

DEVELOPMENT OF ANTICHRIST

by Andrew Bonar

Bonar's study tracing the historical and prophetic development of the spirit of antichrist, examining how Scripture predicts the progressive unfolding of opposition to Christ culminating in the final Antichrist.

7 Chapters

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Development of Antichrist

Preface

The principle of interpreting the prophetic portions of Holy Scripture as literally as the historical is recognized throughout the following pages, and it is upon this ground alone that the writer builds his hope of escaping a charge of presumption in submitting them for consideration, as he has ventured to do. They are meant to be a protest against the confusion which has been introduced by metaphorical indulgences, and not as an additional fancy to increase the bewilderment felt by many who, like himself, are honestly seeking to know the truth of what concerns us all so deeply.

The rule laid down is that Scripture language is to be taken literally in every instance where the context does not, clearly and unmistakably, show it to be metaphorical. There surely is nothing unreasonable in such a position, and if there were, it is for those who dispute to prove it so and also to define, with equal distinctness, the principle on which they would proceed, showing, to begin with, why words occurring in one part of Scripture are to bear a different construction from what they do in another.

We have its own authority for saying that in it are things "hard to be understood," and a knowledge of this may well deter any from dogmatizing upon details; but can it be said that this is to interfere with the principle of a literal interpretation itself or the leading deductions which, if words have any meaning at all, follow inevitably from it? Can it really be deliberately believed that God's Word is so darkly and unintelligibly expressed as to have left the prophetic portion of it an open field for every wild and unbridled speculator to enter upon, or that men may venture to assign to terms occurring there a meaning altogether different from what truth and soberness assign to them elsewhere?

If the great enemy of all truth can no longer bury prophetic truth, as till of late years he has pretty nearly succeeded in doing, it would seem as if his efforts were now directed to deluge the world with false suggestions, so as to bewilder and perplex men's minds, and it would therefore be well for us to recall, in the deceivableness of our days, how our Lord Himself met the delusions in His. Was it not by a constant and consistent appeal to the inspired literality of Scripture? "It is written," was His answer, and it is to the same refuge His followers must betake themselves, if they would escape the increasing confusion in which the neglect of this great principle is involving prophetic as well as all other Scripture investigation.

That prophetic study, in an especial degree, should have been attended with so little practical benefit, might well of itself create a suspicion that the prevailing system has been, and is intrinsically wrong. By it the inquiry has been directed chiefly, as it would seem, to gratify a vain curiosity as to dates, etc. on which it was not to be expected any blessing could rest: nor indeed has it rested nor will rest, until the same consistent principle of fulfillment, recognizable in prophecies declared by Scripture itself to have been already fulfilled, is acted upon in respect to those that are not.

But besides all this, let us bear in mind there is something else to be attended to. Our principle may be right, and yet there be no practical benefit to ourselves individually from the study after all.

The question is not how much we are interested or how correct our conclusions may be, but how are we profiting by the disclosure we shall find of such terrible, and, at the same time, such glorious realities as the "sure word of prophecy" declares to be coming upon the earth? Without a corresponding result on our life and conversation, we are but trifling with this as with other Scripture, for all there is bound up in indissoluble harmony together, prophecy as well as doctrine being alike declared to be profitable for our correction and instruction in righteousness (see 2 Timothy 3:16) by the same inspiration which has taught and commanded us to "search the Scriptures," without separating them as we have been doing.

The different portions, when so taken, will be found to be all in explanation and support of each other, whilst the comfort given by an assurance of ultimate triumph will indeed be found distinctly helping God's people into a "patient waiting," as the knowledge imparted will keep them from being "shaken in their minds," if not altogether overborne by those things which, as they will see, are coming upon the earth.

Leamington, November 1852.

Chapter 1. The Personality of Antichrist

Christians are called to tread nowhere with greater circumspection than when dealing with unfulfilled prophecy, and it is owing to want of due caution here that so many a humble inquirer has been left, amidst the confusion that is within and ridicule without the Church, in painful uncertainty as to what his duty in regard to the prophetic portion of Scripture really is. The things there, "hard to be understood," have been so twisted and perplexed by each enthusiast in pursuit of his own favorite theory of interpretation, as seemingly to have left the whole question of what is fulfilled and what is not, more doubtful and unsettled than ever, and hence with many, a not unnatural doubt has arisen as to whether it might not be better to leave the whole subject alone.

But against the propriety of such a decision the natural thought will arise, if no practical benefit was intended for the church from the study, why does what is confessedly prophetic occupy so large a portion of that sacred volume which all are enjoined to "search" (John 5:39), and how comes it that there should be a distinct blessing to him who readeth and understandeth the prophecy of this Book? Why should the example of such an one as Daniel be recorded with approval (Dan. 9:2-3), who set himself by prayer and supplication to understand by books the number of the years? Or that such advantage should be indicated to those of God's people who give heed to the sure word of prophecy, as of a light shining in a dark place (2 Peter 1:19)?

And farther, are we not presented with a tangible proof of such advantage having actually been secured to those, who in faith of prophecies recorded, were waiting for and expecting such events as marked the first coming of the Messiah, and the destruction thereafter of Jerusalem when they should see it "compassed by armies," as they did at the approach of Titus, so escaping in Pella the calamities of that terrible overthrow?

Had each recorded prophecy been unquestionably already fulfilled in the church's past history, there might perhaps have been some excuse for those who stand back from the study. But when confessedly this is not the case, as shown amidst other things by the very discrepancies which exist among interpreters themselves, we cannot escape from a commanded duty unless prepared to forfeit the blessing with which the study of prophecy is distinctly connected.

Again, if that study is to have reference (as some would have it) only to the past, how is it that Scripture itself says concerning it, "ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise"? Surely it cannot be said that this has reference to the past, for even our own senses will lead us, when journeying home in a dark night, to observe the lights before us more anxiously than those we have passed. "Ye do well that ye take heed," is the simple and sufficient reply to those who counsel us, because of the perplexity in which men have involved the subject, to leave it henceforth alone, whilst at the same time the failures of the past ought no less to make us cautious as to how, in future, we allow ourselves to take so many unproved assertions for granted.

In prophecies already fulfilled (such as those relating to our Lord's first advent—the crucifixion, etc.), there is one striking characteristic to which we would do well to attend, as about it there can be no difference of opinion. It is this, that in whatever way men might previously have been regarding the prediction, and however their fancy might have wandered as to what it might mean, when the fulfillment took place it was distinctly found that Scripture had been speaking literally, as shown by a literal accomplishment. Alas! for the expositors of our day if their declarations are to be tried by that rule. Who among us would, for a moment, place the satisfactory simplicity of past fulfillments on a level with those which we are called to consider as over and gone already, by the easy and fanciful system in fashion now?

It is a dangerous thing to underrate the extent of Satan's agency in the world, raising as he has ever done from the day of his first perversion and misinterpretation of God's words in the garden of Eden, mists of delusion and error to distort or conceal what God intended His people should be aware of for their warning as well as for their comfort. He knows well in our day that his time is fast shortening, and he knows too of the increasing power he is to be permitted to exercise in the time of the end (Rev. 12:12; and 13:2).

So whilst the "sure word of prophecy," if given heed to, would have been and still be "a light" shining in the dark passages through which the course of events is leading, his efforts have been constantly and successfully directed to darken and perplex the future, by hiding the simplicity of the truth under fanciful coverings, and so leading even God's people to be looking in wrong directions, that, if possible, they may be deceived or overthrown, even as His ancient people themselves were, when the issue itself is really at hand.

The idea of a personal literal Antichrist is what he seems especially to have sought to render ridiculous, or rather, to banish altogether, in these days which to all appearance so closely precede his being revealed: and yet if such an embodiment of evil (as it is desired to show) is really to be, to what ought the attention of the church be directed more seriously than to this? The fanciful and metaphorical interpreters already referred to, have worked hard to make the pope or the papacy (it is difficult sometimes to know which) answer the description given in Scripture of the man of sin when he is seen. Some plausibility has been given to their attempts by the occurrence of certain points of resemblance, for all forms of error and evil will be found summed up in the embodiment which is to be at the end, "when the transgressors are come to the full" (Dan. 8:23). But the great and distinguishing marks themselves are not, and will not be seen till he who is to carry them all is revealed.

One of these has been specially defined by inspiration, "he is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22), which it is vain to say that either the pope or the papacy have ever done. On the contrary it is sufficiently evident to any one who is not determined to deny it at all hazards, that their whole strength to deceive and rule as they have done, has rested on the (wicked and unfounded) assumption that the pope is the vicar of God upon earth. His bulls have accordingly been issued in the name of the Holy Trinity, which so far from denying, he claims to represent.

If he is worshipped, as asserted, it is simply and undeniably by those who believe him to be what he pretends he is, the authorized representative of the God Whom both they and their pope himself profess to worship. Is this not manifest when, at his death, like the meanest of his

followers, he has to be prayed out of purgatory to fit him to appear in the presence of Him Whose representative he was held to have been on earth, where nevertheless he had personally been contracting sin like others? So far from denying either the Father or the Son, each pope in succession has professed to derive expressly from Them the usurped authority so fearlessly and fearfully exercised.

Again, if the pope or the papacy be the beast, as maintained by that class of expositors, according to Revelation 13:8, all must be worshipping him whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb slain. In other words, Antichristianism in that case, would simply be limited to those who adhere to the pope, with the unavoidable conclusion that such professed atheists as Hume, Gibbon, and Thomas Paine, who showed as little faith in his as in any other name, were written in the book of that adorable Redeemer Whom nevertheless they blasphemed!

Moreover, if the pope is the beast, as it is pretended he is, and all the world wondering after him, his followers to accord with Scripture (Rev. 13:3-4) must be, without mistake worshipping the dragon (who is elsewhere declared to be the devil—Revelation 20:2) as giving to him the power he possesses. But surely, however misled we may think them to be, none among us will venture to affirm that either as a community or individually, papists do this, which would evidently imply a state of hopeless reprobation.*

*(1 Corinthians 10, showing that where idols are worshipped devils are, is not overlooked. All we mean to assert is, that fearful as the delusions of the papacy as a system are, papists individually cannot be said to worship the devil, as men in the end will avowedly do under Antichrist, to whom they see him giving his power and authority— Revelation 13:4).

To escape from such a conclusion, all that can be said must resolve itself into this, that the precise language of Scripture referred to does not mean what it says, for there is not even a place for repentance left to them inasmuch as it is written, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented" for ever and ever (Rev. 14:9-10).

It must not, however, be imagined that there is with all this, the slightest intention here of insinuating anything in favour of the pope and his false and impious pretensions. From the days of the apostles there have been "many antichrists" in the world, as we learn from one of the very passages which tells us (1 John 2:18) that "The Antichrist shall come." And among these the pope and the papacy must take their place, not only as forbidding men, in opposition to God's command, to "search the Scriptures," which testify of Christ (John 5:39), but as having introduced doctrines and commandments which are contrary to His honor and subversive of His alone mediation as well as sufficiency for the sin of the whole world. To lift a man in one way or other into the place and honor which Christ alone should possess, is the grand aim of antichristianism in all its different states and degrees.

A family likeness is therefore to be traced through them all, to be more strongly marked, perhaps, in the last days, which are so strikingly referred to in 2 Timothy 3:1-13, when evil men and seducers are to wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, and when as we learn

elsewhere (Dan. 8:23-25), transgressors having come to the full, "a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power;* and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace (prosperity) shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes."

*(It is hoped as we proceed to be able to show that the king here spoken of is identical with the beast who acts "not in his own power" but by that of the devil, whom all the world worships, as giving "power to the beast" (Rev. 17:13), that identity being proved by there being one act, one era, and one destruction common to these among the other names which are given to the Antichrist as characteristic of him.)

The personality of the Antichrist here contended for is no speculative theory to be adopted or rejected as suits our own fancy and about which each may form his own opinion. A very slight examination, particularly of the original, will show that so strongly is that personality declared, as to leave it as little optional with us to overlook it, as it is to deny that of the devil who will give him his great power and authority. It was evidently the belief of the early church, whilst the passages in Scripture which speak of him, if honestly taken, distinctly show that none else than a person can be meant.

He is called (and if any will examine the original, they will see how markedly it is there expressed), "that man of sin, . . . the son of perdition" who "sitteth in the temple of God"* (2 Thess. 2:3-4), the wicked or lawless one (verse 8), "the Antichrist" (above the many who will have preceded him) (1 John 2:18 and 22), "a king" and "the king" (Dan. 8:23 and 11:36), who does "according to his will," "the idol shepherd" who tears the flesh (Zechariah 11:17), he who is to open "his mouth in blasphemy against God" (Rev. 13:6), and who is to be "cast alive into the lake of fire" (Rev. 19:20).

*("The temple of God" is an expression applied in Scripture to three things, and three only. (1) to the actual temple at Jerusalem, as in 2 Chronicles 35:20. (2) to the bodies of individual saints, as in 1 Corinthians 6:19. (3) to the Church of God, as in 1 Corinthians 3:17. Now it is manifestly impossible that Antichrist could "sit" in any but the first of these three, and the coinciding mark given by Daniel of the "glorious holy mountain" [Mount Zion being alone called so], where he is to plant himself, confirms it to be a fact which can have no accomplishment at Rome [as alleged], inasmuch as neither the temple nor mountain are or ever have been there, any more than they can be elsewhere than at Jerusalem—the holy city. Is it not strange to see Protestants so bent on their fancy of the pope being Antichrist, as not to perceive they give up the whole question by calling St Peter's at Rome "the temple of God"? For if the pope is the Antichrist, how can they call his temple at Rome or anywhere else "the temple of God," when the exception, as we have seen, is only as to Jerusalem, where alone, of necessity, the usurpation in any circumstances could be, "in the holy place,"— "My holy hill of Zion")?

Under other names which as remarked already will be found applicable to him only, his personality is as distinctly intimated on every occasion, and yet to suit preconceived notions and prejudices, terms nowhere else so interpreted are distorted to mean a "succession of men," or as others would have it, a "succession of principles," which are gradually to be consumed out of it as the world becomes converted. Why in the same way might not the third Person of the ever blessed

Trinity be held to mean merely a succession of influences or governing principles? How is it that Christians will not open their eyes to the danger of sanctioning what would make plain words of Scripture mean anything or nothing, and so give the enemy ground for questioning even the Personality of the Lord Who bought them, or else the alternative of hearing themselves taunted with inconsistency?

In addition to this greater danger to our holy religion itself, there is another springing from such loose interpretation of Scripture which is, that by suffering ourselves to be led into the hope of amelioration which is gradually to usher in the day of the Lord, we may mistake the "deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10) with which we are warned Antichrist will introduce himself, for the beginning of that reign of righteousness which will be established only when Christ "with the spirit of His mouth and . . . with the brightness of His coming" shall have destroyed and consumed him (2 Thess. 2:8).

It will be found in that day to have been no light matter to have been trifling with Scripture language, our tendency being to call evil good and good evil; while all Satan's art will be turned to conceal the real tendency as well as nature of his working from us. "That old serpent, which is the devil" (Rev. 20:2), will at the end as at the beginning, still prove himself more subtle than any beast of the field. His "working" will be in no shape to alarm the fears or shock men with its impropriety.

On the contrary, it will be suited to the spirit and requirements of the age, with a flexibility and power of insertion best resembled to the form which he assumed when tempting Eve in the garden. The gradual character of his approaches should rouse us to think, for "many antichrists" have been preparing the way for him ever since the apostle declared in his day that "the spirit of Antichrist" was already in the world (1 John 4:3).

The full development will surely follow when the apostasy and man of sin come to be. Meanwhile each successive step downwards seems in itself so trifling as scarcely to deserve our notice, which is in fact the danger. "Behold, I have told you before" (Matthew 24:25) is the caution given immediately after our Lord Himself had been warning of the especial deceivableness of the times which shall immediately precede His coming, when will be seen how vain and unwarranted was the fond conceit with which men had been pleasing themselves of any peaceful termination of present evil, which on the contrary, if we will but listen to Scripture, must "wax worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3:13) until the consummation takes place under the Antichrist, emphatically called as presiding over it, "that man of sin," in a trouble "such as was not from the beginning (foundation) of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21).

Regarding that last tribulation, it seems God's merciful design to have His church and people specially warned, so that it should not overtake them unawares any more than the day of the Lord which it is to precede, though both shall come as a snare upon all them that dwell on the face of the earth. Only admit the possibility of a future personal Antichrist (which, surely, it is not unreasonable to ask, after the Scripture terms that have been cited), and our Bibles will be found replete with allusions to such a being in this dispensation, with marks to distinguish him when he does come, from all that will have preceded him.

Is it objected that so evident a sign as he would be before the coming of Christ, would interfere with the injunction to "Watch, for ye know not the day nor the hour when your Lord cometh;" and to

that extent to put off the expectant and pilgrim character which befits those servants who profess to be waiting for their Lord? Hear the answer which such a passage as 2 Thessalonians 2 supplies. In it we have the church warned not to be shaken "as that the day of Christ is at hand," whilst the very same apostle who gives the warning, had just been telling them to "watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:6), for the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, — nay, what is more, a distinct intimation is given that that day should not come until the man of sin—this "son of perdition"— should be revealed.

The only seeming confusion arises from our overlooking the broad distinction drawn in the same epistle, between the children of darkness and the children of light (1 Thess. 5:4-5) —the one to be overtaken as by a thief in the night, the other to "know perfectly" the times and the seasons, inasmuch as "I told you these things" (2 Thess. 2:5).

Indeed, signs of the most definite character have been constantly vouchsafed to God's people in all ages, as now, to designate the advent of events previously foretold by His prophets. Yet these, though sufficiently distinct for their warning, are invariably seen to have been overlooked by all others. Noah's preaching, whilst the ark was preparing, did not alarm the scoffers of his day, or make them know "till the flood came and took them all away." And so with the scoffers in our own (2 Peter 3:3), will the coming of the Son of man be, although preceded by so signal an event as the revelation of the man of sin: a sign, nevertheless, to the children of light, for which already they would do well to be watching.

To be "seeking" a sign is a widely different thing from looking out for one already announced for warning. The sin and perverseness of seeking a sign is pointed out to us in such passages as Matthew 12:39 and Mark 8:11-12. To that evil and adulterous generation—children of darkness, and not of light, according to the distinction drawn in the epistle to the Thessalonians already referred to—no sign shall be given. And why? Because of their willful rejection of the signs God Himself had been pleased to vouchsafe. And mark the consequence when the false christs and false prophets appear, as appear they will (Mark 13:22), with signs and wonders to seduce if possible, the very elect though waiting for them.

Not only shall no sign be given to the despisers of Scripture warning, but God shall send them strong delusion to believe "the lie," that they all may be damned who believed not "the truth" (2 Thess. 2:11-12). How fearful the thought even of such a delusion! More fatal still than that in the days of Noah; for it is the delusion of him whose coming is to be after the working of Satan, and their end, like his, to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Rev. 19:20; 20:10).

If there be any truth in these remarks, enough, surely, has already been said to vindicate, in some degree to Christians at least, the uses as well as duty of prophetic study, whatever ridicule may be attaching to it. A study in which it will scarcely be possible to engage without, ere long, being forced to see that a personal "coming of the Lord" is to be undoubtedly expected, if words are to have any meaning at all, as well as a time of unequalled tribulation immediately to precede it (Matthew 24:29). And equally impossible will it be found to separate that tribulation from a personal Antichrist and the leading part he has in it, as the express agent for the putting forth of Satan's energy to accomplish what God will then permit him to do.

The apostle speaks, as has already been adverted to, of antichrists in his day, but the maturity of antichristian evil (every departure from the truth in Jesus being held as antichristian) is distinctly postponed till "that man of sin be revealed" —the lawless one who, after a permitted triumph, is to be destroyed by the "brightness of His coming."

It has been already noticed incidentally, that the notion of a personal literal Antichrist with a short-lived supremacy, was held by the early Christians, without, it is believed, any recorded exception. They were living too close to the times in which a strictly literal fulfillment had been seen of all the prophecies connected with our Lord's first coming in the flesh, to doubt that "the man of sin" in his times, would prove to be also literally a man, or the 1260 days of his usurpation literal days. It was reserved for a later generation, who had fallen under the cruelties of papal oppression, to fancy it to be the unequalled trouble and predicted apostasy of the last times, and even to alter the literal meaning of words to make it so.

It was about the year 1240, that Eberhard began to think the pope to be the "little horn," and that Luther and his companions in tribulation should have gone in with such imagination, seems far less wonderful than that so many in these days should still be arguing that he is the dreaded "man of sin," when the oppression and troubles Luther saw have long since ceased. The cessation alone ought to have proved to any not willfully blind, that the pope cannot be that man of sin under whom the tribulation is to be; for it is to be terminated, not as some would have it by the gradual decline of either the pope or the papacy, but by the coming of the Lord Himself to destroy the wicked one.

"Immediately (the word in the original is emphatic) after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth (land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29-30).

Those who adhere to the prevailing mode of figurative interpretation, regard all this as metaphorical language, maintaining that the sun and moon here mentioned, are political emblems. Thus they dispose of these solemn predictions of our Lord Himself, even when forced to admit that the same expressions in Scripture, when employed to describe past events, as at the crucifixion, did express what actually occurred and took place then and there. If the sun was darkened and the veil rent (Luke 23:45), surely it is worse than presumptuous to affirm that the same words applied to the future may have a totally different meaning.

"Yet once more (again),* I shake not the earth only, but also heaven," are the words of inspiration (Hebrews 12:26), and by the terms applicable alone to the same mighty occurrence foretold by our Lord Himself in the passage just transcribed from Matthew, which again can of necessity be none other than that "coming" by which He destroys Antichrist— that "man of sin," whom He will encounter, not in decrepitude like the pope, but whilst he is still aided by the devil "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders," and then fully manifested to be the lawless one opposing and exalting himself above all (2 Thess. 2:4).

*(This "once again" is alluded to in Isaiah 2, "when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (verse 21) which is distinctly to be, as the context will show in "the day of the LORD" (verse 12) when

every one that is lifted up (like Antichrist exalting himself) "shall be brought low").

If Christ then destroys the "man of sin" at His coming, the destruction must take place "immediately" after the tribulation described to be "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). This being so, the time spoken of must be identical with that of Daniel 12:1 and the events there recorded, inasmuch as there cannot be two distinct periods of unequalled tribulation; and this again identifies the king there described as exalting himself above every god and coming to his end and none to help him (Dan. 11:45), with "that man of sin" (2 Thess. 2) "the son of perdition" who is destroyed by "the brightness of His coming."

But who can pretend that there is any resemblance between such a desolation with such a destruction, and a pope powerless to do even what his predecessors did; nay, requiring the support of foreign troops to retain him on his feeble throne? Does it not appear something like mockery to say of such an one that the devil is giving him his power and great authority? Are men worshipping him and saying, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:4). Where are the ten kings who "receive power as kings one hour" with him, and who are said to have one mind, and agree to give him their power till the purposes of God are fulfilled (Rev. 17:12,13,17)?

They who call the pope the Antichrist admit he is also the beast, and yet can talk to us of the gradual diminution or drying up of his power, in face of what is written in Revelation 17, where, with the kings of the earth, he is seen in the plenitude of his power (and from what follows aided to the last by the devil), gathered to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army. Is it possible to think that the downfall there recorded is a gradual one? Every word in Revelation 19:20 indicates the reverse. It is sudden as it is overwhelming, for then is seen the strength of Christ, the "seed of the woman," put forth against him who is the seed of the serpent; the "head" bruised then as the "heel" has already been.

It is the strength of heaven against the strength of hell, and the catastrophe is complete. "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" (Rev. 19:20-21).

Such is the end, not of the pope or the papacy, but of an apostasy more terrible than all that has yet darkened this sin-worn earth. It is the recorded downfall of Gentile power then in unholy combination with Jewish, which alike cast off Christ as the rightful Lord, will have chosen a king of their own to the rejection of Him Who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And it is thus that his Name is seen written on His vesture and on His thigh (Rev. 19:16), as followed by the armies of heaven, He comes to claim His kingdom from the usurper.

How strange to see Christians willing, by figurative perversions like these, to set aside the glorious open triumph which will then be seen, and in which they themselves are to share, for an inconsistent attempt to make the pope in the decrepitude of these last times, personate him who aided by the devil and supported to the end, as we have seen, by the kings of the earth and their armies, encounters the armies of heaven and falls by the power of a Mighty One.

People tell us that although it may be different with him at this epoch from what it once was, the pope is reviving or will yet revive, and his efforts to recover his lost authority be yet successful. But this is indulging a mere fancy, for which there is not only no warrant in Scripture, but the reverse. The Antichrist, when he is seen, comes "in like a flood" (Isa. 59:19) and prospers (Dan. 8:12) without intermission, and this continuance is also characteristic of the adherence given by the kings of the earth and their armies, till they share his destruction.

There are other arguments, besides these which have been already produced, to show that the Antichrist when he does appear, will prove to be neither a succession of men nor a succession of principles, but what Scripture language, in its ordinary acceptation which we have no right to reject, tells us throughout he will be—an individual man. It is somewhat unfortunate that the definite article, which appears in the original, has been omitted in our translation of 1 John 2:18. It ought to run, Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that the Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists already in the world, whereby we know that it is the last time.

The many antichrists are thus forerunners of the Antichrist himself, and must of necessity therefore exhibit in some degree his characteristics; not the least remarkable of which (as attempted to be shown) are his personality, and also his rising out of an apostasy. In fact, many individuals have actually, from time to time, presented themselves to the notice of the world answering in various particulars the description we have of him in Daniel 11:36-40 and Revelation 13:5-8.

One of the most remarkable of these, to begin with, was Antiochus Epiphanes about 160 years before Christ, whose history is given by Josephus and also in the first chapter of the uninspired book of Maccabees, which although apocryphal, is of good repute as a history, and as such, respected by the Jews themselves.

Antiochus was the savage persecutor of the Jews in their latter times, as the Antichrist himself will be of both Jews and Christians, when, at the end, transgressors shall have come to the full. He followed or rather rose out of an apostasy then, as the Antichrist will be revealed out of the still more fearful "falling away" of which Paul speaks in 2 Thessalonians. A few extracts from the chapter of Maccabees referred to will show this, and help to give us some idea from what he did, of what the Antichrist himself will do in his times.

"In those days went there out of Israel wicked men who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow. So this device pleased them well. Then certain of the people were so forward herein that they went to the king who gave them license to do after the manner of the heathen. Whereupon they built a place of exercise at Jerusalem according to the custom of the heathen; and made themselves uncircumcised and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen."

Such is the account of that early apostasy, which may foreshadow more closely than many may be prepared to think, the "falling away" spoken of in Thessalonians. Following upon it, the enemy of the truth in that day appears as we go on to see, "after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt," (mark how Antichrist in his day will do the same, Dan. 11:42-45), "he returned again and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, and took away the golden altar and the candlestick of

light and all the vessels thereof, and the table of the shewbread and the pouring vessels and the vials and the censers of gold and the veils and the crowns and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all of which he pulled off, and when he had taken all away he went into his own land, having made a great massacre and spoken very proudly."

Moreover, we are told, "King Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people and every one should leave his laws; so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king; yea, many of the Israelites consented to his religion and sacrificed unto idols and profaned the Sabbath." Thereafter we find him doing what the Antichrist will yet do still more markedly in his day (Rev. 13:15-18), condemning all to be put to death who refused to "profane the Sabbath and pollute the sanctuary and the holy people, and to set up altars and groves of idols and sacrifice swine's flesh."

Then comes the identical expression quoted by our Lord from Daniel 168 years after Antiochus, showing his allusion was to something still future: "In the month Casleu he set up the abomination of desolation on the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Judah. And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire. Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved not to eat any unclean thing, and there was great wrath upon Israel."

Here we have one of the many antichrists whose doings wonderfully foreshadow what we read of the yet more terrible actings of him, to whom the devil will give his power and great authority; and who opens "his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven;" and to whom it is given "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power . . . over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," and whom all shall worship that dwell upon the earth whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb slain (Rev. 13:6-8).

Another individual Antichrist out of the many, was the apostate emperor Julian who tried to overthrow the church and bring back paganism. He too, like Antiochus, followed upon an apostasy (the Arian) which denied that Christ was God. (The Antichrist when he comes will do still more than this, for he will deny "the Father and the Son, exalting himself above all that is called God or is worshipped"). So grievous were his times, as history informs us, that the few devout and holy men who in them were testifying to the truth amidst abounding impiety, thought that Antichrist himself had come when Julian, his shadow, arose.

Another apostasy, which began by placing the traditions of man on a footing with the written word of God, introducing the worship of saints and images and assigning to the Virgin Mary an intercessory power, which holds back from the laity the Bible in which such things are forbidden, teaching, too, contrary to its requirements, a belief in purgatory, transubstantiation, justification by works, and such like doctrines of devils, has also been seen, with a person arising out of it too who claimed for himself and his successors, in the usurped place the popes have so long held, such power and authority as to entitle them to a place among the many antichrists that are in "the world."

The next great heresy which arose, the Nestorian, denied Christ's incarnation, and spreading widely in the lands round Palestine, succeeded in destroying the churches which had so long flourished there. It was out of that remarkable "falling away" that another personal Antichrist arose,

Mohammed, who, denying the Son altogether, proclaimed that there was but one God and that he was his prophet. It is well known how successful he has been with many of the Jews themselves in the East.

In France, before the revolution, another well-known "falling away" occurred, following upon the doctrines taught by Voltaire, etc., when a national decree was passed that death was a perpetual sleep. The scenes which followed show us what man will dare to do if left to himself, and also called forth another individual who came in like a flood and prospered.

In many particulars Napoleon Bonaparte, like his predecessors, showed the features of the Antichrist, flattering at first the system he found prevailing, whilst using it all the while to establish himself in power. In France accordingly he was a Roman Catholic, and in Egypt a worshipper of Mohammed, till finding himself, as by and bye Antichrist will do, fairly established, he dropped the deception under which he had entered, proclaiming himself the monarch and only source of authority. "La France! c'est moi," was the laconic way in which he announced it.

What the successor to his name and authority now appearing may be raised up to accomplish is yet to be seen, but already the tendency is clearly towards a still more extensive development of the clay-iron principle of government which is to prevail in both feet of the Image, before the ten toes of it are developed.

These instances should cause us to ponder well, when we read of a still future and more fearful "falling away" which, to distinguish it from others, in the original styled emphatically "the apostasy" (2 Thess. 2:3), with the revealing after or out of it of that man of sin, the son of perdition, who will oppose and exalt 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.

Why should we, in the face of such express language and with examples before us of bygone antichrists, still refuse to believe that the Antichrist who shall come (1 John 2:18) will be a person also? The Saviour Whom he will try to counterfeit as well as supplant, appeared in a literal as well as a mystical body. And Antichrist will not want his either. All who practice, encourage, or support corruptions, are properly of Antichrist's mystical body, exhibiting his spirit which is already working in the children of disobedience; and when the number, perhaps a determined one, is filled up, they will be manifested as displaying the genuine fruits of complete apostasy from the truth which is in Jesus; when transgressors are come to the full under a personal Antichrist, even as Christ's Church, which is His mystical body (Col. 1:24), will appear under Him when the fullness of time has come and its numbers complete. So that as the perfection of truth is manifested in Him and His body the Church, the perfection of error will be seen in the other also—the one the Church of the Living God, the other the synagogue of Satan.

If Antichrist is to be then a person, surely it becomes us to inquire what manner of man he will be, especially when told that his coming is with all signs and lying wonders, and also with such deceivableness of unrighteousness, as if possible to deceive the very elect. Are there no tokens already of some such gathering apostasy and deceivableness, along with an increasing conviction among those who think at all, that the signs of the last days are fast gathering around us?

Is there not a visible attempt by the men who fancy themselves more advanced and free than their neighbors from what is called bigotry, to make expediency instead of Bible truth the rule of state

measures and enactments of law? —to shape their course as if true "catholicity" consisted in letting each man think for himself, and numbers, not Scripture, decide the course to be taken, so leaving us to believe that the many will be right and the few wrong? Nay, is it not beginning to be even openly avowed that religion has nothing to do with the guidance of a nation, and that the less we say on so sacred a subject the better, seeing it is merely a matter for each man's conscience?

Do we not notice already the fruits of such views in the attempt to have education apart from religion altogether lest someone's prejudices should be hurt or interfered with? To let the greatest questions be decided by expediency, or (what is nearly the same thing) the wisdom of the majorities, with a sneer at every attempt to appeal to Scripture for guidance? To frame laws by which the Roman Catholic may legislate and hold office in our Protestant community, and the Jew, too, sit in our parliaments, care having been taken that his conscientious belief of our Saviour being an impostor should meet with nothing to offend it on entering there?

Is it not plain to the humblest capacity, that there is on all hands a growing inclination with a cunning sort of decency however in the way of doing it, to supersede religion altogether as far as it is external and objective, and to confine it to inward feeling, which again it is thought hypocritical or sanctimonious to allude to in the affairs of life?

All this is grief enough surely to the Christian, but what an addition is made to it when the express language of Scripture is so questioned and criticized as at present, not by its foes alone but by professed friends, and when metaphorical interpretations are given by them of its plainest warnings against all such increasing evil! Give way, as we have been and are doing, to such a system, and what is there to prevent men coming ere long to think that Scripture may have a hundred different meanings, all equally good, and its teaching mean anything or nothing, as people choose to make it?

Alas for us if that "sure word of prophecy" is obscured, as is the tendency in these days of intellect and energy, whilst the heart of man, amidst all refinement, remains, as it was, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Let us remember that there is to be a "deceivableness of unrighteousness" in the times of the end, under which Satan will hide his poison and his purposes. Do you think he will be so unskillful in his craft as to ask any one openly and plainly to join him in his crusade against truth? No! he can bait his snare with what has all the appearance of good, if we look at it simply with our own eyes which are evil.

He is even now promising to the nations a coming millennium of civil and religious liberty, when every one is to be sitting under his own vine and fig tree. He is promising equality. He is promising trade and wealth, remission of taxes, and reform of all kinds, and every one happy at last in his own creed, whatever it may be, and in his own way of deciding what is best for himself. Meanwhile he is tempting men to rail against their rulers and superiors as hindrances to this development, whilst he turns their heads with talk of philosophy, and science, and knowledge, and enlargement of mind. The times gone by are only to be scoffed at, and the ways and wisdom of their ancestors a fair subject of merriment. He bids men "mount aloft," and shows them how they may be "as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5).

By and bye too he will provide for them a king whose coming will be after his own working, "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." He will be "the prince of this world" of whom our Lord spoke

as having "nothing in Me" (John 14:30), but one fitted to be a "king over all the children of pride" (Job 41:34), and whose eyelids will be "like the eyelids of the morning" (Job 41:18)—that true Morning which will rise upon his destruction (Isa. 17:14).

But who, in the fancy that has taken possession of so many that the great tribulation is "past already," and that amelioration is now the happy tendency of things, will believe or even listen for a passing moment to those who would spoil their dream by showing forth the plainest declarations in Scripture to the contrary? Such men are esteemed to be beside themselves and deserving at best but of quiet compassion. Their words seem as idle tales and not worth listening to, whilst in their appeals to Scripture they are answered by metaphorical explanations of words which are nowhere else so construed.

Such is the reception they meet in general from within the Church, whilst, without, the confusion is becoming worse confounded. "God is not in all their thoughts," if in any. It seems small concern to the multitude that the world is in opposition to its Maker, His Son rejected and despised and His Holy Spirit grieved, with thousands hurrying on to destruction, and (if Scripture be true) the day of the Lord at hand. How little is there of the mind of Him Who, though He had no sin to weep for in Himself, yet made Himself a man of sorrows for others, and wept over the city that was about to crucify Him.

But what has the world, with all the misery that is in it, to do with sorrow or looking for the things that are coming on the earth? They "lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall." They "chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David;" they "drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph" (Amos 6:4-6). This is not for want of warning, but because it is either misread or despised altogether. The world is of a truth sitting in darkness, so gross, that although the light shineth in the darkness, the darkness comprehendeth it not.

Such is the description which inspiration gives, whatever the world may think of its justice in the abundant self-complacency with which every thing human and divine is now canvassed. And it would have been for the Church, compactly knit together, to have been continuing the protest against all such delusion and error, by reflecting, in the darkness around her, the light and spirit derived from her risen and exalted Head, Who Himself in the days of His flesh also bore witness to the same. But, alas! how is the very name being brought into disrepute and contempt among us, by the large and influential class who in the dread of what they call schism, are turning to the stocks and stones of Rome itself rather than let go their unscriptural conceit of what the Church's unity should be.

It is most true, for the sure word of prophecy declares it, that the Church is to be manifested as one, a visible unity, one fold and one shepherd. But surely they who are living in the certain hope of seeing that blessed consummation, need not be surprised at there being counterfeits in this as in meaner things, and still less be in any danger of being beguiled by the man-millinery (as it has been not inaptly called) of such a thing as Tractarianism, into thinking its childish imitation and mimicry of what is to be, any realization of it.

In spite of all the overbearing clamor about apostolic succession, how is it possible for men, capable of reflecting at all, to believe priests and things to be what they visibly are not? Or, to make them think that rood screens and surplices are introducing, if not constituting, the unity which God's people are panting to see?

Where are they to find in Scripture any value attached to such outside unity as this, when the Christian unity of the inner service—the only bond recognized there—is, as in this instance, broken by a Pharisaism which will have nothing to do with others who, although loving the Lord Jesus in sincerity and seen to be walking in His ways, may nevertheless be unable to yield implicit submission to what such masters in Israel pronounce to be "the church," any more than to what councils have decided in bygone times, when men were as fallible as they are now?

Is it not manifest, to the overturning of all such pretensions, that amidst His own chosen priesthood even in His own Temple at Jerusalem where His presence had been seen in the cloud which filled it, a period arrived when its oblations and assemblies became an abomination in God's sight? "Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth; they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. Who hath required this at your hand to tread My courts?" (Isa. 1:14,12).

And further, was it not when that Temple, which had itself been built by Divine command, was still standing in all its completeness of ornament and observance, that the prophet in vision saw the glory of the LORD depart from off the threshold of the house (Ezekiel 10:18), which house thereafter our Lord Himself declared to be "a den of thieves"? What becomes, after such a warning, of the superstitious veneration now reviving for stoles and consecrated chancels, and when to the last of His sojourn on earth, nothing was said of either priesthood or building but that both should be overthrown as they are this day?

Then again, when the promised descent of the Holy Ghost took place, did not the sound as it were of a mighty rushing wind sweep, as it might seem in scorn, past the antiquated walls where once the presence of Deity had visibly been seen, and within which the "vain oblation" was still offered up by priests as properly accounted as before, to rest in that "upper room, where abode" a humble band "with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brethren" (Acts 1:14)? Would that the Spirit which thereafter animated these holy men were seen as visibly resting on the multitude of priests who claim succession from them! Of this we may be assured, that where it is wanting in the individual no mere imposition of hands will avail, even if the form could be proved to have been complied with more satisfactorily than it has yet been, or can be.

O! when will men learn that it is the want of the "Spirit of Christ" among His professed followers which constitutes the schism from Him and from each other so deeply to be deplored by us all, and how vain is the attempt to find, as Rome thinks she has done, a substitute for it in the unity of a complacent ritual, however perfect in its way?

Chapter 2. The Time of His Appearing

Reference has been made to the declaration in 2 Thessalonians 2 that the day of Christ should not come until "the apostasy" as well as "the man of sin" had been seen. Also to Matthew 24, where the great tribulation, "such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," is also to precede the same glorious event. It is evident from these passages that the man of sin who is to exalt "himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped," must be the principal person in the tribulation which "immediately" (mark the importance of the expression, Matthew 24:29), precedes the "coming" by which he is destroyed.

His times also have been identified already with those of the tribulation spoken of in Daniel 12:1, inasmuch as there cannot be two unequalled tribulations any more than two second comings. It is equally evident that after the advent of Messiah in humiliation, only one abomination of desolation is spoken of, as shown by the use of the definite article (Matthew 24:15). The reference there made by our Lord is to Daniel 9:27 in connection with what had before been mentioned in chapter 8, and afterwards referred to in chapter 12:11.

These passages, as will be noticed, are all distinctly connected with the king, the Antichrist, who obviously is the principal character in them, for he is seen exalted above all that is named. Still more to show that the abomination is of necessity yet future, let it be borne in mind that there has been neither city nor sanctuary to pollute since Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in the year A.D.70. And that it could not have happened before is manifest, for Revelation, which agrees with Daniel in the description of the times of the beast and in which there is distinct reference to the abomination as well as the tribulation, was not written for twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem had occurred.

Again, as fixing the chronology of these events to a period yet future, the destroying king of fierce countenance (Dan. 8:23) is said to come "in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full," (can any one pretend to say in our downward career we have yet seen the full account of transgressors?) and to "stand up against the Prince of princes" to "be broken without hand," which again can mean nothing but the second coming of Christ, the "Stone . . . cut out without hands" (Dan. 2:34). Another remarkable sign fixing all these events, so connected with each other, to the very last days, is given by our Lord Himself in Matthew 24:14, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

It will be noticed on reference to the chapter that this is seen before the tribulation of which we have been speaking, and consequently also before the man of sin who appears in it. If so, he must be, as we have all along been contending, future, for no one will say that the gospel has been ever so preached until now, if it can even yet be said. Still it is evident that sign is drawing near enough to make all of us think how close at hand its full accomplishment may be, when the apostasy, the man of sin, the great tribulation, and the Son of man in the clouds of heaven will all, as it appears, follow in rapid succession.

Again, we are told (Dan. 7:24) that "the ten horns out of this kingdom (the fourth or Roman empire) are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them," etc. The ten kingdoms must therefore have appeared before Antichrist, inasmuch as he rises after them. This accords with what is said in Revelation 17:12, where the ten horns are again spoken of as "ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast," who, as we have seen, rises after them.

Now let us mark what is said of these kings (verse 13), "these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast," for (verse 17), "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Is it possible for anyone to say that ten such kingdoms are in existence now in the Roman earth, each giving their kingdom to the beast? If not, these kingdoms must of necessity be future, for begin when they may, they "agree," and give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

And what are these "words of God"? "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 . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire" (Rev. 19:19-20).

Thus they are agreed until the purposes are fulfilled in the destruction of the beast, and his remnant being slain. It will not do, after such plain Scriptures, to say that some hundreds of years ago, ten kingdoms (which is doubted) gave their power to the pope, so trying to prove him to be the beast. Whatever they were then, it is not pretended by any that they are giving their power to him now, which is fatal to the theory of either the ten kingdoms or the beast having yet been seen at all.

Once more: the fourth or Roman empire is divided into ten horns or kingdoms (Dan. 7:23-24), corresponding in all respects to the ten toes of Daniel's image, being its division at the time when the stone falls upon the feet—that is at the very end—and when "in the days of these kings" (Dan. 2:44), God sets up the kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

In other words, the ten kings, receiving power at one hour with the beast, give him their power to the end of this dispensation when they share his destruction. The new dispensation is the setting up of the "kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." Now surely this proves that these kingdoms and the beast, to whom they are said to give their power, exist at the very end of this present dispensation, and not in times long past, as so many seem determined to have it.

But if we look further into what is said of this remarkable division of the Roman earth into ten kingdoms, it will appear still more manifest that that division cannot yet have taken place, and if so, the Antichrist who, as we have seen, rises after them, is of necessity future also. The limits of what is called the Roman earth are sufficiently known to all, and no division of it which does not include the whole can be said to have fulfilled its division into the ten toes or kingdoms spoken of at the end.

But whilst admitting that the legs of iron mean the east and west divisions of that empire, no scruple is shown in leaving out the former altogether (embracing as it does the portion most important in Bible history, namely the Holy Land, Syria, Egypt, Turkey and Greece), and placing

the ten toes upon one foot of the image in Daniel 2. In fact, it was found impossible to take the Eastern empire into account at all, and so it was abandoned.

Thereafter the whole effort seems to have been directed to discover them in the Western, at the rise of the papacy, and the result is the submission to us of various different lists of ten kingdoms certainly, which if they ever existed at all, have long since confessedly disappeared. Whilst the pope, who, if he really had been the beast, ought to have disappeared with them (Rev. 19:19-21), is still strong enough to make the effort he is doing in our day to recover the power he has lost.

It would be a useless task to follow the extravagancies in regard to these pretended ten kingdoms and the part they are alleged to have acted in fulfilling the predictions of Scripture. The pages of Gibbon and others have been ransacked, and singular confirmations are alleged to have been discovered there, whilst between metaphorical and literal interpretation of Scripture language itself, as alternately it suited the purpose to have it so, the whole has been wrought into a tissue of extravagance sufficient to involve the work of prophetic inquiry, if not the study of the Bible itself, in ridicule and confusion.

If the fourth kingdom (the last) stretches, as it must, to the end of this dispensation, where should we expect to find the ten toes—in its condition at the end—but at the extremity of its existence? Originally the kingly power (however abused by him afterwards) was conferred on Nebuchadnezzar the declared head of the image, "thou art this head of gold," "the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom," —and is seen descending through gradually baser metals, till mingled with the people's.

This will be the remarkable feature in the ten kingdoms when they are seen, mingled "with the seed of men" —the kingly power mixed with the people's—the governing with the governed - and all who are not willfully blind to it, may see the whole tendency already going in that direction.

The supposed era of the rise of the papacy (for it is far from being settled even among those who date their predictions from it), is somewhere between the years 560 and 600, when in the pretended ten kingdoms the people's power was as little recognized as can well be imagined. How different now, when although the kingly power is needed to keep all together, the people are pronounced to be the source of all power, and when even in our loyal land the will of the governed is becoming more and more compulsory on the governor.

The clay-iron principle is daily coming out in more recognized strength. And it is the distinguishing feature of the ten toes when developed, as they will speedily be, out of elements already displaying themselves in the feet from which these kingdoms arise.

What has caused much perplexity regarding their formation or rather the period at which it occurs, is not noticing that the times of the Gentiles which began on the rejection of Christ by "His own," intervene manifestly as an interruption or break in the prophetic history of "his people" the Jews, as given by Daniel among others.

The nationality of the Jews (whilst individually they remain a standing proof of the literal fulfillment of Scripture denunciation) ceased for the time with the destruction under Titus, which consummated by building Aelia (Hadrian Capitoline) on its site to suppress the very name of Jerusalem. Indeed virtually the loss of their nationality may be dated from the fatal hour when they

crucified their King after having disowned Him as the King of the Jews (John 19:15). Along with it must have ceased also for the time, the history of the Jewish people as a nation, inasmuch as they were no longer one.

Jerusalem has since been "trodden down of the Gentiles," and will continue to be so, by distinct announcement, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Who can affect indifference as to the sign of their drawing to a close, which our Lord Himself has supplied in Matthew 24, where it is written, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." From Scripture we shall see, as we proceed, that the return of the Jews to their own land which must precede "the end" as a matter of necessity, will be in unbelief, even as at the time they left it. Still it will be a return in such circumstances as to place them in it once more as a nation.

The prophetic history broken off at their dispersion, will then be resumed preparatory to the mighty events to be enacted there, and the manifestation of "the abomination that maketh desolate," "the king of the fierce countenance," "the little horn," "Assyrian," "the Antichrist" who is to be broken without hands there on the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 39:4; Isa. 14:25; Dan. 2:45).

If it was given to Daniel, who was eminently a Jew, to know what should befall his people in the latter days (10:14), surely it is to be expected that we should find the Jews nationally among the ten toes or kingdoms from such mention being made by him of these toes, and this is in accordance with their return in unbelief while the times of the Gentiles are still unfulfilled.

Yet everything indicates a short duration for these kingdoms when seen, else they would not be in harmony with the other proportions of the image which he describes. For the toes of it, of iron and miry clay" (implying certainly less duration than the nobler proportions of it which by general consent have passed their day), could not surely exceed in point of duration all the rest put together, as they would do if they dated from the rise of the papacy the more so as by the conditions of the prophecy they would require to be existing still, and until "the Stone" falls upon them.

To make this more plain, it may just be noticed here that the Babylonish empire lasted 78 years, dating from the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the Persian 200 years, the Grecian 300 years, in all about 578 years. These were succeeded by the Roman empire which was established under Augustus. Unless we are prepared to admit a break in the prophetic history, we must be prepared not only to show that the Roman earth, in its integrity, was then divided into ten kingdoms which are still existing, but still further to explain how such lengthened duration could consist with the harmony in the portions of the image which have been seen.

Again with regard to the time of these remarkable kingdoms, coexistent as they are to be with the Antichrist inasmuch as we have already seen they receive power at one hour with the beast, and agree to give him their kingdom until the purposes of God are fulfilled (Revelation 17:12,17), we must remember, that Daniel in speaking of him under the name of the king of the fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23) distinctly places his appearing at the time of the end.

This is confirmed by three different expressions all marking the same fact in the same chapter. In the preceding one, Antichrist is seen rising out of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire will then have been divided, whilst here, it is out of the four into which Greece was parted under

Alexander's generals. But in this, as in all else, there is no discrepancy when it is examined, for the Roman empire received its most valuable additions from the territories which it wrested from the successors of Alexander. All therefore would be accomplished should Antichrist rise out of the Grecian portion of the Roman earth, "in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full" (Dan. 8:23).

This time cannot have been seen yet, unless we are prepared to say that transgressors have come to the full in contradiction to the apostle Paul's warning to Timothy concerning these same perilous times in the last days, which shows us that instead of amelioration, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13), till, under Antichrist, with the measure filled up in his times, the Lord Himself comes to destroy the wicked one, and supplant him with a reign of righteousness.

The break in the prophetic history which is contended for may be seen perhaps still more distinctly if we examine the well-known prophecy of the 70 weeks of Daniel (9:24-27), and the events declared to happen in them. Is it not evident, to begin with, that the prophecy must reach to the end of this dispensation from the mention of the terminating in the everlasting righteousness which is to be seen only when 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" (Daniel 7:27)?

Doubtless in the loose interpretation of such passages, it has been assumed that all this may be said to have happened when our Lord came, and by suffering on the cross, established His right to the dominion He had so purchased. His right, thank God, is clear and will one day be vindicated in the destruction of all that interferes with it (Ezek. 21:27). But whilst this evil generation lasts, is not the people of the saints of the Most High a persecuted people? And their Lord still "despised and rejected"? The everlasting righteousness and anointing of the Most Holy which concludes the 70 weeks (Dan. 9:24) are yet therefore to be seen in times as unlike the present as prevailing evil is to prevailing righteousness.

It is true the price was paid on the cross, but "the redemption of the purchased possession (inheritance)" (Eph. 1:14) is still future, and until it is completed, the prophecy we are considering cannot be said to have been accomplished in all its parts. Yet as so large a portion has, without contradiction, been already fulfilled, how is it possible, without admitting the break spoken of, that the 70 weeks with the cutting off of Messiah occurring at the close of the 69th (Dan. 9:25-26), could reach the times of everlasting righteousness which are to be only when "the kingdom" is set up which shall never be moved (Dan. 2:44)?

In fact, no other solution can be given of the difficulty than that which will be found to be in harmony with all else, namely, that Daniel, giving as he did, the future history of his people to the end and the promises which are yet to be made good to them, spoke of them as he was moved by the Holy Ghost only as a nation, which they ceased to be when their Messiah was "cut off" at the end of the 69th week, and when they themselves were scattered (as predicted elsewhere) and the gospel sent to the Gentiles.

As their "times" draw to a close, Scripture indicates a return of the Jews again as a nation, although in unbelief (Ezek. 22:19-22), when the last week, shown to be a week of years from the

portion of the prophecy already fulfilled, will remain naturally still to be accomplished before the happy days of universal righteousness and the anointing the Most Holy are seen, which, as we are told, "seal up the vision and prophecy" (Dan. 9:24).

And here it may just be noticed, that the word "week" is in the original simply a hebdomad or seventh, and would have been better so rendered in our translation, for a week with us implies a week of days only. In this instance, by the measure observed in the other parts of the prophecy already fulfilled (Messiah having been cut off at the end of the 69th hebdomad of years), it must mean a seventh of years also, or seven years. Jacob served Laban for Rachel seven years, and was said to have "fulfilled her week" or hebdomad (Gen. 29:28).

It is of this week accordingly that express mention is made immediately after (Dan. 9: 27), the "he" there spoken of being manifestly the destroying prince that shall come, the Antichrist, with his abomination to the end, and with whom Daniel's people will enter into a covenant, choosing, in the strong delusion sent them, the false prince for the True.

What strange and deep meaning is there in that declaration of our Lord when so viewed, "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not: if (or when) another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43). And this Antichrist will do, for he will exalt "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped" (2 Thess. 2:4).

His coming is declared to be with all "deceivableness of unrighteousness." He adapts himself, just as Napoleon Bonaparte did, to the prevailing system of the godless times he appears in, and especially to the prejudices of the Jewish people, who (probably by his help) in their own land once more as a nation with their great wealth, will rise into importance there. In this "deceivableness" also it is that the covenant is made with them for the whole remaining week, which Satan, who works through him (2 Thessalonians 2:9), knows perfectly will exhaust the term remaining of his power to deceive until the thousand years which follow should be fulfilled (Revelation 20:3).

At first all seems to prosper. All the world is seen (Rev. 13:3) to wonder after the beast, and not only to wonder but to worship him and the devil too, who gives "him his power ... and great authority." How fearful to think even of such an apostasy as this. Well may it be called "THE apostasy," connected as it is with this prince that shall then have come and shown himself to be that "man of sin . . . the son of perdition," for in the midst of the week (although his covenant, such as it was, had been made for the whole), he throws off the mask and shows himself "that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4), with a false prophet too working miracles before him in the power of Satan himself -the mock trinity of hell then shown in opposition to the Trinity of heaven, in league too with all whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life!

The last half of the seven years, when the covenant has been broken, are the times of the unequalled tribulation so often referred to already, and of which so much is said in Scripture. God has mercifully shortened those days, and told his people in every different mode of expressing it what the limit is; "the midst of the week," or hebdomad of seven years, that is, three years and a half, the "1260 days," the "42 months," the "time, times, and half a time," all expressing exactly that same duration, and all, if taken with the context, pointing distinctly to the same dreadful period.

During it God raises up two witnesses, doubtless individual men, from what is said of them, whom he miraculously protects during the time of "their testimony" (Rev. 11:3-7), inasmuch as He has

never left Himself without a witness on the earth (Acts 14:17), nor does so, until His longsuffering being exhausted and His Spirit no longer striving, the earth and its Antichrist king whom it had chosen to its confusion, are left to the terrors which fall upon its inhabitants, as Christ descends with power and great glory to vindicate the insulted Majesty of His Father, and to show in His times "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15).

We must never overlook the prominent part assigned in Holy Scripture to Israel. The whole history and prophecies there revolve round it as a center. Israel alone was God's chosen people and recognized as such by Him. "You only have I known of all the families (nations) of the earth," and it is added, "therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). Accordingly the mention of every other nation is always in subordination to Israel and their connection with it for the time. They are seen to be advanced to punish Israel when Israel had sinned, and turned back again when repentance had brought back to it God's favour.

And even in the New Testament, when the "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile had been broken down, the earthly distinction of the Jew and the favour yet to be shown to Jerusalem, are distinctly remembered and confirmed. God has not cast off His people whom He foreknew (Rom. 11:2), nor will it be found that He has forgotten the promises He has made concerning them. "Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (Isa. 65:18), and connected as Jerusalem now is with the Gentiles by their adoption, it will yet be literally "the joy of the whole earth."

To separate, therefore, the Jews from our thoughts of the blessedness which is yet to be in this, at present, blighted earth, is to overlook the promises as well as prophecies which connect them still, distinctly as a nation, with the better day that is coming. For yet "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:3-4).

A difficulty has occurred here to some out of what they consider the small and insufficient mention which, according to this view of prophecy, is made of Christ's church on earth during "the times of the Gentiles" now running their course. They ask, "How can we think that startling events, like the rise of the papacy, should have occurred during the long 1800 years which have passed, without special notice of them for the church's guidance?"

In reply to this, let us bear in mind the fuller dispensation as well as presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter under which the Gentile church had been placed from the outset. And let us not, at the same time overlook the perfectly accurate and sufficient description which was given in addition to this, of the trials and treatment to which believers in it would be exposed, whilst "the times of the Gentiles" were being fulfilled.

The disciples, until the Holy Ghost descended, had thought that Christ "at that time" would have restored the kingdom to Israel (Luke 24:20-21), even although our Lord Himself had warned them in Matthew 24 of what was to intervene, telling them that "all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places."

And as to His people themselves, about to be gathered out of all nations, They shall "deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My Name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another, and many false prophets (the pope among them) shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of (the) many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:6-13).

It was inspiration alone which could, in the disciples' days, have drawn out with such fullness and accuracy the description of the "times of the Gentiles," keeping pace as they have been doing with the no less wondrous description of Israel and its dispersion until their close - still dwelling alone, and not mingled among the nations (Num. 23:9) amongst whom their wanderings are. Deaf to their own prophets and not seeing the light around them, blindness in part having happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles shall have come in (Rom. 11:25).

The warning to and hope of the Gentiles was distinctly held out to them from the beginning, whilst as their times draw to a close, the prophetic history of Israel, with which their own fullness is shown to them by the apostle to be bound up inseparably (Rom. 11:11-12), again comes in as a guide, if they will take heed to it, to all God's people, Jews as well as Gentiles, through the dark passage which still remains to be trodden before there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer Who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26), at the close of the last of the 70 weeks.

These promises are indeed sure, but so let it be remembered, is every word of Scripture regarding the abomination of desolation and the time of trouble yet to be seen in Judea (Matthew 24:15-16) before that blessedness come. It is with the people of whom Daniel was speaking, as we have seen, that Antichrist will "confirm the covenant . . . for one week," although the whole ten kings of the Roman earth join together in giving "their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

The scene will be once more in Judea, for he, Antichrist, plants the tabernacle of his palaces there "between the seas (the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea - Dan. 11:45), in the glorious holy mountain" (a name given alone to Mount Zion, in Jerusalem), and there it is that he comes "to his end and none shall help him," for he is broken in "My land" and trodden down upon "My mountains" (Isa. 14:25). Well then may we look to Jerusalem as the days of its being trodden down are so surely drawing to a close, for there again a people terrible from their beginning hitherto" (Isa. 18:2) shall be gathered, that what remains of the prophecies concerning them may be fulfilled.

God has said that He will gather the house of Israel into their land again, not as we have been taking it for granted, in favour, but in anger. "As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace ... so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you ... in the fire of My wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof" (Ezek. 22:20-21).

If such is to be the course of events, how striking is it to see already amongst other signs of the times, the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean daily attracting greater notice and becoming of greater interest to the world. Greece, too, as well as Egypt (both spoken of in the times of the end), have reappeared only of late years, and the other two required with Turkey to complete the five

toes of the Eastern foot, will not be wanting when the time comes - nay, may even already be guessed at. The transit through Egypt to our Indian possessions has for some years been drawing all eyes in that direction, and steam, with the introduction of railways there, will soon make its neighborhood yet more familiar and important.

The jealousy with which the European powers are watching each other in that quarter, is revealed by the powerful fleets, in seeming idleness and maintained at prodigious cost to watch over the different supposed interests there, which must be correspondingly great. Turkey, too, extended for its own strength, is confessedly maintained in its integrity through the jealousy felt by the great powers of each other - a jealousy showing itself on all occasions, as in the recent and still unsettled question regarding the holy places, of which the Eastern and Western churches are alike claiming the right of custody.

However it may be arranged for the time, as probably it will, it has shown in addition to all else, that the feeling regarding Palestine, which has been dormant since the days of the crusades, is alive and stirring once more. The feeble sway of the Turk could not stand even now but for the interested protection given by others who are opposed to one of themselves occupying such a position of advantage over the rest. Such being the anomalous position of Palestine itself, who can help noticing the rising importance of its ancient possessors, the Jews, and how they have come to be spoken of as the bankers of Europe from their enormous command of capital?

What is to prevent such a people, by general consent, being called upon on any emergency to occupy that land as a mode of removing the difficulty at present existing? The more so, as neither by their religion, which unlike others tries to make no proselytes, nor by their arms, for they have none, are they in a condition to disturb the balance of power there as any other movement would.

Things far more wonderful have happened, but be this as it may, the increasing consequence of the Jew and his land are among the undeniable realities of these days of energy, when money and mercantile interest are shown to be the great springs of action, both being especially the weapon of the Jew.

If religion cannot quite unite the families of the earth, the thought with its rulers now evidently is that mercantile interest may, and the Jew and Gentile may blend with Turk and Hindu with no mention of religious differences at all. This is also the system Antichrist will encourage and under which the "vile person" (Dan. 11:21) will be called "liberal," a word of the day used more and more to mean the same laxity of principle as characterizes Antichristianism and will still more characterize Antichrist in whom the vile man is to be personified. He it is who is destroyed by the King Who shall reign in righteousness" (Isa. 32:1). After which, as may be noticed (verse 5), "the vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful."

And if we look at the Jews themselves with their deathless yearning still for the land of their fathers and belief of future rest and greatness there after all their wanderings, how visibly do they seem to feel that a change in their condition is at hand?

With the restoration to their own land is inseparably associated the rebuilding of their temple and renewal of sacrifices there. For this express purpose, a subscription has been already begun among many of the wealthiest of them, particularly in America, to erect a building like the "holy and beautiful house" of their fathers. Who can doubt their ability to raise any sum that might be

required for such purpose, when they see their time come for executing it?

The ancient temple, as all know, was on Mount Moriah, where the Jews have still a weekly lamentation with prayer in the words of their own prophet, whose warnings of old were disregarded, that its walls may again be built. "Be not wrath very sore, O LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all Thy people. The holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, O LORD? Wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us very sore?" (Isa. 64:9-12).

But it is not on Mount Moriah, for the mosque of Omar there on the site of the ancient building, forbids the profanation of "the unbeliever," and the spot likely is understood to be on Mount Zion, with which, let it be remembered, all their future glory is connected.

And how strange does such a locality appear as we read that "the tabernacles of his palace" are to be planted also there (Dan. 11:45), "in the glorious holy mountain," a name applied to none other than to itself. It is there "on My holy hill of Zion" that God will place His King (Ps. 2:6), and it is on it too that first the tabernacles of Antichrist will be seen.

The false deliverer will doubtless appeal to Scripture in support of his claim to be received, for it is "out of Sion" the Deliverer comes (Rom. 11:26). If then the Jewish temple be erected on Mount Zion by Israel still in unbelief, where else would Antichrist seek to restore for them their sacrifices and thereafter to show "himself that he is God," but in the place of which these things are spoken, and where the Jews themselves expect the Lord of the whole earth will one day reign?

Surely an allusion, without fancy, to this placing of the false where the true is yet to be, may be traced in Ezekiel 43:5,7-8, where, in speaking of the return of God's glory to the wondrous temple he had been describing so minutely, and which is yet to be seen in better days than these, he says, "The glory of the LORD filled the house ... And He said unto me, Son of man, the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and My holy Name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by My thresholds, and their post by My posts, and the wall between Me and them, they have even defiled My holy Name by their abominations that they have committed; wherefore I have consumed them in Mine anger."

The "abomination of desolation," let us remember, will before that latter glory come, have been seen "standing where it ought not" (Mark 13:14) In the holy place," and Antichrist too, consumed by "the brightness of His coming."

The Jews are looking to the restoration of their daily sacrifice in the temple that is to be, but confess they know not how the sacred fire is to be again lighted on the altar. This will afford their Antichrist another occasion to lay claim to their belief, for among the great wonders done in his presence (the devil giving him his power), "he maketh fire to come down from heaven . . . in the sight of (all) men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do" (Rev. 13:13-14).

The priests of Baal in the days of Elijah failed in their attempt to prove by fire that he was a god, but in the latter day, when the transgressors are come to the full" and such practisings perfected, the false prophet, who will then be ministering in the permitted working of Satan himself, is not so restrained.

Yet with the fire so kindled for the sacrifice, it is only at first and until established in power that Antichrist goes in with the desire of the Jews to see all restored in their temple again, for we read that "in the midst of the week," when he breaks the covenant he had beguiled them with, "he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (Dan. 9:27), his own overspreading abomination exalting itself above every thing, false or true.

For it is then that he will be seen opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God (2 Thess. 2:4). Paul foretells that his coming will be "after the working of Satan" (2 Thess. 2:9) when he does come, which John also affirms (Rev. 13:2), and Isaiah, still more remote, is heard declaring in unison with what they, along with Daniel, had declared, that their "agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you (see warning also in Matthew 24:15,23), for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only when he shall make you to understand the doctrine" (see margin, Isa. 28:18-19).

It is to the same terrible individual that the allusion is also in Isaiah 33:1, "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled." And further on, of the desolation that marks his progress, at verses 8-9, "the highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man. The earth mourneth and languisheth."

And to the same great crisis is the allusion in Psalm 55:20-21, "He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords." How fearful will these times be, and who shall live when God doeth this!

Mercifully, as we have seen, the days are shortened, else no flesh should be saved. In them "men will seek for death, but shall not find it." They are the days of unequalled tribulation following upon "the falling away" and revelation of that man of sin, the son of perdition, who had been mistaken for "the Son of man," the "Heir of all things.

Chapter 3. His Characteristics and Duration

The very name of Antichrist implies a denial of Christ having come in the flesh as well as an assumption of His place and dignity; and so exactly does this description apply, that to deny Christ in any measure or shape is held to indicate the working of that spirit of Antichrist which was already in the world in the apostle's day (1 John 4:3). In one form or another, therefore, more or less prominently, this characteristic will be seen to mark the "many antichrists" that have appeared, whilst "the Antichrist" himself, following at the end, when transgressors have come to the full, and having necessarily (to begin with), like all that preceded him, denied the Spirit of Christ as utterly opposed to his, will reject the Son Himself and thereafter deny the Father also, exalting himself, without any concealment then, above all that is called God.

It is clear, from the terms employed that Paul as well as John speaks of one and the same opposition to the truth, for the former tells of the mystery of iniquity already working in his day (2 Thess. 2:7), and the latter, that it was already in the world (1 John 4:3), whilst both describe the evil as characterized by the same spirit of enmity. It is reserved however, as we have seen, for the last days to reveal Antichrist himself in all his malignity and impiety, for it is not until then that he is seen personally sitting as God "in the temple of God" (2 Thess. 2:4).

Another mention of him is in Daniel 11, giving a further detail of the recklessness with which he proceeds, and by which he is so strongly characterized. "The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous 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 (does not this imply he will be an individual man?), nor the desire of women (that is Christ, of Whom all Jewish women desired to be the mother), nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all."

The times too which will introduce this great enemy are, as they advance, to exhibit more and more of the spirit which is to be fully developed in him. They are, as has been seen, spoken of as "the last times" in which the wicked shall do wickedly, and when "none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Dan. 12:10). This is in harmony with what the apostle declares, "knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (world) (2 Peter 3:3-4). All this is descriptive of the spirit of Antichrist now rapidly maturing for his development.

In 2 Timothy 3:2-5 we have, again, the same last days described when "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers (we have seen how Antichrist breaks his covenant), false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good . . . having a form of godliness (Antichrist will have his forms to begin with also), but denying the power thereof." From all such things Timothy is commanded to turn away.

And surely as the last days in which they are to be, draw on, it well becomes all who, like him, have learned and been assured, to turn more earnestly than ever to the Holy Scriptures they have known "from a child," and which are declared, in distinct reference to these "perilous times," to be able to make wise unto salvation, not through such teaching as Antichrist's will be, but "through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

It is not without reason that such a caution is given, for few perhaps are aware how subtle and dangerous already is the attempt to criticize and impugn the great truth that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), and to introduce other appliances. The deceivableness of unrighteousness, let us always remember, comes in, not by openly denying what it means to overthrow, but by introducing by little and little such specious corrections and improvements as, in the end, will answer the purpose which an open avowal at the outset would have prevented.

The Antichrist does not at his first appearance shock the prejudices of those whose faith he at last overthrows. He comes in "by flatteries" (Dan. 11:21), such as are grateful to the natural man who finds that something may, with apparent plausibility, be said against that which has been the great barrier to the indulgence of his own passions and will. He finds in Scripture much that is "foolishness" to him (1 Cor. 2:14), but which fear has kept him from openly questioning, as long as his belief in inspiration remains. Let however that once be shaken by the idea of errors and incorrect statements having crept in, or that words may be altered from their ordinary plain meaning, and very soon the wholesome reverence is gone.

Such at present (1853, Ed.) is the direct tendency of the German school above all the others, which are, however, beginning to follow in its wake, whilst surely warning might be taken from the deep rooted infidelity, which in consequence is more and more displaying there the danger of all such tampering with Holy Writ.

If France is distinguished by its licentious infidel writings, the slower thinking German is ponderously advancing by a still more dangerous road to the rejection in the end of all inspired truth together, whilst his metaphysical subtleties and criticisms are already perceptibly infecting the faith of his neighbors. Such popular writers as Goethe and Richter have done much in their day to prepare the public mind for this, and an echo of their style may be caught more and more distinctly from our own shores, where men like Carlyle and Kingsley have caught it up. "Great swelling words of vanity" draw men out of their depth to indulge, at the risk of themselves and others, in mental exercises there all leading to deeper unbelief, and "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

And such really is the case already with these teachers; some of whom are turning deliberately into fables much of the historic portion of Scripture. One of the most distinguished of them, Ewald, a German critic who himself wrote a "history of the people of Israel," speaks of the authors of the prophecy of Moses and Balaam as "prophetic relators of what had already happened, and of their predictions being a peculiar style of authorship"! He also maintains that so far from Moses having written the book of Deuteronomy, it was not written for 800 years after his death, and that whoever compiled it then, had felt himself at such a distance from the events he professed to relate, as "to have allowed his fancy the freest play with them in his way of treating history." He tries also to

show that "the Patriarchs were polytheistic in their religion," into which "Mosaicism" introduced a "certain monotheistic character," which is shown by the oath between Jacob and Laban calling on the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, as two different Gods recognized by them also by there being altars to the God of Bethel, and the God of Abraham!

Yet this is the man whom another, still better known, and who is domesticated among us in high places with great influence derived from his distinguished personal character and accomplishments as a scholar, welcomes into the field of Bible criticism with the strongest expressions of joy. And for an explanation of this, let any one examine what the Chevalier Bunsen himself says in his well-known work on Egyptian history, and he will be at no loss to discover the origin of this liking. Mr. Bunsen will there be seen to speak of the chronology and history of the Old Testament just as lightly as M. Ewald does, and in a very different manner from Paul, who quotes it in his epistles to the Romans, Galatians and Hebrews, as literally and strictly true, just as the martyred Stephen had done before, who, we are told, spoke "being full of the Holy Ghost."

But these names, alas! are not solitary instances of such infection having already extended among us. It has gone much further than people are willing to believe, and men of high standing in literature and power of writing, have not only themselves become tainted with this sort of skepticism, but are laboring to spread it in what they declare to be their zeal for the truth.

Listen to what their organ, the Westminster Review, of July 1852 says, "The theory of the origin of Christianity from agencies exclusively divine and of the infallible character of the canonical books, can no more be restored now than Roman history can be put back to what it was before Niebuhr's time" (page 175). And further on, "This in spite of every resistance from the rigor of the old theology, is an inevitable consequence of the modern historical criticism. But its large and genial apprehensions will open for us new admirations, it will do away with an unnatural dualism, and reinstate the great families of man in unity" (page 204).

This is pure antichristianism which, by removing "the offence of the cross" as producing what it calls "dualism," or as our Lord Himself had previously declared it to be, "division" (Luke 12:51-53), would try to introduce a system of godless brotherhood such as Antichrist himself will ere long be seen presiding over, and all the world wondering after, and worshipping him. It is in this direction that one of the dangers of these "perilous times" lies, for if Scripture is to be so dealt with, what has man left to meet the "strong delusion" in which Antichrist will come with his lie? It is for him to launch without helm or compass into a troubled sea where currents more dangerous than the winds and the waves are running and drifting insensibly all that is floating on them towards a fatal shore.

Of the doctrines springing up under such a system we have already seen some specimens, whilst an occasional glimpse is afforded us of results still more matured, and which may well make us tremble and cling closer than before to Bible truth. Within a very short period it has been openly broached in Germany in so many words, that from the confusion prevailing in religious belief as well as in all social arrangements so markedly seen in our days, it has become evident that the power which has governed mankind hitherto is become unfit for the task, and that man himself, therefore, no longer in his infancy, must rouse up to undertake it!

Such as these are the advances being made by antichristianism even in the midst of us. The barriers in the way are the Scriptures in their integrity, "given by inspiration of God," and "which are able to make . . . wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." And along with them, the promised teaching of the Holy Ghost "the Comforter . . . Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things" (John 14:26).

When these are disowned and cast off, as we see they are already beginning to be by so many, what is to hinder men coming to worship the devil in the end (Rev. 13:4), as well as the Antichrist "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a (the) lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:9-12).

It may seem hard to connect in any way, even the remotest, with such dangerous writers a very different class of men who have been assigning to Scripture words a metaphorical interpretation, chiefly to carry out prophetic theories of their own. Yet the plain truth is that the tendency of all such liberties is to encourage the profane hands which, with widely different feelings and intentions, are touching the Scriptures of truth. If Christians among themselves are seen by the unbelieving multitude without, claiming a latitude of meaning which would make inspiration say anything, what right have they to complain if they themselves are charged with inconsistency in their way of reading it? "That the Scripture might be fulfilled," is an expression of frequent occurrence in it, and always to point out that, however men might previously have been viewing it, the fulfillment of a prophecy when so announced proved it to have been a literal one.

What is contended for, therefore, on this point is, that by such warning in the past, Christians are bound to receive what is written in a literal sense, except where symbols, as in the Revelation, are avowedly the medium of instruction, or in cases where the language is shown to be figurative from the circumstance that otherwise an absurdity or physical impossibility would arise. This was the rule of the "judicious" Hooker, and in fact what we ourselves observe in regard to every book we read, and in every conversation we hold; also, for instance, in the case of the woman in Revelation 12, seen "clothed with the sun and with the moon under foot," where plainly a symbolic meaning attaches to her as much as to the seven candlesticks which symbolize churches.

Our own language abounds in metaphor, and we can scarcely utter a sentence which does not contain one. Yet we are living in a practical age where literal meaning is indispensable, and where in fact no one feels at a loss as to what is really meant. Why should we treat Scripture language differently? Or say that "that man of sin" means a succession of men, and "that wicked" or lawless one "whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming," a succession of evil principles to be absorbed by the advance of the Spirit of Truth? The mischief to all from such lax interpretations is incalculable, and is leading many in despair to ask like Pilate "What is truth?" without waiting for an answer to their question.

It has been tried throughout to point attention to what is said of a personal Antichrist who is yet to be seen, and who in the latter days (which must be near) will realize and embody the spirit of the many antichrists that are in the world. His characteristics, of which we are now particularly speaking, must necessarily be in unison with his times from the welcome they give him, and

therefore what Scripture says of them is full of warning as to what manner of man he will himself be when he is seen.

Jude, in his epistle, gives us, along with the other inspired writers already referred to, a striking outline of these last days, and in perfect accordance with all other Scripture tells what Enoch, from remotest times, had prophesied of their termination by the Lord Himself coming "with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14-15). In reading this short epistle, how wonderful does it appear that with such details of times so concluded as to make them to be as they are emphatically called (Jude 18) "the last," any one should still be found looking for a general amelioration as Scripture truth is disseminated.

Yet thousands of such there are who will see nothing even of such a "coming of the Lord" as is here spoken of, but who persist in making it an entirely spiritual one or gradual working of His power on the hearts of men to convince them finally of their ungodly deeds. Whilst entertaining such ideas, they will not see anything of "the apostasy" yet to be (in general they believe it to have been already seen in the papacy), or of the man of sin who is to be over it and thought now to be the succession of popes about to terminate, when no bar will remain to the realization of their expectations of such a spread of gospel light and truth as will turn the earth and its inhabitants into all they are most unlike to at present.

Is there no danger when even Christian men are found thinking so, and stopping their ears against such plain Scriptures as would warn them how they try to find good where God tells them they will find only evil? If Jude, among others, speaks of "the last time" and refers to a distinct coming of the Lord to terminate them with "judgment executed upon all" (Jude 18,15), how vain the thought of seeing any distinguishing mark in the people that will be living in them, but that which he applies so terribly - murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouths speaking great swelling words, having men's persons (not Christ's) in admiration because of advantage (Jude 16).

Is it not possible to rouse Christians to consider all this, when they see the most infidel and godless all rejoicing with them in the prospect of increasing emancipation, and of the "good times" that are coming as ancient prejudices disperse before the dawn of reason; when Scripture accuracy and inspiration is impugned and found to be a hindrance to the progress of the day; when commercial interest, not religious principles which are more and more pushed into a corner, is looked on as the bond which is yet to unite in brotherhood, and when in a word man is to do everything and be everything, and God a mere idea in all this scheme of coming happiness? Is there nothing in Scripture warning that instead of it, there is yet to be "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21), a trouble which is to yield to no scheme of amelioration which man can devise, or be averted by such a course as he is pursuing?

To speak of such things may seem ungracious, but so has the truth of God ever seemed when opposing the willfulness of man whose first temptation by Satan (Gen. 3:5) was to be independent of his Maker, as he will with his Antichrist succeed in tempting him to hazard being again. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt not surely die, was the lie of the devil which prevailed with our

first parents to eat, that "your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The same lure is being displayed to their descendants under circumstances and with a result which will show that, in himself, man is hopelessly evil (Jer. 17:9,18), and that the finished work and perfect righteousness of Christ alone can restore the beauty and order that has been marred.

Under all conditions, whether in Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian dispensations, man will in the end have been shown a failure, the more unmistakable if in the face of all the lessons and experience of the past, the last days are to exceed (as they will do if Scripture be true—and it is) in daring wickedness all that preceded them. But when "the transgressors are come to the full" (Dan. 8:23), and man in the trouble that is coming has been shown how vain his thoughts of amendment and amelioration have been, the Lord Himself "will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Rom. 9:28).

With regard to the duration of the reign of the Antichrist, we have seen that in his connection with Jewish history, a hebdomad or seven years is wanting to complete the seventy weeks of Daniel's prophecy, and that during all that "week" he acts a prominent part. There is no Scripture to lead us to think he is seen for any considerable period before it, and certainly he is not seen after it, for the anointing of the Most Holy and the bringing in everlasting righteousness (Dan. 9:24) closes all, as "the transgression" itself is finished by the destruction of that wicked or lawless one at Christ's coming (2 Thess. 2:8).

There is much mischief in trying to be wise above what is written, for Scripture is not given to gratify an idle curiosity, but for our instruction and correction in righteousness, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). This surely implies that he is also to be thoroughly furnished against all evil ones, which again, we believe to be the reason why so much is said by both prophet and apostle of the character of the unrighteousness in the last times, as well as of the Antichrist himself under whom the consummation of it is to be. For then, through what is permitted to Satan, it will be "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:9-10), to deceive, were it possible, "the very elect," unless thoroughly furnished by warning against it.

To show that the notion of a personal Antichrist, with a limited duration, is at least not a novel idea, it will serve to look here a little into what "the fathers" thought and wrote on the subject. In doing so, however, let it not be imagined that there is any intention of conceding to them and their opinions the place of authority which a large party in this country are trying to obtain for them now. The attempt being made is, in fact, a revival of what was witnessed in the reign of James and more openly in that of his son, when the first fervors of Luther's reformation were subsiding, and when Andrews and Laud sought, by magnifying them as links in the apostolic succession, to exalt thereby ecclesiastical power in opposition to the Puritans. But the deference thus shown to an imaginary perfection and unity in the early ages gave a great advantage to Rome, and then as now, many were the secessions to it from among the high church party.

It seems to be overlooked that the testimony of these same fathers extends over twelve centuries, including among them the darkest ages of popery, and that, from the very outset, there is not only the greatest discrepancy of opinion on nearly every important point, but also the most flagrant error. In fact, the "catena" is one of false instead of consistent Scripture doctrine, and what is remarkable the nearer the apostolic times, the more grievous appears to have been the

perversion.

With the exception of the existence of God in a Trinity of Persons, and the belief that the Roman empire would end in ten kingdoms and Antichrist to be destroyed by the Lord's coming, there is scarcely a truth which is not overlaid or distorted. The danger has ever been from within the professing church rather than from without, and of this the apostle, accordingly, is seen warning God's people in his day of what they were to expect when he himself was withdrawn from them. "Know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away (many) disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

To quote here from the fathers therefore is for the alone purpose of showing that the truth of a personal Antichrist at least was, amidst all their differences, nearly unanimously maintained by them all. They further considered that he would come out of the Roman empire, when towards the close, it should have become divided into ten kingdoms, three of which are to be subdued by him, and all to continue supporting him to the last.

Hippolytus, one of them (died c236) expressly says (in "de Antichristo") that "the ten states, meaning the ten toes of Daniel's image, which will at length appear will be democracies," which is in accordance seemingly with the increasingly "clay-iron" character of the present day. (For an account of the testimony of Hippolytus, see Mr. B W Newton s "Babylon and Egypt, Appendix A"—Ed).

Another of them, Irenaeus (c130-c202), considers that "when they are reigning, and beginning to settle and aggrandize themselves, suddenly one will come and claim the kingdom and terrify them as foretold." In the same treatise the same old writer says, "the adversary will sit in a temple built at Jerusalem, endeavoring to show himself to be Christ." And again, "It will be he who will resuscitate the kingdom of the Jews."

The Jews themselves, it is sufficiently known, are prepared to receive one who will do so, having rejected our Lord and theirs, Whose life as well as death had disappointed those among them who at that time "trusted it had been He Which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21). The veil being upon their eyes, they are to this day expecting a deliverer of their own race* according to promise, whilst nevertheless rejecting still the idea of His being also the Son of God, as they say "Israel's God is One God." The mystery of Christ in the flesh, despised then, is now altogether "hid from their eyes," which they are opening wider and wider as the time draws near, to descry him who, coming in his own name, will be received by them (John 5:43).

*(It is strange how general the belief was in ancient days, that in some way or other he is to be especially connected with the tribe of Dan. This may have proceeded from such as the following considerations: The sceptre was not to depart from Judah (Gen. 49:10), and yet we read "Dan shall judge his people;" with what sort of judgment may be inferred at least from the description given to him, as "a serpent by the way . . . that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward;" and that too followed by an aspiration of the patriarch as if he foresaw trouble coming, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD" (Gen. 49:16-18). The same with Moses: (Deut. 33:22) "Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan" (a word used in Scripture to denote pride and opposition). "Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round" (Ps. 22:12). "Hear this word, ye kine of

Bashan" (Amos 4:]). In Jeremiah 4, where "the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way" (verse 7) with his chariots as a whirlwind, and horses swifter than eagles (verse 13), to give out their voice against the cities of Judah (verse 16) because she hath been rebellious against Me (verse 17), it is a voice from Dan that declareth it (verse 15). In Jeremiah 8:16, "the snorting of his horses was heard from Dan," with the whole land trembling with the sound of his strong ones. Whilst in Revelation 7, where the tribes of Israel are sealed before the judgments are let loose on Antichrist and his followers, that of Dan is omitted, and the name of a half tribe substituted for it. In Amos 8:14 too, a curse is recorded against them that say "thy God, O Dan, liveth", and like them who receive the mark of the beast, "they shall fall, and never rise up again").

Irenaeus says ("Against Heresies, Book 5.30") that "the reign of Antichrist will be for three years and a half (the last half of the hebdomad), when he shall be destroyed by the Lord from heaven, and the kingdom of the Just One be established."

Many extracts of a like nature might be given, but it seems unnecessary here to extend quotations or name the names of the many others who express themselves similarly, with some important differences of opinion. (For a fuller account of the testimony of the fathers to a personal Antichrist, see Mr. B W Newton's "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms, 2nd Edition, Appendix A"—Ed.).

What has been quoted is chiefly to show that the idea of a personal Antichrist with a short supremacy at the close of this dispensation is no novelty, and that on the contrary it was in fact the universal early belief, men then taking Scripture words to mean what they really said. With some shades of difference, then, the general belief in early days was that Antichrist, as has been shown, would suddenly show himself at the very end of the Roman empire, which once was dominant, but now, in our days, is in a manner dormant. That he will knit it into one again by his skill and enterprise, engrafting Judaism upon the worship he sets up;—that he will then acquire the title of King of the Roman Empire, from the ten kings giving him their kingdom (Rev. 17:17)—that kingdom, be it recollected, being the last of four monarchies shown in the image of Daniel when "the Stone" falls, and he along with all its parts passes away as rapidly as he arose.

Thus Nebuchadnezzar, as the head or first king, received a pure monarchy from God (Dan. 2:37-38). Antichrist arising out from among the toes and also manifestly the last king, receives his power which is clay-iron or democratic ("mingled with the seed of men") apparently from the people or the kings over them, but in reality from the devil, as the "sure Word of prophecy" distinctly tells and makes us see (Rev. 13:4). Such is the contrast and such the end and destruction of the image by a still purer monarchy "which shall never be destroyed." Christ, the God-man, receiving it into His hands from "the God of heaven," even as Nebuchadnezzar, a fallen man, had been entrusted with it at first, had corrupted it, and like his successors, been deprived of it.

People in our days persist in saying that the destructive action of "the Stone" (Dan. 2:44-45) is the spread of the gospel, Christ's spiritual reign constituting the millennium. But this, surely, a very slight consideration might show them to be impossible, for it would imply that Gentile power (the ten kingdoms) will be coexisting with the kingdom of Christ, which, on the contrary, it will be seen breaks in pieces and consumes all these kingdoms (Dan. 2:44). It is vain to say this prophecy was accomplished at the first advent, because the ten toes were not then in existence for the stone to fall upon. And no more could it be so when the gospel was preached by the apostles, else the

Roman empire would then have been divided into ten kingdoms, which historically was not the case.

Another strange attempt, chiefly since Luther's days, has been to convert the 1260 days into 1260 years, to measure out the supposed duration of the papacy which he fancied to be the man of sin as already alluded to. (For a fuller treatment of the year-day theory, see Mr. B W Newton's "The Antichrist Future and the 1260 Days of Antichrist's Reign" — Ed.).

Having assumed this measure of time to be satisfactorily proved, it is now deliberately argued that the pope must be the Antichrist inasmuch as no reign but his could at all be said to embrace so long a period, and this, without exaggeration or unfairness in the way of stating it, is a specimen of the reasoning to which so many are seen surrendering their own better judgment. What is known by the name of the year-day theory (a sort of contradiction in terms to begin with), is based chiefly on a perversion of two passages in Scripture—Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6—"I have appointed (given) thee each day for a year."

Had this meant, as alleged, that henceforth in all prophecy a day was to be taken for a year, what becomes of that most interesting one among all others uttered by our Lord Himself, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," it being immediately added "but He spake of the temple of His body" (John 2:19,21), which surely no man will say was not raised on the third day, when "they came early in the week and found the stone rolled away," and the "two men in shining garments" declaring He was risen as He said?

Chapter 4. His Destruction and Its Consequences

In saying so much of Antichrist, it was impossible not to anticipate to a certain extent, what ought in proper order to have fallen under this division of the subject. It was necessary to allude to some of its circumstances in establishing his personality, the time of his appearing, and his duration. But having proceeded so far, it may be objected that in speaking of the Antichrist hitherto, we have been assuming without proof, that many different names in different parts of Scripture are all used to indicate this one and the same individual. It is admitted that similarity of destruction is not in itself sufficient to establish identity, and therefore this seems to be the place to show how the different names claimed for him in the Old Testament, as well as in the New, do, in fact, apply to him and to no one else.

First then as connecting the Old with the New Testament in what is said of the Antichrist, let us take the "little horn"* of the first to compare with the "man of sin," "the son of perdition" of the second. The one name occurs in Daniel 7, the other in 2 Thessalonians 2, and we have been taking them till now as applying to one and the same individual. That this is a necessity will be seen without difficulty if the chronology is attended to.

*(That "a horn" in the days of Babylon was used as the emblem of kingly rank, may be witnessed in the Nineveh sculptures recently deposited in the British Museum, where "horns" on their head-dress or caps are seen distinctly denoting the monarch from his attendants. This looks like a silent testimony introduced among us at the right time to the especial propriety with which "the little horn" is taken in Scripture to denote the rising power of this "king of Babylon," who, we have seen, is like the sculptures themselves, so associated with Assyria, as to be called "the Assyrian").

Daniel's vision of the four beasts is explained: "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" (Dan. 7:17-18). This is the general outline given of the world's history. But in the explanation which follows we see the first three rapidly passed over, whilst the description lingers upon the fourth and last to call our special attention to it. "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" (Dan. 7:19-20).

It is contended that the power so described must be in full dominion at the end, for the prophet proceeds thus, "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" (vv. 21-22), which again, further on, is declared to be the "everlasting kingdom" (v. 27). It is also explained of him (v. 25) that "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" (the three and a half years, the 1260 days, the 42 months already so frequently alluded to).

Now if we compare all this with what is said in 2 Thessalonians of the "man of sin," it cannot but be admitted that this little horn and he must be identical, for not only do their characters and actions agree perfectly, but both are seen "exalted" at the close, without mention of their being rivals to each other, and continuing till the saints possess the kingdom, which from other Scriptures cannot be until the Lord terminates the oppression by the brightness of His coming to destroy that wicked or lawless one; which, being in both instances in the singular case (2 Thess. 2:8 and Dan. 7:26) also forbids the thought of their being two such enemies, both exalting themselves above all, and both in existence when the time comes for the saints to possess the kingdom under the whole heaven at Christ's appearing, and not till then (see John 16:19-22).

Another name we have claimed for him is "the Assyrian," which occurs, among other places, in three of the chapters of Isaiah, where he is seen with the same prominence involved in what is to be only at the coming of the Lord.

In the first of these chapters (10:5), he is spoken of as "the rod of Mine anger," sent against "the people of My wrath . . . to tread them down like the mire in the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so (that he is but an instrument); but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." It is then added, "When the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish . . . the stout (proud) 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" (vv. 12-13). The time at which this happens, as we have seen, is, when God has performed his "whole work," after which (v. 20) in that day "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." The Assyrian having smitten them after the manner of Egypt, the Lord's indignation is seen to cease in their destruction,—the remnant returns, and the consumption overflows with righteousness. Who can doubt that this will only be in the days when Israel at last exclaims, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord," to destroy Antichrist, the little horn, the lawless one, the Assyrian?

In Isaiah 14:25, mention is again made of the destruction of the Assyrian whose hand had been stretched out, not upon Israel alone, but upon "all nations," with mention at the same time of the downfall of Babylon, which is then to be swept with the besom of destruction, and with whose king each candid reader of the chapter will see "the Assyrian" identified. The chronology here again determines the place to be that of Antichrist's, for on the destruction of "the Assyrian," the yoke and the burden departs from off their shoulders, as he is broken "in My land," a consummation only to be at Christ's coming.

Once more, in Isaiah 30:31, the destruction of "the Assyrian" by that coming, is still more distinctly referred to, with allusion to the joy of "tabrets and harps" which follows it, after the Lord shall have caused "His glorious voice to be heard," and shown "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" (v. 30). Who can doubt that this is Antichrist, the wicked one, who is here called "the Assyrian," destroyed by the brightness of His coming?

It is equally evident that the Assyrian and the king of Babylon must be the same individual, the name being derived from the locality of Babylon in the land of Chaldea, embraced in Assyria. In one of the chapters just referred to (Isa. 14), they are distinctly identified, whilst to the king of Babylon there, the exact words and characteristics of Antichrist under all the names we have been considering, are given. "I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" etc. (vv. 13-14). And mark how the accompaniments again determine the chronology to be, like all the rest, at the coming of the Lord, for then only will it be said, "the whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they brake forth into singing" (v. 7); "The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth" (vv. 5-6).

The whole passage is strikingly descriptive not only of Antichrist, as given under other names identifying this, from the peculiarity, with all the rest, but of his coming by the agency of "hell" (v. 9), or as we read in Thessalonians, "after the working of Satan," and in Revelation 13:2, of the dragon, giving him "his power, and his seat, and great authority." Nor ought it to be overlooked, that when this "king of Babylon" (who can be from this description none other than the Antichrist), "falls" (Isa. 14:4-12), how distinctly his city, which is described similarly to that in the Revelation, is seen to fall with him; its very name thereafter is cut off (v. 22), whilst the designation of "the Assyrian" is there applied to its king as if to mark the locality in which that Babylon is to be at its destruction.

In Ezekiel 31, we find the Assyrian spoken of with remarkable distinctness, both in regard to his exaltation and his overthrow, the description being addressed to the king of Egypt—a name constantly employed in Scripture, as must have been observed, to express the help derived from the world, in opposition to the help which cometh from God alone. The Assyrian's connection with such must therefore be intimate, and accordingly at the conclusion of the warning given to all against attempted independence, as well as against seeking such godless appliances, the Assyrian, with "Pharaoh and all his multitude" are classed as one, as both the help and the helper are seen overthrown together. "To whom art thou thus like in glory . . . among the trees of Eden? Yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden into the nether parts of the earth; thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord God" (v. 18).

In Hosea 5, Ephraim is seen to have been among the seekers of this help, "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jereb (translated in the margin, the king that should plead); yet could he not heal . . . your wound" (v. 13).

Again, in Hosea 11:1-4, Israel and Ephraim, called as they had been out of Egypt and drawn with the cords of a man and with bands of love, yet "knew not that I had healed them." And mark what this their stubbornness will at last lead to. "He (Israel) shall not return into the land of Egypt (where the former oppression had been), but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return" (v. 5). Yet though God will give them such a king in His anger, hear the yearnings of His compassion and His mercy in the end, "I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger . . . for I am God and not man" (v. 9). The Assyrian, their last oppressor, does not finally destroy them. "They

shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord" (v. 11).

In Micah 5, Christ, Who comes out of Bethlehem Ephratah, is distinctly seen to be the Deliverer from "the Assyrian" to mark that his destruction is identical with that of the man of sin, the son of perdition, and that they are therefore one and the same. "And this man (the Ruler of Israel Whose goings forth have been from everlasting) shall be the peace, when the Assyrian . . . shall tread in our palaces" (plant the tabernacles of his palace . . . in the glorious Holy Mountain—Daniel 11:45). How accurate the agreement and how perfect the identification of the Assyrian with the king in Daniel also, "who does according to his will," as well as with Antichrist, the man of sin, who is destroyed by Christ's coming.

Another name given to him is the beast. This is in the Revelation and occurs there three times. In the first of these (13:1-2), his rising is described with seven heads and ten horns, which must be those spoken of by Daniel (7:24), as signifying the ten kingdoms of the Roman earth which were to be at the end. The "blasphemy" written upon his head and the devil giving him his power, can surely be supposed to apply to none other than to him who under the title of the man of sin, the son of perdition, comes also distinctly in the time of the end "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2).

The next mention of the beast (Rev. 17) shows him in connection with Babylon and the ten kings also, making war with the Lamb, and the Lamb overcoming him (v. 14), which is, as Antichrist is elsewhere described to be, destroyed with "the brightness of His coming."

And as if to remove all doubt of that identity, the destruction itself is described in the third passage alluded to (Rev. 19:19), where the beast encounters the Rider on the white horse Whose Name is declared to be "The Word of God"—the chronology being again fixed by the millennial reign immediately succeeding.

In 2 Thessalonians, Antichrist is called the "man of sin," as he is also in one of the passages already quoted (Isa. 14:16), a "man." "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake the kingdoms?" And he is also shown to be "a man" in Revelation 13:18, his number there (whatever it may be) "being the number of a man." This he must be to be the king of Babylon as we have seen he is, and his being so distinctly declared to be a man shows there is no absurdity in supposing he will be also a king according to the name so given him in Scripture. Besides these, there are various other names employed there also designating an individual, which on examining the context, will be seen to apply to none but him. They are apparently used to express one or other of the characteristics of "the lawless one," and do show him accordingly always in remarkable antagonism, as might be expected, to the characteristics of Him Whom he tries to supplant and overcome.

Thus in Zechariah 11:17, he is called the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock, in contrast to the Good Shepherd Who giveth His life for the sheep (John 10:11). The man of (or from) the earth (Ps. 10:18), in contrast to the Second Man Who is the Lord from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). The vile person (Dan. 11:21), to contrast with Him, Whom an unclean spirit even recognized as "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). The oppressor (Isa. 14:4), in contrast to the Deliverer Who shall come out of Zion (Rom. 11:26). The little horn (Dan. 8:9), in contrast to Him of Whom it is said "In My Name

shall his horn be exalted" (Ps. 89:24). The destroyer of the Gentiles (Jer. 4:7), in contrast to Him in Whom shall the Gentiles trust (Rom. 15:12). Lucifer fallen from heaven (Isa. 14:12), in contrast to Him Who is "the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. 22:16). The terrible one (Isa. 29:20), in contrast to the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The son of wickedness (Ps. 89:22), in contrast to the Son of God (Mark 1:1).

Surely no one on reflection can fail to be struck with the individuality indicated by each and all of these passages, which show the personality of Antichrist in as strong language as the personality of our blessed Lord Himself. The object however at present in making these references, is to exhibit not his personality alone, but how the different names all point to and imply one great and the same individual. If successful in this, the destruction of the Antichrist, which is the point now immediately to be considered, will be easily shown as will be the harmony of all the passages which speak of it as falling upon him under these different names and designations.

In the metaphorical system still followed by a large and influential class of interpreters, the thought of amelioration is constantly encouraged by what is made out of a gradual drying up of evil towards the end, by the advance and progress of Scripture truth which "Christ's coming" is declared to mean.

The pope, at all hazards, is still held to be the "man of sin," and this has contributed greatly to the maintenance of this error, for his unsteady career and present decrepitude encourage the thought they cling to of a gradual disappearance, however he may, from time to time, still rise or sink. But surely no thinking inquirer can read the many passages which have been already referred to without seeing that increasing confusion and increasing evil with a sudden tremendous termination, in which an individual man, who had been exalted and was exalting himself in the midst of it, is signally and fearfully destroyed, is really what Scripture language indicates, if words are to mean any thing at all.

"The Antichrist" has all along, in what has been said, been regarded here as this individual, and is seen "before that great and terrible day of the Lord" distinctly denying (which no pope has ever done), the Father as well as the Son (1 John 2:22), or as elsewhere expressed, exalting "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4). He it is "whom the Lord shall consume (destroy) . . . with the brightness of His coming" (v. 8), a coming which so far from being a gradual coming, is constantly and invariably spoken of as sudden, "as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2), as the lightning that "cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27).

When the risen Saviour left this world, it was whilst He blessed them and as His disciples beheld that "He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). This surely was "sudden." And if so, His return will be in the same fashion, for the angels that stood by as His disciples were gazing after Him into heaven, declared "that this same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Let us remember that Christ had then been visibly as well as tangibly with them after His resurrection for Thomas had been told to thrust his hand into His side, and it was therefore in His body, in which He bore "the print of the nails" that He ascended. It is "in like manner" that that

same Jesus shall come again in the clouds, though now "with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). It does seem indeed strange presumption to declare that a coming, so spoken of, can mean nothing more than a spiritual and gradual one, and that the destruction of the man of sin by it is only a slow consumption of the papacy by the substitution of Scripture truth in its stead.

When Christ comes, every eye shall see Him, and they that pierced Him shall mourn. But if by "the extension of truth" His coming is already taking place, alas! who are seeing Him? Surely it is high time for Christians to rouse up and investigate Scripture for themselves, and to cease from listening to those who would (perhaps unconsciously) turn its plainest warnings and declarations into anything or nothing.

If in the apostle's day it could be said that "the night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12), how near may, or rather must, that day be to us! And how ought men to be marking its description by the sure word of prophecy in all its particulars, instead of giving ear to those who are flattering themselves and others with the vain thought of a peaceful surrender of his dominion by Satan who is now "the prince of it," and a gradual advance of better things.

Hear how differently both prophet and apostle speak of the termination, if their emphatic language is good to express any thing. "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 clouds and of thick darkness . . . a great people and a strong (the beast and the kings of the earth—Revelation 19:19); there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be . . . even to the years of many generations" (Joel 2:1-2).

It is gravely asserted that all this is past already, having had its accomplishment at the destruction of Jerusalem. If so, what cruel mockery must her children be thinking the words of the prophet to have been, for surely their floors are not filled with wheat nor their vats with wine (Joel 2:24) nor have they ceased yet to be a reproach among the heathen (v. 19). Must not they to whom Joel prophesied be thinking such predicted blessedness can only mean something still to be, even should they be overlooking "the day of darkness" and terror which is to introduce it?

Of "that great and terrible day" we have another prophet saying, "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 . . . even very dark, and no brightness in it" (Amos 5:18-20).

Another, "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" (Isa. 13:9).

Another, "The great day of the Lord is near . . . and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zeph. 1:14-15).

Again, in the New Testament in perfect harmony, as ever, with the Old, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth (land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29-30). It is clearly

at that "coming" that the man of sin, the son of perdition of whom we have been speaking is destroyed, for Christ comes but "once again" when He is to "reign for ever and ever."

"Shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) will in that day be found to have been a question full of significant meaning, for Antichrist will then be exalted and all the earth wondering after him, nay, even worshipping the devil who had given him the power they see him exerting (Rev. 13:4). Is this the gradual amelioration, in the thought of which men are already beginning to enter into the delusion of mistaking evil for good, which will result in an "apostasy" from truth altogether?

We are apt to lose sight of what is said of the "deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10) in which Antichrist comes, and of which already, if Scripture warning was regarded, we might be seeing the "workings," although never was outward decency drawing a thicker veil than now over the hidden things of dishonesty and darkness. Men would be shocked and society call out against it were the grossness of bygone times to revive in these days. The tide of feeling is in another direction and perhaps towards greater refinement and elegance. But let us not blind ourselves to the declared results in which all this is to end. "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

The parable of the tares and the wheat in Matthew 13 might surely forbid the thought of this gradual amelioration, for they flourish together till the end of the harvest which is explained to be "the end of the world" (age), when they are to be gathered out. And Isaiah confirms this by telling us (Isa. 26:9) that it will be by God's judgments and not by man's efforts, that the world will even then be converted. For it is "when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

What the day of grace then had failed, through man's perverseness, to accomplish, the day of judgment will, that day meaning here the coming of the Lord to judge the world in righteousness. The distinctness of all Holy Scripture as to "that day" is as remarkable as the attempts being made to reduce the warning to nothing by spiritualizing (which is not spiritual! —Ed.) the plainest declarations of what will then be seen—As in the days of Noah, in spite of his preaching, men "knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:39).

And the same was it with our Lord's first coming, in the face of what prophets had spoken with perfect literality as the event itself proved, of the circumstances in which that "coming" was to take place. People perplex what is said by allowing themselves to be persuaded that the coming of the Lord to destroy Antichrist, is merely another expression for the final judgment, which all tell us they are assured of, whether prepared for it or not. But they will not see that events occur after the coming of our Lord which show that the end of all evil is not to be even at that time, and that therefore the final judgment which terminates all, must be future to it, for the devil himself, the great deceiver, is let loose a thousand years after Antichrist and his army has been consumed by His coming, when he gathers again a fearful confederacy before he himself, with Death and Hades (the last enemy), are cast into Gehenna (Rev. 20).

The terrible day of Christ's coming to destroy Antichrist and terminate his day as well as his tribulation, will have therefore long preceded the final judgment, and it is for Antichrist and the tribulation, and the apostasy he triumphs in, that the church is so strongly warned in all Scripture to

be prepared even now.

Surely if these things are so, it is for every Christian to be watching and looking well to Scripture, for Christ's day will be ushered in by a time of "great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning," and which His glorious appearing alone will terminate. It is especially needful too, to think well of the "deceivableness" spoken of, and to be on our guard against a more open "working of Satan" who in introducing his Antichrist will aid him with all "signs and lying wonders" to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect (Mark 13:22). This could only have been written for their warning, for "none of the wicked shall understand" (Dan. 12:10). And if so, how amazing the slowness exhibited by Christians in giving heed to a message so distinctly delivered.

It is "in the last end of the indignation . . . and when the transgressors are come to the full" (Dan. 8:19-23) that the spirit of Antichrist which is already in the world (1 John 4:3), is to be embodied in a man, like ourselves, and to him the devil will give "his power and great authority." He it is who will distinctly as a man, try to exalt himself, with that help, above all that is called God or is worshipped, denying the Father and the Son, even as the spirit that will be in him has been from the beginning a denial of the other Person in the Blessed Trinity.

And under man, so manifested and emancipated from all control by the permitted energy of Satan, will be seen what a world is, in which the God that made it, the Son that redeemed it, and the Spirit that sanctified it, are all at once and altogether disowned and insulted. Mercifully, God will shorten those days else, as He Himself has told us, no flesh should be saved (Matthew 24:22).

How distinctly may Habakkuk be seen on his watch-tower, looking out for the fulfillment of the vision he had seen, and which he knew at the appointed time was to speak in "the end" (2:1-3). And who can miss seeing that the vision itself, which is given (1:5-12) did distinctly intimate not only the tribulation "terrible and dreadful," but that one should be over it offending, and "imputing his power unto his god"—that god being, as we are told elsewhere, the devil (Rev. 13:4)?

In the description given, Antichrist is seen in connection with the Chaldeans, in respect to his being "king of Babylon." Judgment and dignity proceeding of themselves (v. 7), marking the lawless one who does according to his will—"the east wind" (v. 9), an emblem of blight and desolation following his steps. Scoffing at all kings (v. 10), who are sunk in his being exalted above all. His mind changing, passing over and offending (v. 11) refer to his breaking (in the midst of the week) the covenant so often referred to already (Dan. 9:27)—see also Psalm 55:20-23 in contrast with Psalm 89:34.

This is followed by the astonishment of the prophet that the Everlasting and Holy One should permit such terrible wickedness and misery.

How marvelously does Habakkuk afterward enlarge the description of him in chapter 2, and dwell in chapter 3 upon "the coming," by which Antichrist and his followers are to be destroyed, when as if to close all, and himself being in full preparedness for the confusion and terror seen to be coming, this man of God so "thoroughly furnished" could, in the failure of all things, rejoice still in the Lord and joy in the God of his salvation (Hab. 3:18). Nor is the support given to his faith less apparent, for he exclaims, "God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet"—an animal, as we know, fitted to walk safely in dangerous high places where others would stumble and be destroyed.

Intimation of the same may be noticed in Malachi also, where the "coming of the Lord," as a refiner and purifier, is distinctly seen to "cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar" (Mal. 2:12). "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" (3:2). Yet following immediately, as may be constantly observed in all Scripture when that trouble is past, is a comforting assurance, "then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years" (Mal. 3:4).

Joel, too, is full of striking allusions to the tribulation, which must be the same so often referred to for it ceases only "in the terrible day of the Lord," when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood (Joel 2:31), and when immediately after, the deliverance of Mount Zion and Jerusalem is seen and the bringing again the captivity. "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the Hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3:16).

The desolators had been spoken of previously (Joel 1:6), which surely describes Antichrist with the kings confederated with him (here spoken of as "one nation") for God had put it "in their hearts . . . to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast," until His purposes are fulfilled (Rev. 17:17). "For a nation is come up upon My land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion" (Joel 1:6). In Revelation 13:2, the description of him to whom the devil gives his power, is that he had "the mouth of a lion" and here is similarly described with similar outrage, as in that chapter of Revelation above referred to.

"He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white" (Joel 1:7). And that all this does really, without fancy, apply to Antichrist is proved by the chronology so often already noticed, the destruction being again in "the day of the Lord." "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction (fire) from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?" (vv. 15-16).

In Hosea, too, the warnings of coming wrath are mixed with promises of mercy and conversion—when "He shall roar . . . the children shall tremble . . . they shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria" (11:10-11). How true will these words sound to Israel in that day, "I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath" (13:11). "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon" (14:5)!

Amos has also, like the rest, a sight of the trouble as well as of the future blessing when the trouble is over and gone. "The Lord God of hosts is He that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as the flood of Egypt" (9:5). "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" (vv. 10-11).

An objection is sometimes made that by dwelling so much on an Antichrist that is future, we may become less sensitive than we ought to be to the many antichrists that are already in the world. But such an objection will cease to be thought of when we come to see that what is to be fully developed then, is just what we are to strive and watch against now, that watching and striving being quickened the more when we see whither the present tendency of all things is conducting,

instead of deceiving ourselves with false ideas of the world, with some removable evils, being in progress towards amendment.

And although the thought that the pope is the man of sin has to be surrendered, why should this make us less alive to the real mischief of the papacy when we see, more than ever perhaps, how largely it is contributing by its "vain traditions and doctrines of devils," to hasten what we are now taught to believe will be an apostasy yet more dishonoring to God, and fearful in its consequences to man?

"The coming of the Lord" is what the apostles taught to be the hope of Christ's people, and this they would pray and long for more earnestly if they would only see how much Scripture says of the increasing antichristianism which is to prevail and prosper, until checked and destroyed by His appearing. Such would assuredly be the case if we were not fixing our eyes so resolutely on the papacy, and fancying that were it to fall, all would be well whilst error with which the papacy has nothing to do, and which, in fact, ignores the papacy like everything else, is all the while springing up and threatening the total rejection of the Bible itself as a rule of life, or even as a thing to be believed.

If evil is coming, it is scarcely less dangerous to be looking for it in a wrong direction than not to be looking for it at all. And if Scripture tells us where it is to be, it is purely presumptuous for any among us to be thinking we may do very well without the warning.

If we long, as we ought to do, for the destruction of all evil and the admission of the saints, whether alive or dead into an enjoyment with us of the blessedness which is to follow the sorrow and confusion of the present, how is it we do not pray with greater desire that "Thy kingdom come"? A consummation however will not be till the tribulation is past, and Antichrist himself destroyed by Christ at His appearing and kingdom.

We are told Christians ought to feel satisfied if individually they are safe and taken to be with Christ. But this is losing sight of the collective and increased blessing which will be when "the dead in Christ" in their glorified bodies (now lying in dishonor), shall be raised and "caught up to meet Him" and each other, and when they who are alive and remain shall be changed to be their fitting companions. Paul thought to depart and be with Christ was far better, but his longing, as may be seen, was not to "be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality (the earthly house) might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4); with this express condition however, if so be that when Christ appears, Who is our life, and in Whom it is now hid, we being already clothed in His righteousness, shall not be found naked, but ready to meet Him in the air, in our bodies, which are then to be raised in incorruption.

The whole creation, laboring and groaning, is said to be waiting for this manifestation of the "sons of God," and yet, are they themselves alone of all creation to be insensible to the glory, and careless of the reunion, which is awaiting and only delayed till the mystery has been finished in the revelation and destruction of the Antichrist himself? He is yet, if Scripture words mean anything, to appear in an apostasy, more dangerous to the church in its deceivableness as well as oppression, than any trial that has yet been encountered.

The nature and urgency of the crisis may be judged by the array brought forth to meet it. "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was 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 . . . And the armies which were in heaven followed Him . . . And He hath on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:11-16). It is He Who encounters the beast and his armies and destroys them with the brightness of His coming. The head of wickedness (see Gen.3:15) in the height of his rebellion is met and crushed by "the Seed of the woman," Who is also the Lord from heaven.

Is it possible that the church can any longer remain in such indifference as to the promised deliverance, which extends not only to those of its members who are to be "alive and remain" at that day, but to the loved ones who are asleep and whom Christ will bring with Him? Of their yearnings we seem actually to catch an echo, "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" (Rev. 6:10-11).

In the passages of Scripture which relate to the destruction of Antichrist, the various modes of expressing it are all in harmony with each other, and all agree in distinctly showing it to be accomplished by superhuman agency. The great fact itself is plainly proclaimed in the verses of 2 Thessalonians, so often referred to already—consumed by the spirit (breath) of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His coming—and all other mention will be found pointing to such a destruction as well as such a Destroyer.

In Daniel he is "broken without hand" (8:25). In another passage (9:27), which is more intelligibly translated in the margin than in the text, the allusion is first to his setting up his abomination and then to his destruction. "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and upon the battlements (or pinnacle, for it is the same word as is used to designate the pinnacle of the temple) shall be the idols of the desolator, and he shall make desolate, even until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator," meaning himself.

In another (Dan. 11:45), "he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain (Zion); yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

In Isaiah 10, also already referred to, Antichrist under his name of "the Assyrian" is seen with his apostate confederacy in his daring attempt to possess himself altogether of "Zion, the hill of Jerusalem" (v. 32). He shall "remain at Nob that day"—it is his last—for "behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror . . . and Lebanon shall fall by a Mighty One" (vv. 33-34). "The Assyrian" perishes "in My land, and upon My mountains" is trodden under foot (Isa. 14:25), thus marking, with all other Scripture, that Antichrist falls in the land of Israel.

In Isaiah it is further written (11:4), "with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked (one)," the instrument there being (as may be seen) Christ, the Branch out of the roots of Jesse, Who at that day stands up for "an ensign of the people" (v. 10) and to "assemble the outcasts of Israel" (v. 12), just as we see He does under another name* in Daniel 12:1, where at the same terrible emergence, Michael, the Great Prince standeth up "for the children of Thy people."

*(We wonder if Mr. Bonar is right in identifying the Son of God with the Archangel Michael. Mr. B. W. Newton helpfully comments "Michael the archangel is unquestionably an angel and not the

Lord. It would not be said of the Lord Christ, as it is of Michael, that he durst not bring a railing accusation against Satan, but said, the Lord rebuke thee. Besides which, a comparison of Peter and Jude clearly shows that they are both speaking of the same circumstances; and Peter expressly ascribes to angels what Jude ascribes to Michael. Compare 2 Peter 2: 10-12 with Jude 8-10, observing the identity of the expressions in the Greek". We would add that the description of Michael as "one of the chief princes" in Daniel 10:13 would not be befitting of the Lord—Ed.).

Psalm 76 is one of thanksgiving for that great deliverance so wondrously accomplished, with mention also of the locality in which it is wrought, for God is seen in it to have caused His "judgment to be heard from heaven," when He arose "to save all the meek of the earth" (vv. 8-9). Jerusalem in that day will have become "a joy and her people a praise," and this psalm, among others, will then be sung there with a fullness of meaning, which faith in promises existing can alone now justify or appropriate when all remains so unlike to what it speaks of—"In Judah is God known: His Name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion. There (that is, the places just named) brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle." It is added,—"Thou art more glorious ... than the mountains of prey," alluding to Christ—the Stone which had fallen on the image—having become then a "great mountain to fill the whole earth," displacing the robbers who had usurped His authority— "the stout hearted" will then have been "spoiled" (vv. 1-5).

Another passage in Isaiah (30:33) also describes the destruction to be in Judea, for Tophet is in the valley of the son of Hinnom (Jer. 7:31) close to Jerusalem, the south wall crossing over Mount Zion with this valley at its foot, while the adjacent eastern wall runs across the brow of Mount Moriah above the valley of Jehoshaphat.

This it is to which Joel alludes (3:12) for, though the gathering of the apostate nations under Antichrist is to be at Armageddon, the battle and destruction is to be in that "valley of decision" (v. 14) where God will "judge all the heathen round about." It is well known that in the wall over the valley where this is to be, the Turks point to a small projecting stone on which their Antichrist Mahomet, as it is believed by them, will sit when the world is to be assembled for judgment below.

This is in accordance with all that the spirit of Antichrist has ever been attempting to do since the beginning as he will to the end, in placing the false where the True is yet to be. But the crisis of all this is to be decided there under the very walls which are yet to be salvation and its gates praise (Isa. 60:18) "for Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king 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."

It is vain to say, as some do, that this was spoken of Sennacherib,* inasmuch as he did not perish there, although his army did. We know from good authority that he returned and dwelt at Nineveh, and was slain in the house of Nisroch his god (Isa. 37:37-38).

*(Sennacherib, like Saul, was a remarkable type of Antichrist, as will be seen more distinctly if we examine the answer God gave to Hezekiah's prayer against him (Isa. 37:21), for although that "king of Assyria" was overthrown in his attempt on Jerusalem, yet there will be noticed a distinct declaration of events connected with it, which did not at that time have any full accomplishment—What is said of the remnant (v. 31) that escape of the house of Judah, taking

root downward and bearing fruit upward, must allude to what is to be at the great deliverance yet future, when Jerusalem is to be "safely inhabited" after the last "Assyrian king," like the other has been overthrown, for God is pledged to "defend Jerusalem" against which "the Assyrian" will yet come (Isa. 10:5-32), "for Mine Own sake" —verse 35, "and for My servant David's sake").

Nor can it refer to Satan, as Lowth imagines, for when his time arrives he is to be cast into the lake of fire where "the Assyrian" and his prophet will already be. It is manifestly spoken of Antichrist destroyed, as will be seen (Isa. 30:30) by the Lord's coming, and causing "His glorious voice to be heard," and showing "the lighting down of His arm."

Psalm 18 was spoken by the literal David, as is intimated, "in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand . . . of Saul," who we have seen was a type of Antichrist. It will be a song of praise for a greater than David, when all Christ's enemies, including the anti-type himself, are under His feet, for it is evident the deliverance there spoken of, could not have applied in full to the literal David, except as a figure of Him Who was to come. "The bowing of the heavens," "the coming down," "the brightness that was before him" (vv. 9-12) all indicate that it was the great enemy of Christ, described as "the violent man" (v. 48), who had been then destroyed by the "fire out of His mouth" (v. 8). "Therefore will I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Thy Name" (v. 49).

How wondrous to see in all this, Christ the true David giving thanks, for Himself and the people with whom He identifies Himself, to his Father in Whose Name He had come. "It is God that girdeth Me with strength" (v. 32); "Thou hast enlarged My steps" (v. 36), "Thou hast also given Me" (v. 40), "Thou hast delivered Me" (vv. 43 and 48), Thou hast avenged Me (v. 47), "Thou liftest Me up" (v. 48), etc. What an exhibition of the love which could have brought Him from the glory He had with the Father, and take our nature upon Him and exalt it again to be heir with Him Who is the Heir of all things! Surely, love like this might make us long to see the kingdom He has purchased, and in which we are to reign with Him for ever and ever.

In Isaiah 14, much will be found which can alone apply to Antichrist, for it is on his destruction that the "earth is at rest" (v. 7) under its rightful King, after the storm that will then have passed over it. "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?" can be none other than Babylon's Antichrist king, distinctly a man, and so spoken of in subsequent verses, "all the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one (of them) in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under foot. Thou shalt not be joined with (to) them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people" (vv. 18-20).

All this agrees with what is said in Revelation 19:20, "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 . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

How much is the terrible character of all this in unison with the daring wickedness that will have provoked it. The firmness of the impostor is supernaturally supported to the last. Upon his heart, seared as with a hot iron, no dew of repentance is seen to descend. In that terrible hour he justifies the selection Satan had made of him, as, in undismayed presumption he hurries both himself and "the kings of the earth and their armies" against "the city of the Great King," Who is Himself

coming to meet him in the clouds of heaven and with all the accompaniments of Deity!

It was at the thought of that encounter that Habakkuk trembled, and of which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, heard the shoutings, exulting at the same time to proclaim the issue, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14-15).

If the reign of Antichrist, so fearfully terminated, will have been marked by such terror and tribulation as to have made men seek death without finding it (Rev. 9:6), what thought can imagine the joy and gladness of creation on that "morning without clouds" which follows when the storm will have passed away into the "clear shining after the rain"! What a scene will this freshened earth exhibit, reposing in the tranquillity of a reign of righteousness which comes at once upon the turmoil and anguish and blasphemy beneath which it had groaned under Satan and his antichrist king! "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, since thou (Antichrist) art laid down, no feller is come up against us" (Isa. 14:7-8).

It is impossible for a believer in that coming blessedness not to feel refreshed and invigorated by the very thought, and to wish to linger and linger still amidst the green pastures and still waters of comfort which its promise supplies. They restore the soul and make it to feel, with the way-worn psalmist of old, that a table has been prepared in the presence of its enemies. "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Ps. 23:5-6)!

An objection has been taken by many in our day to the study of prophecy, as being of little practical benefit. That there should be any ground for such a charge can arise solely from its having been misconducted, for it seems impossible that any one on reflection should think that so much of Scripture could be occupied with anything that really was useless or unprofitable.

In fact, however, the chief effort of writers on prophecy seems to have been now-a-days, to prove the truth of Scripture itself, not from its own, but from the pages of Gibbon, or Volney, or some such recorder of past events, which their system declares the prophecy to have previously indicated. In their fashion of accounting for it, nearly the whole of the Revelation has been accomplished. The pope, as the Antichrist, has nearly had his day and little remains in fact now to be arrived at but the probable year in which the dispensation will close, and the millennium, for which the world is so ripe, be expected to begin, if indeed it has not done so already.

Now this is really idleness, if it be no worse, for besides this mistake as to the times of the end, prophecy was given neither to gratify curiosity, nor to prove the general truth of Scripture. It was the doctrine on which its claims to inspiration chiefly rested. Our Lord Himself declares it to be so, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" etc. (John 7:16-17).

If a writer like Mr. Elliott (author of "Horae Apocalypticae" - see "The Prophetic System of Mr. Elliott and Dr. Cumming considered" in "Aids to Prophetic Enquiry" by Mr. B. W. Newton—Ed.) labors to prove the truth of Scripture from the two witnesses having appeared in Luther's time in exact fulfillment of its prediction, is there no risk of the ridicule of the scoffer being excited by such a

conclusion as few, even among his own followers, are at all satisfied with, or even inclined to believe? The attempt therefore is more likely to prejudice than to advance its object, and to such things, it is to be feared, may be attributed the strange indifference observable now among Christians themselves to prophecy, scarcely however to be wondered at, if men of such talent and research can draw nothing more practical, or even likely to be believed, out of it than this.

The very erudition required to support such a system as his is against the probability of its being true, for what becomes of the poor man with his Bible for his companion, if such extended literary research is required to make him understand what it means, and how its prophecies have been accomplished as he is assured they have been? And even if true, what benefit is it to him, if he was previously satisfied that the Bible was indeed God's Word, without all this labour to prove it so from statements he has no means of verifying?

He sees a distinct mention of the last days, and from his Bible written in the plainest and most intelligible language, believes we are entering upon them; and he reads there of the sure word of prophecy being a lamp in a dark place, to which it is well to give heed. Surely it is not what took place in the days of Constantine that can satisfy such as him, for he is told to "press forward" and it is in that direction he naturally expects the lamp to cast its light.

If warned of "perilous times" to come, surely he will seek to know the dangers there are to be in them, and not rest satisfied with being told what the General Councils of the Romish Church either said or did, hundreds of years ago.

What is it practically to him that there should be some who think the rider on the white horse "who goeth forth conquering and to conquer" to have been a Cretan, because he had a bow and Cretans had bows, or that the symbolic horsemen in Revelation 9 were Turks, from the mention of their power being in their tails, and horse-tails were the standard of the Turcomans?

He is told in his Bible of "a deceivableness of unrighteousness" with a coming that is to be "after the working of Satan," and he thinks of the light in a dark place, to which he has been told he would do well to take heed. But how can he feel satisfied in listening to such "tales of the past" as he can in no way connect himself with, even if he could understand, or remember, or believe them to have been the fulfillment of what his Bible had been telling him?

Zechariah, 500 years before the event, had told his people, "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" (9:9). Yet their fancy revolted at such a humiliating advent, however literal the event afterwards proved it to have been. And yet, in the face of the warning, every book is now searched, but the Bible itself, to furnish accomplishments, whilst the scoffers at the promise of His coming again "in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11), are scarcely to be distinguished from those, who, professing to believe and make others understand, are yet themselves scandalized at the thought that any but a spiritual return can possibly be intended, or that the man of sin means anything but a succession of popes, of whom it is now hoped from their calculations, we have seen nearly the last.

All this of itself is enough to repel men from the sure word of prophecy in absolute despair of finding anything sure or practical in it, whilst all the while, instead of traces of right triumphing over wrong, the most superficial observer may see that the reverse is the case, and that opinions

subversive of the sure word of truth itself, are spreading with fearful rapidity.

The weekly issue of impure and irreligious publications in the Metropolis alone is, of itself, enough to create some doubts as to whether the world we live in will come out of the dispensation men are agreed in thinking to be drawing to a close, in so spiritual and peaceable a termination as our learned are trying to make us believe. In fact, no thinking man does believe this, or that the pope can be either the only or even the greatest Antichrist we are to see.

Let the literality of Scripture but be freed from the fancies which have been woven into it, and again it will be found a practical guide as well as comforter, amidst the increasing darkness, and the evil that is yet to be, before the delusion is broken by that coming in the clouds of heaven, which every eye shall see, and about which there will be no mistake, "for as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27).

From the explanation given of the seals, trumpets, and vials, and how their effects have been seen in the world, it is attempted to make us believe, against, as it would seem, to express Scripture, that God has already been reckoning with it in judgment instead of "waiting to be gracious," still causing His sun to shine and His rain to fall "on the just and on the unjust." How a day of wrath could consist with such a day of grace in which "God is not imputing trespasses," might have led any one to pause and ask, what if these judgments are yet to be?

If Scripture, as it is alleged, does speak of an Antichrist to be seen and of a worshipping of the devil under him, may it not happen that when the Son is denied, as it is at that time said He is to be, together with the Father, the effect will be shown by plagues then as typified by what fell on Egypt of old? Admit, even for argument's sake, that this is possible, and Christians will soon discover how deeply they are concerned in the sure word of prophecy as pointing to what is still future, instead of in Gibbon to tell them it is all past.

It is by Scripture light alone, as shining in a dark place, that they will see to what all things are rapidly tending, with, at the same time, a comforting assurance that amidst the crash, God's faithfulness and promises will not only stand secure, but that He has cared for them with a Father's tenderness in having told His people before (Matthew 24:25) of what might well have shaken, if not overthrown their faith altogether, had it come upon them unawares," as it will upon all the world.

They will be saying Peace, peace, when there cometh sudden destruction from which they shall not escape.

Conclusion

There would be no conclusion to draw from all this were it true, as is so frequently insinuated, that prophecy is of no private interpretation as far as our own individual interests are concerned. There may undoubtedly be a risk not alone of neglecting, but also on the other hand of giving it an undue prominence. Nevertheless between these extremes let us bear in mind, that as "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" and declared to be "profitable," so it must be to our risk and damage if we overlook the proper place and importance of each and every portion of it. Our wish has been to vindicate the study of what many a Christian, from one motive or another, seems to shun, for in the persuasion of coming disorder and "perplexity," the lamp in the dark place spoken of is, by mention, the "sure word of prophecy," to which it is added "ye do well that ye take heed" (2 Peter 1:19).

Now if Scripture declares this, who is to forbid us saying that throughout a distinct warning is given—a telling before (Matthew 24:25)—of events yet to come in which individually we are all concerned? "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say," and whether there is not reason for asking why Scripture language, after all past lessons, is not to be taken literally in every instance where the context does not manifestly and unmistakably show it to be metaphorical. The rule laid down is not one of difficult application if we attempt to apply it honestly, and not with a mere wish to cavil and find fault where it becomes all to be humble as well as vigilant.

It is a sign of the times that the study of prophecy is talked of, at least more than it was, and if so, how deeply important that the theories regarding its interpretation should be examined with greater caution now, from the manifest failures of the past and the want of any real practical good having come out of it after we had expressly been encouraged to expect a different result.

Does not such a failure of itself suggest the thought that the prevailing system may have been a wrong one, and that greater regard to the plain literality of Scripture would lead, as in its other teaching, to the profit which of necessity, from Scripture declaration itself, must be there? Timothy when warned of the perilous times of the last days, nearer to us now than they were to him, was directed (2 Tim. 3:14-15) for protection against deceiving or being deceived to the Holy Scriptures which he had known from a child.

But how marked a departure must there be from the simplicity of that admonition, when we can sit quietly, year after year, listening to expositors who tell us of the allowance to be made for eastern phraseology and illustrative symbols, until in their hands, the plainest words which no "child" could mistake or stumble at, have become mystified if not wholly altered in their meaning.

Hence the whole way by which they have come, is strewn with abandoned assertions as one portion of the theory was shown to be inconsistent with the other, and as each succeeding writer still detected a new date or accomplishment which was found to fit more exactly even than previous ones had done.

It may look like presumption to say all this, but the presumption disappears when all that is contended for in these imperfect remarks is simply that a greater regard, than all of us have been showing, is due to the inspired literality of that Scripture, which infidels and philosophers of the day are seeking to overthrow altogether. If prepared to say that Scripture truth alone must be our refuge in the days of evil and error which are darkening around us, surely it becomes us to be "very jealous" for its literality, and to count all other lights as false which come not from that place where alone the true light shineth, however men may sneer at our simplicity in thinking so.

There are, and will be increasingly, meteor lights sent forth by Satan to lead man astray till his feet stumble on the dark mountains, if he himself does not perish there. Let any one think to what the German mysticism, to which allusion has been already made in these pages, is leading, and of what the world without a Bible would be, before he yields a hair-breadth to the system which is turning much of the plainest language into metaphor.

With our attention so plainly called to it, prophecy will be found no idle study to be dipped into or disregarded as suits our fancy, nor will it serve us to plead the confusion in which such widely different interpretations have involved it. This is only a good reason for more attention being given to the subject, and also for our asking why Scripture language should be differently construed from all other.

If it tells us of a revelation that is to be of "that man of sin ... the son of perdition" before the coming of our Lord Himself to destroy him, why should we be speaking of a succession of popes or principles any more than of a succession of Saviors and influences? Such discrepant interpretation is helping greatly the scoffers of these last days, who are already pointing to the inconsistencies of professed Bible Christians themselves, to show that their Book means anything or nothing, as they choose to make it, and is therefore unfit to guide man now that he is beginning to think for himself.

It is confessedly one of the characteristics of the last times that man's restless energy is searching into everything human and divine. Knowledge of whatever kind it may be, is increased by the many that "run to and fro" (Dan. 12:4), an expression which in the Hebrew means properly to run through or examine (a writing). As to Daniel's people, they make no attempt to understand his book, saying that he did not understand it himself and was even told that the words were "closed up and sealed" (verse 9). But they will not see, like many among ourselves, that this was only to be "till the time of the end," whilst we have what they had not, a book of Revelation shown to speak of the same events as Daniel had done, but which John, as distinctly, was commanded not to seal (Rev. 22:10) "for the time is at hand."

How strikingly ought this to warn us with all becoming reverence while searching the Scriptures, to give heed also to the sure word of prophecy in our eventful days as to a light shining in a dark place, and reflecting itself with increasing power from other Scripture which, we have seen, was to be sealed up and closed till now.

But besides neglecting a duty, as we contend it is from Scripture declaration itself, how much are we also in the meanwhile losing of warning and comfort, if either we refuse altogether to look into the subject of prophecy, or cling still to the misleading system of interpretation unhappily prevailing, even although our judgment is unconvinced by it? There is no Scripture warrant for

expecting a peaceful termination of present evil before the Lord comes, as literally and truly, as He was seen to go into heaven.

His people in the world have yet to expect a darker day than has appeared, and already are its presages unmistakably gathering in masses over them. The "light that shineth in a dark place" would increasingly vindicate to them, in such circumstances, the mercy that placed it there, were they not willfully perverting or obscuring it, as they are doing. It would be seen illumining the sable cloud of the future, making it to "turn out its silver lining on the night," with the light that is "behind it" reflected to God's people, who are on their way beneath it, until the darkness itself was dispelled by "the morning appearing." The light of prophecy is light from that heaven where there is no darkness at all, and is in contrast to another light spoken of by our Lord himself, if "the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23).

Let us be warned that this is it which the philosophers, falsely so called, of the day would beguile us into choosing, and of which it becomes us to beware, for it is from beneath (from him who is the prince of darkness as well as the prince of this world), which has accordingly ever chosen the darkness rather than the light, its deeds, like his, being evil.

And to what is all this "word of prophecy" pointing? Surely not alone to the trouble which is yet to be, but far more extendedly to the gladness that is beyond it, but of which our notions are and continue so low and earthly from want of heed to the sure word of prophecy.

If Antichrist is spoken of and the outbreak of sin and terror which will attend him, how do all the prophets seem to rejoice to be done with such details, and to escape from them into the glad tidings they are also commissioned to tell of "the glory that should follow"! Yet they who are to share in it seem content that things should go on as now, provided only the day of their death take them out of the trouble into a state which, after all, is still one of waiting "for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19).

The whole creation is represented as groaning' for this, nay, Christ Himself, although sat down on the right hand of God, as also "henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool" (Heb. 10:13). Yet Christians continue indifferent, or rather averse, to look beyond the present state of things, into what Scripture prophets tell them of the future with a distinct intimation that they would "do well to give heed." Nay, it almost seems as if they were deliberately overlooking the fact of this mortal which is to put on immortality being now in weakness, corruption, and dishonour (1 Cor. 15:42,43,53). How is it they will not understand their interest in what is to be?

It is written, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore" it is added, "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:16-18).

Are we doing so? Are we thinking of this change as well as of the reunion that is to be at that moment when this corruptible is to put on incorruption (surely this is not spoken of the day of our death) and this mortal, immortality? If so, how strange all this indifference to the "coming of the Lord," which is not only to destroy existing evil and accomplish this change in us, but to bring back to us "them also which sleep in Jesus," possessed like us then, and not till then, of glorified bodies

in which we shall recognize and welcome each other as fitting companions to be for ever "with the Lord."

Him, eye to eye we then shall see,

Like His, our faces shine;

O, what a glorious company

When saints and angels join!

What a contrast does the language, used by both prophet and apostle in reference to such a time of blessing, present to the indifference with which men hear of it now. "Thy dead shall live, My dead body (not "together with" which is not in the original, for believers themselves are that body, His Own having seen no corruption, Acts 2:3) 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! Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isa. 26:19-21).

It was to the expectation of such an "awakening," (then how distant!) that David is heard responding, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Ps. 17:15).

And Job too, in times still more remote, "in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: my reins within me (see margin) are consumed with earnest desire for that day" (Job 19:26-27).

Is there no longing exhibited here for the day when they were to be so "satisfied"? Is death swallowed up in victory now, when its triumphs are intruded on us every hour by the mourners who go about the streets? And are we still indifferent to the time, when all this is to cease with us and with them whom we are committing to the dust? Or, as Christians, can we afford to treat, as a matter of indifference, that the inheritance which Christ purchased with His Blood is still under the dominion of another lord; and that, instead of an amelioration and turning to Him, there is to be "the apostasy" and Antichrist who is yet to exalt and oppose himself upon it above all that is called God or is worshipped?

What a narrowing of all the glorious expectations which His church has been encouraged in from the beginning, is it for us "upon whom the ends of the world are come," to be confining our hopes to a bare individual escape from present distress and weariness, with our bodies, which are Christ's, left behind us in weakness and shame! How like a dishonored retreat from the battlefield were Antichrist and Satan to remain on it triumphant, and the earth upon which the Son of God had lived and suffered abandoned to the evil which had ruined it.

Surely this is not to be if Scripture's plainest words mean anything at all. He, Who endured the cross, despising the shame, and is even now bringing many sons and daughters to glory, is under promise to "come again;" no longer as at the first, in suffering and humiliation, but in the clouds of heaven and His saints with Him. The places of the Redeemer's sorrow are yet to be the places of

the Redeemer's triumph. His feet are yet to stand upon the Mount of Olives, the moon confounded and the sun ashamed, when He reigns in Jerusalem and in Mount Zion before His ancients gloriously (Isa. 24:23).

How strange to think that they who are to share in that triumph should be cold and indifferent about it, and more taken up with the thought of escape from their individual "light affliction, which is but for a moment" (2 Cor. 4:17), than with the hope of seeing realized the promise of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:13).

When our Lord comes, His reign with His saints is to be a reign of righteousness in contrast to that of Antichrist, which had preceded and shall then have come to an end. And Satan, bound for a thousand years, will not be present to exert the power he now has to pervert and mislead. But the flesh which fell will still be that of the inhabitants of the earth, and still exposed to sin again as if to show that in it "dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18).

This is an undeniable fact, whatever our fancy of the millennium may be, for sin and death are both spoken of as in operation during its period (Isa. 65:20; Jer. 31:29-30); and an outbreak at the end, when Satan having been loosed out of his prison (Rev. 20:7-8) will gather a number "as the sand" ready to join him in one further effort for preeminence, even as the first Adam, whose flesh they inherit, sinned and fell amidst the happiness of Eden, and in face to face intercourse with his Maker.

The former attempt had been led on by Antichrist, but in this Satan appears for himself and his final overthrow, for the Great White Throne is set and he, along with "the rest of the dead" whose names are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life, are judged, to be cast into the lake of fire, where Antichrist and his false prophet will already be, to be tormented for ever. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26), and his destruction is recorded as following immediately after that of Satan as if to mark the conclusion.

And here Scripture alone should speak, for these are solemn futurities: Christ "must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet ... And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:25,28). That which is perfect will then, at last, have come and that which is imperfect be done away (1 Cor. 13:10).

Every spot even where sin had rested or could rest "shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10), and "behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). What the glories of eternity will be to all God's redeemed people we could not now conceive, for earthly things cannot measure heavenly. We read of one who was caught up into Paradise (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell), and "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" yet "of such an one will I glory" (2 Cor. 12:3-5).

Another in speaking of them says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (see Isa. 64:4). And as if to seal all by a last promise, a third is made to declare, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (Rev. 21:7).

It will remain a mystery to us till we know as we are known, why a holy God could permit evil to enter where His will was supreme. But this we know, that He Who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (Isa. 28:29) doeth all things well. In His wondrous condescension to His people, He calls on them to prove Him, and how could this have been done, had nothing been permitted to ruffle or interrupt the tranquillity and order of His perfect dominion?

A man's character (with deep reverence be it spoken) is proved by the difficulties and trials to which he is subjected, and so God may have been showing, where sin abounded, how His grace could much more abound. May not this earth prove to have been the theatre selected by His wisdom to show, not only to us, but to beings incomprehensible to us now, who themselves never knew either sin or disorder, the full character of God on which all happiness depends, by a display of it in permitted events involving even the death of His Son?

Is it not confusion which makes us understand the blessings of order, sickness of health, sorrow of gladness, and turmoil of rest? And may not the passage of their Great Head in union with His people through all these, have been appointed, not only to "make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery," but "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:9-11).

Yet how would that purpose have fallen short of its full display of power as well as of goodness, were the earth itself which God had created in the beginning and which He had pronounced to be very good, been abandoned to Satan as a polluted thing, after all the display of the wisdom and grace which had been witnessed upon it!

But this is not to be so. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). "The redemption of the purchased possession" will yet be fully manifested when, as we have seen, the last enemy upon it having been destroyed, the Son Himself becomes subject, that God may be all in all.

Then, and not till then, will be known what that redemption so spoken of implied, as well as the wondrous ransom that was paid for it. It will be declared to men and to angels when the new heavens and the new earth are seen restored without spot or blemish, to God's sinless dominion, and what is more, along with them the "many sons and daughters" whom He, the Captain of their salvation Himself made perfect through suffering, had been bringing out of the world to share in glory with Him, Who in that day will be shown to be "the Heir of all things."

He Who was, for our sins and for our transgressions, reviled and spit upon and crucified between two thieves, will then be highly exalted. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify (have justified) many; for He shall bear (bore) their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11). The mystery will at last have been ended for ever, and He Who took our nature upon Him "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. 9:24), will be shown to be the same that was in the beginning with God and by Whom all things were made, without Whom was not anything made that was made, Who was with God, and Who was God (John 1:1-3).

It needs that we understand something of the character of that tremendous wrath which descended on our great Sacrifice and which will yet devour every one who is not found washed in

His Blood, before we are in any condition to judge aright of what is constituting the false glory of the natural man, and the real character of all that is within the gates of His city. Until brought to see this, we cannot have any true or proper desire "to go forth . . . without the camp, bearing His reproach;" and still less can we rejoice to have been, by free grace alone, thus called to come out and be separate from it. For where, alas, will he be found in that day who now lingers in these cities of the plain with the destruction that is impending over them, ashamed of the Saviour Who would have drawn him out of them, and up to Himself! Is it not written of such an one, "of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His Own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26)?

And if the sure word of prophecy tells us, amidst present distress and weariness, of such a glory as this is to be, it is, whatever men may call it, a light shining in a dark place to which we do well to take heed. For it is not impossible to do so, without feeling within us the stirring of a hope that is full of immortality. Whilst we look at those things that are not seen, do not our hearts burn within us by the way, and seem lifted above the "heaviness" of the present, rejoicing in the thought that "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18)?

Time, as it is now with us, is a human word, and the change associated with it an entirely human idea; so wrought into us however, that we dread monotony and the possibility of weariness where there is no change. But this is simply because time is connected in our minds here with invariable decay, and therefore with the thought that were there no change, our very hopes as well as occupations would slip from underneath us.

But when the eternal things spoken of are seen and there shall "be time no longer" (Rev. 10:6), neither shall there be any more decay, marking time's progress as now, with its dark and sorrowful shadow. The former things will have passed away and we shall have a new measurement scarcely to be appreciated by us at present constituted, but how transporting then, when we ourselves are "changed," and like all things around us, made pure and holy, without decay and enduring as the ages of eternity. It is when personally sinless ourselves, and not till then, that we shall be able to recognize the blessedness of owning and bowing to one perfect and sovereign Will.

Is not such a prospect fitted to animate Christ's people with new strength to press onwards, by showing them the real dignity of their present condition, set forth as they are, as a spectacle to men and to angels? For are they not chosen out of a world, which is pluming itself on its advancing liberty, its discoveries, its intellect, its science, its powers and its pleasures for ages to come, to be "God's witnesses" against all these, dedicated as they increasingly are, to the prince of this world, whose glory is and will be still more, in opposition to the Name of Jesus?

Like their Divine Master, they are despised and hated, not resisting evil nor trying to put right by force what they nevertheless protest to be wrong, and still contented in quiet submission to authorities and powers for the Lord's sake to suffer with Christ, knowing they shall also reign with Him (2 Tim. 2:12). Their light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working out for them a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory; and the crown that is laid up for them will be found worthy of God, the Righteous Judge, Who is to place it on their heads at that day.

Such a view, too, of Christ and Antichrist as we have been considering, helps to make us understand the width and breadth of that great gulf which is fixed between the service of the one

and the service of the other. There is no half-way—no compromise. Like that between the rich man and Lazarus, in one sense already "they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16:26). Yet, in another sense, there is still an escape if men will hear Moses and the prophets—"the sure word of prophecy" —but if not, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

And such, with all the promises still attaching to them, would seem the present existing condition of God's ancient people, the Jews. The veil is upon their eyes, and they cannot see what their own prophets have declared unto them. Nevertheless, God's truth is pledged, and He will surely perform whatever He has promised them of earthly distinction and blessing. And yet, after all, they were but types of His true people, brought not alone out of Egypt, but out "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues—a great multitude, which no man could number" (Revelation 7:9) bought with the precious Blood of His Son. The care which led and fed them in the wilderness is still shown to His own, whom He is bringing into a far nobler inheritance.

The one might sing the song of Moses when delivered from Pharaoh, whilst the other will, ere long, join to it that of the Lamb, as they stand on a sea of glass, mingled with fire, having "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" (Rev. 15:2-3). The inheritance of the one is on earth. The inheritance of the other is in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

The Jerusalem that is below will be the joy of the whole earth, but it will be so in the light of the New Jerusalem from above, "which is free and the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26), described as the "city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). The glory of the one will lighten the other during the millennial reign, and its bright inhabitants be the realization of what Jacob only dreamed of, "angels of God ascending and descending" on the earth (Genesis 28:12).

Who that has an ear to hear, can after this be insensible to the true dignity of the sons of God, nor feel more than urged to walk worthy of his high calling, when in the "sure word of prophecy" he gathers something of what that calling is, and to what it is conducting him?

How perfect, too, is the consistency of all Scripture, proving it in the face of all the scoffers and all the critics of these evil days, to be indeed given by "inspiration of God"! He it is Who hides these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matthew 11:26).

Gird up then, Christian, the loins of your mind; be sober and hope to the end. Even now, amidst the gathering darkness without, the "sure word of prophecy" which is indeed the light from the windows of your home, shines brighter and brighter as you approach unto it; and soon, as you touch its threshold, will come forth that gladdening reception, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

To close with a single inference from all that has been written in these imperfect pages. There are, and ever have been, but two principles in the world as will be seen plainly ere long—self and Christ. The one wholly evil and incapable of any amelioration or affinity with the other, as will be fully manifested in the approaching times of the Antichrist. It must, therefore, be utterly destroyed by that other, which is Christ; and when He comes to effect this, there will be peace in the world

itself, and not until then.

Meanwhile, God's discipline is now employed to convince us of this, and to show us what self is, as well as what Christ is. If the lesson is savingly learnt we cease to have any confidence in the one, and learn to lean simply and entirely on the other. Forthwith, the struggle within us is felt to be ended, and we do enter into rest (Heb. 4:3), expecting henceforth with Christ Himself till His foes and ours be made His footstool, when there will be outward tranquillity also.

Faith in this is "the victory that overcometh the world," even whilst we ourselves are still amidst its trials. No one ever thus knew himself and Christ without abhorring the one and cleaving to the other, for it is then he begins to learn that His yoke is indeed easy and His burden light (Matthew 11:30), even as that of the other was grievous to be borne.

And if by the full display which is to be, of what "self" really is, and tends to, in the revelation when the transgressors are come to the full of Antichrist, as its development then in open opposition to Christ Himself, prophecy serves to show (as it has been our attempt to prove it really does show), the direct antagonism which, under all forms and disguises has been in action from the very beginning, is not its study cleared from the charge of being a vain intrusion into things not seen and with which properly the future alone should have been left to deal; whilst itself is vindicated to be light shining in a dark place to which we do well to take heed?

But it will have been seen that it does far more even than this, for it declares the utter and terrible destruction of the one by the final and complete triumph of the other. Without the "sure word" how could such a termination have been assured to Christ's people, left as they are in a world where the foundations "are out of course" (Ps. 82:5), and self ever seeking to be uppermost in themselves, as in all around them, to an extent which might have made the struggle absolutely wearisome, if not seemingly hopeless altogether?

It was inspiration alone which could have told, as it has done, how all this is to end, and that in language and minuteness of detail, well fitted to meet all present perplexity, as well as all alarm regarding the issue. Greater is He that is for us than all that can be against us, may henceforth be the exulting thought of all who are Christ's, and who, as such, will share in that triumph which is approaching, as surely as is the Antichrist whom it is to destroy.

And ought not this assurance, and the disclosures with which it is accompanied, to teach and enable us to receive at present every inward and outward trouble, every disappointment, pain, temptation, or desolation with actual cheerfulness and joy as an occasion for the overthrow of self, that we may enter more closely into fellowship with Him, Who was Himself "made perfect through suffering"?

True, the world is seen more distinctly to be sitting in darkness, but God has called us out of that darkness into His marvelous light, and we understand, therefore, how it is He bids His people to walk as children of the light and of the day, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. What gladness to all such must be the thought that "the time is short"(1 Cor. 7:29), till He Who cometh will come, and when all that opposes His kingdom within or without shall be gathered out of it for ever!

Let men forbid or scoff at the study of prophecy as they may, its real importance is becoming daily more plain and apparent, for already, thank God, are many increasingly led to understand why it is written, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).

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