we who know Him, rise to meet Him in the air, the living changed, the dead taken out of their graves, and what then? Israel comes again to the front; God again picks up the chain, if I may say so, and the seventieth week of Daniel is fulfilled.

"The people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." It was the last empire, the Roman empire, that slew the Lord, and destroyed the city, and it will be the Roman empire, revived by Satanic power, that, in the day yet to come, will oppress the Jew, and will be the real foe of God's people in the time of which the seventieth week of Daniel so solemnly treats. I believe the prince in that verse has never arrived yet. He is the beast with the ten horns, the revived Imperial head of the Roman empire, who, along with the false prophet, antichrist, will yet crush down God's ancient people.

The end of verse 26 doubtless alludes to what took place shortly after the death of the Lord. That death broke the link between God and His people, and since then they have lost their national place. A perfect flood of troubles

broke on them, as it says, “And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.” Again, “The king…sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city” (Matt. 22:7). This is no part of the seventy weeks.

The 27th verse carries us up to the close, and gives us the seventieth week. Here the long interregnum of Christianity ends, and we read, “He,” that is the coming Roman prince—not the Lord Jesus—“shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (ver. 17). The Jews will be gathered back into their own land, with the temple rebuilt, the sacrifices re-established, and their old customs, feast days, and rites going on, and then they get under the protection of this western political power, that is, the revived Roman empire. A covenant is made with “the many,” the mass of the nation; the remnant declining it, and having no part in it. “In the midst of the week” this covenant is broken. “He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease.” The object of this is plain. Antichrist having effected, first of all, the complete obliteration of every remaining trace in Christendom of what was, or pretended to be, the worship of Jesus—the Christian’s God—will not be content till he has driven out of the earth every testimony to Jehovah, the God of the Jew. The Lord having come for the Church, and the Holy Ghost being removed, then the mystery of iniquity works, the man of sin appears, thenceforth every vestige of what you and I are accustomed to think of as Christianity will be set aside, and then the Lord will send them a strong delusion, and they will believe a lie.

But there is a portion of God's earth still left, where the name of Jehovah is known, and the God of the Jew still owned, and worshipped. The Jews are gathered to their own land, and they are worshipping the God of their fathers, according to their idea. What is the next thing? 'I must get rid of that also,' says Satan, and great will be his satisfaction when he can say, I have made clear riddance of every vestige of the testimony to Jehovah, I have got rid of Christ in Christendom, and I have replaced the true Christ by antichrist. When he shall have turned out every vestige of worship of the true God in Judaea, then he will be content. The enemy's great design appears to have succeeded, for a man—himself but Satan's tool and dupe—has usurped God's place upon the earth. That is the moment when God begins to assert His rights. The patience of God is wonderful. If either you or I had had the government of this world in our hands, we should have wound the business up long ago. There is not a man here to-night who would have gone on as long with it, for if he had had the power, he would have exercised it long ere this, and set things right according to his own mind. But I repeat, the patience of God is wonderful.

Now, however, when idolatry is once more upheld in what professes to be His temple, the long-suffering patience of God with man on the earth is ended. The reason is here given, "And for (or on account of) the wing of abominations, a desolator, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." The covenant is broken, the sacrifice and oblation caused to cease, and the wing of protection flung over the "abomination"—the well-known Old Testament term for idolatry. In plain language, you have

clearly predicted here the solemn fact, that there will yet be idolatry in the spot where Jesus died, in Jerusalem, and in what purports to be Jehovah's temple. Idolatry there will undoubtedly be, according to the 12th of Daniel (ver. 11) and our Lord's own words in Matt 24:15, 16: "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."

"The abomination that maketh desolate" is this: Antichrist, the beast with two horns, the simulator of Jesus, will make an image to the beast with ten horns (see Rev. 13:11-18). He will make the image of his friend, with whom he is working in confederacy, and he will have the power to make that image speak, and compel people to worship it. In plain language, compulsory idolatry springs up again, and then God sends, in retributive judgment, the "flood." What is called the "flood" in verse 26 is called the "desolator" in verse 27 I regard this as the Assyrian. Because idols are taken under the protection of "the prince that shall come," God sends "a desolator," "an overflowing scourge" on Jerusalem—here spoken of, as "the desolate." The prince, although he has broken the covenant, is still the patron and head of the nation, and his minion is the false prophet—antichrist—who will have his seat in Jerusalem, as the great arch-priest of the idolatrous worship offered to the image in the temple of God. As a result God sends down the "flood," or the "desolator." The one referred to by these two figures is the Assyrian, or "king of the north," the foe outside the land. Antichrist is the enemy of the righteous

Jews within; the Assyrian, from without. Thus the remnant are exposed, so to speak, to a double fire of diabolical persecution.

Other scriptures speak of this moment, particularly Isa. 28:2: “Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which, as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.” This verse flings light on the 9th of Daniel. Further down in Isaiah 28, ver. 14, you find the covenant also spoken of: “Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.” That is, the Roman emperor will make a covenant with the ungodly mass of the restored Jews. That covenant is an unholy covenant, and he breaks it, and God will then step in, and bitterly chastise them, because of their sin, first of all, in the rejection of Jesus, as their Messiah, and secondly, because of their acceptance of antichrist. Mark it well, if men do not have the true Christ, they are bound to

accept the false one. Man is not independent, and self-supporting, and therefore, when antichrist comes, with his delusions, and wiles, he will be accepted, and received, above all in Jerusalem, where, of course, his throne will be. God's indignation is thereon expressed against these last representatives of the Christ rejecting portion of Israel, and on them will fall His dire judgments, the Assyrian being used as "the rod of mine anger" (Isa. 10:5).

But now what about the tribulation? Well, here is the whole point. It is because of the sad moral condition of the nation, at that moment, that God pours forth the judgment, of which Scripture thus speaks, and if any of you have any doubt as to this special time, I must refer you briefly to other scriptures, both in the Old and New Testaments, which point out this state of matters. Look first at the 30th chapter of Jeremiah, where you will find, first of all, the statement that God will restore His people, and then, what will be effected, when they are restored. "For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it" (Jer. 30:3).

Concerning Israel and Judah, you must not forget that the kingdom, in the days of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, had been divided. The ten tribes that went off with Jeroboam are usually spoken of, by the prophets of the Old Testament, as "Israel" or "Ephraim," and you will have pointed out, later in this course of lectures, that Scripture speaks most distinctly as to the different dealing of God with the ten tribes and the two tribes. Here we have merely the fact brought out, "I will bring

again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah." The ten tribes were taken into captivity long before Judah. Where they are, at this day, I do not know, and no one knows. There has been a great effort to make out that the English-speaking race, and specially the Christians thereof, are the ten tribes, but I demur to this, because I do not think there is a shadow of ground, in Scripture, for this theory. I am quite willing to admit this, that if a man wants to prove any absurdity he can always get some wrested scripture, dislocated from its connection, to support him. But what destroys the whole force of the theory to me, is this, that the acme of the beauty and blessedness of Christianity is, that we are going to heavenly glory with Christ. We are not going to live on the earth. Thank God, no. When the time comes to go hence, the Lord has given us something far better than earth. Let the Jew have his portion, and we will give it to him freely, and therefore if anybody comes and says, You are the house of Israel, do not you believe it; because even if an Israelite were converted now, he ceases, as a believer in Jesus, to be a Jew, and becomes a member of the body of Christ.

I truly confess, beloved friends, that the day when I say "good-bye" to the earth, I shall say, from the bottom of my heart, Thank God. If the Lord came to-night, we should break out, as we left the earth behind, into that noble paean, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." We are going to be changed into the likeness of Christ, and to be with him for ever. Heaven, not earth, is our home. I would not be anything but a Christian for ten thousand

worlds; and it you are not one, it is high time you became one.

But, with regard to the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, we read, “And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel, and concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 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. 30:4-7). The time of Jacob’s trouble is the time when the Jews, regathered, will be brought under this solemn judgment of God. “For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity: and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished” (verses 8-11). Then in the 18th verse, “Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwelling-places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the

manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving, and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small" (verses 18, 19). Abundant other scriptures give the same testimony as to their restoration, but this one I refer to because it speaks of the time of "Jacob's trouble," and of the solemn character of that day.

Now go to the 12th chapter of Daniel, and you will find the same time marked out. It is in the last, or seventieth week, at the close of the time spoken of as the forty-two months, the last half of the seventieth week of Daniel. "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. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever"(verses 1-3). Here, see, we have the remnant teaching the mass righteousness, if they will learn. But, some one says, I thought that was the resurrection. So it is, but it is not the resurrection of the body; it is the resurrection of the nation of Israel. This use of resurrection, as a figure of blessed restoration from national ruin, is not uncommon in Old Testament Scripture. Compare with this passage Isaiah 26, where Israel's trouble under Gentile lords is described. In verse 19 the Lord says, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." They are yet to be delivered from Gentile thraldom. Again, Ezekiel 37:1-14, speaks of Israel as not only dead, but buried nationally. There God says, "O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel" (ver. 12). Jeremiah shows us then the time of Jacob's trouble, whereas Daniel lets us know that it will be a time of trouble of which the like was never known before.

Now come to the scripture, which I read at the beginning of the meeting, Matthew 24, and you will find our Lord comments upon that time in the most remarkable way. Having detailed all the surrounding circumstances of that day, He says in verse 15, "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: let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." What does the shortening of those days refer to? It carries you back to another scripture in the book of Daniel, chap, 12, verse 11, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh

desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." That is more than a thousand two hundred and sixty; it is three and a half years and one month more. That is, the end of the seventieth week will scarcely bring in the contemplated blessing, they must hold out in their trouble and wait thirty days longer; and then Daniel adds, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." That is another forty-five days further on. At that moment, when God puts His hand to things, He does not take very long about it. After the seventieth week closes, another month will produce wonderful effects, and at the end of the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days the reign of the Son of Man will be established.

But the Lord, in speaking to His disciples here in Matthew, says, "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." The moment they see idolatry in Jerusalem, let them take refuge where they can, because He tells us in the 21st verse, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." There never has been such trouble, and there never shall again be such trouble, as at that moment, and for the reason that idolatry is sanctioned, maintained, and protected, in what is ostensibly the temple of God. But you may say, I thought Christians always had trouble. Well, no doubt, we do get it, and it does not do us any harm, but always good. Whenever there is a bit of sharp persecution, you will always find that the saints are very bright and

happy, and very bold in their testimony for the Lord; but when everything is quiet they are apt to go to sleep. It is quite true that “in the world ye shall have tribulation,” for our Lord says so. What then are we to do? Run away from it? The Lord alone can guide us at the moment. Here, however, there is clear instruction for an earthly people, in peculiar circumstances, at a special moment of coming trial. “Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in winter, neither on the sabbath-day.” Why not on the Sabbath day? Because the Jew could not, under the law, go beyond a Sabbath day’s journey—not quite half a mile—on the Sabbath day. No Christian would think that there is anything wrong in travelling ten times that distance, on the Lord’s Day, if it were to serve the Lord, say in preaching the Gospel. Not that the two days are identical, because I claim for the Lord’s Day a far higher sanctity than ever was accorded to the Sabbath. The Lord’s Day is the day that marks Christianity, and the Sabbath is what was connected with Judaism, and it is a remarkable fact that the Lord spent the Sabbath day in the grave.

There is great grace in the Lord’s desiring that no obstacle might be in the way of those who were bid to flee then,—“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” etc. He gives them further warning not to listen to this man, or that, because they have then distinctly to understand, that, at that moment, He is, Himself, coming to their rescue. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days,” He says, “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" (verses 29, 30). I know that expositors have attempted to explain these verses, by saying their fulfilment was the Romans taking Jerusalem. But on the very face of it, we cannot accept that. The Romans did not come from the east, but from the west,—"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. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (verses 27, 28). What is the carcase? Corrupt, dead Judaism.

If you turn now to the 13th of St Mark, you will there find identical testimony as to the tribulation. "For in those days shall be affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days" (verses 19, 20). We have read two distinct statements in the Old Testament Scriptures as to this special time of trouble; and you have the two evangelists, Matthew and Mark, each speaking of it, specifically, as a special time, and then, in the Revelation, you have confirmatory testimony. Turn there for one moment, and you will see exactly who they are who go through, and come out of "the great tribulation." Read the 7th chapter. The first half is occupied with telling you, that there were sealed twelve thousand of each of the twelve tribes of Israel—God will have His own testimony—and you have therefore this limited number—one hundred and forty-four thousand of Israel. Then in the 9th verse we read:—"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number"—it is

refreshing in its largeness—“of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands: and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” I confess I do not like to have to spoil a happy, and pretty illusion, but truth demands it. Many—perhaps, at some time, all—of us have thought this was heaven, but we must give that thought up; it is not a heavenly, it is an earthly, scene, and company.

But I hear some one saying, Oh, but I thought this meant us Christians. Thank God, it is not us. We have something infinitely better. This scene is enacted on the earth. We see first, Israel’s remnant blessed on the earth, and then we get those countless white-robed Gentile multitudes on the earth. They have to do with God now, in the enjoyment of His grace; they are in definite relationship with God, and they have also palms in their hands,—they are victorious. They are seen standing before, not around the throne, and they ascribe salvation to God, on the throne, and to the Lamb. Who the “elders” are here, you can learn from Revelation, 4th and 5th chapters. The four and twenty elders represent the heavenly saints. We are supposed to understand all about that day, for God is giving us light about it in this day. We are to know it now. The saint of Christ, the saint of heaven, is supposed to understand all about the earth, because his heart is so free, and happy, in the enjoyment of what he possesses himself, that he is able to think of, and be interested in, what is going on in the earth.

Now, in proof of this statement, observe,—“One of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And

I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:13-17). They had come out of the great tribulation. They had been true to God, and faithful in it, and their robes were washed in the blood of the Lamb. They were cleansed ones, owned to be such, hence are always before the throne, a special class, and serve God day and night in His temple. This at once distinguishes them from the Church, the heavenly saints. There is no temple in Revelation 21:22, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple. This white-robed multitude have a priestly place, in the temple, on this earth, and they will have the deep consolations of God, worth all the sorrows they have passed through. It is a lovely picture of how, after the tribulation, God brings them into perfect blessing on earth.

The Church of God, the body of Christ, will not go through the tribulation. There have not been wanting those who have asserted that she will, but to any simple believer the distinct, absolute statement of the blessed Lord, to the overcomer, in Philadelphia, settles that finally. In the 3rd chapter of Revelation and 10th verse, we get this lovely word—"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from (out of,

not in) the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Thus while the 7th chapter distinctly brings out who will be passing through, and coming out of, the great tribulation,—viz., all those that are blessed of God in Israel, and likewise an innumerable company from among the Gentiles,—we see the other side in this 3rd chapter, and learn who will not go through it—the Church, the Bride of Christ. Will the Christian pass through it? No; "because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation." Jesus, as it were, says, You have known Me, you have loved Me, and I am going to come for you before that day sets in. "Behold I come quickly." Beloved friends, how blessed thus to hear His sweet voice speaking to us. I ask you, are you among this number, that have believed in His name, have heard His voice, and are waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven? Are you ready, are you prepared, are you His? If not, let me say as I close, Oh! turn to Him now, and escape that tribulation. Get into the very presence of God now, into the enjoyment of His own grace. Approach now, trust, and know the Lord Jesus, as the risen Saviour, and then wait for Him, as the coming Bridegroom.

The Sun Of Righteousness

Malachi 3:16-18, 4

Lecture 5

You will remember, dear friends, that on the first night we were together, we were looking, a little, at the blessed Lord in the character of “The Morning Star.” You will further remember that it is in the last chapter of the New Testament, that the Lord Jesus says specifically, “I am the bright and morning star.” Now is it not remarkable that the New Testament closes with the apparition of the Morning Star, whereas the Old Testament closes with the rising of the Sun, “the Sun of righteousness.” Every one knows that the morning star is always visible before the sun. And you say, What is the Scripture meaning of that? Simply this, that what the last chapter of the New Testament brings before us, will be certainly fulfilled, before that which the last chapter of the Old Testament brings before us. It is but another illustration of the Scripture principle, “The last shall be first.” Do you inquire what is the Morning Star? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. And what is the Sun of Righteousness? It is the Lord Jesus Christ, without doubt, but the Lord Jesus looked at in a totally different way. As “the morning star,” He shows Himself in heavenly glory, as the One who says, “Behold I come quickly”; and He is coming. For whom? For those who are His own, His own redeemed people. If He came to-night, beloved friends, He would come for you and me, if we belong to Him. You say, But suppose I do not belong to Him? Well, you will get your portion in this last

chapter of the Old Testament, and it is by no means a very bright outlook, for an unsaved man.

I do not deny, for a moment, that many a true and honest soul has looked at the “Sun of righteousness,” as being the gospel of the grace of God, but such is not the meaning of it, I am persuaded. The context of Scripture will always explain its meaning, and if you will take the trouble to read the context of the passage, where the expression “the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings,” occurs, you will immediately see to whom it refers—a company of people, in terrible sorrow, but, who are marked by one lovely characteristic, viz.—“They that feared the Lord.” I do not know whether you observed, as I read, that three times over the Spirit of God marks out a certain company by this characteristic—“Then they that feared the Lord,” “Them that feared the Lords” (3:16), and “Unto you that fear my name” (4:2). What marks the people, to whom the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, is this, that they “fear the Lord.” They are godly.

Now, I do not suppose your nearest friend supposes you to be a godly person, if you are not converted. No, I do not think that your nearest friend would exactly put that characteristic upon you, if you are an unconverted person, because of the ungodly it is said there is no fear of God before their eyes. The mark of the unregenerate man is always this, the fear of God is not in him. The fear of hell may be, the fear of judgment, and torment may be, and ought to be there, but that is not the fear of God. Ah, beloved friends, it is a blessed thing to be a God-fearing person, whether in this present time—the Christian era—or in that of which the last of Malachi speaks. Are you a person that fears God? “Blessed is the

man that feareth alway," says Scripture. The thief on the cross turned round to his wicked neighbour,—grace had opened his eyes and opened his heart, and saved his soul,—and he said, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing amiss." Then he said unto Jesus, "Lord remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The man that fears the Lord is never forgotten by the Lord. These men, that Malachi speaks of, feared God, and I say, beloved friends, that there is nothing more blessed for a man than that. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). Again, "Fear the Lord and depart from evil" (Prov. 3:7). It is ever a happy thing for a man when he fears the Lord. I do not doubt that many a man may have the fear of God, who may not have the full enjoyment of the Gospel; but the point in this chapter is that the Lord has His eye upon, and blessedly addresses, a certain company who feared Him. They are those whom He will save, whom He will deliver; nay, more, He says, "Ye shall tread down the wicked." Of course, they cannot be Christians, for no Christian would do that. No Christian would tread down the wicked man, it is foreign to the spirit and genius of Christianity, whose motto is "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" (Rom. 12:14)

You may say, Who then are these? I spoke a little, last Lord's Day evening, of a certain company of godly Jews here upon the earth, who,—after the Lord has come into the air, after the Church of God is taken up, after antichrist has appeared, and the beast has made its

appearance, and full Satanic power is manifest upon the earth,—come on the scene, pious earthly saints, and they speak of the things of the Lord. They fear the Lord, they delight in the Lord, and although they are passing through terrible persecution, and tribulation for the Lord's sake, they are not crushed. Here God speaks by Malachi, and says of them this—"They shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels." I will read it again. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and"—look—"I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." This is a company of witnesses alive on earth when the Lord is coming to judge righteously, and about to deal with the earth. God says about them, "I will spare them."

Although many Christians might not take much interest in, or comfort out of, these last verses, I believe there is coming the day when there will be a good many saints upon the earth, who will take the deepest, and sweetest comfort out of them, because they will apply to them, in a moment, when they are passing through terrible persecution for the Lord's sake. I say again they are Jewish saints. Do you ask me, then, What means the rising of the Sun of Righteousness? The Lord unfolds the meaning, plainly, and simply here. He says, "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor

branch." That is not the Gospel day. The day in which your lot and mine is cast, is the day when the Gospel comes fresh down from glory, and the Spirit of God labours to bring your heart to the heavenly Saviour, to attract you to Him, and to save you. There is no "oven" in this day, but "the day cometh," says He, "that shall burn as an oven." Solemn prediction of what is coming! It is the day of the Lord. The day of the appearing of the Son of Man, the day when the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings, will be an awful day for the wicked man. Doubtless men will get on swimmingly till the Lord appears—grandly till the Son of Man appears. It will be a day when men will be rubbing their hands smoothly, and saying, "Peace and safety." Yes, but it is when they are saying this, that "then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child (i.e., it is inevitable), and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:3). It will be the day when Satan governs and rules, when Christ is utterly ignored, and forgotten, and antichrist is owned in His place, and that which goes on in that day will suit the hearts of men of the world, it will suit you, my unconverted friend, absolutely. There will be no Gospel then. You will not have a godly mother praying for you, or anybody persuading you to go to a Gospel meeting, or any one thrusting a tract into your hand. You will be saying, Thank God, I have got rid of all those unwelcome interruptions to my happiness. You will have got rid of them all, and you will be in a fool's paradise, with the judgment of God just about to burst on your head. The Lord deliver you, my friend, yet unsaved, from the day of His wrath, by giving you now to know Himself, in the day of His grace.

Look then, the wicked are going to be dealt with by God, “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” That is very simple. The godly are looking for deliverance—for the appearing of the Saviour, the Messiah; looking, as many a man, who has gone through a black night of tempest, looks. Look at the mariner passing through a terrible storm at sea, in the darkness of night. How he longs for the morning, and he takes hope and says, It will not be long before daylight comes, and by-and-by the sun arises, and what a comfort there is in the light. Do you not think it will be a great comfort for the people of God upon earth in that day, when the Saviour—Jesus, their own Messiah, their Deliverer, comes? Immense comfort! “And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob” (Rom. 11:26). It will be very wonderful comfort, and therefore the figure here, “the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.”

I should not like to be misunderstood as to this point. It is not the Gospel of the grace of God, though I fully believe, that many an anxious soul has gone down on his knees, and cried with deep earnestness, that the Sun of Righteousness might arise to him, with healing in His wings, and the Lord has answered that prayer. God knew what the man wanted. He wanted the Gospel, and got it too, and, if you want the Gospel, you are welcome to it; yea, more welcome to it than to the air you draw into your lungs at this moment. Freer to you than the very air you breathe is God’s precious salvation. Whatever you are, whatever you have been, and whatever you have done, God sends out now the word,

of salvation, and if you are anxious men, or troubled women, you are heartily welcome to it, but that is not the interpretation of the scripture before us.

This scripture means that Christ, in glory, and power, and majesty, and having everything in His hand, comes for the deliverance, and help, and healing of the godly amongst those who are His ancient people upon the earth—the Jews gathered back into their own land—restored. They are a little company, whom Scripture speaks of by a term, which, when once apprehended, will help you better to understand Old Testament Scriptures. I will therefore ask you to go to the 10th chapter of Isaiah, and you will there find that this company is designated by God as the remnant: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God” (verses 20, 21). This language brings out distinctly the fact, that there will be some saints upon earth, in the day after the Holy Ghost, and the Church are taken up, after the testimony of Christianity is over, and while the general apostasy is manifest, and antichrist is ruling. God, who never left Himself without a witness on earth, and never will, raises up in that day a company who testify to Jehovah, and who are spoken of in numberless passages of the Old Testament Scriptures: often by this term, “the remnant.”

In the first instance they seem to belong only to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and, if you want to learn more about them, turn to the 13th chapter of Zechariah. There again you find God speaking of them in another

way: “And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God” (verses 8, 9). There is almost universal declension, and apostasy, and a giving up by the Jews generally, of all their own peculiar truth. But in spite of the idolatry in their midst, and the terrible power of the enemy against them, led on by the antichrist, and the beast, God has, as He always will have, a witness to Himself, in this “third part.”

In this passage we see that only one-third escapes, the rest being cut off in judgment. The two tribes—Judah and Benjamin—were those that were in the land when the Lord Jesus Christ died. The ten tribes had been taken into captivity, long before the two tribes were carried away to Babylon. Out of the captivity of Babylon, a certain number came back into Judaea, in the days of Ezra, and Nehemiah. Their descendants were in the land when Jesus came, and Him they refused, and got Pilate to condemn to death, and they were glad when He died. They have lying against them, therefore, this grave and serious sin, that they murdered their Messiah. When again restored to their land, and evidences arise, indicating Messiah’s return, this sin will press upon their conscience, for God says, “I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and

shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 12:10-14,13:1)•

The repentance will be deep and real. Each, separately, will take part therein. A Nathan will not rebuke a David, as in days gone by (2 Sam. 12:7-12), but will judge himself. Levi and Simeon, who were companions in murder (Gen. 34:25, 16) will repent apart.

I have little doubt that the tide has set in, at this moment, by which the Jews are going to be replaced in Palestine. Their return will begin, perhaps, as the outcome of political intrigue, and matters will go on swimmingly till they think themselves securely reestablished. If you refer to the 18th chapter of Isaiah you will find, in figurative language, the fact that they are put back in their land, but when everything seems to be all right, and happy, God blows upon the whole thing. "For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches. They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the

beasts of the earth shall winter upon them. In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion" (Isa. 18:5-7). The Lord breaks up men's plans, because He is not going to have His people put back into His land, and theirs, as the outcome of man's political ideas.

When the Lord takes His people back, He will take them back Himself. He will, however, have to purge them. The two tribes are purged after they have reached the land. One-third is faithful to God, spite of antichrist's wiles and force, but "two parts therein shall be cut off and die." The two tribes are commonly called, in Scripture, the Jews. This is their technical term. The ten tribes are, on the other hand, spoken of as "the house of Israel." In Zechariah you find the two tribes returning, and being purged in the land. At a later date God will bring back the ten tribes. The two tribes come back in unbelief, and are purged, by God, in the land, and two-thirds are cut off in judgment. The ten tribes will be purged of God on their way to the land, whither the Lord Himself will gather them. They will be purged in the wilderness, as their fathers were. This is given to us in Ezekiel, "And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you,

saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, arid they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 20:34-38).

Now, let us turn to the prophet Amos for confirmation, "Lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us" (Amos 9:9, 10). These scriptures make it abundantly plain, that the two tribes are purged, after they have got back into the land in unbelief, whereas the ten tribes are purged in the wilderness, while they are on their way to the land.

I ask you now to look a little bit into the book of Psalms, and for this reason,—that the question, Why does the Lord come in this character of the Sun of Righteousness? may be answered. Turn back to the 93rd Psalm, and you will find what is exceedingly interesting, and instructive. From the 93rd to the 100th Psalm—really a little book by itself—the Spirit of God shows us various of His activities in "the remnant," just at the moment that is characterised by the return of the First-begotten from the dead; the Lord Jesus, as Jehovah, then coming back manifestly into the world. We do not get here the hope of the Church, nor the truth of the Bridegroom coming into the air, and the Bride meeting Him there. What we get is the return of the Messiah, who really is Jehovah, to the earth, for the deliverance, and help, and comfort of His ancient people. You will

find in this little book of Psalms the whole series of coming events developed, with the utmost exactness.

The 93rd Psalm is prefatory to the rest. We will read it therefore, “The Lord reigneth; he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved. Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting. The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea. Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.” It is what I may call the anticipatory inauguration of Messiah’s reign. He is coming, that is the point. Yes, He is coming, but what brings Him? The 94th Psalm answers that question. Briefly, that Psalm is the fervent, earnest, longing cry of the remnant, of which I have been speaking, who, in their sorrow, and need, and distress, suffering keenly under the power of Satan, the pressure of antichrist, and tremendously persecuted by the enemies of the Lord, turn round to God, and cry to Him for deliverance.

We shall trace this as we read it. “O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belonged, shew thyself” (margin, shine forth, see also Ps. 80:1—they cry for, and await the rising Sun). “Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud. Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves? They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The

Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it." Ah! but He does, and lower down, in the 14th verse, you will see they have good reason for their cry. They say, "The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. But judgment shall return unto righteousness." Remarkable expression—"Judgment shall return unto righteousness." When did judgment depart from righteousness? Do you not remember? When this very people had dragged the Son of God to the bar of the Gentile governor. And do you not remember when Pilate had said, "I find no fault in him," they cried "Crucify him"? Yes, in Pilate's hall, over eighteen hundred years ago, judgment in the person of Pilate, and righteousness in the person of Jesus, parted company, and the innocent Man was condemned and slain. Thank God, that Man is my Saviour, I hope He is yours.

But the day is coming when "judgment shall return unto righteousness." Everything will be altered in that day. When the Lord returns in power and glory, "judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it." Then the remnant say,—"Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul;" and then they ask this question,—"Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" (ver. 20.) Here we see how the godly Jew, by-and-by, will turn back to the 94th Psalm, and interpret his difficulties, under the pressure, and power, of antichrist's reign, with every semblance of Christianity gone, and all his own religious feasts, and rites set aside. Although they have rebuilt

their temple, set up their altar, and resumed their sacrifices once more, all has been put aside. Hence the prayer and query,—“Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood. But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge. And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.” It is the cry of the remnant, at that moment, that really causes their sun to “shine forth,” and brings the Son of Man upon the scene, in answer to their cry, “Lord, how long shall the wicked triumph?” (ver. 3.).

Similarly, you hear their voice in the 6th chapter of Revelation, when John saw “under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them: and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (verses 9-11). God had been patient. The indignation which He had been pouring upon His people had not yet come to its full height, and therefore He tarries, and bids them be patient. But He will come, and they know it; and what therefore does this remnant do? They turn round, in Psalm 95, to their brethren, yet unprepared, of the house of Israel, and say, Get ready. And then, in Psalm 96, to the Gentiles—the heathen generally—they say, Get ready. They render what I call a

double testimony. It is a testimony on the one hand to their brethren, and, on the other, to the Gentiles, to get ready because the Messiah is coming. Look at the 95th Psalm. It is a summons to Israel to get ready. “O come” It is the earnest cry of the evangelists of that day—“O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is our God: and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day, if ye will hear his voice, (Ah! may I not say this unto you also, my unsaved friend? To-day, if ye will hear his voice,) harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: unto whom I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.” It is a beautiful, and simple, earnest, loving testimony, on the part of those godly saints of the Lord, to their Israelitish brethren, to get ready, because Messiah, Jehovah, is about to appear to “judge the world with righteousness, and his people with his truth.”

Is that all? Nay, God puts it into their hearts to turn round in that day to the heathen. Read the 96th Psalm. The call is to “all the earth” now (ver. 1). We are not to forget the heathen, beloved friends, but if we do, they

will be remembered in that day. People sometimes say, What will happen to all the heathen before the Lord comes? Well, the 96th Psalm is a very great comfort to my heart. Christians have made very little progress in converting the heathen, and we all ought to be far more earnest about that than we are. It is a sad reflection that a very much larger proportion of the earth's surface was Christian twelve hundred years ago, than is the case, at the present time. In the sixth century almost all China was Christian.

I rejoice to think the day is coming, when evangelists, who will be commissioned, and called of God to the work, and who will do the work magnificently, will go out to call the heathen. You may say, How do you know their work will succeed? We saw the fruit of their work last Lord's Day evening. Do you not recollect that "great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues"? (Rev. 7:9) How were they converted? By hearing the preachers. Who the preachers are, is not there stated, but the effect of their preaching is palpable, and in Ps. 96 I believe we get the preachers. "O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nation are idols: but the Lord made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O

worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before him, all the earth. Say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth" (Ps. 96:1-10).

That is a splendid sermon, though I could not preach it, for the simplest reason possible, viz., that He does not reign yet. Nay, He is in heavenly glory now. He has been refused here, and has gone to heaven, but He is going to reign. In that day, these earnest souls go out, and say, "The Lord reigneth." What then? "The world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth" (Ps. 96:10-13). They go out with this beautiful testimony to the earthly rights of the Messiah, the now rejected Jesus.

I should like to show you, in connection with this Psalm, two other scriptures. One of them is the 24th of Matthew, where we shall see what our Lord Jesus Christ says about this matter. There He is unfolding future events for Israel, and the Jew. He says distinctly, that there shall be unspeakable troubles and sorrows, and (12th ver.), "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." All the world shall hear of Him, as the coming King. Thank God for that. Only a small portion of the world has had "the gospel of the grace of God" preached to it, in our day,

but I comfort my heart, that within a very short time from this night, if the Lord were to come, and the Church to be taken up, and this blessed company, of what I may call earthly evangelists, appeared, a wonderful change would be manifest. “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.” Christ does not say, or mean, that all nations will be converted, because, I shall yet show you, that many will not be converted, but, nevertheless, they will have presented to them a clear distinct testimony.

But recollect, friends, that there will be no comfort for a lost man, who hears now the gospel of a heavenly Saviour, to remember by-and-by, that he might have been “saved” but for his folly, and unbelief, and there will be no excuse, for the nations of that day, if they come under the condemnation of the Son of Man, as given in Matthew 25, where the nations are gathered together before Him, and judged. It will be no comfort for them to remember that they heard of the coming Messiah, and refused to bow the knee to Him. What they will hear is “the gospel of the kingdom.” You may say to me, Are not the two identical? The two identical! The gospel of the grace of God, identical with the gospel of the kingdom—the announcement that the Son of Man is coming, by-and-by, to put things right by judgment! The difference between them is immense. The gospel of the grace of God is this, you may be saved to-night through simple faith in Jesus, who has come into this world, and has died for sinners on the cross. The work of atonement has been effected by Him, that whoever believes in Him might be saved, the moment there is faith in that precious Saviour. You are welcome to that Saviour, He wants you. That Saviour’s voice rings through this earth,

through this hall, and says to many a weary soul, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He brings you pardon, peace, life, forgiveness, justification, salvation, where you are, and as you are. The gospel of the grace of God takes your heart to heaven, whereas the gospel of the kingdom, if believed, will make a man very happy on earth eventually, because it is the assertion of the glory and rights of the Son of Man, about to come and purify the earth by His righteous judgment.

We see, then, that the gospel of the kingdom will go out to all nations, and then.shall the end come. This allegation is confirmed by another scripture—the 14th of Revelation. It is very remarkable that this latter chapter, which contemplates the time of the energy of antichrist, and the wrath of the beast, when persecution is going on apace, opens with this, “A Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Here again we have the remnant, seen on that which is the centre of

dominion, and glory, in a renewed earth—Mount Sion, where the Lamb shall reign. They had suffered, but not unto death; suffered, as Christ had in His life, in owning God to be His Father. Hence His name, and His Father's is on their foreheads. It is clearly an earthly company of saints.

Now, a good many expositors of prophecy, in the present day, are most anxious to make out that the one hundred and forty-four thousand here spoken of, are a particularly bright, earnest, fervent set of living Christians, who alone are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, when He comes. That I believe to be a thorough mistake, because it is an earthly scene, and there is not one word about their being caught up. The scene—Mount Sion, the seat of royal grace—is upon earth, and they are evidently an earthly company of Jews, who are standing firm, and faithful for God, in that day when truth has altogether been given up. They are the first-fruits of the new scene which God is about to inaugurate. They had not corrupted themselves when all others had. They neither loved nor made a lie, nor gave in to it. Hence, they are without fault, and they share the Lamb's earthly place and glory, being His companions whithersoever He goes in the manifestation of that glory.

The idea that the Lord, when He comes, is going to take up only one hundred and forty-four thousand bright, earnest Christians, is, I think, most curious, not to say mistaken. I most earnestly trust and hope that you, my Christian friends, will not be beguiled by such a poverty-stricken theory, as unworthy of Christ, and His grace, as could well be imagined. If the Lord Jesus came to-night a good many more than one hundred and forty-four thousand would go up to meet Him in the air. Why?

Because all believers in Him are “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph. 5:30), and the bride of Christ—not a bit of her only—must go up to meet the Bridegroom. What do you think of a man who only wants a bit of his bride on the marriage day? He wants her altogether—of course he does. And what a mercy to be numbered amongst those that compose that Bride. Such an idea, therefore, as I have indicated, I believe to be foreign altogether to Scripture, and, for this reason, that Scripture presents, as the hope of the whole Church, which is the Bride, the return of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom. No man can fix the date when He will come, but He is coming, and coming quickly, and when He comes He will take up all those “that are Christ’s,” the dead first, then those that are alive and remain. Therefore, I have no hesitation in saying—and you may charge me if you like with speaking dogmatically—that the idea is totally foreign to the sustained testimony of the Word of God.

A little careful perusal of the Scripture will show that the one hundred and forty-four thousand are an earthly company, and not a heavenly company at all. The “man-child” of Revelation 12 will have been “caught up unto God, and to his throne,” before the scenes of chapter 14 are enacted. But who is the man-child? Christ? Yes, but not Christ only. Those that are Christ’s, I take it, are included in the expression. The man-child is going “to rule all nations with a rod of iron”; and in Rev. 2:26, 27, we find the Lord promising this position to the overcomer in Thyatira. Hence, not only is it Christ, but those that belong to Christ, and who, like Himself, have been taken up to heaven.

Returning again to Revelation 14, we find the connection between the position, and portion of the remnant, and the angelic testimony of verses 6 and 7, which are practically the carrying out of the statement of the Lord in Matthew 24:14: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” There is the everlasting gospel—the testimony of Christ’s power, from paradise onward, as in contrast with the special announcement of the glad tidings which relate to the assembly of God. Now I know very well that people often speak about the gospel of the grace of God as the everlasting gospel. I am by no means critical, nor anxious to make a man an offender for a word; but if you ask me whether the gospel of the grace of God is thus spoken of in Scripture, I unhesitatingly say, No, because the gospel of the grace of God is connected with the heavenly Saviour, who died, and rose again, and it calls the soul to have to do with Him where He now is. That gospel could only come out consequent on the incarnation of the Son of God, followed by His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, and it in no way resembles the everlasting gospel spoken of here. Nay more, supposing I were to stand up, and tell you, that your salvation depended upon this—your fearing God, and giving glory to Him,—and that you would be saved by that, I think you would tell me, with very good right, that I had better go and learn the gospel before preaching it—because there is therein no word about salvation, atonement, and the

blood of Christ. No, that which is really characteristic of Christianity is conspicuous, by its absence, in this everlasting gospel; but, take the Scripture as it stands, read it in its just connection, and you soon see how, in view of the return of Him, who is the everlasting Son of God, to the earth—in view of the return of the Messiah, this godly little company goes out and asserts the rights of that coming One, ascribing to Him all that is His due, as they do in the 96th Psalm.

You see how perfectly simple it is. The remnant go out and call on the heathen to "give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name" because "He cometh to judge the earth." When that testimony goes out, what is at hand? The Lord is going to judge the earth. The "everlasting gospel" is heralded forth, apparently, by these Jewish evangelists, just before the Lord appears, in manifest glory, to sweep the earth of the godless, and to bless the righteous, and therefore I have no hesitation in saying, that I believe the 96th Psalm, the 24th of Matthew, and the "everlasting gospel" of the 14th of Revelation, are all connected with the same movement, in fact, are the same testimony presented in different aspects.

I now go back again to this little book of Psalms, for a brief space before I close. The 97th Psalm goes a step further, and the Spirit of God there leads us to the moment of Christ's appearing. I will repeat for the sake of clearness. The 93rd is prefatory; the 94th, is, O Lord, come; the 95th, Israel, get ready; the 96th, Gentiles, get ready; the 97th celebrates the very fact of His coming, and brings out the character of that coming—what that appearing of the Lord will be. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him:

righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Do you suppose the coming of the Lord to the earth will be a joke? Do you suppose that the day, when the Son of Man comes back, will be a day of mirth for the world, a day of fun for the wicked? Oh, how plain is the word of God! "A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." He is going to claim the earth then; He came once as King of the Jews, but when He comes another time He, will come as "Lord of the whole earth." Then it is "that the heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols; worship him, all ye gods." The day of the utter, and lasting overthrow of idolatry has dawned.

"Worship him, all ye gods," is the Spirit's urgent call then, and if any of you have a doubt, whether that distinctly, and definitely, refers to the coming back of the Son of God, in this way, to the world, it must be immediately dissipated, by your turning over your Bible to the 1st chapter of Hebrews. There you find the Spirit of God, by the pen of Paul, makes absolutely certain the moment to which the 97th Psalm refers. He says in the sixth verse, "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him." God will demand, in that day, that every one shall worship Jesus. Thank God for that, but I am not going to wait for that day to adore Him. No, no, for I know His love, and delight to bless and worship Him now. It is my joy to worship Him, Is it not yours

also? But the point is this, that, in that day, the Spirit of God will command it, and will force it, and what will mark the day? He will be worshipped. When He came in grace, He came as the only-begotten Son; when He rose from the dead, the world never saw Him. The last the world saw of Him was hanging on the cross. The next time the world sees Him it will be as “the first-begotten” in glory, and then “Worship him, all ye gods,” will be the word.

The 98th Psalm goes yet further, Israel there celebrate their deliverance. The Lord has come and answered the cry of the remnant. “O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he has done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.” He has come, and delivered them, delivered this broken-down remnant, and they are delighting in His grace. They are wonderfully happy; it is only delivered people that can really sing, and they sing in this Psalm with great joy. “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets, and sound of cornet, make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord: for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.” He has taken the kingly character—Israel

is delivered, the Deliverer has come out of Zion, and His happy subjects are celebrating the joy of that moment.

The 99th Psalm goes a step further. “The Lord reigneth: let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. The Lord is great in Zion; and he is high above all people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy, The king’s strength also loveth judgment: thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.” He is now in Jerusalem. He is in the temple, judging peacefully, sitting between the cherubims, and everything is being done exactly as their hearts would desire; and then comes in the 100th Psalm. Sometimes we are asked to sing it, but I say to my friends we shall have to wait a little before we can sing it to its own tune. It is scarcely the moment yet when it can be sung in the Spirit. “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves: we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” His mercy is everlasting—that is always the keynote of Israel’s song—His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures. It will be a wonderful moment for the earth by-and-by, when that psalm is rightly sung, in full world-wide chorus.

What a grand thing it is that we can look into Scripture and see what is coming, and then can turn back, rejoicingly, to our own portion, because, bright and blessed, as is the day, that is coming for the earth, there

is something far brighter, and better, belonging to you and me. We who have received the Lord Jesus Christ, know Him now as our Saviour, and we can rejoice in our hearts, and be glad, and look up, simply waiting to see that blessed Saviour face to face.

Is there no joy in your heart to think that the One who came, and had nothing but a borrowed cradle, a cross built for a robber, and another man's tomb—I say, is there no joy that God is going to give Him all His rights, and establish Him in them by-and-by? I freely confess it is a great joy to me, and I love to think that when He comes back I shall be there. We shall be sharers of His glory and joy, and our hearts will be glad to the full, because it is the day of the exaltation of our own Jesus, our own blessed Saviour.

Well, friends, if you have seen to-night what the everlasting gospel is, what the gospel of the kingdom is, do not for a moment hesitate to let the gospel of God s grace do what it desires—save you. Get this salvation of God, where you sit to-night, and then you will be able to sing suitably to the Lord now, while waiting patiently for the day when, the "Sun of righteousness" having arisen, the 100th Psalm will fill the earth with its charming melody, and heaven's arches re-echo its notes of joy.

The Stone Cut Out Without Hands

Dan. 2:34-45; Rev. 19

Lecture 6

We had occasion, beloved friends, on a previous night, to look at the 2nd chapter of Daniel, in connection with the times of the Gentiles, and many of you will remember, that we saw brought out in the book of Daniel, the history of Gentile power in this world, commencing in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, and successively passing from the Babylonian empire to the Medo-Persian, then to the Grecian, and finally to the Roman. Then, in Nebuchadnezzar's great image, we saw the head, of gold, the breast and arms, of silver, the belly and the thighs, of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet, part of iron, and part of clay. It was a tale of deterioration right down. Now you will observe, in the verses I read this evening, that the stone that fell, did not fall on the head, nor on the breast, nor on the belly, but on the feet, that is, that whatever might be designed by God as the interpretation of the feet, made part of iron, and part of clay, it was upon the feet that the stone fell.

I have no doubt, as before stated, that the image gives us a continuous view of "the times of the Gentiles," that is, the time in which God gives the Gentiles power on the earth, the Jew, for the while, being set aside. But there is a moment coming when God will change everything, and we find it indicated here in the 44th and 45th verses. This really happens in the closing days of the Roman empire, the revived Roman empire, for it does not now exist as such. But we learn from Scripture that that empire, which has now ceased to dominate the

world, will be revived by Satanic energy in a day, I believe, near at hand, and it will have immense power, particularly in Europe—where, of course, its seat will be.

It will have great power, and it will be a bitter foe to all that is connected with God, whether under the name of Christianity, or Judaism, and it is that power, which is first dealt with by the Lord, when He returns in glory. You must not forget that it was under the Roman power, and by its decree, that He died. It was the Roman governor that said, “What shall I do then with Jesus, whom ye call Christ?” You must not forget that it was the Roman authority that signed His death warrant. It was under the Romans that Jesus died, and John suffered, and it will be that same power, revived, that will be dominating things very much in the world, when the moment arrives of which the 2nd chapter of Daniel speaks, and there comes this remarkable intervention of God, “the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands.”

That stone falls, and smites the image upon his feet, and the result is that it is all reduced to powder, and the whole thing disappears. Then we find “the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” I am perfectly well aware that many expositors of the Word of God have endeavoured to make out that this is the Gospel. I do not see how they make it out at all, because I do not think the Gospel is very destructive, as this falling stone most certainly is, and, moreover, I ask you this, Did the Gospel ever smite the image? Never, the image smote Christ. It was the Roman power that slew the Lord Jesus. The Gospel has never set aside the civil power in this world; on the contrary, the Gospel has always suffered, and will suffer

right on to the end. But what we have here is, that there comes a power that sets aside every human empire, and then is introduced an everlasting kingdom. “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” God sets up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. There can be no shadow of a doubt this refers to what Scripture speaks abundantly of elsewhere, “The everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:11), in the moment when He comes back to earth, to assume the reins of government, which He alone is worthy to hold.

What we read in the 19th of Revelation carries us up to that point. That chapter introduces us to the moment when He, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, returns, as Son of Man, to assert His rights, and when God will establish them, and there shall be brought in a kingdom that shall never pass away. I will speak another evening of the nature and character of that kingdom, but, to-night, I just want to show you, if I can, how it comes in, and what will be the salient features of that day. It is indeed a blessed character that God gives to the kingdom—it never passes away. The fact is that there never has been a king, in this world, that has not—sooner or later—lost his crown, and there never has been a kingdom but what has been upset, or is going to be; but what God is about to do is to bring in a King, who shall never be uncrowned, and a kingdom, that shall never be set aside. The kingdom shall extend from pole to pole, and the King does not lose the crown, nor have it taken from Him, either by a usurper, or by death.

Nevertheless, the moment will come when that throne which He has filled so blessedly for a thousand years, He will abdicate, as man, and lay down the crown voluntarily, which, as man, His peerless brow has borne, unsullied, during the ages of His mediatorial and universal sway, so that God may be all in all, for eternity. The history of the first man is this, he sought to rise—to get up to God's level, and he fell to Satan's, he was abased. The history of the last Man is this, that when He comes to assert His rights as Son of Man, and has put down every foe, He gives all up, that God may be all in all.

Scripture speaks abundantly of the return of the Lord Jesus in this way. We must not, however, confound the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His heavenly people, with the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ with His attendant hosts. That which we look for, as Christians, is the return of the Lord Jesus for us. We shall rise to meet Him, and we shall go and be with Him, in the Father's house, and then we shall come with the Lord, when He returns to the earth in power and glory. That He will so come there can be no manner of doubt. Just turn to one or two parts of Scripture by way of confirmation. In the 24th of Matthew, we have already seen the Lord distinctly speaking of His appearing—His revelation, verse 30, "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." He is about to come to the earth in that character. Then turn to Matthew 26, where He is standing before the high priest. They had Him, who is going to be the Judge of all the earth, dragged before man's bar, and see what takes

place. “The high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (verses 62-64). When the Lord is put upon oath, He answers. Up to that moment He was silent, but put upon oath He immediately responds. He, as Son of Man, was to come with every surrounding of power, and glory, conferred on Him by God, “Sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” That moment has not yet come, but thank God, it is coming. When He does come in that character, of course it will be in relation to the earth, and in judgment thereof.

Turn now to the 19th of Revelation, and you will get a general view of what will be the characteristics of the appearing of the Lord Jesus. Recollect it is to deal with the earth, in order to put down all opposing power on the earth, and that is the great point that the Spirit of God brings out in the 19th chapter. But there are a few points that I must touch upon, before going into that, viz., what the early part of the chapter brings out.

You will observe that this chapter opens with a great movement in heaven—“After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah,” etc. Now, what produced the praise? It is clearly the judgment of which the 18th chapter speaks—the fall of Babylon. You have there the judgment of the false Church—the false bride you may call it if you please—

and you have now the coming out in glory of the real Bride, the Bride of Christ. In the 18th chapter the judgment, upon earth, of what is false, immediately precedes this moment, when the marriage of the Lamb takes place, and the Bridegroom and the Bride together appear, when He comes out, in kingly character, as Son of Man to deal with the earth.

It is important to bear in mind that, in the main, what the book of Revelation gives you, up to this point, are the providential judgments of God, that are preparatory to what the 19th chapter ushers in. I believe that in the opening of the seven seals, and the sounding of the seven trumpets (chaps, 6-11), as well as in the pouring out of the vials (chap. 16), you have given to you—sometimes in mystical language—those desolating temporal judgments, with which this whole earth will be overwhelmed, previous to the appearing of the Son of Man; and if any of you are unsaved, and want to know what you are hastening on to, I recommend you, without delay, to read these chapters straight through, and you will have a very fair idea of what your portion is to be, if not caught up at the rapture. If the Lord Jesus came now, if the true saints were called up at this moment into glory, I will tell you what you would have to face immediately thereafter. You would find the first seal (chap. 6) begun to be broken, before you were at all aware.

In the 4th of Revelation you have the creatorial glories of Christ. In the 5th you have the redemption glories of Jesus, and there you see Him, as the Lamb slain, in the midst of the throne. The cry is sent forth, “Who is worthy to open the book?” In the hand of God there is a roll. That roll contains the purposes and counsels of God

with regard to the earth. There goes out this challenge, “Who is worthy? John says, “I wept much” He knew he was not worthy himself, and he looked for some one to come up who was worthy. Would not Joseph, Moses, Samuel, or Elijah come? Nay, neither patriarch, priest, nor prophet was worthy; nor Peter, nor Paul, nor himself; and he “wept much.” Then, what takes place? The Lion of the Tribe of Juda prevails. John turns round to look for the Lion, and he says, “Lo, in the midst of the throne, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.” There you may see Jesus, the Saviour—my Saviour! Your Saviour? Oh, my friends, hurry to Him, if He is not yet your Saviour. Get ready for Him. But we read, “He came, and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.” And as Jesus puts forth His hand to take the roll, what does heaven see? It sees the mark of the nail, that tells of His death on the cross, and all in heaven together bow, and sing, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” What has led you to worship Jesus? Because He died for you.

There is no one worthy but Jesus to unfold the mind of God, or to execute the purposes of God. He therefore takes the book. I must not dwell upon that, but let me ask, Are you sure to be with Him when He takes the book, and breaks the seals? If you are not, whither are you going? As you sit to-night, you are either a glory-bound saint, or a hell-bound sinner. You say, That is drawing the line very fine. Well, grant it, but I am not drawing the line finer than God does. A glory-bound saint! Oh, how blessed! That is a remarkable expression; I like it—a man bound for glory through the grace of

God. If I am not that, what am I? I am on my road to hell, as surely as I face you this night. Oh! say some people, we cannot be sure of salvation. Do not be deceived by the devil that way. You ought to be sure. If you never were sure before, I implore you to be sure now, because He died for us, and there is the song in glory—"Thou wast slain, and thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Perhaps you say, They learned that up there. No, they learned it on earth, and if you do not learn that song on earth, you will never learn it There is no redemption after death; there is no pardon in the tomb; and there is no forgiveness for the man, who has heard, and despised the Gospel, after the Lord has come, and the door is shut. You may, and you had better, learn that song now.

What is the next thing? The 6th of Revelation opens with the fact that the Lamb begins to break the seals. He is about to begin to deal with the earth. I believe, in point of fact, that what we have in Revelation 4 and 5, and in chapters 6, 7 and 8, and onwards, are concurrent. Chapters 4 and 5 are what I may call the high level, and the 6th, etc, give us the low level. The two are going on together. The one is a heavenly, and the other an earthly scene. The worship meeting in heaven of chapter 5 is concurrent with the prayer-meeting on earth, of the 6th chapter of Revelation. But what is the prayer meeting on earth? In verse 15 we find "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" I do not believe the day of the Lord really has come then, but conscience terrifies men into thinking it has come. I do not believe the "day of the Lord" has actually set in then, it is only the gathering of the clouds. But, O beloved friends, there is many a man in Christendom to-day, who never bent his knees at a prayer meeting, that will be found at a prayer-meeting yet, beseeching—not God for mercy on his guilty soul, but—the rocks and the hills to fall upon him. These are God's solemn statements, and yet I repeat, not yet has the day of the Lord set in. It is only what is coming, acting on conscience, guilty conscience. Man wakes up, and feels he is in an awful case, and flies, if he can, to get away from God, in the dens of the earth. You remember our Lord Jesus Christ prophesied this prayer-meeting in Luke 23rd, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (verses 28-51) What the Lord predicts, in the moment of His willing self-sacrifice for guilty man, that he might be saved from judgment, we find fully brought out in the 6th of Revelation.

From the 6th chapter to the end of the 18th, broadly speaking, you have brought before you the providential dealings of God, in judgment, with man upon the earth, which lead up to the final climax, which is the appearing of the Man that the world does not want to see. If you could only certify to the world that the Lord Jesus

Christ, and His Father, the Living God, were dead, and buried, and never would have anything more to say to the earth, I believe that the world would take a general holiday.

But God yet lives, Jesus lives, and it is well to remind the world that God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

The One who died on the cross eighteen hundred years ago, died for our sins, and was raised for our justification, has passed into glory, and the heavens have concealed Him for eighteen long centuries. God has had long patience with man, but the day is appointed, and the Lord will come out again, according to the testimony of the 19th of Revelation, to which I again turn. Joy fills the arches of heaven's courts in that day, because the time has come when the whore with all her children are cast into the fire. That is her judgment. Babylon falls, in the 18th chapter, and then heaven rejoices, because the moment is coming of earth's deliverance.

Then, just before the Lord comes out, there is brought before our view something peculiarly blessed to the Christian. I cannot pass it over, because it is what I may call our own unique portion. A wonderfully blessed place will all believers in Jesus have in the day when the Lord comes out. Let us read it. "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings,

saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:5, 6, 7). The great multitude anticipates what is coming, and heaven goes into an ecstasy, because they see that the moment has come, when the Lord is going to put forth His hand to clear sin from the earth, and set things right; and heaven, after six thousand years of patient waiting, says, "Hallelujah for the Lord our God, the Almighty, has taken to himself Kingly power" (ver. 6, New Trans.). But before He comes out in glory, they add, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (ver. 7). What a wonderful thing, heaven goes into an ecstasy over the marriage of the Lamb. There was another time when heaven was equally moved, when the angelic messenger came and told the shepherds, "I bring you tidings of great joy,…for unto you is born this day…a Saviour which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10, 11). Immediately there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, and they were all praising God. Heaven went into an ecstasy when Jesus was born, because it now saw a way for man to be saved. The problem of four thousand years, how man could be saved, was now settled by the birth of the Son of God, the Saviour, who was going to die for sinners like you and me. Yes, joy filled heaven that day, and here is the other side of it. He came down, He was born, He lived, He was refused, rejected, abhorred of the people, and despised of the Gentiles, and at length cast out. A robber was preferred to Jesus, the Son of God, a murderer rather than a Saviour. The world took Him forth, crowned with thorns, and slew Him on the tree.

All that Jesus got from this world was to be born in one man's manger, to die on another man's cross, and to be buried in another man's tomb. The world has well-nigh forgotten His existence, and would entirely but for the Holy Ghost's testimony; and now there comes a moment, after eighteen hundred years have gone by, when there is to be an end to His waiting, and a reward for His toil, and heaven is in deepest sympathy with His joy, and says, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints" (Rev. 19:7, 8).

A rapturous moment, for the Bridegroom and the Bride has come. Who is the Bride? I have no doubt who the Bride is. There are others looking on, who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb (see verse 9), but these are the guests—they are not the Bride. But who is the Bride? There is not a believer in this hall to-night, that does not form part of the Bride of Christ; there has not been one believing soul on earth, from the day of Pentecost, right on to the moment when the Lord comes back for His people, that does not form an integral part of the Bride. On the day of the marriage, the heavenly Bridegroom wants the whole Bride, He does not take a part of her. If you are going to limit the Bride, as some would, to a few faithful living Christians, you have to leave Peter and Paul out. Are we going to leave them out? Nay, the Bride is composed of all that belong to the Lord, from the day of Pentecost, to the day of the rapture. When the last soul is converted, and, by being sealed with the Holy Ghost, is brought into the body of

Christ, that body is complete. The Bride is also then complete, and observe, you will find always that the Bride is connected with glory. When I come to think of eternal glory, then it is, that we specially hear of the Bridegroom and the Bride, terms that call up, and foster in our hearts, those holy and blessed affections that befit such a relationship.

But observe how the Bride is apparelled here. She is "arrayed in fine linen clean and bright; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints" (ver. 8). What are we to learn from this? "Fine linen" or "white raiment" (Rev. 3:18), would appear, in the Word, to be the figure of practical righteousness in the saint, as "gold" is divine righteousness, in which we stand before God. It is, I judge, connected with reward, though the fruit of perfect grace. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love" (Heb. 6:10). This will be the outcome of going before the judgment-seat of Christ, which precedes the marriage day. Although you and I, if believers, can never be judged for our sins—Jesus having been judged for them—yet, as believers, we shall have to give an account to the Lord, by and by, of all our actions here. We shall go before the judgment-seat of Christ, and if we have served the Lord, He will reward us. I believe that when our whole history has come under review before the Lord, we shall come out, deeply thankful, to have gone over it with Him.

I do not think you will be concerned about my history, but only about your own. I shall be very troubled about what will come out then, some one may say. Nay, I will tell you one thing that will come out, you will find that you have been put into glory, in the likeness of Christ. Will you have any objection to review that? Guilt can

never be imputed to us, because it has been already imputed to Christ. He died for our sins, and Christ is, then, as now, our righteousness, and our ground for appearing in the presence of God. Nevertheless, when before the Lord, it will be a very blessed, though withal a very solemn thing, to review what His grace was to us here, in our earthly pathway. At that moment, when I get before the judgment-seat of Christ, the Lord will, I judge, take me over the whole of my history. Looking back on my life, as an unconverted man, I see, so to speak, a long, dark, black, inky river of nothing but self-will, and sin, and then I come to a point when His grace began to work in my heart, and I see a little bright silvery streak coming in, the first touch of the Spirit of God on my soul. And then the stream of grace begins to widen a little, and the inky stream of self-will, and active sin, to diminish. Thus I retrace the whole of my history, seeing my failures, and my faults, and the Lord's patience, and grace with me; what a fool I was here, and how grace helped me there, and then I come right up to the end of the double stream, and I say, Here I am with Christ in glory. Oh! what wondrous grace, me in glory! I think I shall turn and say, Where is my harp, that I may strike my hand across its strings, and praise the ever blessed, loving Lord, that brought me here. I would not miss that for worlds.

What we have been for Jesus here will be manifested there. Your service will come out there, and I tell you honestly, I believe I shall delight to look on then, and say, Look at that brother, what a blessed reward that saint has received, how brightly does his garment shine. Your practical righteousness here will follow you into heaven. This, you see, will make us careful down here as

to our walk, and it is a very good thing that we should be careful. We are not trying to get salvation; or righteousness, to fit us for glory, we are only trying to be "rich in good works" (1 Tim. 6:17-19), which will follow us there.

The marriage of the Lamb having taken place, the Son of Man comes out, and who is with Him? You and I, fellow-believer, will be with Him. Many an earthly bridegroom and bride, have had to be separated, but we are to be for ever with the Lord; with Him in the Father's house in glory, at the marriage supper, and when He comes out in majesty, and power, and glory. Will it not be deep joy to be with Him in that day?

The character of the Lord's appearing, as given here, is very striking. He comes out seated "on a white horse," the symbol in Scripture of victorious power, and similarly seated "upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean," the armies of heaven follow Him. He is called "Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns" (verses 11, 12). The last time the world saw Him He was naked. They had stripped Him, and had gambled for His garments, beneath His dying eyes. The next time the world sees Him, how will it be? Oh, sinner, it will be an awful time for you. Unsaved man, if you are caught in that day, it will be a terrible time for you. "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word Of God…And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule [shepherd] them with a rod of iron" (verses 13-15).

When He rules we shall be with Him, in the day of His power. We who have known, and followed Him, in the day of His weakness, and rejection, shall be with Him, in the day of His manifested power, and glory.

But further, “He treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” There is a difference seen clearly elsewhere in Scripture, between the harvest, and the vintage. Here He treads the wine-press. Turn back to Rev. 14:15, and we read, “And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had; the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her; grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.” You have there two things, the harvest and the vintage. What is the difference? The harvest clearly is connected with judgment, Christ reaps the earth—separating, gathering, and judging, but there is discrimination in the judgment of the! Lord in that day. “There shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and

the other left. Two shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Luke 17:34-36). That is the principle of the harvest, because some righteous are to be found then. When the Lord treads the wine-press, He exercises unmingled vengeance upon the wicked, for the vintage is the moment when the final desolating judgment takes place, that is to say, the godly have been delivered, the harvest has been gathered, and what remains forms the vintage, and every bunch goes into the wine-press. It will be an awful day for the earth when the harvest is over. Then the rest are left to the judgment, that is expressed by the vintage.

I will here ask you to turn to other Scriptures, merely to refer to what is going to take place in that day. Look at Joel 3:9, where you will see clearly what the Lord will do. God summons the earth to try conclusions with Him. "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow: for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:9-14). It is a stupendous fact, that at that moment Jehovah comes, and deals with the nations of the earth, and men are obliged to bow down before God. There again we read

that the “harvest is ripe,” and “the press is full.” Although a terrible, it will, at first, be a discriminating judgment.

Then look at Matt. 25:31-46, where you get, not the warrior judgment of Christ, but His sessional judgment, what you may call an assize. In this, His saints are associated with Him (Dan. 7:22, 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Rev. 20:4). In the warrior judgment Christ is alone. “I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people none was with me” (Isa. 63:3).

The 19th of Revelation gives us the warrior judgment of Christ—overcoming power—while sessional judgment we find in chap. 20 from verse 4 Now we read on ”He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords.” He is thus publicly, and officially announced. “And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh” (Rev. 19:19-21). The impiety and daring folly of man rises to its full height, as we see gathered against Him the beast and his tributaries, “to make war against him.” There will be a tremendous effort on the part of man to resist God, but that effort results in nothing but overwhelming destruction. What takes place? The beast and the false prophet are taken, and are cast alive into

the lake of fire. These two men—ringleaders in evil—get their final doom without death—they are cast into the lake of fire. That is not strange, for Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven without death. That was in Old Testament times of feeble light, and knowledge of God. Alas! it is reserved for two men, in New Testament times, when grace is abundant, and has been despised, to be cast alive into the lake of fire. They receive their final judgment, the rest are judicially "slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse." In the 25th of Matthew, familiar to every one of us, the Lord commences His sessional judgment, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,

prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteousness into life eternal" (Matt. 25:31-46).

It will be a wonderful moment, and a deeply impressive scene. All His angels, and all His saints, form His retinue, and there never has been such an assemblage since the world began, and there never will again be such a concourse in the world's history. The Son of man comes in His glory, and "then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations." But, some one may say, that is the same judgment, as the great white throne, is it not? No, dear friend, nothing of the sort. They who are judged here, are gathered before the Lord in nations, but people do not so rise from the dead. There are four judgments spoken of in Scripture. You have the judgment of sin on the cross, the judgment of the works of the Christian in glory, with Christ, when we are like Him. Then, here, we get the judgment of the living nations, which corresponds exactly to the 3rd of Joel, "Gather together all the heathen," etc, and lastly, the judgment of the wicked dead, as given to us in Revelation 20:11-15 Clearly the sheep in Matthew 25 are, in a certain sense, related to the Lord, and the goats are not, but both

classes are living nations! Observe: “Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Are these Christians? No, our blessing dates from “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). These are blessed from the foundation of the world. Observe also the ground of the judgment, viz., the treatment of the king’s brethren. The king answers and says unto the sheep, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Who are the brethren? Christians? No, certainly not Christians, the day of Christianity has gone by, it is the day when the Son of Man is dealing with the nations upon earth, and in that day, you do not get the three classes, Jew, Gentile, and the Church of God. The day of the Church of God is over. She has gone up into glory before this day. But we have Jew and Gentile. I was showing you, in my last lecture, how the Jew will carry forth the Gospel of the kingdom in the end of the age. The brethren here, I conclude, are the messengers. These sheep, who will be witnesses of the return of the Son of Man, are the believing Gentile nations who bow to the truth, while the goats are those who refuse the truth. It is not the great white throne. It is the Son of Man on the throne of His glory, dealing with the living nations on the earth, and judging them according to the way they have treated His messengers. The judgment of the great white throne will come before us on another occasion.

In this way then is the kingdom of the Son of Man established. Every foe is put down; for “the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity…Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun

in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:41-43). The beast and the false prophet; the Roman empire and its minion, with all their confederates, we have seen dealt with, but there is yet another foe of Israel to be set aside, ere the stone, cut out without hands, can fill the whole earth. That I reserve for our next lecture.

Israel And The Assyrian

Rom. 11; Ezek. 36-39

Lecture 7

The question with which the apostle opens the 11th of Romans is an exceedingly important, and interesting one, not only to Israel but to us. Of course, when he says, “Hath God cast away his people?” he is not talking of Christians now, but of His ancient people Israel. At once the apostle says, “God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.” Then he states most emphatically, “God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew.” Now, by casting them off, what the apostle has before his mind, clearly, is their being, as a nation, irrevocably rejected by God, to be no more taken up by Him. It is not a question of individual salvation here, in this part of Scripture; it is as a nation they are spoken of. Has He then cast them off? The answer is most distinct. “God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew,” and the apostle goes on to quote a remarkable bit of their history in connection with Elijah, who, when he thought he was the only man standing for God, is reminded, that God had seven thousand men, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace” (ver. 5).

The apostle says they have fallen (verses 11, 12), but they have not been cast off—they have fallen, and God has allowed them, in the meantime, as a nation, to stay where they have fallen. They have fallen under the power of the Gentiles, and by their fall salvation is come

to the latter. This fall refers, clearly, to their national captivity. You remember how they were carried off. Two and a half tribes were first carried into captivity, by the Assyrian king, Tiglath Pileser (2 Kings 15:29), because of their idolatry. Then seven and a half tribes, the rest of Israel, were carried away to Assyria, by Shalmaneser (2 Kings 17:6), and, about a hundred and forty years afterwards, Nebuchadnezzar carried off Judah, and Benjamin, the other two tribes, to Babylon, so that, in three sections, Israel as a nation was swept out of the land. A little remnant might, and did return in the days of Ezra, and Nehemiah; still, speaking broadly, Israel has fallen, they have been rejected, they are not in the land God gave to their fathers, and the question is this, Is God going to restore them? We shall see, clearly, that God is going to restore them, for “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Rom. 11:29).

Very beautiful is the way in which the apostle brings in, in this nth chapter of Romans, our relation to Israel. The blessing of God comes to us Gentiles in the moment of, and because of, their rejection. He says in verse 11, “Through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles.” Why, beloved friends, you and I ought to go down on our knees, and thank God for what has happened. We should never have heard of the Saviour, if it had not been for the sin of Israel. When the Messiah came, had He been accepted, the kingdom would have been established in Jerusalem, and we should not have had the Gospel, as we have it now, but “through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles.” You see the Gentiles, the nations of the earth, were, in no sense, in relationship with God. Sinners of the Gentiles are stated to be “afar off,” but first, as a consequence of the sin of Israel, that

compelled God to judge them, and cast them out of their land, and secondly, because the remnant, when restored, rejected their Messiah,—God, as you know, had the temple destroyed, the city burned down, and the Jews were scattered to the four winds of heaven. God has, so to speak, dropped them for the time being, and He has turned round to the Gentiles. Thank God, indeed, for the news, that “Through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles.”

I should like to pause a moment, and ask whether you are saved? If you are not, you have somehow escaped what God is presenting to you, for “salvation is come unto the Gentiles.” The Messiah crucified by Israel, God has raised and glorified, and the Holy Ghost has come down, and for eighteen centuries has the blessed Spirit of God been carrying out the testimony about Jesus, the exalted Saviour in glory, and been turning the eyes of sinners, on earth, to that Saviour in glory. But God is about to replace His ancient people in their land, and establish them there, for He promised Abraham, “Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.” That event is preceded by all the Lord’s evangelists being called home. The Gospel of God’s grace then ceases, but the Lord Jesus is still in heaven as I speak, the sweet note of the Gospel still rings out in this world, and if there should happen to be, in this room to-night, only one unsaved person, I would earnestly say to that soul, Join now the company of those that know the heavenly Saviour, who have believed, through infinite grace in Him, and received God’s salvation. I know perfectly well you may reply, Nobody can know they are saved. But that reply is a mistake, for here the apostle says, “Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles.”

Salvation you may know, you ought to know. The blessed news is this, that there is forgiveness, peace, pardon, and access to God, through Jesus Christ, for any poor sinner that is on earth at this moment.

There are fuller, and deeper, because heavenly, blessings to be had now, through the rejection of the Lord Jesus, than ever Israel will know, in the day of their revived glory, and their restored kingdom, under the King, of whom I will speak a little further on. Therefore, if there be a soul in this hall, that has not yet been saved, pause, think, and ask these questions, Why has God sent the Gospel to me? Why has God not yet sent back His Son, the Lord Jesus, to reestablish Israel in their land? Why is He tarrying? He is tarrying because “blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (ver. 25). What does He mean? This. He delays till the last Gentile has been brought into the Church of God, till the last member of the body of Christ has been called, reached, converted, and baptized, by the Holy Ghost, into that body. Were you ever struck with the expression, “the fulness of the Gentiles”? We saw, on a previous evening, what was meant by “the times of the Gentiles,” the time when the Gentiles rule, and the Jews are nowhere. “Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,” has, however, a different significance, viz., that Israel will not be blessed until the Gospel has reached the last soul, that will listen to the testimony of this heavenly Saviour, and thus the body of Christ completed, the Bride of Christ is also complete, and the Bridegroom comes into the air and catches up His own people, to meet Him there.

The fulness of the Gentiles has then come. God will begin to put His hand upon the Jew once more, and the long night of their sorrow, and dispersal, will end in a morning of joy, and gladness, for here it is stated distinctly, “So all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (verses 26, 27). And the reason is this, “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (ver. 29). He has let them drop for the time being, and they are under the chastening hand of the Lord, but the time is coming, and I believe in my heart rapidly drawing near, when God will show how true is His word, how faithful is He to His promises, and how blessedly His Son “Jesus Christ was” (and yet will be) “a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers” (Rom. 15:8). Not one promise, that God has made, shall ever fail.

I now turn to some scriptures, to show the way in which the Word of God informs us, that He will yet gather, and lead His people, and plant them in the land, given to their fathers. The kingdom of Israel was broken up in the days of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12). Two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, clave to the house of David, and they are spoken of in the Old Testament as Judah. The ten tribes who revolted, under Jeroboam, are spoken of constantly, in the historical books, as “the house of Israel,” and in the prophets, under the title of Ephraim. Judah, and Ephraim, are the technical terms, used in the later books of the Old Testament Scripture, to express the two divisions of the nation. Now, we have already seen, that it was at the hands of the representatives of the two

tribes, that the Lord Jesus died, and therefore, that in the judgment of God, the heaviest end of His lash must fall upon these two tribes, who were guilty of the murder of their Messiah. We have observed on a previous occasion, these words: “It shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God” (Zech. 13:8, 9). I have already pointed out, that we have presented to us there, the little company spoken of in the Psalms, and in the Prophets as “the remnant” of the two tribes, who, gathered back into their own land, will be looking to the Lord for deliverance. They are chastened in the land,—purged, so much so, that two-thirds will die. Only one-third shall escape the tribulation, which, elsewhere, is spoken of as God’s “indignation,” at that moment.

And what of the other ten tribes? It would appear that they are not restored to Palestine till a later date. So far as I can see from Scripture, the return of the Son of Man in power, and majesty, to the earth, will really take place before the mass of the ten tribes is recovered, and restored. Look at Matthew 24 in confirmation of that statement. Speaking of His return, the Lord tells His disciples this: “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). With this statement agrees that of the prophet Isaiah: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord 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 the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem" (Isa. 27:12, 13). It appears to me that only the remnant of repentant Judah will welcome the Messiah, when He does return in glory, but, having returned, He will have the great trumpet blown by His many angels, and thus will regather His elect of Israel.

By way of confirmation of these passages, turn back to the 11th of Isaiah, where we find a fuller prophetic statement by the Spirit of God (ver. 10). "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 the Lord 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" (Isa. 11:10-13). The two tribes and the ten are to dwell

together in amity. Now go to the last chapter of Isaiah, and you will find further testimony to the same point. It contemplates the moment when the Lord has come to the earth. You read at the 18th verse—"It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory: and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord" (Isa. 66:18-21). Again, you have indicated that He gathers His people Israel from all nations, and, therefore, I think the idea, that the British nation is the ten tribes, is foreign to Scripture. I think this expression, "out of all nations," should at once dispel the illusion. The truth is that no one knows where they are, save God Himself, and when the time comes, He will find them, and bring them, in His own way.

The Book of Ezekiel gives us, in much detail, the subject before us. "As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you; and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out.

And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me; I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God… I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered: and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers" (Ezek. 20:33-39, 41, 42). The statement is clear. God is going to gather them out, and bring them into their own land; but, observe, He purges them on the way. There is this difference between the two tribes, and the ten. The two tribes go into Palestine in unbelief, and are purged in the land. The ten tribes are brought out of the nations in unbelief, but they are purged, by God, on their way to the land. Just as their fathers fell in the wilderness, so will God test the children, in the time to come.

Turning now to another prophet, we find that the truth Ezekiel affirms, Amos glowingly corroborates. "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the

house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos 9:8-15). He is going to gather them out of the nations, and, although He chastens them,—"the sinners shall die,"—that is the very moment that He raises up the tabernacle of David, and closes up the breaches thereof. He restores Israel to their pristine glory—even greater glory than under the reign of Solomon.

I would like now to turn to Ezekiel once more, to see the elaborate care that God takes, by His Spirit, to make all this plain and certain for the faith of His ancient people. I am going to ask you to look at the close of this prophecy, a little in detail, because it is exceedingly interesting. Let us look at the 34th chapter, and you will read, "For thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will

both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day" (verses 11, 12). Oh what a cloudy and dark day has Israel known, for over two thousand five hundred years, but if I could only speak to those twelve tribes, I would say, There is a good time coming for you—there is at hand a moment when the Lord will redeem this wonderful statement on His part. "And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture. [Oh, friends, God is a wonderful God.] And upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost"—blessed be His name—"and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment" (verses 13-16). God will break down and judge the guilty in Israel, just as He does the Gentile. You will find that God will break you down, hardy sinner that you are, very soon, if you are not brought to repentance, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, in the midst of beautiful promises, I find God saying, "I will destroy the fat and the strong." I know perfectly well that expositors want to apply these scriptures to Christians. Nay, they do not belong to us. I do not object to the application of a scripture, but I want

the meaning, and interpretation, of those blessed, and beautiful promises, which are to me exquisitely lovely.

Pass now to Ezekiel 36 and 37, which run together, even as 38 and 39 go together. I do not say they are absolutely consecutive, though I conclude they are, for I do not see how that which chapters 38 and 39 bring out, could take place, until that which chapters 36 and 37 unfold has transpired. To them I now turn your attention, assured that you will be filled with admiration of the goodness, the mercy, and the long-suffering patience of God, as you look at what He states there.

“Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God, Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha! even the ancient high places are ours in possession: therefore prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up on. every side, that ye might be a possession unto the residue of the heathen, and ye are taken up in the lips of talkers, and are an infamy of the people: Therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes, and to the cities that are forsaken, which became a prey and derision to the residue of the heathen that are round about; Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea, which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.” God says, I know what you think. You think you are going to possess the land. I will tell you what I am going to do

—“Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains and to the hills, to the rivers and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy, and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown. And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: and I will multiply upon you man and beast;. and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.” That is like God. It is better at the end, after Israel has sinned, than before they sinned. It is exactly the same with us. After we have sinned, and are on our road to hell, what does God do? He opens up heaven, and says, Come this way.

But, in continuation of God’s words to the land, we read, “Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men. Thus saith the Lord God, Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations: therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord God” (Ezek. 36:1-14). You recollect that when the spies went up to the land (Num. 13:31-33), they, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, said it was

“a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof”—so barren that people could not live on it. You see that is exactly what Palestine is now. Many cannot live therein, as they do not yet get “the first and the latter rain,” and, until that comes, it will not be able to feed the people. But the Scripture says, “I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil” (Deut. 11:14). It will yet bring forth abundantly, for the curse will be removed, and Jesus will be there. In that day “the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed.” It is a very remarkable statement, but it is only God’s way of showing how wonderfully fruitful everything is to be in the day here spoken of.

It is the land that the Lord first addresses, and further down in this chapter He talks to those who shall be the people thereof. “For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I give to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God’“ (verses 24-28). I know that people say, We thought that was only a figure of what the Gospel is. Does not the Lord Jesus make allusion to this scripture when he says to Nicodemus, “If I have told you earthly things,

and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" I have no doubt that the Lord did allude to this, along with other scriptures, when He said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"(John 3:5). That is exactly what will take place in Israel.

Scripture abounds in figures, hence I do not understand by water, either in this scripture, or in Isaiah 44:3, what we are accustomed to think of as the material water that men wash in. It is a figure of the Word of God, applied in the energy and power of the Spirit of God, by which men will be blessed. New birth is ever, and only, by the Word of God, of which water is the figure, and that such is so is abundantly plain in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Some have thought that to mean baptism. I do not believe it at all. There is no word about baptism in either chapter. In Ezekiel 36, what God says is, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." He takes away the heart of stone, and gives them the Spirit. It is the new birth through which they are to pass—even as you and I have to pass through it now, if we are to enter God's kingdom. It is plain that it is not baptism, by the fact of our blessed Lord taking water, and washing all His disciples' feet, and then saying, "Ye are clean, but not all" (John 13:10). Later on the same eventful night He says to His disciples, "Now are ye clean"—through the water I used before Judas went out? No. "Now are ye clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).

With this also fully agrees that which we read in Ephesians, “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:25, 26). Again, in St James we read, “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth”(Jas. 1:18), and in St Peter, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23). In plain language the water is the figure of the Word of God, by which the Lord converts the soul, whether of the godless Gentile now, or of the repentant Israelite in the day yet to come. The word enters and is the means of cleansing. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psa. 119:9). It is only by the Word of God that the soul is new-born. Whether you are new-born I do not know, but I desire to remind you of the universal applicability, of what the Lord says to Nicodemus, as well as to you, and to me also, “Ye must be born again.” Doubtless the Lord knew it would surprise his listener a bit—and many others since—and therefore He said, “Marvel not that I said unto you, ye must be born again.” Whether in the day of Israel’s restoration, or in the present day, the new birth is an absolute moral necessity if we are to be blessed of God. Jesus tells you how it can be. The Son of Man is lifted up on the cross, and you have to believe in the dying Saviour, in order to get life to your dead soul.

Well, now, it is perfectly plain what God will do. Israel will be converted to God, new-born, and they will possess the Holy Ghost—not in the same way as the Christian does now, but the Spirit of God will be within them. Thus the new birth, and the possession of the

Spirit will lead them into relationship with God, known in grace. “Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God” (ver. 28).

Passing now to the 37th chapter, we come to a passage familiar, I doubt not, to everybody in this room. The valley of dry bones has been, no doubt, before you many times, as the subject of a Gospel address. I should like, however, to show you what I believe to be God’s meaning in the scripture. “The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about; and, behold there were very many in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry.” Dry, that is exactly what the sinner is; you are very dry, you have not got a bit of life, or sap in you. Dry bones may very well describe your spiritual state, if you are an unconverted sinner, no matter what your profession may be. “And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.” I have no objection at all to the extraction of the Gospel here, and I know that dear old Dr Guthrie preached lovely sermons from this chapter, and got many a conversion through it too, but then you see the application, and the interpretation of a scripture, are two totally different things. Well, “hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as

I was commanded: and as I prophesied there was a noise, and, behold, a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are "—what? Poor Gentile sinners converted by the Gospel? No. "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts." That is what they are saying to-day, We are cast off, we are rejected of the Lord. "Therefore prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord" (Ezek. 37:1-14).

The grave here, clearly, is their national grave, and corresponds exactly with the last chapter of the book of Daniel, where you recollect it says (1st verse),—"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. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." That is, in that day, I do not think all will be saved, but when the word of the Lord comes out, the nation will be revived, and the people, whom nobody can put their hand upon now, God will put His hand upon, and will find them, and restore them, and the whole house of Israel will be replaced, by the hand of the blessed God, in their own land.

It is very beautiful to note the way that God repeats a truth, thereby to cause the faith of His people to be confirmed. In the 36th chapter you have the doctrine of Israel's restoration, in the 37th you have a striking figure of their national resurrection, and then you get another view of it in the two sticks. God comes to great detail, in the latter half of chapter 37: "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions; then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and

they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be my people, and I will be their God." Oh! glorious promises, for this ancient, and down-trodden people. But more: "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd…And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein: even they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever" (Ezek. 37:15-25).

But, who is David? I have no doubt he is the Lord Jesus. You say, Why David? and why not Solomon? David is a type of Jesus as a king, but a king who is patient with his enemies. Solomon judged his immediately. I have no doubt that when the Lord reproduces the kingdom, He will do as David did, He will not put His hand on His foes, in the tremendous hurry, that you, or I, would do. He is patient. Why it is David, is this, that it is more in the shepherd character, and because he did not deal

with, and judge all his enemies, when he might have so done. There were several enemies left when David died, and it was Solomon, who executed righteous judgment, upon those godless men.

Our chapter concludes, “My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore” (Ezek. 37:27, 28). They are re-established in the land, and Christ reigns over them, and every promise of God is fulfilled. What a happy, and glorious day, for Israel will that indeed be!

No sooner is Israel possessed of the land in peace, than they are again, and finally, assaulted by Gog and Magog (chaps. 38, 39). These must not be confounded with those spoken of in Revelation 20. The Gog, and Magog, of Revelation are not brought into view until the millennium has passed by. And they come, “from the four quarters of the earth.” Here, clearly, Gog and Magog are a huge host, gathered from comparatively contiguous lands to Palestine, and led on, I have no doubt, by the antitype of Israel’s ancient, and ruthless foe, the Assyrian, or “King of the North.” You, who are conversant with the Old Testament, will remember, that as long as Israel were in outward relationship with God, and were owned by Him as His people, and were living in the land He had given them, when they were Ammi, i.e., my people (Hosea. 2:1), it was the Assyrian that oppressed them. It was when they were cast off by God, and called Lo-Ammi, i.e., not my people (Hosea. 1:9), that the power of Rome came in. at length completely subjugating the Jews, destroying their city and temple, and scattering them to the winds of heaven, as we have

seen. The beast and the false prophet, the fourth empire, revived in Satanic energy, will yet again oppress the Jews, who get back to Palestine, before Messiah returns. The Assyrian oppressed Israel while they were in, and before they, as the fruit of their sins, lost, the land, at the time of their captivity. The Spirit of God gives us here a prophetic picture, of what will be yet attempted, by the old foe. No sooner are they replaced in their own land, than the old desire of the Assyrian, to despoil God's people, and possess their land, breaks forth again, and the remarkable details of the 38th, and 39th chapters, come before us.

"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal" (Ezek. 38:1-3). The expression rendered in your English bible, "chief prince," is the Hebrew word var) (Rwv"), which learned, and perfectly competent men, of all nations, and schools of thought, agree in telling us, is the old proper name for Russia. Gog is the name of the leader, of this threefold band of Gentiles, from the north, and east, and south, while his territory is called the land of Magog—the Scythia of the ancients. Impelled by territorial greed, this Prince of Rosh (Russia), Meshech (Muscovy), and Tubal (Tobolsk), the three great divisions, of the vast European, and Asiatic possessions, of the Russian empire, leads his countless hosts against the Holy Land, saying, "I will go up to the land of unwalled villages" (ver. 11). He goes, but only to his utter destruction, as we shall see. You know that the great desire of Russia is territorial aggrandisement, and

for centuries she has been making her plans to get possession of India. Peter the Great said his children were never to rest, until they possessed India, and Constantinople, with Turkey in Europe. There are remarkable reasons for that; it is not only that they would have the countries named, as added bits of land, but then, he thought, they would be able completely to dominate the Holy Land. To possess the land where the Lord Jesus lived and died, would gain for them a character for sanctity, which would admirably suit a power, whose superstition is as notorious as its greed. That land has for nearly two thousand years been a bone of contention. It was the cause of all the crusades. It, however, specially belongs to God, and His earthly people, Israel, and they will yet enjoy it.

“Thus saith the Lord God, In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it. And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army” (38:14, 15). Lured by the apparently defenceless condition of Israel, and ignorant that God is there, Gog puts forth his mighty hand, with a desire to annex that land, and the history of the invasion is given in these two chapters, telling alike his folly, and utter overthrow. Gog comes with his hosts and allies, an overwhelming army, and God cuts off five-sixths of them (39:2). So mighty is the multitude, with bows, and arrows, that we read: “They that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the hand staves and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: so that they shall take no wood out of the

field, neither cut down any out of the forests: for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God" (verses 9, 10). Tremendous, indeed, must be the number of warriors that come against them, since Scripture says they will not need to cut firewood for seven years, and it will take seven months to bury the dead in their appointed graveyard, the valley of Hamon-gog (verses 11-15).

In conclusion, let me, at this point, connect one or two passages, to show you the place which the Assyrian—who is the forerunner and type of Gog—holds in Scripture. In Isaiah 10 you find this mighty power spoken of in relation to Israel: "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in thine hand is mine indignation" (ver. 5). God used this power, as His rod, to chasten His people. Again: "It shall come to pass, that, when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: and my hand hath found, as a nest, the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood" (verses 12-15). God,

so to speak, says to this mighty power, I am using you to chastise my erring people, but if you lift up yourself against Me, then I must bring you down. Again: “Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction” (verses 24, 25).

With the fall of the Assyrian, with the crushing of the power of Eastern Europe, in that day put down by the Son of Man, will cease the chastening, by the Lord, of His people. The last foe to be judged is the one who was their earliest—the Assyrian. This is fully predicted in Isaiah 14: “I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot; then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden from off their shoulders” (ver. 25). Then there is further testimony in Isaiah 30: “For the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king also it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it” (verses 30-33).

The prophet Micah, also, speaks of the Assyrian being overthrown by Christ. “And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide, for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. And they shall waste the lands of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders” (Micah. 5:4-6).

We get further light on this in Daniel 11: “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over”(ver. 40). “The king” spoken of in verse 36, is antichrist, reigning in the Holy Land. Against him comes, first “the king of the south,” or Egypt, which lies south of Palestine. He is soon followed by “the king of the north,” that Syrian district, north of Palestine, now belonging to Turkey in Asia, but which will eventually fall into the hands of the great north-eastern power—Gog—which we have been looking at in Ezekiel. These two powers both oppose antichrist, “the king,” and each other, but “the king of the north” appears to be victorious, for “he shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but there shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon” (ver. 41). “The king” we hear no more of here. His fate we have seen

elsewhere (Rev. 19:20). “The king of the north” seems to triumph everywhere, but Edom, Moab, and Ammon escape his clutches. Why? The answer is found in Isaiah 11:14 Blood relations, and among the earliest enemies of Israel, God will not let their chastisement come from any hands but from those they have so needlessly injured. They are shortly after entirely subjugated by the victorious Israelites.

“He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps”(verses 42, 43). This clearly shows that “the king of the north” is inimical to “the king of the south,” and in fact ravages his kingdom, apparently much changed from what it now is—Egypt, then, being as rich, as she is now notoriously poor. “But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (verses 44, 45). What the tidings are, out of the east, and out of the north, that trouble him, we are not told. Whatever they be, he hastens back from Egypt, plants the tabernacles of his palace “between the seas”—the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas—and there comes to his end, cut off, not by man, but by God.

With this scripture, I would just connect, what we get in the close of Zechariah (chaps. 12 and 14), where Jerusalem is made “a burdensome stone for all people.” Against it all nations gather—and at first victory seems

to lie with the foe, for the city is taken, and half of the city goes into captivity. This may be possibly connected with the downward march of the king of the north. Thereafter the Lord appears, and goes forth “to fight against these nations.” Then it is, that “his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives” (Zech. 14:4), which will be cloven in twain—and the word shall be fulfilled, “At evening time it shall be light” (ver. 7).

The way is now clear for the reign of the Son of Man. All is indeed wonderful that has led up to it. The Church is gathered out, and the Lord coming in the air, every believer is caught up. The sleeping saints raised, the living changed, are all caught up in His likeness. And what is the next thing? The Jews restored, and purged, are seen waiting for the coming of the Son of Man. The Son of Man comes, and then all Israel is brought back to the land, and every foe is set aside. The moment is drawing near now when many a prophetic scripture will have its fulfilment, and at that time the Lord will fill the earth with gladness. We may well say in our hearts, Lord, hasten that day. If you are not on the Lord’s side, let me once more implore you now. Do not hesitate, because the Lord is coming. Perhaps this is the last Gospel call that you will ever hear. Before to-morrow’s sun rises, we may have gone up, and you who are not His, will be left behind, to mourn your folly for ever.

A King Shall Reign In Righteousness

2 Sam. 23 1-7; Ps. 72

Lecture 8

One is in no sense surprised that the last words of David should be true, to life, of Him, who is David's Son, and David's Heir, although He was also the Root of David, and David's Lord. I think no person can have the slightest difficulty in seeing, that the One of whom David speaks, in the third verse of the 23rd of 2nd Samuel—although the principle, of course, ought to apply to every ruler—in truth can be none but Jesus, and Jesus in that blessed moment of which the 72nd Psalm has already spoken to us this evening—when He shall rule and reign over this earth. In no part of Scripture can I put my hand upon a passage, which brings out more beautifully, and sweetly, what will be the character of that day, than that which we have read—"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God: and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." Now turn to the 32nd chapter of Isaiah, where we get a remarkable expression with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, which I desire to point out to you,— "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearkens" (verses 1-3). Then lower down in the same chapter we read, "Until

the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest" (ver. 15). That is the change, in the external aspect of the world, at that moment—the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and what men had, till then, counted a fruitful field, in that day, will be thought a forest—the character of things will be so changed. Reading on, you further find what marks the moment: "Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace: and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (verses 16-18). Thus you see the Lord distinctly unfolds to His people, by the pen of Isaiah, what will mark that day when the King shall reign in righteousness.

Now, beloved friends, it is very important for us to see, distinctly, the relationship, in which we, as Christians, stand to the Lord, as compared with that of the people, Isaiah writes about here. I know perfectly well, it is a very common thing, for people to speak, poets to write, and preachers to preach about the Lord Jesus, as our King. Scripture, however, is quite silent upon this term, used in relation to the saints of the present dispensation —Christians. In fact, I daresay, it may a little interest you, if I say, that the Lord Jesus, in the whole of His earthly pathway, never spoke of Himself as a king, save once. That once was in the 25th of Matthew, where He is speaking of the future day, of which this 32nd of Isaiah speaks also, when, as King, He will sit upon the throne of His glory, and "then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit

the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It is surely not without interest to us, to see, that the Saviour never speaks of Himself as a King, in the whole of His pathway here, save in that passage, and the reason is very simple. It is not as King that the believer knows Him now. It is not, of course, but that the Lord has authority over him, but the moment of the manifestation of the kingship of Christ has not yet come. The expression "King of saints" (Rev. 15:3) should be "King of nations," as the margin rightly gives it. When the Lord was upon the earth, He was a prophet, and now interceding before God, He is the great High-priest, but, in the day to come, He is to be a King.

What, then, is our relationship to the Lord Jesus? It is one of a much deeper, and far more blessed nature, than that of a subject to a king. Do not we, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, stand in a wonderfully nearer relationship to Him, than that of subjects to a king? There is, of necessity, no love between a subject and a king. It is merely a relationship of authority and subjection—exaltation on the part of the king, and subjection on the part of a subject. But the blessed truth of Christianity is this, that if you and I are brought, through grace, to know the Lord Jesus Christ now, as our Saviour, we are washed in His blood, and redeemed to God, through the work that He accomplished on the cross. We stand in the same relationship to God, as He does, as Man. He is now set down as the risen Man, the exalted Man in glory, and then, and never till then, did He become what Scripture asserts that He is, viz., "the head of the body—the Church." But now that He is in glory, the Holy Ghost comes down from Him there, and believers, Jew and Gentile, are first of all born of the

Spirit, and then indwelt of the Spirit, and are so "baptized by one Spirit into one body," of which the Lord Jesus, in glory, is the living head. We are thus made members of Christ, and members one of another. It is not by faith, nor by possessing life, but by having the Holy Ghost, that we become united to Christ. But what has that to do with the Lord's coming? A great deal. Another night I hope to show you, that they who are in union with Christ, as members of His body—hence composing the Bride—will have a wonderful place, by-and-by, in the millennial day. I do not purpose this evening taking up that side of the truth, but I will say this, that those who belong to Jesus now, who are united to Him, as Head of the Church, will have a marvellous place in the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will find all this fully unfolded in the 21st, and 22nd of Revelation, where the New Jerusalem, the Bride, the Lamb's wife; is depicted, and portrayed, and her relation to a delivered earth fully brought out. The importance of knowing the Saviour now, and our relationship with that Saviour, is very far reaching, because it is of that day, that the Lord Himself speaks, when He says, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:22, 23). And by-and-by, when the world sees the blessed Lord, and owns Him, it will be a wonderful thing for you and me, to find ourselves in association with Christ, not as subjects merely, but as sharers of the glory, which He inaugurates, and will maintain for a thousand years, over the delivered earth. It is a happy thing to be a

Christian, there is nothing brighter or better, if one thinks of it now, or for the time to come.

Here, then, we get plainly enough the divine statement that a King shall reign in righteousness. Now turn to a scripture which definitely states what the period of the reign will be—Revelation 20:4-6 On a previous occasion we looked at the 19th chapter, and saw how the Lord comes as King of kings, and Lord of lords, from heaven, and how the beast and the false prophet will be put down by Him, when, as a warrior judge, He comes again to the earth. “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.”

The very first thing the true King does, before He commences His reign of peace upon the earth, is to bind the usurper of God’s rights, and place, in this world, from the Garden of Eden downwards. Satan is “bound for a thousand years.” He is called here the dragon, but also the old serpent. He was the source of all the evil, and sorrow, in the morning of man’s day on earth (Gen. 3),and every name, that Scripture gives him elsewhere, is introduced here, that there might be no mistake whatever as to his personality. The angel “cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season” (ver. 3). The time of his incarceration in the bottomless pit endures then for one thousand years.

Then John says, “I saw thrones, and they” (the heavenly saints, who came out with the Lord in chapter 19, the Church, I have no doubt, but more than the Church, all the heavenly saints) “sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God” (the early martyrs of the book of Revelation, see chapter 6), “and those which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands” (that is the later company of martyrs, spoken of in the 13th, and 15th chapters); “and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” They have full association with the Lord in the day of His earthly glory. “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison” (verses 4-7).

I speak not now of Satan’s release, but you see that for a thousand years—the millennium—the prime mover of all evil is cast out of the scene. Some person might say, Why a thousand years? Well, Scripture distinctly says it shall be a thousand years, and, I have little doubt in my mind that, the thousand years is connected very beautifully with the faithfulness of God. Do you not remember what God said, when He reformed this earth, and put man upon it? Turn back to the first of Genesis, and you will at once see another instance of how all Scripture hangs together most wonderfully. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Then we read, “the

earth was without form and void." Do you think that is the way God made the earth? Do you think God turned this earth out, a rude, shapeless mass, like that? Impossible, no! There is no mistake about that. Just turn to the 45th of Isaiah, verse 18, and you will find a remarkable statement as to this point. There the Spirit of God says, "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth, and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited."

What does "in vain" mean? It is the very same Hebrew word rendered "without form, and void" in Genesis 1:2. So you see that you have here, a great sidelight flung on Genesis 1 In the beginning God created the earth. When thus created, it was not created "without form, and void." How it became "without form, and void," is not told us in Scripture. We are only told, that God did not so create it, but that eventually it was reduced to that condition, and therefore, I have little doubt, that between the 1st and 2nd verses of Genesis 1, in other words, between "the beginning," when God created the earth, and the time when it is seen to be "without form, and void," we have that necessarily vast period, during which all the varied strata of the earth's crust were formed, of which the geologists instruct us, and, for the deposition of which, they demand such unlimited ages. In the interval between these two verses you have space for all that geology demands. Let me say, in passing, you had better believe Scripture before geology. Geology sometimes speaks a little bit widely. Science, and geology especially, is rather like a noisy baby, it is very apt to make a great noise when it first appears, but as it gets older it gets quieter. We had better listen to God

than to geologists, if they state what is counter to Scripture. We have lived long enough, some of us, to know that the theories of fifty years ago have all been exploded to-day, but the Word of God abides. Geologists tell us that there were at least twenty-nine epochs, and twenty-nine immense convulsions of the earth's crust. Well, be it so, and what do you find? We discover the granite, which was formed at the bottom, brought to the top, and you build your houses thereof, and the coal, that you are glad to warm yourselves with in winter, though formed infinitely lower than where it is found to-day by your miners, was, by the very influence, that rendered the earth "without form, and void," brought near the surface, or they could never get at it at all.

Let me repeat, then, that there is room, for all that geology wants, between verses1 and 2, and then we can take the six days to be, as I believe them to be, days of twenty-four hours, in which God prepared the earth for man. It might have taken one hundred years for an oak tree to grow, but it would not take a carpenter one day to cut that tree, and make it into some useful article. That is what is meant, I take it, when it is said of the earth, that God "formed it to be inhabited." He put to His hand, and formed the earth for man, and then "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). Then we read, "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made; and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Gen. 2:2, 3).

We have, then, God working six days, and He appoints the seventh as the day of rest. That is the second of

Genesis, and you know what took place in the third. I do not know that the fall of man took place on the very day that God did rest, but He had made man, and put a helpmeet by his side—a lovely type of Christ and His Church. Then the next thing we find is, that the serpent enters, and this happy scene is defiled by the enemy's power. Man falls, and the rest of God is broken, and from that day till this, the earth has been marked by the trail of the serpent, the sin of man, and the absence of rest. That has gone on for nearly six thousand years. About four thousand years elapsed before Christ was born, and we are now in A.D. 1891, which makes 5891 We are not, however, quite sure of our chronology, and I am thankful for that too, for we may be rather nearer the end of the six thousand years, than people are aware of. Earth has been robbed of her Sabbaths for six thousand years, but God is faithful, and will give them to her, all in a lump, by-and-by, and so, I have little doubt, that the seventh thousand, will be the thousand years of which the 20th of Revelation speaks; for, as six days of labour, are to one of rest, so are six thousand years of sin, and sorrow, under the rule of the devil, to the thousand years, of rest, and peace, under the blessed Lord Jesus.

The next thing before us is the rapture of the saints, the Church is taken to glory, and then the Lord appears, Satan is cast into the bottomless pit, and the reign of the righteous King begins. The 72nd Psalm, to which I will turn you, is exceedingly beautiful, as unfolding what will be the character of that reign. All the Lord's enemies are judged, and He gathers out of His kingdom all things that offend, and then He rules, and reigns over the earth, in absolute righteousness. In this Psalm you will

see one particular feature of the Lord's reign, that is exceedingly beautiful. He thinks of the poor especially. In the 4th verse we find, "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 helpers" (Ps 72:4-12).

Every kind of injustice will be remedied, by His blessed hand, immediately, for He reigns in righteousness. There are three spheres where righteousness is found. In the present moment, if I think of God's dealings with men, I learn this, that grace reigns through righteousness—it is divine grace upon a righteous basis that saves men to-day. But from another point of view, now is the day when righteousness suffers. From the day of the rejection of the Lord Jesus, in fact from Abel downwards, righteousness has always suffered. You just try to be practically a righteous person, and you will suffer. I do not deny at all that in the long run "Honesty is the best policy," but nevertheless the honest one will have to suffer. You may suffer for "conscience toward God" (1

Pet. 2:19); or, “for righteousness sake” (1 Pet. 3:14); or, “as a Christian” (1 Pet. 4:16). In the millennial day righteousness reigns; and as regards eternity we read of “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:13). It is perfectly at home, so to speak, there. In the day when righteousness reigns upon the earth, it does not appear that everybody will be converted. The millennial reign of the Lord Jesus does not, necessarily, involve the absolute conversion to God, of every soul upon earth, although, thank God, the mass will be converted. There may be, even in that day, when the Lord is manifesting His glory so wonderfully, those, who may break out in opposition to Him. When the Lord appears by-and-by, in power, and majesty, with every attribute of glory connected with Him, it will be a magnificent, marvellous, and appalling sight for the world. Sinners will think then, that they had better bow down to Him, but whether they all will do so, in reality, is a question.

In proof of this, I ask you to turn to the 18th Psalm. It describes the moment when the Lord is made “the head of the heathen.” Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me. As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me: the sons of the stranger [see margin] shall yield feigned obedience [margin] unto me”(verses 43, 44). This is not a very remarkable thing; the fathers will be all right, but the sons unchanged; just, as to-day, you will find a godly father, and, alas! an ungodly son. Again, in Psalm 66 we read—“How terrible art thou in thy works; through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee,” or as in the margin, “lie, or yield

feigned obedience" (ver. 3). That is, in the presence of the unmistakable power, and divine authority of the Lord Jesus, in that day, there will be an apparent subjection to Him, that may not be real, and that being so, one is prepared for that which the 20th of Revelation gives us, —namely, that after the thousand years, there is found Gog and Magog—a large company, who yield themselves to Satan, when, being loosed, he emerges from the bottomless pit.

I would now like you to look at some of the salient features of the millennium.

(1) Death will be a rare thing. Turn to Isaiah 65 "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" (verses 17-20). You see from this passage that death will be a rare thing. To-day death is the rule; "death reigned from Adam to Moses," and right onward too; but in that day it will be the exception. We, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, are looking for the return of the Bridegroom, and we look to go to heaven, without death, and, thank God, some of us will—I do not say you and I Will—but, certainly, some of the Lord's saints will be alive when He comes. You remember Methuselah, whose life was nine hundred and sixty-nine years. That was not very much short of the thousand;

but in the thousand years of the peaceful reign of Jesus, man will live out the full limit, which God has designed for him. What is meant then by saying that “the child shall die an hundred years old”? Well, Supposing you had a little one of seven, and it died, you say it died a child. Supposing next week the grandfather dies, and his age is seventy, you say he was an “old man.” He was only seventy, and as seven is to seventy, so is an hundred to a thousand. Seven is the child’s age in our day, while it will be an hundred in that day. In our day seventy is the old man’s age, while in that day one thousand years will many an old man see. I take it that death will only be, as the result of the governmental dealing of God, upon some open, and distinct act of sin, against the Lord.

But I hear an objector saying, If people are not going to die, how will you get them fed; the population of the earth will overstep the possibility of its supplying food for its inhabitants?

(2) The curse will be removed from the earth. In that day God will change the very aspect of things upon the earth. I wonder if you have ever observed another verse in our chapter. “They shall build houses, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them” (ver. 21). Man is in the most happy, and blessed relations with God possible, in that day, and God will blessedly undertake for him then. We have looked already this evening at the 3rd of Genesis, where the curse came in. The head of creation, Adam, fell, and, for his sake, the ground was cursed. It did not yield its increase. It is by the sweat of the brow that man has had to earn his bread since, and I suppose there never was a day, when people, in this land, felt more the pressure of

the curse than now, when agriculture has so failed, and competition is so keen. Every year comes out the cry that the land cannot be made to bring forth food, to feed the people thereof; and it is a question of importing from all quarters, to keep people alive, at least where you and I live.

Now observe what is going to happen in that day? The curse is to be removed entirely. It was partially alleviated in the day of Noah, but it will be completely abrogated in Messiah's day. This is plainly stated in Isaiah 35: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God…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 the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (verses 1, 2, 6, 7, 10). The Lord puts His hand upon the face of creation in that day.

Look at Amos 9: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine

thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (verses 13-15). In Isaiah 32nd, the same testimony comes out, when "the wilderness shall be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest" (ver. 15). The sweet Psalmist of Israel also anticipates this moment when he says, "Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us" (Ps. 67:6). Very wonderful will be the change over the face of creation, and all a testimony to Christ.

(3) The animal creation will undergo a radical change. Turn for a little again to Isaiah 65, "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 the Lord" (ver. 25). The only creature, from which God does not remove the curse, is the serpent. Even in that day the recollection will be in Jehovah's mind, of the part the serpent played, in producing the ruin He is now remedying, and therefore we have that sentence, "dust shall be the serpent's meat."

Then in Isaiah 11 we have a glowing picture of the reign of the Messiah. He comes forth as a, rod out of the stem of Jesse—a branch growing but. Then we get the character of His reign. "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 the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (verses 4-9). A marvellous day for the earth, and the, at present, groaning creation, will it be. It will be the fulfilment of the statement, "The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8:21, 22). We shall then have the curse removed, and the brute creation—at least as far as "my holy mountain" extends—brought into touch with the mind of God, and all will be equally fitting, and beautiful.

(4) Jerusalem, in more than pristine glory, will be the world's metropolis. Jerusalem, which was so trodden down of the Gentiles, will occupy a wonderful place in that day, and, her recovered glory, as much eclipse the past, as the glory of Christ as King, will surpass that of Solomon. I refer you to the closing verses of Isaiah 59: "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord" (verses 19, 20). Then (chap. 60) there is the beautiful call, to a long

down-trodden nation, to wake up to their glory. “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” Who is the light? It is Christ.1 When He did come as the light of Israel, they refused Him, but when He appears again, they will own Him, and acknowledge Him, and now the Spirit of God calls upon them to wake up and see what God is going to give them. “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee…And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee”—the Jew knew what that meant—“the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious… Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for

brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isa. 60:1-5, 10-13, 18-20).

Then let us go to the 62nd chapter: "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that urneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy rightousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah (i.e., my delight is in her), and thy land Beulah (i.e., married): for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isa. 62:1-7). Nothing could be more clear than these statements of God's faithful word to His people.

Look now at Zephaniah, chapter 3, "In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee

with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee; and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord" (verses 16-20). That has nothing in the world to do with the Church, it is Israel's blessing, and Israel's day of glory.

(5) The Temple will be rebuilt, and its services restored with great magnificence. This we get unfolded in Ezekiel, chapters 40 to 46, which I am, from lack of time, unable to touch to-night, and you can peruse at your leisure. You will find this comes out, that Jerusalem is not only the joy of all the earth, but God owns that place as the spot where His temple is, and you have the temple rebuilt, in more than pristine glory, while the sacrifices are renewed, and the veil of the temple again exists in that day. That might seem to some of us a little retrograde, but I think you will find this, that, as the Old Testament sacrifices were anticipatory, the sacrifices of that day will be commemorative, because Israel's salvation, like our own, is based on the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(6) Jerusalem becomes the centre of earthly worship all nations flow to it. Israel will have their temple rebuilt, and its services reinstituted, we have seen, but not only will Jehovah have their worship, but the whole earth will turn to Jerusalem, as its centre of worship. In proof of

this, I shall quote here but two scriptures—"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:1-3). Nothing could be plainer. Then in Zech. 14, which, in its early verses, states, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle," and then, that the Lord has come to the Mount of Olives, fought against them, and delivered her, we read, "And every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles; and it shall be that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague wherewith the Lord 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. 14:16-19).

The Feast of Tabernacles is the Old Testament feast, in Israel, which was typical of the millennial day of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had three great feasts, the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles; and it is very striking to see, that, while the

Passover, which has its fulfilment in the death of Christ, and the Feast of Tabernacles, which is a figure of the coming glory of Christ, will be kept, Ezekiel is most careful to omit the Feast of Weeks, because that feast has found its antitype in Pentecost—the coming down of the Holy Ghost, and the forming of the Church. Israel will not keep it in that day, because the Church, so to speak, absorbed into herself what the Feast of Weeks meant. In that day Israel will keep the Passover (Ezek. 45:21), and the Feast of Tabernacles, and all the nations of the earth will come up, and join them, at least in the latter, and worship the Lord. A happy and blessed day for the earth will that be. A wonderful day indeed will it be for this poor sin-stained earth. Well may we pray, Lord, hasten that day.

1 Possibly here, Christ, and the Church, are indicated. (See Lecture 9., The New Jerusalem, pages 213, 214).

The New Jerusalem

Rev. 21:9-27, 22:1-5

Lecture 9

We were looking, last Lord's Day evening, at the earthly side of the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus. There passed before us the testimony of Scripture as to what the nature, and character of that day would be, with every foe, and every adverse power, subjugated to the Lord Jesus, Satan in the bottomless pit, and "neither adversary nor evil occurrent." We saw that those, under that beneficent reign, will be indeed blessed. We saw that death is to be a rare thing, the curse to be removed, the earth to be fruitful, the earthly Jerusalem to be rebuilt, and re-established in more than her pristine glory; the temple to be rebuilt, the sacrifices re-established, and Jerusalem to be the metropolis of a renewed, and absolutely blessed earth. The Jew—now despised, looked down upon, and often treated with contempt—in that day will be "the head, and not the tail" (Deut. 28:13). Jerusalem will be the joy of the earth, and from Zion will come out streams of deepest blessing, and all the earth will rejoice under the sway of Jesus. And where shall we Christians be in that day? I believe the scripture, which I have read this evening, answers that question most distinctly. What I desire to bring before you now, is, what I may call, the heavenly side of the kingdom of the Son of Man, the heavenly side of the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus, and to show how the Church—it is a wonderful thing, and. an unspeakable favour, to belong to the Church of God, the Body of Christ—will be in distinct relation to the

renewed earth. In the scripture which I have just read, God gives us much light and information, of an exceedingly interesting, and very blessed character, upon this point.

Before I touch this subject, bear with me a moment, while I point out that, which I think may help some students of Scripture, in regard to this passage, and its position in the book of Revelation. I can easily understand a person saying, Are not the subjects of these chapters in Revelation consecutive? I believe they are not. The book is, in a certain sense, a book of drama, and you find, every now and then, the curtain drops, and something entirely new will come before you—a new scene. Commencing with the 19th chapter, we find the marriage of the Lamb,—the Bride, the Lamb's wife, gets herself ready, and the marriage takes place. The next thing is this, the Lord Jesus comes out from heaven, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, attended by the armies of heaven, on white horses; the heavenly saints attend their Lord; the Bride is with the Bridegroom, when He comes to deal with the earth. The next thing is, that every foe is put down; the beast, and antichrist are cast alive into the lake of fire, and their armies overwhelmed, and Satan bound, and cast into the bottomless pit. Then (chap. 20) the reign of the Lord is established; the heavenly saints, and two martyred companies, live, and reign, with Christ, a thousand years, and, at the end of that time, Satan is let loose. Gog and Magog come to his hand, fire comes down from God, their destruction follows, and then the great white throne is set up. Time is over, the judgment is set, and you are carried, in the first few verses of chapter 21, into the eternal state, the description of which closes with the 8th verse of the

chapter. We have here, then, a consecutive, descriptive account of events, commencing with the Lord's appearing, and coming to earth, with His people, right on, through the millennial day, to: the great white throne; and then into the eternal state; and with the 8th verse of chapter 21 the prophecy of the book of Revelation closes, for you cannot get further than the eternal state. We have the history of God's dealings, with man upon the earth, absolutely closed in chapter 20, and in the first eight verses of chapter 21 we have the relationship of God, to man, in eternity. The eternal state is there most fully, and beautifully described, and the curtain, so to speak, drops. The question before us to-night is, Why does it rise once more?

Why does the Spirit of God commence an altogether new subject in the 9th verse of chapter 21, which is carried on to the close of the 5th verse of chapter 22? Because He would give us, and, in order to do so, turns back again, into time, to give us, details about a certain being —a certain company of people if you like the expression better—who will be in relation to the Lord of the earth, in the millennial day, and who will be in relation to the earth itself, in that day. In the verses read, I have no doubt we get the. distinctive relation of the Church,— the heavenly people of the Lord, that belong to Jesus now,—to the renewed earth in that day. Some one may say, That is a very arbitrary way of dealing with Scripture. No, it is the way of the Spirit of God. You will find in numberless places in Scripture, that God's Spirit will, first of all, give you a little summary, and then turn back again, and give detail. Revelation 21:9-27, 22:1-5, is not any exception, because you will find that, in another part of this same book, you have absolutely the

same line of descriptive treatment by the Spirit of God, not with regard to the Church—the true Bride of Christ —but with regard to what calls itself the church the false bride—Babylon, the Mother of Harlots.

Turn back, for proof of this, to the 14th chapter of this book, where the Spirit of God brings out seven distinct points, of, as yet, unfulfilled prophecy. The first thing that John sees is the one hundred and forty-four thousand, the earthly company. That brings us down to the end of verse 5 Then in verse 6, we get a second point, the preaching of the everlasting Gospel. In the 8th verse, we get the third point, “Babylon is fallen.” Now Babylon’s fall comes here, as the third of the seven, and you will see what follows. Next, we get what will be the judgment of those who worship the beast (verses 9-12). That is the fourth point. The fifth point is how blessed it will be then to “die in the Lord” (ver. 13). Then (sixth), in verses 14 to 16, Christ comes, with a sharp sickle in His hand, and we have the harvest of the earth—discriminating judgment. Then (verses 17 to 20) another angel comes out, and we have (seventh) the vintage described—the unmistakable vengeance of God, upon a guilty, blood-stained earth. Here, then, we see a summary of earthly events, commencing with the manifestation of the Jewish remnant, and closing with the final pre-millennial judgments. Now observe, Babylon was mentioned there in one verse (the 8th), but we do not get Babylon portrayed, and her fall described, till chapters 17 and 18, where you will find her characteristics delineated, viz., idolatry, corruption, worldliness, and persecution, as well as her destruction, given in detail.

The same mode of treatment is found in the part of Scripture before us to-night. We have first a summary of events, and then, for a particular purpose, the Spirit of God turns back, and gives us an immense amount of detail—not about the false bride, but about the true. Babylon is the false church; the new Jerusalem is the real thing. We have only to read these two scenes to see how strong, and doubtless purposed, is the analogy between the two passages. Nay more, if we observe the way, in which John is invited to behold the glory of the new Jerusalem, you will find, it is exactly similar to the way in which he is invited to look at the fall of Babylon. "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife" (21:9). Again: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters" (17:1). Do not suppose that Babylon is a built city, or the New Jerusalem either. Both are figures. They have an immense meaning to the student of Scripture, and "the new Jerusalem" teems with thoughts of the Bride's glory, and happiness, to any one who understands the meaning of the term. I say this to show, that I am not taking unwarrantable liberties with the Word of God. I rather wish to show how absolutely the Scriptures hang together.

How beautiful that the Spirit of God should turn back then, in this 21st chapter, and show, that in the millennial day of the reign of the Lord Jesus, those who have followed a despised Saviour, those who have known an earth-rejected Saviour, those who have shared in His

loss, and shame, and contempt, and scorn, during the long night of His rejection, and absence, will be identified with Him, in His glory. The Spirit of God delights to spend almost a whole chapter, in describing, and unfolding, what will be the beauty to the eye of God, what the joy to the heart of the Lord, and what the displayed glory to the eye of the world, in that day, of those, who have followed Jesus in the time of His rejection, and, hence, share with Him in His glory, and shine with Him, in the day, when the whole earth basks in the sunshine of His blessed favour. In figurative language here, the Spirit of God is bringing out that which had already fallen from the lips of the Saviour Himself, when He was here upon the earth. He shows us the moment of incomparable glory for the Church.

But who is the Church, the Bride? “I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.” To see the Bride, I invite you, dear fellow-Christians, to look at yourselves to-night. I do not often do so. It is very rarely that I ask a Christian to look at himself, or herself—I always say, Look at Christ But God is going to let us look, this evening, at ourselves, not as we are, but as He is going to make us, in Christ, in a day yet to come. Who, then, will compose that Bride? Let me ask you a question Do you think you are a part of the Bride? I know, through infinite grace, that I am, so also are all sinners saved by grace; sinners of the Gentiles, sinners of the Jews, called by the sovereign grace of God, touched by His blessed Spirit, converted, and brought to know the Saviour, in the night of His absence. I can see before me to-night scores that I know form a part of that Bride. Are you, however, sure that you belong to it? If not, I would most strongly urge you to come to Jesus at once. Come as a sinner, as you

are to-night, and you will find, that He will give you a title to glory, that will never fail. Come to the One who died, and rose again. Cast yourself upon the mercy, and grace of that blessed Saviour, and He will not cast you out, because “it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). The passage before us shows that we are saved, gloriously, grandly saved. I would not miss it for ten thousand worlds, ten thousand times told. I shall have yet to show you what will be your portion, if you do miss what God now offers, but I say, with all the love, and energy of my soul, Do not miss it. Get washed in the blood of the Lamb, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will find that you are a stone in this city, so to speak. I see a great many of the stones before me to-night. The Lord will have them all beautifully polished by-and-by—the same stones that are sitting down here to-night, will form part of this holy city, in that wonderful day. You have only to come to the Saviour, the Living Stone, and believe in Him, and you will find yourself a living stone also (1 Pet. 2:4, 5), a member of the Church, the Bride.

By the Church, I mean sinners, brought to know the heavenly Saviour, since the day of Pentecost, born of the Spirit, washed in the blood of the Son of God, indwelt by the Spirit of God, baptized into that “one body,” of which Christ, in glory, is the head. The Church is the body of Christ. He went into death for it. He has made it His own by dying for it, as it says, “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it

should be holy, and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). The Church, then, is composed of poor sinners, washed in the blood of Jesus, and led through grace to believe in Him. Anything down here, that man may call the Church, is neither here, nor there, in this respect. Being baptized, or a communicant, is utterly useless, for what I am speaking of to-night. These ordinances, most valued, and blessed, as they are in their place, never did, nor can, put a soul into Christ. The only real Church is composed of sinners, saved by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you can truly say, I believe in Jesus, I rest upon His blood, then I believe, I shall see you, by-and-by, shining in the very glory of God. You may have many a doubt, though you ought not to, for the Lord leaves no room for such, when He says to every simple believer in Him, "Where I am, there ye shall be also."

Well, now, this Church, formed by the Holy Ghost, is united to her living Head in glory, and she is to appear, with Christ, in the character which is unfolded here. "Come hither, I will shew thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife," It is not the first time she is brought before us, for we saw (chap. 19:7) that she got herself ready for the marriage day. In the 2nd and 3rd verses of chapter 21, where she is again seen, the moment is really later on, in the ways of God, than the 9th verse. John is carried away in the Spirit now, to a great and high mountain, and is shown "the holy city, Jerusalem." The word "great" should be left out. It is not there as God wrote the verse. Babylon is called "that great city," Babylon, "that mighty city." Yes, man always wants something "great," but God does not call His Church great. No, another adjective suits her better—"holy." Babylon loves

greatness, but we read of “the holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.” In the 9th and 10th verses, she is seen descending out of heaven from God. She is descending, but she has not got down to earth, whereas in the 3rd verse you find that she is resting on earth, for “the tabernacle of God is with men.” In eternity it will be God and men together, and the tabernacle of God, which is the Church, is with men. By His Spirit, God has tabernacled in the Church from the day of Pentecost, but the world has not believed it. In the millennial day God will compel the world to believe, that He has been dwelling in the bosom of the Church, all through the long dark night of the absence of Jesus; and, further, He will make the world in that day to rejoice in the light of His glory. But in verses 10 and 11, she is only descending—it is, in fact, the position which the Church holds in the millennium. She is between heaven and earth, over the earth, clearly connected with Christ, but linked to the earth. What the character or extent of the communication between the heavenly Jerusalem, and the earthly may be, I do not know. Scripture is silent, and therefore we must not speak. This much we know, that we shall judge, both angels, and the world. “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?…Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (1 Cor. 6:2, 3) What, then, do the angels do? They will be uncommonly happy to be the doorkeepers of this holy city, because “unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come” (Heb. 2:5)—the future habitable earth. It is Man who is going to reign over the new earth, Man, in the person of Jesus, and His Bride in association with Him.

When the lowly Nazarene reigns over the earth, and blesses it, those who belong to Him in the day of His rejection, will reign with Him, in the moment of His glory. In the 10th verse, the city is not again called the New Jerusalem, because there is no necessity. She is the new Jerusalem, that is her nature and character, and there is no need to emphasise that again. She comes down from heaven. Her origin is divine, her nature, her character, is heavenly—"out of heaven from God." One is reminded of the scripture, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly…We shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15:48, 49). Do you not know that the Christian is a heavenly being? Yes, he belongs to heaven, he is taken out of the earth. The world says now, of a devoted, unworldly, Christ-loving, and Christ-serving saint, What a fool that man is! but it will alter its judgment, in the day, when it sees the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the holy city "descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God."

Turn to the 17th chapter of John for a moment, to which this scripture necessarily carries one's mind. The Son is there unbosoming Himself to the Father, and we find Him saying in the 20th verse—"Neither pray I for these alone." He was not only praying for the apostles, but He was likewise praying for us—for all them that believe. There may be a very great difference between the members of the family of God, but there is one feature, which marks the whole family of God—that is identical, —they all believe. The Lord says therefore, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Blessed Lord! He was thinking of you and me, and He unfolds what belongs to us. "That they all may be one: as thou, Father,

art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." If the Church had been one, the world might have believed, but now it thinks it has very good ground for its unbelief because Christians are not one, but split into endless sects. But listen, he goes on—"And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they maybe made perfect in one: and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me" (John 17:20-23). That will be the day, when the world sees the Church coming down, out of heaven from God, and it will then say, Ah! those Christians were right after all. We thought they were only deluded when they talked of being one with Christ, and the possessors of eternal life, but we know now they were right. The world will know it when too late to believe it. What the Lord prays for in the 21st verse is that the world might believe, but in the 23rd, He asks that the world may know, "that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me," and the world will know, then, that the believer in Jesus now, is accepted in, and is one with, God's beloved Son.

In that day the world will know this wondrous fact, that "the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." It is the glory which God gave His Son, as man, not the incommunicable glory, which belongs to the Lord Jesus, in the Godhead,—this never can be given. But the glory which the Son of Man has acquired, on the ground of redemption, He can, and, blessed be His adorable name, He does, share with His loved, and blood-bought Bride. But He says more. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they

may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). We shall see that glory; we shall be like Him, in that day of His glory, and more than that, we shall also appear with Him, in glory. Little wonder that the Spirit of God says here, "I saw the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." You and I, as sinners, are unfit for that glory, for "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," we read, in Rom. 3:23 Then in Rom. 5:1, 2, we get, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Revelation 21 says John saw the city "descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." We are now made perfectly fit for it, through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, then we shall possess, and enjoy it.

"And her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (verse 11). The jasper stone is used in Scripture, for that which is expressive of the glory of God (chap. 4:3), which can be seen by the creature, for He has a glory, which no man can approach unto. "The building of the wall of it was jasper" (verse 18). That which is used to express the glory of God Himself, this city is seen to have. Her wall (verse 18), and first foundation (verse 19), are jasper. The glory of God is the foundation, and protection, as well as the light, and beauty of the heavenly city, for the Church is glorified, with Christ, in the glory of God. She belongs to God. The Christian is born of God, and has the divine nature imparted to him, through the new

birth. There is only what is the fruit of grace visible in this chapter, all is “clear as crystal.”

The city is divinely secure also, for it “had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel… And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (verses 12-14). Another has said:2 “It has twelve gates. Angels are become the willing doorkeepers of the great city, the fruit of Christ’s redemption-work in glory. This marked the possession too, by man, thus brought, in the assembly, to glory, of the highest place in the creation and providential order of God, of which angels had been previously the administrators. The twelve gates are full human perfectness of governmental administrative power. The gate was the place of judgment… There were twelve foundations, but these were the twelve apostles of the Lamb. They were, in their work, the foundation of the heavenly city. Thus the creative, and providential display of power, the governmental (Jehovah), and the Church once founded at Jerusalem, are all brought together in the heavenly city, the organised seat of heavenly power. It is not presented as the Bride, though it be the Bride, the Lamb’s wife. It is not in the Pauline character of nearness of blessing to Christ. It is the Church as founded at Jerusalem under the twelve—the organised seat of heavenly power, the new, and now heavenly capital of God’s government.”

The place which angels hold here is interesting. They are now, and have ever been, the servants of the saints, as we read: “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of

salvation" (Heb. 1:14), and when the Church is seen, by-and-by, in effulgent glory, they will be delighted to be the doorkeepers of the heavenly city. God, too, does not then forget His earthly people (Israel), nor the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The world is not to forget that the twelve apostles who served the Lord, and suffered in the earthly Jerusalem, are they, who, by their ministry, founded the heavenly Jerusalem, and thus it is only seemly, that the names of the apostles should be found in the twelve foundations of the city. In Ephesians we are told that we "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord"(Eph. 2:20, 21), which has its full answer, I apprehend, in the new Jerusalem.

The city is alike vast, and perfect, and measured, and owned of God. "He measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal" (ver. 16). It was a cube. Now a cube is the most perfect figure, being equal on every side—finite perfection. It has what you call finality, it is the most comprehensive, and holds the most—nothing contains as much as a cube—and therefore, it is given here, as the expression of perfection. Observe, it is finite perfection, divinely given. I do not say it is divine perfection, because that is God Himself; but it is divinely given perfection, and therefore it is spoken of as a cube. The Spirit of God delights to show, the absolute perfection of the place in glory, which the saints have before God, on the ground of Divine righteousness.

"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the

foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the. eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Rev. 21:18-21).

To again quote the words of another,3 "The city was formed in its nature, in divine righteousness and holiness—gold transparent as glass. That which was now, by the word, wrought in, and applied to men below, was the very nature of the whole place (compare Eph. 4:24). The precious stones, or varied display of God's nature, who is light, in connection with the creature (seen in creation, Ezek. 28:13; in grace, in the high-priest's breastplate, Exod. 28:15-21), now shone in permanent glory, and adorned the foundations of the city. The gates had the moral beauty which attracted Christ in the assembly, and in a glorious way. That on which men walked, instead of bringing danger of defilement, was itself righteous, and holy; the streets, all that men came in contact with, were righteousness, and holiness—gold transparent as glass." Gold all through Scripture is Divine righteousness. White linen is practical human righteousness. When the Bride puts on the white raiment (Rev. 19:8), it is her practical righteousness. If you were to put a little bit of white linen into the fire, it would soon be destroyed, but put a bit of gold in, and it stands the test. That is the whole point. Gold is Divine righteousness, and you, and I,

stand before God, on the ground of Divine righteousness, in Christ.

“And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones.” As we have seen, we have these precious stones in Scripture three times. In the garden of Eden they are seen in connection with creation; then in Exodus 28, where they are seen in the breastplate of the high-priest, it is evidently a question of grace for a failing people; but, when we see these same stones, in the foundation of the heavenly city, the thought suggested is permanent glory. Those many-hued stones bring out the varied qualities of God, made known through His people. There will be different rays of His glory reflected through them, illustrated by these different precious stones, which are the emblems employed, to set forth the lustre of God’s saints, in heavenly glory, and the way, in which He displays, the beauty, which He sees in them. Put a light through an emerald, and it is quite different from that of the ruby, and although we are all partakers of the grace of God, that grace will shine through each differently, and no two are alike. It would be an immense pity if all the saints were like a cartload of bricks—all the same shape, and colour. Just as there are not two leaves of the forest alike, so there are not two saints of God alike. All are alike in being saved by grace, but all are different in the expression of that grace.

“And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl.” Why was every gate a pearl? You remember the heavenly merchantman, in Matthew 13, “seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (ver. 46). You may say, That is a sinner

seeking the Saviour. Indeed! a sinner selling? What has a sinner got to sell but his sins? Nay, the pearl of great price is not Christ, but the Church—the Church in its unity. Christ went and sold all that He had, truly, and gave up all for the Church. The pearl is the Church in her unity, beauty, and completeness as viewed in God's mind, that so fascinated the Lord Jesus, that He parted with "all that he had," to get that pearl.

"And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." When you walk through the streets of man's city, you get your feet defiled. But what do I find there? Nothing to defile; nothing of that sort can by any possibility enter. We are there on the ground of Divine righteousness.

"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof" (verses 22, 23). There being no temple is a great thing. There is no concealment of God's glory. A temple would speak of concealment, or of a special place, where God could be known, by those who drew near to worship. All this has gone by. Even now, we Christians, have fullest access to the holiest (Heb. 10:19-22). In the heavenly city God is fully displayed. The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple. They are approached in their own nature and glory, as another has sweetly sung—

"The Lamb is there, my soul—

There, God Himself doth rest,

In love divine diffused through all,

With Him supremely blest.

God and the Lamb—'tis well,

I know that source divine,

Of joy and love no tongue can tell,

Yet know that all is mine.

But who that glorious blaze

Of living light shall tell;

Where all His brightness God displays,

And the Lamb's glories dwell.

God and the Lamb shall there

The light and temple be,

And radiant hosts for ever share,

The unveil'd mystery."

There will be a temple in the earthly Jerusalem. Any architect, with a fair knowledge of his profession, might go to Palestine, and build Ezekiel's temple to-day; God has given the measurements, and plans, so plainly, that Ezekiel's temple could be easily built. But there is here no temple—oh, no, because a temple always implies the thought of God being hidden, being in an inner place. In a certain sense it is all temple—i.e., the Lord God and the Lamb pervade the city, and the saints are in the nearest contiguity to the Lord, in the closest relationship to the Lamb, enjoying the light, and basking in the sunshine, of the presence of the blessed Lord. Oh, what a contrast to the darkness of that eternal hell, which is the lot of the man who dies in his sins. God save you, if you are yet in your sins. Do not miss this scene of blessedness, and rest, and joy. There is no need for the

sun, and the moon in that day. Why? Because “the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof.” The glory of the divine nature illumines all, and the Lamb is the Lamp—the Light-bearer. God, fully displayed, supersedes all created light. The sun at mid-day was put out by a brighter light, when Saul was converted (Acts 9). Even so will it be in this city. “The glory of God did lighten it.” It comes, shaded for us, through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although this city is the Church, brought out for millennial view, and gives our relationship to the millennial earth, it is the Church really in her eternal state, though the figure of “the city” ceases in the eternal state. What she is, she is going to be for ever, but, first of all, set in relation to earth, as a visible and glorious object over it. Therefore we read, “And the nations shall walk by the light of it.” Only the redeemed nations will enjoy that privilege, and blessing I apprehend. Suspended above the earthly Jerusalem, the holy city will transmit the rays of the glory of God, by which it is absolutely permeated, and encompassed. The light which it will then transmit, and shed on to the earth, will render it a magnificent luminary, of an altogether unknown quality, and the nations will walk in, and enjoy its light. This wonderful glory of God shines among, and through His own people. The city enjoys the direct light within, the world gets the transmitted light of the glory, and “the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour unto (not into) it.” They thereby acknowledge the heavens, and the heavenly kingdom, to be the source of all they possess, and enjoy; they render homage to Him, who is the Source.

“And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there” (ver. 25). The poet has said,—

“And sing of Thy glory above,

In praises by day and by night.”

I never sing that, for there is no night there, and the gates are ever open. Evil cannot enter in. Blessed thought. Divine security guards against this. No falsehood, no idol—“whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie” (ver. 27), no defilement can ever enter. Neither Satan’s deceit, nor man’s evil, can again produce corruption.

This glorious description of the New Jerusalem, forcibly reminds us of a passage, before quoted, in the Old Testament (Isa. 60), where the earthly Jerusalem is addressed. “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (ver. 1). Again, —“Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night: that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought” (ver. 11). If the nations of the earth will not bow down to Jerusalem they will perish. But further, —“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended” (verses 18-20). What is the meaning of that? The light that streams

through the heavenly city—having God's glory—would appear to irradiate the earthly, and we have the heavenly, and earthly, Jerusalem, in touch one with the other. You have reached "the dispensation of the fulness of times" when God will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1:10). Jacob's dream is realised—"A ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven" (Gen. 28:12). The two spheres are in intimate relation, and accord. The night of evil has passed away, and the day of glory has set in. The affections of the soul are moved, as one also reads, that "only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" enter in to the city. Sovereign grace is at the bottom of all blessing for man.

The first five verses of chapter 22 give us yet lovely details, as to the connection of the holy city with the earth, although not on it. "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." The city is refreshed by the river of God, and the fruits of the tree of life—always ripening—are for its inhabitants. The fruit, only the glorified saints eat, whereas the leaves—that which is visible without—are for the blessing of those on earth. Observe there is only one river here, and only one tree. You recollect in Genesis 2 there were four rivers, and two trees—the tree of the knowledge of good, and evil, and the tree of life. When man sinned, he was driven out, that he might not touch the tree of life. But when driven out of the earthly paradise, God opens a heavenly

one to him. In Eden there were four rivers, and with two of them, Hiddekel, or Tigris, and Euphrates, are connected some of the most sorrowful passages of the history of God's earthly people. On the Tigris, was built Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, which carried captive the ten tribes. On the Euphrates, Babylon was built, whither the two tribes were taken. When we come to the last chapter of Scripture, we have but one river, the river of life, and one tree, the tree of life, and that seen on both sides of the river. The tree of the knowledge of good, and evil, is for ever gone. The day of man's responsibility, and testing, is, for ever, over, and everything is settled absolutely according to divine sovereign grace in Christ. There may be trouble on the earth, to begin with, but the Lord will put all right, in that day, for "the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." It must be borne in mind that these are only God's figures of fullest blessing. There will not be any real river, or visible tree, I take it, but, the river of water of life symbolises the superabundance of life, and blessing, which will flow through the city—i.e., the Bride, the Lamb's wife—and, clearly, we are on millennial ground, in this chapter, for, in eternity, there are no nations or kings. Then comes the climax. "There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him" (22:3). Sometimes we are hindered here, but, thank God, there will be no hindrance in that day, nothing to hinder the heart going out to the Lord, to the fullest. "And they shall see his face." Yes, we are going to see the face of the blessed One, who died for us on the tree. "And his name shall be on their foreheads." On the forehead, of many a man on earth, will the name of the beast have been imprinted, but here, everybody

delights to own, I belong to Jesus. “And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (ver. 5). There is no night, nor need of light, for the Lord God gives it. The “candle” man makes, and the “sun” God has made, but neither are required there. All that suits, and is needed in, this world, is past, for the heavenly saints,—the Bride, the Lamb’s wife,—and they “shall reign for ever and ever.” We shall pass into eternity, in the unclouded enjoyment, of that which the Spirit of God brings before us in these verses. Oh, what a day for the Church, what a day for Christ, what a day of unmingled, unparalleled glory, and what a great mercy for you, and me, if we can say now, “I belong to the Saviour.” If you are His now, then you will be most certainly His, in that day 2 “Synopsis of the book of the Bible,” Vol. 5, p. 614, 2nd edition 3 Loc. cit., p. 615

The Eternal State

Rev. 20, 21:1-8

Lecture 10

For the last two Lord's Day evenings, we have been looking at the testimony of Scripture, as to the nature, and character, of the thousand years, of which the 20th chapter of Revelation speaks particularly. I need not, therefore, detain you with many remarks about it, because, what is before us this evening, is that which is subsequent to the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus. That He will reign for a thousand years, has been conclusively proved from the Word of God, and here in the scripture before us (4th ver.), we find three distinct companies, that lived, and reigned, with Christ, for one thousand years. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (ver. 5). The first resurrection, which includes Christ, and all that are His, is pre-millennial. It is marked off, by its own peculiarities, from the moment when "the rest of the dead" again live. This solemn event is not here called the second resurrection, because the separate taking out of the wicked, from their graves, for judgment, and the lake of fire, the Spirit of God would not, in this connection, call, by that blessed word, resurrection. He calls it the second death. "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of the Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (verses 5, 6).

We have been looking at this blessed period, as given in Scripture, and we have seen the earth renewed, and blessed, under the sway of Jesus, and heaven, joining with earth, in owning, and praising Him. And now the Spirit of God carries us to the time, subsequent to this blessed millennial reign. “When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison” (ver. 7). The thought in the minds of many is, that if the millennium came in, then, of course, everything would be fixed, and settled for ever. But not so. There is a period, fixed and limited, during which the blessed Son of Man, will have His mediatorial reign over the earth, but it comes to a close, for a reason which I shall show you presently, and now when it is ended, the first thing we find is this, that Satan is loosed out of his prison.

I understand, from this chapter, perfectly well, why the book of Revelation is so little read. I think I see clearly, why, even Christians, so little give themselves, to the study of this wonderful book. They often say, Oh, it is very difficult, and so full of figurative language, that we cannot comprehend its meaning. But that is not the reason. Do you think the devil likes that you, and I, should ponder, carefully, a book, that speaks, first of all, of himself and his angels, being cast out of heaven (chap. 12:9), and then of his being cast, solitary, into the bottomless pit (20:1-3), and then, finally, hurled into the lake of fire (20:10)? Do you think the devil likes, that you and I should be occupied with his three fold fall, till, at length, he finds himself the most miserable wretch in creation, for such, indeed, he will be, as, in eternity, he reviews the sorrow he has wrought through pride, terminating in endless shame? Nay, nay, you would not put into the hands of a man, a book that told of your

downfall. You would put it at the back of the fire if you could. But there is yet another reason. This is the book that brings out the final issues of all things, and the book, that shows, what is to be the end of the pathway of that lowly, self-humbled, blessed One, whom the world refused. This book shows His final exaltation, and glory, His reign over a Satan-delivered earth, for a thousand years, and then His dealing finally, and definitively, with the great adversary of man. Little wonder that Satan has persuaded Christians, that the book of Revelation, is a book that had better not be opened. It is remarkable, however, that in the first chapter, as well as in the last (1:3, 22:6, 7, 10, 18, 19), God speaks of the blessing connected with reading, and keeping the sayings, of this book, so I fervently commend it to your attention, henceforth.

We now see, then, that Satan is “loosed a little season” (verses 3-7). He at once resumes his old tactics, the practice of which, for six thousand years, has rendered him an adept, and, for the last time, he goes out to “deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.” The reign of Jesus has been marked by peace, plenty, and prosperity, and all, outwardly, have owned the Lord, but not every heart really, for we saw, on a previous occasion, in Psalms, 18:44, and 66:3, that “the sons of the stranger shall lie.” While the manifest glory of Christ is irradiating the earth, they are quiet. So long as Satan—the prime mover of all evil—is off the scene, men are apparently not prompted to disobey, but, at this point, it would seem, that the Lord retires from the earth, veils His glory again, for a moment, and Satan is

let loose. And what does he find? Alas! Gog and Magog, ready to his hand, and he will “gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.”

These hosts must not be confounded with the Gog and Magog, of Ezekiel 38 and 39, the old historic enemy of Israel—the Assyrian. They appear, and fall before the millennium, whereas, what is given us here, is post-millennial. Those pre-millennial hordes came only from Russia, and contiguous Eastern countries, but here, they come from “the four quarters of the earth.” Satan brings from east, west, north, and south, against Palestine, all that are opposed to the Lord Jesus Christ. He easily manages again to “deceive the nations.” It is his old business. He was a deceiver from the beginning, and he carries his character right on to the close (verses 3, 8, 10). This is the last trial of man, a needed trial, because the natural heart had not been tested, where all spoke of Christ; and present blessing—long life on the earth—was the part of those, who owned a visible, glorious Christ. To have been unfaithful to Him then, meant to be cut off (Isa. 65:20). There was nothing to tempt them. But, alas, not even having seen Christ, basked in the sunshine of His glory, and enjoyed the fruits thereof, can secure the heart of man—mere, natural man. He is not to be depended on, and falls as soon as tempted. God they could not finally enjoy in that state, as proved by the ready way they fall into Satan’s hands. It is the final effort of man, led on by Satan, to get rid of God from His own earth. This concludes man’s history in responsibility. His last act is rebellion, even as his first (Gen. 3:11).

“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the

beloved city" (ver. 9). The saints spoken of here are clearly the millennial saints, those who had been on earth, in the enjoyment of the love of the Saviour, through that thousand years. Attacked by the enemy, they are, apparently, left to be surrounded by their foe. They are tested, not only by seduction, but by violence—Satan's two great weapons with man. Had the Lord appeared visibly, Gog and Magog would, doubtless, not have come up, but the thoroughness of the trial, proves the faithfulness of the saints, who refuse Satan's seductions. The attack of the foe is once more upon the land, from which the eye of the Lord has never been withdrawn. Against that land the enemy goes up, determined, if possible, once more to sweep away the testimony to God, and His Son. Jehovah has been universally worshipped, and owned, and Jerusalem, "the beloved city," has been the very metropolis of the new earth, according to Isaiah 65:17, 18. The enemy comes up against the metropolis, and we read, "Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." The last open revolt of man upon earth, in time, is judged, by God, in the most solemn way possible. Fire from heaven devours them. What an excessively solemn thing!

Nothing, even on the new earth, but being converted to God will do for man. Not even a thousand years of displayed glory, prosperity, peace, and blessedness, under the reign of Jesus, will touch his heart, and, at the end of the thousand years, if the Lord retire, and Satan reappear, what material does the enemy find, of which to compose his hosts? It is only too true, that find, or put man, where you will, unless he be the subject of absolute grace, there is nothing in his heart but downright opposition to God. Affecting thought,

opposition to God! Yes, my friends, opposition to God. If you are not a converted man, you are opposed to God. Till God, in His grace, converted me, over thirty years ago, I was opposed to Him. If you had then told me that plain, solemn, truth, in an unvarnished style, I have no doubt I should have been angry, but the truth would have been the same. “The carnal mind is enmity against God” (Rom. 8:7), and, “The friendship of the world is enmity with God” (Jas. 4:4). One sees here the end of it all, that unless grace has really touched the heart, what it is, in its hidden springs, is sure to be made apparent, as in this final, and unsurpassingly solemn, exhibition of enmity against God.

But the patience of God is exhausted, and fire—always the figure, in Scripture, of God’s judgment—comes down from heaven, and destroys Gog, and Magog. Thus they perish, but for their leader, untouched by this divine judgment, is reserved a worse fate, for “the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and of brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (ver. 10). Thus God describes the final disposal, and overthrow, of His, and man’s adversary. I know that pretty flights of fancy, about Satan’s rule in hell, have been indulged in, and we have heard the phrase, “Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven,” but do you think he really reigns in hell? I believe, that if there be one being, more miserable than another, in the lake of fire, for all eternity, Satan is that one. Therefore I say to you, most affectionately, do not, as you value your being, as you value eternity, as you value your immortal, precious soul, be his companion. There is only one way in which you can ensure not being his companion—it is by being

the companion of Christ. If you are going to be the companion of Christ, in eternal glory, you must know the love of the Lord Jesus Christ in your earthly pathway. Whether you are a converted person yet I do not know. If you never have been, let me beseech you to turn to the Lord now. Bow to the Saviour now, because the day is coming, when you must bow to that blessed One. Here God describes the end of the one, who has deceived man from first to last,—he is "tormented day and night for ever." The fate of his companions is no better. Do not then, I beseech you, be his companion.

Now the Spirit of God carries us beyond the limits of time. Every earthly enemy of God has been judged. The last foe, in that sense, has been dealt with by the hand of the Lord, and we come to a moment of unspeakable solemnity. "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them" (ver. 11). Observe, the heaven, and the earth, fly from the face of Him, that sits on the throne, and I may ask, Who is it that sits there? Scripture leaves us in no doubt as to that point. It is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ. The One, who fills that throne, is without doubt the Son of Man. Have you any doubt about the point? Let us hear what Scripture says. In John 5 you will find to whom is committed the judgment. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (ver. 22). Again: "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man… Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they

that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (verses 26-29).

Nothing can be plainer than, that it is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is going to be the judge. All judgment is committed to the Son. Nay more, He is given authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Why, because He is the Son of Man? Because He has come into the scene where man is a sinner, under judgment, and He, who has come into this scene—the blessed Son of God—became man, a man on whom death had no claim, absolutely, and perfectly holy. He it is, that, by-and-by, is to be the judge. And another reason, too. Man took occasion, so to speak, by the humiliation of the Lord Jesus—for He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant—to put Him yet lower. They cast Him out, and preferred a robber, and a murderer to the Saviour. And what is God's answer to this? "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, and earthly, and infernal beings, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:9-11), As man, He is worthy to receive, and shall receive, what he can claim as God, in Isa. 45:23 All judgment is committed unto the Son, but He has to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Some one may, however, say, Shall we not all be called out, by-and-by, together, to stand before the Lord? No, the Word of God is very plain, and in this 5th chapter of John, we find that the character of the resurrection is different. There is the "resurrection unto life," and the "resurrection unto judgment,"—the resurrection unto blessing, and the

resurrection unto sorrow. We have already seen, this evening, that there is an interval of a thousand years, between these two resurrections. The first resurrection —and blessed and holy is he that hath part in it—is before the thousand years, but “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”

In Acts 17 we also see that the Lord Jesus is distinctly marked out, as the One who will be the judge, inasmuch as God “hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (ver. 31). Another scripture is found in 2nd Timothy: “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (4:1). He judges the quick—the living —before the millennium, and the dead, at the end thereof. Mark, it is the very last act of the kingdom, this solemn work of judging the dead. You have doubtless observed, that in the 5th chapter of John, to which I have alluded, the Lord Jesus speaks of two hours: “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (ver. 25). That is the hour of blessing, the hour of grace, and salvation, the hour in which the Son of God is now calling men to come to Himself. That hour began with Jesus’ life ministry, and goes on up to this moment. It is the hour in which men are getting saved; but that hour is coming to a close, for He adds immediately: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming” {not now, is) “in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto

the resurrection of judgment" (verses 28, 29). The first hour has lasted for nearly two thousand years, but I am persuaded the moment is drawing near, when, to use a figure, the hour-glass is going to be turned. The hour of grace, and life giving, is rapidly drawing to a close, and the next thing is, the setting in of the hour of judgment. Oh, my friend, get ready, believe on the Lord Jesus, get to know the Lord, be decided for Him, for, if you are not one of those, who have part in the first resurrection, then you must have your part, in that which comes out here, at this great white throne.

Jesus sits upon that throne. He, who is now the Saviour, must then be the Judge. God has put all authority into His hand, once pierced for our sins, and He there sits, and wields the sword. The throne is called "great" because of the dignity of the One who fills it. It is called "white" because of the absolute purity of the judge. Everything must be according to the unsullied holiness of the nature, of Him who sits upon the throne. Now observe—"I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them." People have sometimes spoken of this as the Lord's second coming to the earth. But observe, there is no coming at all here. Why? Because there is no earth to come to. Heaven and earth have fled away, consequently the Lord Jesus must have come to earth, before this epoch, or He can never come at all. Evidently time is no more, and the relation of man to the earth, as it now is, ended. Hence, there is no thought of any coming here. Nay, heaven and earth flee from the face of Him, who sits on that throne, so solemn, so appalling, is the sight.

But, let us see, what takes place at that moment. You may get fuller light by listening to what St Peter has to say. “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up” (2 Pet. 3:10). God has but one way of purifying this sin-stained earth, and it is by fire. It will be a terrible day, indeed, when “the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.” How it will be caused, it is not for me to say, but you all know that we live on the crust of a ball, whose interior consists of molten material, and flame. Whether God will let these mighty forces of nature then come into play, is for Him to decide, but all that Scripture says is this, “the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.” So that, on the mightiest monuments of man’s skill, and ingenuity, faith sees written in indelible characters, the words, “Reserved unto fire” (2 Pet. 3:7). It will be an awful day for the man who is not saved. This thought, therefore, leads the apostle to add: ”Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” This last clause, you observe, is repeated, that there might be no mistake whatever, as to the way in which God will cleanse the earth, and the heavens too. “Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:12-13). What Peter says he looks for, John writes that he saw. “We look for new heavens and a new earth,” says Peter; but says John, “I saw a new heaven and a

new earth," and you will find all about them in the 21st chapter of Revelation. Peter reveals them disappearing, in flame, and smoke, and John shows them reappearing, in all the beauty of the new creation, for eternity.

Jesus sits, then, on that great white throne, the earth and the heaven flee from His face, and now there comes a moment, unparalleled in its solemnity, in the history of men. "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." It is the closing moment of the second hour of the 5th of John. Is there any resurrection of the blessed here? Clearly not; they have been already raised more than a thousand years, and taken part in the millennial reign. The two resurrections are separated, as to time, by at least one thousand years, but they are separated more than that, by their utterly different character. "They that have done good" have already come forth "unto the resurrection of life." If the Lord came this evening, every sleeping believer would be so raised. But what about the unbelievers? They are left for this day—left for the "resurrection unto judgment" here, before the great white throne. It is a judgment of persons, not deeds, though they be judged according to their deeds—a judgment only of unbelievers—and though standing before the throne, they are all spoken of as "dead." They have been delivered from the grip of the first death, only to taste the second death, hence, they are still called dead.

"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before the throne, and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life" (ver. 12). It is an assize; there is no hurry, there is no haste; and I may say more, if you stand there, you will have no advocate then, you will have no barrister to plead your case; further,

you will have no plea. These dead—who are they? Those who have lived in sin, died in their sins, been buried in their sins, and now they are raised in their sins. Clearly they are raised in the body, but raised for judgment. But shall not we all be there? No, dear fellow-Christian, you will not be there—not a believer will be there. Nowhere, in Scripture, do we read of a general resurrection, and a general judgment. Not for ten thousand worlds, ten millions times told, would I be, in the class here described, for all are lost. If you are an unconverted sinner, you are in imminent danger of being in that class. Let me affectionately urge you now to step over the boundary line, from the power of Satan to God, and yield your heart to Jesus the Saviour, lest you have to stand before Him, as the Judge, in that day.

“The books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Observe that. Will the Christian’s place in heavenly glory be determined by his works? No, God forbid. We get that place, through grace, on the ground of the death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ for us, as poor sinners. There is, on the other hand, no doubt that we shall appear before the Lord (2 Cor. 5:10), and our position, in the kingdom of Christ, will differ, according to the character of our earthly service to the Lord, since we have known Him as our Saviour, but that is a different thing altogether. Here they are judged according to their works. The ground of judgment is twofold—positive and negative. Their works witness against them, and their names are not found in the book of life. Ah, is there not a single word to be said in favour of those trembling wretches that stand before

the throne? Is there not one word of extenuation in favour of yon trembling, guilty, sin-stained company of unbelieving souls, from Cain downwards, that have come forth—yea, been compelled to come from their graves—by the voice of the Son of Man, which they would not pay heed to, when He said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”? Not a syllable! They heeded Him not, in the day of grace, when He called them, to give them life, but they must heed, and obey Him, in the day when He calls them to judgment.

There will be no mistake then, because the books will show the truth. I do not know what your name may be. There may be ten thousand men, of the same name as yourself, but when the Lord puts His hand upon the book, it will be your book, and that of nobody else. What you are, what you have done, and not done, what you have been, the whole record of your life, will be there, and what a solemn record for a sinner, who dies now, in Gospel days, unconverted! Born in a Christian land, early sent to a Sunday school, perhaps “joined the Church” so called, but really loved the world, thought only of the world, put off repentance, and conversion, till a day that never came, never came to Christ, and at length, cut down, by some sudden judgment, at the hand of God, died, as you had lived, in your sins. As the book is opened, and the pages slowly turned over, on which is the record of your life, oh what an awful moment, for you, will it be, and if your blanched lips part, it will be but to confess—True, true. God have mercy on you, my friend, where you sit to-night, if you are still unsaved. By the blessings of the heavenly Gospel now pressed on you, and the certainty of coming judgment, I implore you

not to miss God's salvation, while it is offered now. Do not let this scene, of which Scripture speaks so solemnly, ever be enacted in your case. Why should it be? I beseech you, come to the Saviour as you are, in your sins, all shall be forgiven, and you will be among those—holy and blessed—that have part in the first resurrection. Come to the Saviour now, all shall be pardoned, and you may henceforth go on your way, a happy believer, serving the Lord, and, in the day of glory, be the recipient of a full reward at the hand of the blessed Lord.

But not so is it here. "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it." The sea, which has engulfed so many, and been the cause of the sorrow of such countless thousands, the sea must give up the dead in it. You may say, They have passed beyond the reach, and the ken of men. Quite true! How many a body has been brought to shore that nobody could identify, and how many have never been cast up. But God will be able to identify every one at that time, and the sea will cast him up, for God's identification, at the great white throne.

"And death and Hades delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Now what does God mean by that remarkable expression, "Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire"? Death held the body, Hades being the condition of the disembodied spirit; but then, as the wicked are brought to life again, Hades is no more inhabited in that sense, and Death no longer holds the body. They are no longer needed. They

are here personified, as the enemies of God, and man, and are thus cast into the lake of fire. Oh! pitiful doom of every unsaved soul, taken out of the first death, which sundered him from his fellows, to meet, and taste “the second death,”—eternal separation from God. We come here to the point where death is annulled. “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” That is fulfilled by the raising of the wicked dead.

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (ver. 15). This is a touching allusion to the wonderful grace of God, because the fact is, that if grace has not written our names in the Lamb’s book of life, we shall find ourselves along with the number judged according to their works. Nothing but sovereign grace will do for you, or for me. Another has well stated it thus4 ”Sovereign grace alone has saved according to the purpose of God. There was a book of life. Whosoever was not written there was cast into the lake of fire. But it was the finally closing, and separating scene for the whole race of men, and this world. And though they were judged every man according to his works, yet sovereign grace only had delivered any; and whosoever was not found in grace’s book was cast into the lake of fire. The sea gave up the dead in it; death and Hades the dead in them. And death and Hades were put an end to, for ever, by the divine judgment. The heaven and earth passed away, but they were to be renewed; but death and Hades never. There was for them only divine destruction and judgment. They are looked at as the power of Satan. He has the power of death, and the gates of Hades; and hence they are for ever destroyed judicially. They will never have power again. They are personified; but of course there is

no question of tormenting them, or of punishing them; when the devil himself is cast in, there is. But death was not then destroyed; for the wicked dead had not been raised for judgment. Now they had, and the last enemy is destroyed. The force of the image, I doubt not, is that all the dead now judged (the whole contents of Hades, in whom the power of death had been), were cast into the lake of fire, so that death and Hades, which had no existence but in their state, were entirely and judicially ended, by their being cast in. The saints had long since passed out of them, but they subsisted in the wicked. Now these were, consequent on the judgment of the white throne, cast into the lake of fire—the second death. The limit and measure of escape was the book of life."

The Spirit of God now opens up eternity—the end of all God's dealings with men. The final destiny of all unsaved souls, has come before us—they are apportioned the lake of fire. I know many may say to me, I do not believe that. Beloved friends, I do believe it, for when God says, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," He means what He says. God never tells lies, although men may. When He speaks, He speaks solemnly, and truly. But turn now and see how beautiful is that which follows, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (21:1). A few verses before, John saw them fleeing away from the face of the Lord, now he sees them coming out, in all the radiance, and blessedness of this ever new, because eternal, condition of matters—"a new heaven and a new earth." Here you have them, just as the Christian will appear, by-and-by, in a real body—the resurrection body. What sort of body I do not know, but I know my body will

undergo a wonderful change, for it will be “a spiritual body.” In the same way, I take it, God carries the heaven, and the earth, through that scene of fire, and they come out “new”—in a new character—altogether suited to, and fitted for God, with every trace of the serpent’s trail, and man’s sin, removed from them. They come out “a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Now, righteousness suffers, in the millennial day it reigns, but in the eternal day it dwells happily, it is quite at home. “I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.” This is not what Isaiah alludes to (65:17). His new heavens, and new earth, are only new, in a moral sense, as suiting the millennium, and the sea also exists, for he speaks of “the isles afar off,” but here, every bit of the new earth is seen, brought into relationship with every other part, for “there was no more sea.” This would be impossible, as things now are, for man’s life. Of course, there must then be a wonderful change in the character of our life, because, as things now exist, we could not get on without the sea. It is the great reservoir, from whence comes the moisture, that is necessary for man, and the earth.. I do not know what the change will be, but God brings out here, that which is very simple, and plain, and which faith delights to contemplate, “a new heaven, and a new earth, and no more sea,” God, if I might so say, in the new scene, will efface everything, that could bring to memory, the sorrows of man’s heart down here.

“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Last Lord’s Day evening we

were occupied in looking at this holy city—the Bride—the Church. Then we saw that she was merely descending from heaven, towards earth, but now she comes right down to earth, because the. new earth is divinely suited to this heavenly city. Look how she comes out? In the 19th chapter we saw the marriage of the Lamb, to His Bride, on the nuptial day, preparatory to the millennial reign. But now John sees her coming down, out of heaven, at the end of the thousand years. And how does she look? I have seen a good many brides in my day, and I have met them a few years after, and what furrows are on the brow, what cares evident on the countenance, and how soon grey hairs have appeared. A very few years will do it, in this scene down here. But what does John see? He sees, coming down from heaven, her, who has been the Lamb's wife, for one thousand years, and she looks as bright, and as beautiful, and as fresh, as the day she went up. Not a grey hair, not a wrinkle, can be seen; her condition is what I may call perennial joy. No change can ever be, thank God. The Christian is going to fixed happiness, and unchangeable blessedness with Christ. This is all told out in the lovely words, "coming down … as a bride adorned for her husband." "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." The moment has come when God takes up His place, upon this earth, in happy relationship with men—not paying them a visit, as He did to Adam, in the garden of Eden, but tabernacling with them, and the tabernacle is the Church, the assembly, the body of Christ, those who are, through grace, now united to the blessed Lord.

Observe, it is not now a question of nations—of Jews and Gentiles—distinctions which had to do with time, and are now all gone by. It is God dwelling with men, as being their God, and therefore, for that reason, in these first eight verses of Revelation 21, where you have eternity brought in, you have no mention of the Lamb. Jesus as the Lamb does not appear here. His mediatorial kingdom is over. It is all God—God is all in all. The moment, of which 1st Corinthians 15 speaks, has arrived: “Then cometh the end when he gives up the kingdom to him who is God and Father; when he shall have annulled all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign until he put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that is annulled is death. For he has put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he Says that all things are put in subjection, it is evident that it is except him who put all things in subjection to him. But when all things shall have been brought into subjection to him, then the Son also himself shall be placed in subjection to him who put all things in subjection to him, that God may be all in all” (N.T., 1st Cor. 15:24-28).

The blessed Saviour has already reigned, as man, over a renewed earth, and a thousand years have gone by; the righteous are blessed, the wicked are judged, and every foe subdued. And what now? He surrenders His earthly kingdom, and thenceforward is Himself subject. We know, there never was a king in this world, that did not lose his crown, and his kingdom, either by some usurper stepping in, or by death sweeping him off, sooner, or later; but here is a king, who, after a reign of a thousand years, takes the crown from His brow, as man, and gives up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father. He who does this is God, but He has been a man, and while we

joyfully remember, that His essential deity ever remains untouched, what we learn is, that Jesus passes into the eternal state as man, and He will never cease to be a man, and you and I, beloved fellow-believers, are going to be with Him for ever. God Himself—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—shall tabernacle with men, they, as delighted to have God's company, as He to be with them. Blessed moment, that God has ever looked on to, and that faith looks on to now! Then see what follows. "And he shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Oh how familiar you and I are with these terms. I see many dressed, in deepest mourning, as I speak, and you sorrowfully rejoin, Death has come into my house, and robbed me of the one that I loved best. Thank God, there shall be no more death, no more pain. Man's history on earth is all expressed in these four words—death, sorrow, crying, and pain, but then "the former things are passed away."

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."

Extremely beautiful are the verses that follow, as though God saw, that the description would make the soul, that heard about it, for the first time, desire to be a participator in that blessed scene. He therefore weaves in the Gospel, in the loveliest way possible, as He now says—"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that over-cometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall

be my son." He gives the water of life! Yes, but more than that. I will give of the fountain, I will take you up to the source of it—my own heart. He that overcometh, who is that? The man that turns to Christ, and believes in the Lord, that turns his back, through grace, on all the deception, and guile, through which he is passing, and sets himself to follow the truth. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:5) Will not Satan hinder you? Of course he will. He puts countless obstacles in every man's way, before he gets life, and blessing. But God would cheer, and encourage, and stimulate the believing soul, so He adds, "He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Blessed promise!

And now we reach the most solemn "But" in all Scripture, as the Spirit of God gives a categorical description of those who, alas, are not blessed. "But the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (ver. 8).

I should like, as I close, to ask you this,—If God sent down, from heaven to-night, an angel, with the commission, to visit Edinburgh, and write on his tablet the names, or the characters of the persons, who most surely, by-and-by, will be in the lake of fire, where Would he begin? Do you fancy that that angel's visit would be to the slums of naked sin, or to the scenes of debauchery, that are, alas, too common? Nay, he would not begin his list there. And if he came into this hall, would the man, who is most sure to be in the lake of fire,

be a notorious sinner? No! the list of the lost here commences with this,—“the fearful,” the person who is afraid to confess Christ. Now, there is many a person in this hall to-night, who is not a murderer, an idolater, or a liar—nay, he is a person of a good character, but, up to this hour, never has he boldly confessed Jesus, as his Lord, and Saviour. I call your earnest attention to this, that it is the fearful, the timid, and the cowardly, the person who is afraid to come out for Jesus, whose name is first given in this list of the lost.

If, my friend, you have been a timid person, until this hour, may God, by His grace, drive out your timidity, by the sense of His love. When you have got in your heart the sense that the Lord loves you, then your fear of owning Jesus will all go. I tell you what it is, there is nothing grander, or brighter, or more blessed, under the sun, than to be a Christian, and if you have not been a Christian, up to this hour, you have missed a grand opportunity. But, thank God, you have still time, and I say, now turn to Him, drink of the living water, believe His grace, and then go on your way rejoicing. Then I shall meet you in glory. I shall never meet you in hell, mind that. I shall not be there through grace. I charge you, beloved friends, meet me yonder with Jesus, meet me in the air, when the Saviour comes.

We have only now to wait, and watch for Him. He is coming for us, coming out from heaven, the Bright and Morning Star, who will take us up to be for ever with Himself. The Lord keep us waiting, and watching for Him, and serving Him, till He come, for His own precious, and blessed name’s sake 4 Loc. cit.. (p. 612)