

A PRIMER ON PROPHETIC TRUTH

by Henry W. Fry

Fry's introductory guide to biblical prophecy, presenting the basic principles for understanding prophetic Scripture and the major events of the prophetic timeline.

18 Chapters

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000 - Preface

Preface

I have long regarded Mr. Fry's book as an excellent manual - indeed, the best that I know - for those who wish to begin the study of prophecy, and especially for such of them as can bestow but scanty time upon it. So much valuable information is deftly packed into the little volume, and it is presented to the reader in so orderly and concise a manner, that it can scarcely fail to endow him with a clear knowledge of God's plan in the Bible.

When, therefore, Mr. Fry wished to issue a third edition of his book, and asked me to revise and bring it up to date, so far as my own investigations would enable me to do so, I deemed it a simple duty to comply with his request.

Consequently, the book has been examined as carefully as the time at my disposal would permit whatever in it appeared superfluous or uncertain has been omitted; while, if anything seemed obscure, an attempt has been made to render it clear. Moreover, in a few passages in which the events of recent years, or an advance in knowledge, called for alterations or additions, these have been made. But there is no change in the general scheme and character of the book; and, I am glad to say, no increase in its bulk.

Mr. Fry's method of interpretation is that of accepting every word of prophecy in its natural and literal sense, save in obvious cases of figure, and of explaining Scripture by Scripture. And there is, certainly, no other reasonable way of understanding God's revelations, which, since He gave them to men, are, of course, expressed in terms easily intelligible to those for whom they were intended. We must not forget, that the element of mystery was introduced into Christianity by those who professed Christ in order that they might corrupt His doctrine, and assimilate it to that of Apollo and the universally worshipped Goddess of Nature.* The Most High God deals plainly and intelligibly with His creatures: it is Satan who excites their curiosity, and deceives them, by means of mystery and darkness.

[*The popular names of these deities when they began to affect Christianity were Mithras and Isis.] The chief aim of this little book, as its title, indicates, is to exhibit, in slight but connected outline, the plan which God has revealed for the redemption of our world. And scarcely any work could be more practically useful than this - to those, at least, who are already believers in "the Scripture of Truth." For the Bible - strange as it may seem - is rarely studied with that reasonable attention which is usually given to uninspired books. Instead of striving to get a comprehensive grasp of its whole contents, and to understand the relation to each other of its disclosures and principles, the majority of its readers are accustomed to cull a verse, a paragraph, or at most a chapter, from this book and from that, and to draw from them whatever consolation, hope, moral teaching, or precept of holiness, they may seem to afford. And this is usually done without any reference to the context, or to God's general scheme of action; and, not seldom, even without notice of the Dispensation to which the cited passage belongs.

What but the direst confusion could possibly follow such a procedure; and that especially if the passages thus isolated be prophetic? For it is impossible to arrive at a full understanding of any Divine prediction, unless one has some comprehension of the general scheme of prophecy, and knows where the particular utterance must be fitted in.

Yet there are very many students and would-be interpreters who do not trouble to expend thought upon such matters. On the contrary, they eagerly seize upon any words which seem to suit some preconceived system, or can, in their judgment, be connected with a passing event or tendency. And these they use for their own purposes; while they altogether ignore the necessity of harmonizing their interpretation with other Scriptures, and with what ought to be known of God's plan as a whole. A conspicuous instance of this kind of exposition, and, also, of its consequences, may be found in a very frequent mode of treating the prophecy of the Seventy Sevens, the simple meaning of which is indicated in the present volume. For many insist, that there is no interval, no "monstrous gap", as they delight to style it, between the Sixty-ninth and the Seventieth Seven; and that the prophecy ends with the death of the Lord and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

Now, when we examine the first of these two statements, we quickly perceive that a very little knowledge of Scripture should have been sufficient to expose its untruth.

For, first of all, Daniel himself placed events between the Sixty-ninth and the Seventieth Seven, namely, the death of the Lord Jesus, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple forty years later, and a continuance of war "until the end" of the age. And it is only after the words, "until the end," that he has introduced the Last Seven. Thus he clearly intimated, that there would be an interval between the Sixty-ninth and Seventieth Sevens, and that it would be protracted until the time of the end.

Then, secondly, in each of the great prophecies of Moses - Leviticus 26:1-46.; Deuteronomy 28:1-68, Deuteronomy 30:1-20, and Deuteronomy 32:1-52. - it was predicted, that the Jews must be driven out of their country, and scattered among all nations for a long exile, during which God would suspend His dealings with them as His people. And this period of non-recognition is manifestly the same as the interval between the Sixty-ninth and the Seventieth Seven, for which, it furnishes us with a satisfactory explanation.

Lastly; from the solution, given in the book before us, of the apparent discrepancy between 1 Kings 6:2, and Acts 8:17-22, it is clear, that, in reckoning the periods of His dealings with Israel, God ignores the time, or times, during which He has chastised them by delivering them into the hands of their foes. In "The Great Prophecies of the Centuries," I have gone still further, and have shown, that the Bible seems to divide the whole period of Israel's probation into three epochs, each containing Seventy Sevens, or Four Hundred and Ninety Years, these epochs being calculated by the omission from the ordinary chronology of the times of non-recognition.

And, while such times will be found to amount to ninety-three years in the first epoch and seventy in the second, they comprehend, in the third, the whole lapse of centuries from the day on which the Lord gave up the City and Sanctuary to destruction - just before He entered into Jerusalem as the King of the Daughter of Zion - until the day when the Jews shall once more be recognized as a nation in their own land. This time has already (1904) been extended to some eighteen hundred and seventy-five years; but, at last, the Jews are manifestly returning to Palestine, and the time of

their restoration must be near. By a consideration of these three points, students, who are seeking the truth in sincerity, will readily perceive, that God's way of computing the Seventy Sevens has been expounded to us with great clearness in the Bible itself. The second mistake, that the Seventy Sevens end with the death of the Lord Jesus, ought never to have been possible to those who had read the earlier part of the chapter in which the prophecy occurs. For all the circumstances connected with that utterance prove, that it is concerned exclusively with Daniel's "people" and "Holy City," that is, with the Jews and Jerusalem, or, with the Jews at times when they are in possession of Jerusalem.

Thus a large class of expositors are putting forth an interpretation, the very conception of which is erroneous. For they explain the prophecy from an altogether Christian point of view, and insert into it the hopes and aspirations of the heavenly people; while they absolutely ignore the yearnings of Daniel's heart as expressed in the prayer to which the prophecy is a direct answer, and assume that God cared not for the affliction and desires of His earthly people [the Jews]. And yet, the prophecy is found in the Old Testament: it is written in Hebrew, and must, from its circumstances, be understood to refer to Hebrews. Moreover, it was communicated to a Hebrew prophet and patriot, who earnestly longed to know when his people and his holy city would be finally and for ever reconciled to God.

Fervently does he pray:-

"O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness, let Thine anger and Thy fury, I pray Thee, be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Thy people are become a reproach to all that are round about us."

Now, was this desired consummation, in all its particulars as expressed in the first verse of the prophecy, fulfilled at the First Advent? Was there, at that time, a full end, and a sealing up for ever, of Jewish transgression and sin? Was the remnant of the people then reconciled to God; were all the survivors of the nation born in a day; and did they and their descendants forthwith become everlastingly righteous? Was all that the prophets had predicted fulfilled eighteen centuries ago, and did the Messiah then build and sanctify His glorious Millennial Temple?

Nay, we know that none of these things have even yet happened; and, what is more, Zechariah tells us that they never can happen until the Lord has appeared for the second time, and the Jews, as they look upon Him, recognize the Holy One Whom they pierced, and, at last, fall prostrate before Him. Then, and not until then, will there be a fountain opened to the House of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness; that is, it will be opened to Jews as Jews; for by that time the Church-period will have passed by.

Those, then, who will have it that the Four Hundred and Ninety Years were completed at the First Advent, can maintain their assertion only by disregarding the context and every circumstance connected with the prophecy. Still worse, their interpretation turns the Lord's gracious answer into an absolute mockery of the prophet's prayers and tears. For, if their conclusions be true, then, instead of consoling Daniel with hope for the latter end of his people, God did but hint at the fearful culmination of their sin, and led him no further than to the threshold of their severest and most protracted trial.

It is, however, impossible that such could have been the case: if an answer of any kind was to be vouchsafed to Daniel's supplications, then, as soon as the Four Hundred and Ninety Years have run their course, the final restoration of Israel, and the dawn of the Millennial glory, must immediately follow. And this, as the reader will presently see, is the true meaning of Gabriel's message to the prophet.

I have entered somewhat fully into this question because of its great importance as a clue to the scheme of all Divine prophecies, but, nevertheless, cannot conclude without a few words of caution. While we prayerfully strive to understand the revelations of God, let us not for a moment allow their practical and sanctifying virtue to be merged in a mere intellectual study. They are intended to serve as "a lamp shining in a squalid place,"* by means of which we may see the filth that is everywhere around us, and so may avoid soiling our garments. For Divine prophecy sets before us God's view of the social, moral, and religious phenomena of these Last Days, in order that we may be warned to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and free from the influence of those who prophesy falsely under Satanic inspiration. Let us, then, not forget the admonition in the opening verses of the Apocalypse:-

"Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein."

[* 2 Peter 1:19. Both of our versions have, "in a dark place"; but I can neither find nor hear of any instance of the use of [the Greek] translated literally. "murky.") in such a sense. The only established significations of that word are "dry," "dirty," or "squalid." And in the Bible, as, indeed, in all other books, we must draw our interpretation of every sentence from the proved meaning of its words, and not alter that meaning to suit our own view of the passage.]

Finally, and above all, Divine prophecy reveals to us the mysteries of our incarnate Lord, and the glory which He will presently assume. Let us eagerly drink in its every word; it will show us the very thoughts and feelings of our suffering and dying Saviour: it will teach us in what manner He, Whom not having seen we love, because He first loved us and gave Himself for us, will shortly return to this earth in the power and glory of His Father, and be adored by all His saints, and by all the angels of God. And it will make us rejoice to know, that our weak and sinful flesh will not shrink with terror from the brightness of His appearing; for that, in one moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He will change the bodies of our humiliation into the likeness of His Body of Glory, according to that mighty "working whereby He is able to subdue even all things unto Himself." So will He raise the poor out of the dust, and lift up the needy from the dunghill, to make them sit with princes, and, inherit the throne of glory.

"Unto Him that sitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever. Amen"

G. H. Pember

01 - God's Plan in the Bible, Parts 1-3

God's Plan in the Bible

1. If we take up a book written by an author of reputation, we expect to find in it a well-developed plan or plot - some definite aim, object, or teaching, which runs through the whole book from beginning to end. We are not surprised to see that it is divided into chapters, and the chapters into sentences; neither do we wonder if the whole be arranged in two or more parts, each consisting of several chapters. We should, however, be startled were we to discover that the chapters, or even the divisions, had no connection with each other; and, in such a case, we could only suppose that the author had become mentally incompetent.

2. And, again, the higher our estimate of the knowledge skill and general qualifications of an author, the higher will be our anticipation of the excellency and perfection of his work.

3. When, therefore, we take up the Bible, the Book which was written by the very [Holy] Spirit of God, through various instruments, indeed - just as a man might write his manuscript with different pens - but essentially by the Spirit Alone; when we accept it as such, and as the only perfect Book, we should, although it is divided into many parts written at various times and under very different circumstances, with reason expect to find one definite plan or scheme running through the whole, from Genesis to Revelation.

4. And how gloriously this expectation is fulfilled! When we read the opening chapters of Genesis, the story of man's creation by God, and his settlement upon the earth in happy circumstances; when we learn how he forfeited his joyous existence through sin, and lost Paradise and the Tree of Life; when we shudder at the curse pronounced upon the transgressors, and the tears, pain, sorrow, and death, that followed it, and still more at the awful fact, that the Tempter himself continued to retain man's confidence, and at the terrible consequences of such a connection - when we have contemplated all these things, how ineffably beautiful it is, and what a testimony to the fathomless love of God, to find that the closing chapters of Revelation tell us of the removal of sin, of the recovery of Paradise and the Tree of Life, of the remission of the curse, of the wiping away of tears from all faces, of the ending of pain and sorrow and death, of the casting out of the Devil, and of the glorious words, "Behold, I make all things new!" How wondrous the story! How worthy of the God Who is love! And, if we study the revelations and details contained within so marvellous a beginning and ending, we shall find them all in fullest accord with what we have already read, all leading gradually, but directly, from the fall to the restoration, and all equally worthy of our earnest attention. Why, then, are we content with owing so little of this wonderful Book; why do we not strive for a complete knowledge of all the measures which the great God has taken to bring back life out of death, order out of chaos, tranquillity out of unrest, and perfect happiness out of misery?

5. It is with the desire of aiding those who wish to obtain a clearer view of the main teachings of the Bible, as a whole, that the following pages have been written. Everything is stated as simply as

possible, with a view to help simple people.

6. May the dear Lord bless our labours for His Own sake, and to His Own glory; and may the effect of this little work be to impress deeply on the mind of every reader the wisdom, as well as the necessity, of being ready for the glorious events which may at any time take place. For, when they come suddenly upon us, it will be to the ineffable joy and blessing of those who are watching and waiting for the Lord, but to the terrible confusion of all who, while professing to be ready, are in reality the children of this world.

7. A further introductory word of warning may, perhaps, be added; since many people are apt to be impatient when they find difficulty in interpreting the teachings of God's Book. For it is very important to remember that the Bible is not merely revelation: it is also a veil. To those who read in the Spirit, it is a revelation, and the same [Holy] Spirit of God Who wrote it will also interpret it to the humble and seeking heart; while its study will only add pride to the proud, stubbornness to the stubborn, and increase the darkness of those who love darkness rather than light. Its perusal will emphasize, and add fuel to the flames of whatever passion animates the heart, pride to pride, wisdom to wisdom, love to love, darkness to darkness, light to light, faith to faith, doubt to doubt, and so on. Let us, therefore, be very careful that the spirit in which we approach this great subject is in accordance with Psalms 25:5 and 1 John 2:27.

8. We will take it for granted, at the commencement of our study, that God had a definite plan and a definite object in giving the Bible, as His message to man, in the form in which we now have it. We may, too, surely, assume that it contains everything necessary for salvation; and, in the same way, may we not also thoroughly realize that no part of it is unimportant or to be neglected ?

9. But, before we endeavour to trace out God's plan, let us fully recognize the fact, that His action has been continually thwarted and hindered by the Devil's plan. Indeed, we shall find that the Scriptures give us much information and warning as to this counterplan of evil so that we may not be discouraged when we see it in the ascendant. For, in the end, God's plan must and will triumph, and the reign of righteousness be ushered in.

10. Let us further bear in mind, that the three great doctrines of Christianity are - 1st, the fall of man; 2nd, the advent of Jesus Christ in humiliation, to die for the sins of the world, and to rise again; and, 3rd, the Second Advent of Jesus Christ to reign [both here, and afterwards in a 'new heaven and new earth'] in glory.

11. To help our memory, we will take five coloured cords, as shown in Diagram A, to illustrate the main teachings of the Bible. On the one side there is a white cord, A, which illustrates God's plan; the black cord, B, on the other side, represents the Devil's opposing plan. Each of these cords is knotted in three places. These knots illustrate, in each case, three facts. Those on the white cord, A, remind us, that God has, 1st, His people, Israel ; 2nd, His capital, Jerusalem; and, 3rd, His King, Jesus Christ. Those on the black cord, B, remind us, that Satan has, also, 1st, his people, the Gentiles; 2nd, his capital, Babylon; and, 3rd, his king, the Antichrist.

12. But, besides these cords, there are three others, C, D, and E, red, yellow, and blue, respectively. These are plaited one with the other to illustrate the fact, that there are three main lines of prophecies running through the Bible, viz., those concerning Israel, those concerning the Gentiles, and those concerning the Church of God. But, just as the three cords are twisted one

about the other, so the prophecies are intertwined in the various books of the Old, as well as of the New, Testament.

13. The three plaited cords are, moreover, tied into knots in two places, to show that the three lines of prophecy mainly converge around two great events. The first of these is the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in humiliation, to be rejected by His earthly people, the Jews, and to die for His heavenly people, the Church. The second, is the return of the same Lord, in glory, into the air, to call thither His heavenly people to Himself, and, subsequently, to descend to earth, accompanied by His glorified Church, and to save His people Israel.

14. We may summarize the teachings of these cords thus:- All through the Bible God's plan may be traced, with His King, Jesus Christ, His people, Israel, and His capital, Jerusalem; and Satan's opposing plan may also be detected, with his king, the Antichrist, his people, the Gentiles, and his capital, Babylon. And so, the three lines of prophecy, concerning the Church, Israel, and the Gentiles, are intertwined throughout the Bible, but principally converge round, point to, and teach of, the first and second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven to earth. By these facts we see, that the one glorious central Figure of time and of eternity, so far as this world is concerned, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

15. If we can thoroughly master these few points, we have, though very roughly, an outline which will materially help us to understand the fuller details that follow.

16. We will now take a somewhat more minute view of the main lines of teaching, by history and prophecy; and, for the purpose of making more clear what is said, a chart or diagram (B) is appended, which, on examination, will be found to illustrate twenty leading events of history and prophecy, as follows:- (A) God prepared the earth to be the dwelling place of man, as related in the first two chapters of the Bible.

(B) But man sinned, and lived on the earth for a considerable period, during which he did not seek God, or do His will, but stubbornly rebelled against Him. Thus God's plan was marred by the counter plan of Satan; therefore,

(C) In His anger He brought a flood of waters upon the earth, and destroyed all mankind, except one family, that of Noah.

(D) By this family the earth was repopulated. But their descendants quickly forsook God's laws, and again His plan was marred. Henceforth, therefore, He abandoned mankind in general to their own ways, and chose out one special people for Himself, namely, the Children of Israel. These He placed in Palestine, with Jerusalem as their capital, and Himself as their God.

(E) After a while, dissensions arose, Satan's plan again interfered with God's plan, and the nation was divided, the Ten Tribes separating from Judah, with Samaria as their capital. These Ten Tribes so terribly rebelled against God that He forsook them, and they were

(F) carried away into captivity to the other side of the Euphrates, according to the prophecy of Ahijah (1 Kings 14:15).

(G) The Two Tribes, that is, the Jews, were left in Palestine, until they, too, so abominably offended against God that

(H) He suffered them to be carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, and that to Babylon, the very capital of Satan. Satan's plan was now in the ascendant: Jerusalem was destroyed; and, although a few Jews remained in Palestine, yet, as a nation, they ceased for a time to exist. The sovereignty of the earth, which by right belonged to Israel as God's people, passed into Gentile hands, where it still remains.

(I) But God had not abandoned either His people or His capital; so He stirred up Cyrus to command that the Temple at Jerusalem should be rebuilt, and to allow some of the Jews to return to their own Land, under Ezra, for that purpose.

(J) Later on, God influenced Artaxerxes to order the rebuilding of the walls and city of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-5); and, with that view, a second company of Jews were permitted to return to their own Land, under Nehemiah.

Now, God had previously foretold by the mouth of the prophet Daniel, that, since the Seventy Years of the Babylonian captivity would not suffice to bring the Jews to a genuine repentance; therefore, their suspension from the sovereignty of the world should be extended to seven times seventy, or 490, additional years. And these Seventy Sevens - wrongly called "weeks" - of Years were to commence from the going forth of Artaxerxes' command for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its walls. But the prophecy divides this period into three parts, that is, into Seven Sevens, Sixty-two Sevens, and One Seven, which is the Seventieth and Last. On the chart, the first Seven Sevens are represented by J. (See also paragraphs 105 to 122.)

(K) The second period of Sixty-two Sevens terminates at the cutting-off, or death, of the Messiah, Who also appeared as a Prince (Matthew 21:5).

(L) Then commenced a great interval (see paragraph 110) between the end of the Sixty-ninth Seven and the commencement of the Seventieth, during which Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles, and all Israel is Lo-ammi, or "Not-My people."

(M) And so, the Jews were wholly banished from their beloved land, and again, as a nation, ceased to exist.

(N) But, during this great interval, God would not leave Himself without witnesses upon earth, and, therefore, began to call out His Church, made up of individuals chosen from amongst all nations, who were to be His spiritual people, until the time when He would restore the Kingdom to Israel. Such is the age in which we live.

(O) On the chart, O represents another feature of these present days - the return of the Jews to Palestine; and already (1903) there are many more of them in the Holy Land than there were at the restoration under Nehemiah (J on chart). Hence we anticipate, that God will very shortly resume His dealings with His earthly people. And, in that case, He will have no further need of His spiritual people, the Church.

(N), to represent Him on earth. Probably, then, He will soon remove those of them who are ready, and re-establish His relations with the Children of Abraham.

(P) Then will commence the period predicted by Daniel as the Last, or Seventieth, Seven. It will be the season of temporal judgment, of the Great Tribulation described in the Apocalypse. It will be

the time of Jacob's trouble, the day of vengeance of our God, and it will culminate in the Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord. Then Christ, the Messiah, will return to the earth with His glorified Church, in order that He may save His then repentant earthly people, Israel, and in them re-establish His Kingdom upon earth, which will have been suspended ever since the Jews were carried away to Babylon (H on chart). This Last Seven of Years is, also, the time in which the Antichrist, our Lord's great opponent, will appear, and will head the final rebellion against God. Mightily will he persecute both Jews and Christians; but he will be destroyed by Christ Himself when He descends to earth with His saints.

(Q) The day of vengeance being over, the Devil bound, and God's plan once more in the ascendant, the whole of the Tribes will be gathered to Palestine, and, as a reunited nation, will serve God there throughout

(R) the Millennial period of a thousand years, during which Jesus Christ, the Great King, with David raised from the dead as His vicegerent, will reign over the whole earth.

(S) At the expiration of this period, the Devil will again be let loose, and sin will once more appear on earth in a virulent form: but for how long a time is not revealed.

(T) When, however, he is finally cast down, and the judgment of the Great White Throne is ended, then other and very different scenes will follow. Old things will pass away, and all things be made new; while, finally, Christ will give up all things into the Father's hands. What then will happen we know not; for then the eternal period will commence: and, while much is foretold of the future in regard to the things of time, very little, indeed, is revealed as to the things belonging to Eternity.

17. In the above outline only a few Biblical references have been given; but, in the more complete plan which follows, everything will be substantiated on the authority of God's Word. If only the events just mentioned be fully comprehended, the detailed narrative that follows will be much more readily understood and retained in the memory. And, when once a sketch, however slight, of the whole plan of Divine revelation is secured as a possession of our mind, we shall without hesitation confess how ineffably grander the Bible appears in its general scheme and entirety, as well as in its detail, than it could possibly seem to those who study its inspired pages in the partial and disconnected manner usual in our times.

18. In the days when our Lord was on earth, He found it very difficult to make His disciples grasp the spiritual teaching which He came to offer. They understood well enough the temporal teaching of the prophets, that their Master was David's Heir, and the rightful King of Israel; but they expected Him to restore the temporal Kingdom to Israel at that time, and could not understand that He had a spiritual as well as a temporal dominion. It was, therefore, expedient for them that He should go away, and that the Holy Spirit should come down and show them these things. But, in our day, it seems just as difficult to make some enlightened Christians grasp the fact, that there are not only spiritual things in the New, as well as in the Old, Testament, but, also, very definite, and very terrific, and very glorious teachings of a wholly temporal and earthly character, which are, perhaps, as important for the right comprehension of God's Will and design as the spiritual teachings are.

19. May the same Holy Spirit Who wrote the Word for our learning, and Who enlightened the early disciples on those matters which they could not fully comprehend, enlighten, also, every reader of

these pages, and cause him to see that ALL Scripture is profitable. For, if a man is to be "thoroughly furnished," he must be acquainted with the details of prophecy before he can expect to understand the nature of that glorious hope on which he professes to rest. For, unless he be thus instructed, he is apt to keep his eyes fixed on the present age - marked as N on the chart - to concentrate all his ideas on that one portion of God's plan, and, by so doing, virtually to ignore the other glorious truths, and so to over exalt his own times, forgetting that their main importance lies in the future, that is, in what they lead to. Let us, then, remember, that, however grand and fascinating one portion of God's plan may be, yet, since a part must be less than the whole, it is ours to be content with nothing short of the fullest obtainable knowledge of all that has been revealed.

20. It is no light matter for reader or writer to approach the great subject discussed in these pages. Surely the most reverent attention is due when the matter under consideration is the thoughts and plans of the Almighty. Unnumbered millions of human beings have already played their part in His great scheme, and unnumbered millions more will do so before it is worked out. It is, indeed, an awe inspiring thought, that, not only has God a definite plan for the life of each one of His people, but also an equally definite plan for the world as a whole. All His plans are definite, all are fore-ordained, and all are intricately interwoven. And, notwithstanding the limitations and hindrances arising from the counter plans of Satan, yet, sooner or later, the mighty and glorious Will and plan of God must triumph. Hallelujah! May the Lord, indeed, hasten that glorious time, and in the meanwhile may we, who can truly pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done," avail ourselves of the inspiring revelations of the Living Word concerning this "blessed hope." For He has given them to us for our comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

21. It will be our privilege, as we study these truths, to observe how we are told, that the evil which is in the world must and will be overcome. It will inevitably be cast out; for it cannot withstand the mighty purposes of God. We shall see, that, although it is foretold that wickedness will prosper and succeed for a time, yet, in the very height of its prosperity, when such power and dignity as evil can assume have come to the full, and are dazzling all men with their deceitful magnificence, even then the Arm of the Lord will be stretched forth in anger and might, and the whole system of rebellion will be crushed beneath It. But this is not all for we learn that, together with the evil system, the evil-doers themselves, also, will be destroyed. This study solemnly warns all who call themselves Christians to take heed that they are so, not merely in word, but in deed.

22. Just as, in the days of Noah, while he was actually building the ark in which he and his family were to be saved, the world saw no reason to fear a flood; so it is at this moment in which we live. Worldly people, and even many Biblical students, see no reason for imagining that judgment is near, or that any change in the order of things is likely to take place. But this, instead of making us confident in the stability of things existing, should rather influence us the other way, and make us mistrust what the world believes, and rely wholly on what the Word of God reveals; for it is at a time when we think not that the Son of Man cometh.

23. And there is another very important point which we must not omit to notice. Undoubtedly justification - that is, repentance and faith resulting in pardon - is the great essential for all unconverted men who would receive eternal life. But sanctification - that is, consecration of oneself to God and faith in His promises, resulting in purity of heart and holiness of life - is the

great essential for those justified persons who long for the glories that shall be revealed. All men come short of the glory of God, because all have sinned; but there are many who, although they are pardoned, and delivered from spiritual death, will altogether fail to obtain the prize that is set before them.

24. For it is those only that suffer with Christ, after they have been cleansed by His Blood, who will reign with Him. If, then, the period of our probation should pass, and we be found to have refused the suffering ordained for us, and so to have missed the blessing of sanctification by faith, we should lose, also, the glory that would otherwise have been secured to us.

25. Many people look upon the possibilities of holiness of heart and righteousness of life as chimerical. But, though with man this is impossible, yet "with God all things are possible"; and He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

26. Evil is subject to His power even now, and He is able to subdue it in our hearts. Only let us study His Word, appropriate His promises, and seek to know Him definitely as our Saviour from the power, as well as from the guilt, of sin. Just in the same way, hopeless as the case may seem at present, it is God's plan and purpose to destroy evil out of the world, and to bring in a reign of righteousness and peace and blessing.

27. God can and will purify the world: He can and will purify the human soul. But "without faith it is impossible to please God"; and "we are purified by faith," and not by sight.

28. We will again avail ourselves of the services of a chart (C), but will add a considerable number of items to the previous diagram, so that we may be able to go into greater detail. In the previous chart we had twenty leading events chronicled, in the present one we have fifty-six, an increase of thirty-six events. Briefly enumerated, these events are as follows:- (1) Represents the Creation. Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3; Isaiah 45:18.

(2) Represents the period of ruin to which the earth was reduced by a catastrophe of which we have no record; but which, perhaps, was connected with the fall of Satan and his angels, and the destruction of the world that then was.

(3) Represents the reforming, or restoration,* of the earth. Genesis 1:1-31. and Genesis 2:1-25.

[* NOTE. The initial creation was not "formless and empty" but "became" that way after Satan's fall. Therefore, the age of our earth is not disclosed in the Scriptures; and the creatures that roamed upon it before its restoration and the creation of man are not mentioned or described in Scripture. Between verses two and three of Genesis chapter one, we have an undisclosed time gap before the account given us of earth's restoration - (and the subsequent creation of man and woman) - from verse three onwards: not, as many mistakenly believe, its creation. The A.V. translation is misleading by its use of the word "was" instead of "became". It was not without form and void at the very beginning – at the time of its initial creation: it became that after Satan's fall.]

(4) Represents Satan as the Prince of the Power of the air. Ephesians 2:2.

(5) Represents the fall of man. Genesis 3:1-24.

(6) Represents the human race between the expulsion from Eden and the Flood. Gen 4:-8.

- (7) Represents the translation of Enoch. Genesis 5:18-24, and Hebrews 11:5.
- (8) Represents the Flood. Gen 6:-8. Hebrews 11:7.
- (9) Represents the city and tower of Babel. Genesis 11:1-9.
- (10) Represents the call of Abraham. Genesis 12:1-5; Acts 7:2-5; Isaiah 51:2.
- (11) Represents the glory of God coming down upon the Ark. Exodus 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 5:11-14.
- (12) Represents United Israel.
- (13) Represents the severance of Israel from Judah, and the captivity and dispersion of Israel beyond the river, that is, beyond the Euphrates. 1 Kings 12:1-33., 1 Kings 14:15; 2 Kings 17:23.
- (14) the line of sovereignty, right fully belonging to Israel, but now in the hands of the Gentiles. 1 Samuel 10:24; Daniel 2:1-49., Deuteronomy 7:1-26., Deuteronomy 8:1-20., &c.
- (15) represents the translation of Elijah. 2 Kings 2:1-18.
- (16) Represents the returning into heaven of the Glory of God from the Temple. Ezekiel 8:3-4, etc.
- (17) Represents the carrying into captivity of the Jews to Babylon. 2 Kings 25:1-30.
- (18) Represents the land keeping Sabbaths for seventy years. Leviticus 26:34-35; Jeremiah 25:12.
- (19) Represents the Jews in captivity for seventy years in Babylon. 2 Chronicles 36:20-21.
- (20) Represents the Golden Head of the Image in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, that is, the Babylonian Empire. Daniel 2:1-49.
- (21) Represents the Breast and Arms of Silver, that is, the Medo-Persian Empire. Daniel 2:1-49.
- (22) Represents the Belly and Thigh - part of Brass, that is, the Grecian Empire.
- (23) Represents the Legs of Iron terminating in the Feet of Iron and Clay (pottery), that is, the Roman Empire. Daniel 2:1-49. (See NO. 44 on chart).
- (24) Represents the return of the Jews under Ezra to rebuild the Temple. Ezra 1:1-4 ; 2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Isaiah 44:28.
- (25) Represents the first period of "Seven Sevens," commencing at the return of the Jews, under Nehemiah, to rebuild the city and walls of Jerusalem. Daniel 9:25; Nehemiah 1:1-11. and Nehemiah 2:1-20.
- (26) Represents the second period of "Three Score and Two Sevens," terminating at the cutting off of "An Anointed One, a Prince." Daniel 9:25-26.
- (27) Represents the Word made flesh, or the birth of Christ. John 1:14.
- (28) Represents the Christ proclaiming Him self to be the King of the Daughter of Zion. Daniel 9:25; Zechariah 9:1-17.; Matthew 21:5.
- (29) Represents the Ascension of Christ. Acts 1:9; John 20:17; Luke 24:50-51.

- (30) Represents the descent of the Holy Spirit to form the Church on earth. Acts 2:1-4; Ephesians 2:13-18.
- (31) Represents the Church period. Matthew 16:13-18; Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 2:19-22, Ephesians 3:1-21; Ephesians 4:1-16, Ephesians 4:23-32.
- (32) Represents the "Heavens opened." Acts 7:56.
- (33) Represents the dispersion of the Jews under Titus and Vespasian.
- (34) Represents the return of Jews to Palestine, now taking place.
- (35) Represents the rapture of the Firstfruits. Revelation 14:1-5.
- (36) Represents Satan cast out of heaven, that is, out of the First Heaven, or Kingdom of the air, and thrust down to the earth. Revelation 12:9.
- (37) Represents the period of the Great Tribulation in the Last, or Seventieth, Seven. Matthew 24:21; Daniel 9:27; Daniel 12:1.
- (38) Represents the rapture of the "Two Witnesses." Revelation 11:3-12.
- (39) Represents the "Parousia" or "Presence," that is, the Lord's descent into the air to meet His faithful people. ("In Thy presence is fulness of joy.") 1 Thessalonians 4:16.
- (40) represents the completion of the Mystery of God, and of the First Resurrection. Revelation 10:7; 1 Corinthians 15:23, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52.
- (41) Represents the Bema, or the judgment seat of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:9-11.
- (42) Represents the "Epiphaneia," the appearing or manifestation; that is, the descent of Christ with His saints to the earth. Zechariah 14:1-5; Revelation 19:11-21.
- (43) Represents the destruction of the Beast and the False Prophet. Revelation 19:20.
- (44) Represents the Stone, cut out without hands, destroying the Image which represents the World powers. Daniel 2:34-35 and Daniel 2:44-45.
- (45) Represents the binding of Satan for a thousand years. Revelation 20:1-3.
- (46) Represents the re-gathering of the Ten Tribes. Isaiah 11:10-12 ; Zechariah 10:7-12.
- (47) Represents the Millennial reign of Christ. Revelation 20:4-6; Luke 1:32-33.
- (48) Represents Satan loosed for a season. Revelation 20:7-10.
- (49) Represents the destruction of Gog and Magog by fire from heaven. Revelation 20:9.
- (50) Represents Satan cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone. Revelation 20:10.
- (51) Represents the Great White Throne. Revelation 20:11-15.
- (52) Represents the Great Resurrection of all the rest of the dead for life or for judgment. Revelation 20:11-15; John 5:28-29.

(53) Represents those whose names are not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life, and who are cast into the Lake of Fire. Revelation 20:15.

(54) Represents the Great Abdication, when Christ, having subdued all things, gives them up into the Father's hands, that God may be all in all. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

(55) Represents the Heavenly Jerusalem sent down from God out of heaven. Revelation 21:1-27.

(56) Represents Eternity.

29. We will now more minutely describe the various events alluded to in the diagram (C). The first two verses of the first chapter of Genesis, in a very few words, describe two periods of time, each, probably, of vast duration. We are in no way able to judge when "the beginning" (No. 1) was. Many millions of centuries may have elapsed since the earth was created, and, no doubt, the first period, or periods, continued for countless ages. At last, however, a great catastrophe appears to have happened, and, instead of law and order reigning, as doubtless was originally the case, another period of indefinite duration ensued, which was one of ruin (No. 2). The account of the restoration of the earth from its ruins (NO. 3) is given in the first two chapters of Genesis.

30. No definite statement is found in the Bible to the effect that any race of beings inhabited the earth before Adam's creation; but there are indications that such may have been the case. Whether, however, it was so or not, of one thing we are sure, and that is, that man is not the only race of intelligent beings connected with, if we may not say actually dwelling upon, the earth. Man inhabits the earth; but Satan, or the Devil, with innumerable hosts of invisible evil beings, inhabits the air. He is described as "The Prince of the Power of the Air" (NO. 4), and rules over the fallen angels and evil spirits, or demons, which congregate there, and, with united purpose, do, as they ever have done, their utmost to lead men into sin, and so to counteract and spoil the plan and purposes of God, and to carry out and establish their own counter plan of evil. How well the Tempter succeeded with Eve, thus introducing sin into the world (No. 5), we all know; how he has continued to be successful ever since, history teaches us; and how successful he is at this day, our own eyes witness, and our own experience proves.

31. Man, on account of his sin, was banished from Paradise; and, consequently, had to work with his hands for a living. Nevertheless, after a few generations, he had grown arrogant, and full of evil; he had contracted horrible alliances with the evil beings of the Devil's aerial kingdom, not merely by giving way to their temptations, but, also, by using their powers through illicit connection with them, by magic and witchcraft, and even by worse methods. This lawlessness finally resulted in the birth of beings half men, half demons, known in profane history as demigods; and then God was compelled to interfere. Accordingly, He determined to cut off the whole human race (Genesis 6:1-12) with a flood (No. 8), leaving only Noah - who was perfect in his generations - and his family to be saved in the Ark, that they might continue and perpetuate the race of man on the earth.

32. Previously to this appalling judgment by water, an event of great significance had taken place. Enoch had been caught up to Heaven without dying (No. 7). We will not now explain the matter; but later on we shall see what a peculiarly significant event this was. (See paragraphs 80 and 81).

33. After the judgment of the flood, Babel, or Babylon, was built (No. 9), of course at the instigation of Satan. But God smote the builders with diversity of tongues; so that they were forced to

separate, and thus became the founders of the various nations of the earth. Yet these nations got deeper and deeper into sin; and, consequently, God it "gave them up," and chose Abraham (No. 10) to be the progenitor of a special people for His service.

34. But, Babylon's influence upon the world calls for a special notice; since that city is the Devil's metropolis of the earth. Hence, in both Old and New Testament, it figures largely in a double capacity. Sometimes it is the literal City of Babylon, and sometimes, "A Mystery, Babylon, the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth."

35. Briefly, then, let it be understood, that Babylon seems to have been founded in order to renew the antediluvian communication with evil spirits, which God had interrupted by the judgment of the Flood. For ungodly men desired to take advantage of such superhuman knowledge and power as they could obtain by this evil communication. According to an ancient legend, Shem, who was patriarch at the time, vigorously discountenanced this movement of rebellion; and so, to resist his power and influence, the new city was founded. As an additional precaution, secrecy was resorted to, and no one was allowed to become a member of the organization, unless he had been duly initiated. The initiation was preceded by a baptism and by oral confession, the latter being designed as a means of getting the candidate under the power of the officials of the organization. This secret society constituted the Mystery of Babylon. As time went on, the priests or officials of the Mystery obtained both wealth and power, as well as rank and great influence; and almost all the Pagan religions of the world, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and especially Catholicism, can be proved to have originated in the Mystery of Babylon.

36. Hence Babylon, being the mother or originator of these false religions, received the name of "the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth." For, since a woman is a common symbol of a church or system, a harlot naturally stands for an apostate or false church. There is, then, no difficulty in seeing how Babylon became the spiritual capital of Satan. How it also became his temporal capital, and must again before long be the place where his throne is, the following pages will show.

37. But our attention must now be turned to the history of the people especially chosen of God. How they gradually developed from Abraham, as an individual (No. 10), through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; how they went into and were brought out of Egypt; how they journeyed through the wilderness, and, finally, settled in Palestine as a united nation - with these portions of their history we are all well acquainted, and need not dwell upon facts so familiar. Moreover, we remember the establishment, under Moses, of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and how the Glory of God came visibly down from heaven (No. 11), and filled the tent, which, however, subsequently gave place to the Temple built by Solomon. We know, too, that the people were governed by judges for a time (No. 12), and that, at length, they cried out for a King, and God gave them Saul.

38. This originated what God intended to be the chief line of earthly sovereignty (No. 14); and it continued in Jewish hands, with Jerusalem as its capital, until the disobedience and apostasy of the people compelled Him to forsake them. Then Nebuchadnezzar was raised up to destroy Jerusalem, and to transfer the sovereignty of the world to Babylon, the Devil's capital. And thus, earthly power was taken away from Israel for a season, as is shown in the chart, and was delivered to the Gentiles, with whom it still remains, and will remain, until "the Times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

39. Again, we need only refer to the fact, that, shortly after the death of Solomon, the Ten Tribes revolted, and henceforth became an independent kingdom, separate from that of Judah. Finally, however, they were carried as captives into Assyria (No. 13).

40. Another event chronicled on the chart is, also, well known, but its significance, which will be explained in the following pages, is not, as a rule, appreciated. That event is the translation of Elijah (No. 15).

41. No. 16 marks the melancholy fact, that, about the same time that the sovereignty passed from Jewish hands, the Glory of God was taken up from the Temple, and was seen no more.

42. No. 17 indicates the carrying away of the Jews themselves in captivity to Babylon, to which place, also, the sovereignty was transferred. And so, Jerusalem, the spiritual and political capital of God, was humbled, owing to the sin of His people, and was superseded by Babylon, which thus became Satan's capital, not merely in a spiritual sense as "Babylon a Mystery," but also politically as the chief city of the first of the Four Gentile Empires.

43. These Four Gentile Empires were revealed in Nebuchadnezzar's Vision of the Great Image. (Nos. 20-23). Their dominion commenced when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, and is to last until it is broken by the Stone cut out without hands, which will descend on the brittle Feet and Toes of the Image, and wholly demolish it. This, however, is an event still in the future.

44. Profane history teaches us how the four great Empires, prophesied of by Daniel, have held the earthly sovereignty up to the present time. First, the Head of Gold, or the Babylonian Empire; secondly, the Breast and Arms of Silver, or the Medo-Persian Empire; then followed the Belly and Thigh-part of Brass, typifying the Grecian Empire; and last of all came the Legs of Iron, representing the Roman Empire, the decadence of which in its latter days is hinted by the mixture of Clay with the Iron of the Feet and Toes.

45. Returning to the main part of the diagram, we see the fact recorded, that, while, at No. 19, the Jews were undergoing a seventy years' captivity in Babylon, so, at No. 18, the land was enjoying those Sabbaths of which her inhabitants had so long defrauded her.

46. No. 24 notes the fact, that such Jews as cared to do so were permitted to return, under Ezra, to assist in the re-building of the Temple. Many of them, however, were comfortably settled in Babylon, did not wish to sever themselves from their newly-formed connections and interests, and, therefore, would not avail themselves of the permission. Later on, another opportunity was given to Jews to return and rebuild the city and wall, under Nehemiah; but comparatively few were so moved by the desire of their ancient home as to be willing to face the trouble and inconvenience of a journey to Jerusalem.

47. Small Jewish contingents did, however, respond to the appeals of Ezra and Nehemiah, and were now back in the land; and, therefore, although they were not the sovereign race they might have been, yet God resumed His dealings with them. Daniel had prophesied (Daniel 9:25), that, between the going forth of the commandment to rebuild the city and wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:8) and the appearing of Messiah the Prince, Seven Sevens of Years and Sixty-two Sevens, making altogether Sixty-nine Sevens, should pass by. These Sixty-nine "Sevens," or Four Hundred and Eighty-three Years, are marked on the chart as commencing at NO. 25, which

represents the first period of Seven Years.

48. We assume that these numbers represent years; for the prophet had previously been speaking of years (Daniel 9:2). He had been much troubled in his mind, because God had revealed to him, by the vision of the great Image, that the sovereignty would remain in Gentile hands until Four World powers should have arisen and been overthrown. For he remembered another prediction through Jeremiah, who announced, that the captives should be permitted to return from Babylon at the end of only seventy years; and, when he compared the two great prophecies, he could not see how to reconcile them. Consequently, Gabriel was sent to explain to him, that, because of the continued rebellion and indifference of the Jews, God had "determined," that, in addition to the Seventy Years, they should be subjected to a further discipline of Seven Times Seventy, or Four Hundred and Ninety, Years; and that this new period of humiliation should commence from the going forth of a command to restore Jerusalem, and should be divided into the above mentioned periods.

49. It is not very clear why the Seven Sevens were marked off; though it may be suggested as probable, that the rebuilding of the streets and walls of the city were to occupy the first period of Forty nine Years. But the second period of Sixty-two Sevens when added to the Seven Sevens amounts to Sixty-nine Sevens, and defines a most distinct period. For this was to be the whole time that should elapse between the going forth of the commandment and the appearing of "Messiah the Prince" or, if we translate literally, "an Anointed One a Prince." But who is Messiah the Prince?

50. Jesus Christ, when on earth in the flesh, did not come as a Prince to reign, but in humiliation to suffer; and, accordingly, we read, that, when the people, realizing that He was Heir to David's crown and kingdom, would have taken Him by force and made Him King, He hid Himself - thus showing that He did not at that time desire, or intend, to be so recognized. Yet, at length, there came a day when He ceased to repel those who would hail Him as their Sovereign Lord. It was when He entered the city of Jerusalem four days before His death, riding on an ass's colt, and the people spread their garments before Him, shouting:- "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

51. Then He no longer rebuked their acclamations; for He knew that they were fulfilling what had been foretold of Him (Zechariah 9:9), and were marking the close of the Sixty-ninth Seven. So, on that memorable day, "Messiah the Prince" appeared; and the event foretold to happen next was, that the same Messiah should be "cut off."

52. The sadly fickle multitude, which had caused the fulfilment of Zechariah's words, were, also, the means of turning Daniel's prophecy into history. For, within four days from the time that they had hailed the Lord Jesus as King, they suffered, and even encouraged, the malice and wickedness of the High Priest to cut Him off.

53. In our more detailed study of the Seventy Sevens, we shall be able to show, that the foretold period of the Sixty-nine Sevens, or Four Hundred and Eighty-three Years, was fulfilled precisely, even to the very day (see paragraphs 117-20).

54. The birth of Our Lord is indicated by No. 27 on the chart, and No. 28 marks His ministry on earth, which was followed by His death upon the cross for our sins. He was cut off, and there was nothing for Him; that is, He had at that time none of the glory and dominion which by right

belonged to Him as the Messiah.

55. No. 29 reminds us of His ascension to glory at the right hand of the Father, waiting (No. 32) till His foes have been made His footstool.

56. No. 30 represents the glorious fact of the descent of the Holy Spirit and the establishment of [Gentiles incorporated into] "the Church" (No. 31). But, when we speak of the Church, we must not be understood to allude to any Establishment, Sect, or Denomination, whether Orthodox, Papal, or Protestant. What we mean is that true and spiritual company of believers which, at present, is invisible to men, but is known to God. For, after the death, resurrection, and ascension, of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit was sent down into the world to teach men how they might become acceptable to God, and worship Him, Who is Spirit, in the only way in which He will suffer Himself to be worshipped, in spirit and in truth. And all those who are willing to be so taught, and to be filled by the [Holy] Spirit, are baptized by Him into that one Body which is truly called the Church, and which is the Body of Christ. This mission of the Holy Spirit is, of course, the great feature of the present age in which we live.

57. So far, we have been considering events which have already happened; now we come to others which are still in the future, but which must take place, because they are foretold in the Word of God.

58. We have already seen (paragraph 51), that the coming of Christ to Jerusalem as the King of the Daughter of Zion, and riding on the ass's colt, indicated the completion of the Sixty-nine Sevens foretold by Daniel; but there was another Seven, the Seventieth, of which we have, as yet, said little. Did that Last Seven of Years immediately follow the Sixty-ninth, or not? If not, why not?

59. There is abundant reason to say that it did not; but, on the contrary, that a great interval at once commenced, during which the Jews are in exile, and God's dealings with them as a nation are suspended, and will not be resumed, either spiritually or temporally, until the appointed period of exile shall have gone by. For it was as a nation that the Jews rejected the Lord Jesus, when He offered Himself to them as their rightful King; and so, God rejected them as a nation, and soon afterwards caused their city to be destroyed, and them selves to be banished from their land (No. 33). And they will continue to be thus rejected, or "given up," until (see paragraph 65) "she that travaileth," that is, the true "Church" (see Revelation 12:1-5), hath "brought forth" (Micah 5:1-3).

60. In the war with the Romans multitudes of the Jews were killed, while the rest of them were scattered over the face of the earth, to endure the terrible persecutions and sufferings which for centuries have been their lot. Hence one of the very significant signs of the present time is the fact, that the hand of persecution, which was in a great measure stayed, is now again raised to smite them, especially in Russia, the effect being their migration in large numbers to the Holy Land, which is no longer forbidden to them. It is also a well-known fact, that, whereas, a comparatively few years ago, the more important and honourable offices and positions in all nations were closed against Jews, yet now, in many countries, they hold more of these offices and positions, in proportion to their numbers, than any other section of the people. Further, there are at this time (1903) many more Jews residing in Palestine than there were in the days of Nehemiah.

61. These facts claim the most earnest attention from all Christians, since they enable us to realize, that the time when she that travaileth shall bring forth must be very near; for it is evident,

that before long the Jews will be once more a nation dwelling in their own land, to which they are even now regathering (No. 34). And God will then resume His dealings with and His judgments upon them by bringing on the final period of the Seventieth Seven, which will include the Great Tribulation, the Day of Visitation and of Desolation. Then the inhabitants of the whole earth, both Jews and Gentiles, but especially the Jews and the unready Christians, will be subjected to the fearful temporal judgments foreshadowed so often in the writings of the prophets, and recorded in the Book of Revelation, many of which will be caused by the great Antichrist, the "Assyrian" of Isaiah 10:5.

62. But we may avoid these woes, if we will; for God has provided an open door of escape. Before the period of tribulation can commence, the saints, those who are found ready and watching for the mighty and glorious event, will be removed, "caught up (No. 35) unto God and to His Throne." For, through faith in the cleansing power of the Blood of Jesus Christ, and through sanctification of the Spirit, they will be accounted worthy to escape ALL those things which are coming upon the earth.

63. Now, according to the belief of almost all prophetic students, events are fast ripening for the commencement of the Seventieth Seven. The night is now, not merely far spent, but is actually passing away, and the first faint beams of dawn may be already detected by those who are earnestly watching. Are we among the watching ones? Have we cast off the works of Darkness, and put on the armour of Light? Have we obeyed our Lord's command, and watched and prayed always, that we may be accounted worthy to escape the things that are coming upon the earth, and to be with Him while they are happening? Let us beware; for at an hour when we think not, and swift as a lightning-flash, the awful moment may have passed by, and the cry be heard from many a house throughout the broad earth, "One has been taken, and the other left!"

64. Alas! how many professing Christians will then be left, and so be disappointed of their hopes! They believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, they profess to be waiting and watching for Him; but, when He comes, they will not be ready; and so, instead of being caught up to God and to His Throne, and spared the terrors of the Last Days, they will find themselves left to go through the greater part of the persecutions and tribulations of the Seventieth Seven, initiated and carried out first by the "Great Whore," and afterwards by the Antichrist, or Beast. Such a danger ought to be the highest and most powerful stimulus to all [regenerate] believers, of whatever sex or age, warning them to prepare to meet their God.

65. The event referred to at No. 35 may, then, be very near at hand; and it will bring the great interval to a conclusion, and usher in the short period, during which the judgments of God will be in the earth (No. 37).

66. At that time, many of the Jews will have returned to their own land, and the earth will have lost the best of her believing inhabitants; nevertheless, there will be a great revival of true faith among those that are left behind. For they will have been horrified at the discovery that their spiritual condition was found wanting; and that, though they may still be saved,* yet they can now be so only as through fire. For they must endure all the terrors of the Six Seals, as well as those of the Six Trumpets. Should they, however, be enabled to remain faithful, their troubles will be ended at the sound of the Last or Seventh Trumpet, which will be the signal for the resurrection and translation of the Church, and will usher in the Seven Vials of God's wrath. This is the event

represented by No. 40.

[* That is, 'saved' in the sense of being restored and given an opportunity to win the 'Prize' - to rule and reign with Christ during the millennium.]

67. At or about the commencement of this period of the Last Seven, vast political disturbances will take place - "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"; in fact, such wars will ensue as are now anxiously expected and dreaded by all the statesmen of Europe.

68. We may anticipate that these political convulsions will result in the setting up of Ten Kingdoms, corresponding to the Ten Toes of the Great Image (Daniel 2:41-43), and also corresponding to the Ten Horns of Daniel 7:7, Daniel 7:20, and of Revelation 17:12. Then, out of the confusions of wars and revolutions, a man will arise, probably in somewhat the same way as the first Napoleon, who will increase in power and might, until he becomes, as Napoleon nearly did, the one great Emperor of the civilized world; and this man will be the Antichrist. Precisely when he is to appear, we are not told; but, in all probability, his coming will not be very long delayed; for even now his spirit is spreading among us.

69. About this time, the great city of Babylon will have to be rebuilt. This is the city originally founded by Nimrod, who established it to be a safe place where he could practise his idolatrous "mystery." It was, also, the city to which the sovereignty of the earth was transferred by Nebuchadnezzar, when the Jews lost it (see paragraph 38). Thus it showed itself to be the capital of Satan on earth, and the rival of Jerusalem, which latter was, in the first place, the appointed centre of all true worship, and, in the second, the chosen political capital of God on earth.

70. It was one of the great Napoleon's ambitions to rebuild Babylon, and to rule over Asia Europe, as well as over parts of Africa from thence. The opposition which he encountered was, however, too strong for him; but what he failed to accomplish, the Antichrist will carry out. For once more, in the Last Days, he will re-establish on a gigantic scale the ancient capital of Satan. And Babylon, thus rebuilt, is the great city whose destruction is foretold in Revelation 18:1-24.

71. The Ten Kingdoms, mentioned in paragraph 68, will flourish for a time, but not for long; for a Stone (No. 44 on chart) strikes the Image upon the Feet, and utterly demolishes it. Then the Stone gradually becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth.

Now a mountain is a Biblical symbol for a government or kingdom, the Stone represents the Lord Jesus, and its fall from above, His return to our earth. Hence it is here predicted, that the Ten Kingdoms will be destroyed by the Lord at His appearing; and that, subsequently, he will, also, absorb into Himself all other worldly governments, and so extend His dominion over the whole earth. Then, at last, the government will be upon His shoulder, according to the prediction of Isaiah (9:6).

72. But, after the present Dispensation has ended, and the watching Saints have been caught up to God and to His Throne, many events must happen both in the air and upon the earth. For instance, we know that Satan and his hosts have been "the Power of the Air" from the days of Adam to the present time. But, if the Lord Jesus and His saints are to come into the air, it does not seem consistent that the Devil and his hosts should remain there. Nor will they be allowed to do so.

Accordingly, in Revelation 12:7-9, we read of a war in heaven, just after the rapture of the Manchild, in which the Archangel Michael drives out Satan, together with all his angels, and casts them down to the earth.

Then a voice is heard, saying, "Rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them!" And well they may; for the Accuser and Destroyer is cast out, and the Saviour and His ransomed ones are about to take possession. But then the voice changes to a minor key, "Woe to the inhibitors of the earth!" For the Devil, driven down to earth, is now forced to remain there, and has great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time. We may, therefore, be sure that the Great Tribulation will speedily enter upon its most appalling phase.

73. No doubt, the true Christian and the Jew are those who will suffer the most acutely at this crisis. But the rebellious and the worldly, also, will be fearfully plagued by the judgments of the Seals and Trumpets; while upon them God will, subsequently, pour out the far more terrible Vials of His wrath. What the nature of these plagues will be may be seen by a reference to Revelation 6:1-17., 8., 9., and 16. And the prediction of Jehovah in Exodus 34:10, indicates that they will be far worse than the plagues of Egypt.

74. Let it not, then, be forgotten, that all these are to be literal plagues, just as much as those of Egypt were. And yet, [regenerate] believers who have been found unready and all Jews, except the one hundred and forty-four thousand of Revelation 7:1-17., will not only have to endure them, but will, also, at the same time, have to face the terrific persecutions of the Antichrist and his officers. Revelation 13:1-18. - compare Revelation 12:17 - gives us some idea of the manner in which these persecutions will be carried on. No one will be permitted to buy or sell without exposing the sign of blasphemy, which will prove that he is loyal to the great reigning Emperor. Men will have to display this sign - which will probably be something like an Indian caste-mark - either on their foreheads or on the palms of their hands. No one, for instance, will be allowed to buy any refreshment, to rent a house, to purchase a railway ticket, or to pass money in any way, unless he can first show the mark of the Beast imprinted upon his flesh.

It will thus be evident, that those who refuse to do the bidding of the Government of that day will be deprived of all power to take part in the ordinary affairs of life, and will find even their supply of provisions cut off. In such circumstances, either concealment or escape will be all but impossible.

75. Every Christian believer will find himself in a fearful dilemma. For, if he looks to the earthly authorities, he must either enter into the service of the Antichrist and receive his mark, or he must prepare to die; for death will be the penalty of refusal. But, if he turns to the Heavenly Powers, he must either refuse to receive the mark of the Beast, or be doomed together with him to the Lake of Fire and Brimstone. There will be no half-hearted service in those days. A man will then know with certainty on whose side he is, and every one of his acquaintance, also, will know. Jesus Christ tells us, that "a man cannot serve God and Marnmon"; but, in these days, it is difficult to judge which of the two most men are serving; indeed, many a professing Christian would scarcely be able to decide the matter in his own heart.

76. But, as we have already remarked, in addition to terrible sufferings at the hand of man, believers will, also, be scared and tormented by those judgments upon the world which, at the same time, will be coming, in rapid succession, directly from the hand of God. There will be no

escape from these woes, except through death; and in the description of one of them, we are told that many in those days will seek death, and will not be able to find it.

77. But, while these fearfully portentous events are taking place, while the people of God are being persecuted, and His Name blasphemed, by the Antichrist, there will be great searchings of heart among the Jews, and perhaps, also, among the Ten Tribes on the other side of the Euphrates. For two mighty witnesses for God, armed with supernatural powers, will then be bearing their testimony to Israel and the world, calling men to repentance, and uttering fearful prophecies of judgment. But their ministry will be altogether on Old Testament lines. There is no hint that they will preach the Gospel of the Grace of God; nor, indeed, would their action be in harmony with such preaching.

Who, then, are these "Two Witnesses" of Revelation 11:3-12? It is very evident that they are persons of great authority and sanctity. Their history is not narrated by John as having formed a part of his vision, but is dictated to him by an angel, and he simply writes it down.

79. The translation of living saints from earth to heaven was a thing not unknown before this time. But it would seem that these two very eminent saints are to be specially sent down from the presence of God, to be His witnesses at this awful juncture. They can hardly be other than human beings, because they have to die (Revelation 11:7). Moreover, we do not see how they can be persons who have already passed through the grave; for it is "appointed unto men once to die"; and, if these had already died, and were to be raised from the dead for the purpose of their testimony, they would, according to the prophecy, have to die twice.

80. The question, then, arises: Are there two eminent saints who have never died, and who would seem fit to assume this honourable but onerous position? Our thoughts immediately turn to Enoch and Elijah, who were translated to heaven without dying (see Chart C, 7 and 15), and that, probably, for the special purpose of being reserved for this very service. We have a further indication in Malachi's prophecy, which declares that Elijah will be sent back to earth about this time; and, also, in Christ's announcement, that, before the Great Day, Elias (or Elijah) must first come (Mark 9:12) to do the work at the end of the present age that John the Baptist might have done at its beginning. The following verse (v. 13) seems to convey the idea, that God, knowing the certainty of the rejection of Christ's person and mission by the Jews, would not, at that time, send Elijah to attempt his predicted work, but substituted John the Baptist in the spirit and power of the ancient prophet. But Elijah himself was reserved until the time of the end, or, as Malachi has it, until just before "the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord." Then both he and his fellow-prophet will be sent to restore "the holy seed," and to make them remember the Law of Moses (Malachi 4:4). For Jews, as Jews, will never receive the Lord Jesus until He actually appears, and they look upon Him Whom they pierced.

81. When the marvellous mission death and subsequent resurrection of the Two Witnesses have been accomplished (No. 38), the full numbers of the Church will be gathered in to the Lord (No. 40), the dead being raised and the living changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16-7; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). And when these are joined to the Firstfruits, which will have been taken up before them, the complete Body of Christ will have been translated from earth to heaven.

82. But, while God's heavenly people will be thus persecuted and delivered, what will meanwhile be befalling His ancient people Israel? We have already seen (No. 34), that the Jews will have been beginning to return to their own land before the Church is translated. And we have also seen, that they will once more become a recognized nation, and that the event which will exalt them to a place among other peoples will, probably, be the signing of a covenant with them by the Antichrist - "the Prince that shall come" (Daniel 9:26) - for seven years, that is, for the long expected Last or Seventieth Seven.

83. How many Jews there will be in the Land when that event is consummated, we are not told; but we know that the majority of them will be living there in unbelief as regards Jehovah, and in disobedience to His law. As to their attitude towards Christ, they will never, as a nation, believe on Him, until, as we have just said, He actually appears, and they look with their own eyes upon Him Whom they pierced.

84. The "covenant," or treaty, thus made will be seen to operate well for a time. During the first half of the Seven Years the Antichrist will, probably, act as though he respected, or at least tolerated, religion. He will certainly pander to the Roman Catholic Church during the earlier days of his career, because we are told in Revelation 17:1-18., that the Harlot, that is, the false Church, will be carried, or borne, by the Beast which symbolizes the then Emperor of Christendom. Hence, at this early period, the Papacy will rather seem to be patronizing and directing the Antichrist than the Antichrist the Papacy.

85. The fact, that the Antichrist makes a treaty with the Jews for seven years, further indicates, that he will deem them sufficiently powerful to be worth conciliating; and, no doubt, in some way, perhaps financially, they will be in a position to render him important service.

86. But, though it seems evident that he will build up his power and influence with the help of both the Jews and the Papacy, yet it is equally evident, that, later on, he will consider himself sufficiently strong and popular to do away with all religion, the false as well as the true, and to set forth himself as the sole object of veneration and worship.

87. In proof of this we are told, that he will destroy the Papacy (see Revelation 17:15-18), break his treaty with the Jews (Daniel 9:27), and then cause the daily sacrifices, which will have been resumed, to cease, and the "abomination of desolation" to "stand in the Holy Place." We interpret this last clause to mean, that he will cause his own image, of which we read in Revelation 13:14-15, to be placed in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem, and to be worshipped instead of Jehovah.

88. In all this awful blasphemy, he and his powerful assistant, "the False Prophet" (Revelation 13:11), will be merely fulfilling the predictions of God. (See Revelation 13:5-6.) They will actually cause mankind to worship Satan, or the Dragon, as well as the Antichrist, or Beast (Revelation 13:4). These three, the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet, are set before us as the Satanic Trinity, being the Devil's mimicry of the Blessed and Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

89. This attempt to force the worst kind of idolatry upon the Jews will, doubtless, be mightily resisted by them, not, perhaps, so much as an insult to God as to themselves; and the consequences of this and other disagreements will be, that the Antichrist will hate the Jews, and

turn all his power against them with a view of extirpating them from the face of the earth, just as he will have previously destroyed the Papacy. But, although he will wield gigantic power, it would seem that he will foresee difficulties. For he will gather together, from many nations, a vast and, apparently, irresistible force, to crush Jerusalem; and the very fact, that he will feel the need of so numerous a host to carry out his object, seems to indicate that he will by no means despise his foe. Yet how little will he suspect the might of the Holy One of Israel with Whom he will find himself to be suddenly confronted!

90. His armies will, probably, occupy a line of country between Bozrah and Megiddo, a distance of exactly 1,600 Roman stadia or furlongs (Revelation 14:20), and gigantic will be the host there concentrated. On the other side, the Jews, with their allies, will, doubtless, have their headquarters in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem for the defence of the capital; but they will be in sore straits. Most of the unbelievers among them will by this time have been destroyed, and many, perhaps all, of those who still survive will be sincerely trusting in Jehovah. But there will be nothing but darkness before their eyes, and no possible escape from death, save by the direct interposition of the Most High.

91. And so, they will continue urgent in prayer, lifting up supplications like those in Psalms 55:1-9, or Isaiah 64:1-12.; and, perhaps, strengthening their faith by remembering such words as may be found in Psalms 107:1-43:- "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses." And this time He will fulfil the Psalm in a wondrous manner, by sending down the Lord Jesus, with all His saints, to tread the winepress of His wrath, and to deal with the wicked as they will be seeking to deal with the Jews. See Revelation 14:19-20, Revelation 19:11-21. This will be "the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord" (No. 42) as described in Joel 2:30-32, Joel 3:9-16; Zechariah 14:1-7; Matthew 24:30. It is the time when the dominion, or line of sovereignty (No. 14), will pass once more out of the hands of the Gentiles, and be restored to the people of God. It is the time when the Stone (No. 44) of Daniel 2:34-35, shall smite the Image which represents the Gentile Empire (Nos. 20, 21, 22, and 23), and grind it to powder at the battle of Armageddon; while the "Stone", Itself shall thenceforth increase, and continue to increase, until It fills the whole earth.

92. But the terrific destruction of the nations will not be the only great event of That Day. For the Beast and the False Prophet will be seized, and cast alive into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone (No. 43); and the Dragon, that is, Satan, will be bound, and shut up in the Abyss for a thousand years; so that his vicious supremacy will be suspended for a season (No. 45). And, lastly, at evening time of that Day, it will grow light, the fearful judgment clouds will be dispersed, and the Millennial joy will thrill the hearts of the Children of Abraham; for then will the Lord Jesus begin His glorious reign over the earth, with David, raised from the dead for that purpose, as His viceroy at Jerusalem.

93. Soon afterwards, the glory of Jehovah, which was removed from the Sanctuary in Ezekiel's days (No. 16), will return to the Mountain of the Lord (see Ezekiel 43:4, and No. 42), and remain, once more permanently visible, over the restored Temple at Jerusalem (see Isaiah 4:5-6; Isaiah 40:5). These great events mark the close of the old Dispensation. The six working days of the earth's existence - "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" - are over now, and the earth's Seventh, or Sabbath, Day of one thousand years, is about to commence. The other Tribes of Israel are brought back into the Land (No. 46); and so, the whole people, who were divided in the days of Rehoboam, are now to be re-united, and dwell together

once more in their own country. The several Tribes will not, however, return to the exact spots which they formerly held, but are to be settled in accordance with the redistribution of their Land as described by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 48:1-29), with the rebuilt earthly Jerusalem in the midst of them as their capital (Ezek. 47:30-35).

95. It may be well at this point to mention, that, according to the Bible, the reward in store for those saints of the Israelitish Dispensation who were not, through sin, cut off from their people, is altogether distinct and different from that which is prepared for the sanctified and faithful of the New Testament Dispensation. For the latter have a heavenly calling, and will dwell in the presence of their Lord; while the reward of the Old Testament saints will be to be brought out of their graves and replaced in their own Land.* See Ezekiel 37:12-14, which must be understood literally, since it is the interpretation of the figurative vision of the Dry Bones (see also paragraph 275).

[* There is no scriptural evidence to suggest that New Testament saints will have greater privileges than Old Testament saints.]

96. Christ's spiritual people, then, will dwell with Him in the Heavenly Places having their dominion in the air, out of which Satan, together with all the fallen angels and demons, will have been driven. But His earthly people will abide in the Land which He had chosen for them, with Jerusalem as their capital, and David, raised from the dead, as their King and the viceroy of Christ upon earth.*

[* Those who are resurrected (from the dead) and changed (via rapture of the living) into an immortal state 'like the angels' (Luke 20:35), will be able to rule from the air as well as from the earth as David.]

97. It is highly probable that the inhabitants of the Heavenly Places will frequently visit the earth, just as heavenly beings did in Old Testament times; and, no doubt, the Great King of Kings Himself will personally appear at Jerusalem from time to time, although His actual abode will be in the Heavenly Places, where His people will be with Him.

98. It would not, indeed, be right to be too dogmatic in regard to the glorious things which we have tried to set before the reader. Nevertheless, what we have described seems to be the course of events indicated in Scripture. There is, however, a very solemn thought connected with this subject. Will all those who profess and call themselves Christians be amongst the inhabitants of the Heavenly Places? We are forced to reply, Certainly not; nay, we must even go further; for, probably, there are many who are, in a sense, real believers, and are, therefore, justified and saved from all danger of hell-fire, but will never be suffered to dwell in the Heavens during the Millennium, or period of rest and reward. These pardoned, but incomplete, Christians will not awake until the judgment of the Great White Throne. Then they will be raised from the dead; but, since their names will be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life, they will be saved from the [eternal] doom of the wicked; and will, at last, enter upon the fruition of eternal life. Unless, then, we are cleansed and purified [and our standard of righteousness measures] up to God's standard here below, we shall have to endure the fate of the Foolish Virgins, and be excluded from the Body of Christ and His Millennial Kingdom [See Matthew 5:20]; but shall not lose everlasting life, which is the gift of God, and cannot be recalled (Romans 11:29). Only the fully sanctified and purified will enter the Millennial abode of Christ and His saints. For, just as the original Temple was built of

stones fashioned and made ready in the quarry before they were brought to the sacred Building (see 1 Kings 6:7), so the Spiritual Temple is to be formed of "living stones," cleansed and sanctified [in Hades] before they are taken to the Building of which they are to form a part. See paragraph 234.

99. The magnificent period of the Millennium (No. 47), when all the nations of the earth shall be blessed through the Jews, will, however, soon pass by, and then the earth must again be tested by temptation; for many of her inhabitants will be yielding but a feigned obedience to the Lord. Therefore, the imprisoned Powers of Darkness must be let loose, in order that their influence may either rouse men to resist them and to cry to God for help, or may incite the wicked to avow their rebellious thoughts, and to rise in open revolt against their Rightful King (No. 48). The result will be a general insurrection headed by Gog and Magog (No. 49), the details of which are not revealed. After the lapse, of an uncertain period, this rebellion will be subdued, and then Satan will be finally "cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone" (No. 50), where the Beast and the False Prophet are so that he may trouble the world no more.

100. Then commences the scene of terror, when the unsanctified and unsaved dead will all be summoned to stand before the awful judgment-seat of the Great White Throne (No. 51). Myriads will be raised from their graves (No. 52) who have lived and died in carelessness, and, consequently, have no hope of pardon, but will be cast (No. 53) into the horrible Lake of Fire.

101. Others, however, will also be raised at the same time who will not share so appalling a fate. They will be those believers whose names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life, but who, during their sojourn upon earth, had failed to attain, through the power of the indwelling Spirit, to that holiness and purity of heart without which no man shall see the Lord. Consequently, they had not been thought worthy to have part in the First Resurrection, and had lost their reward. Nevertheless, since they did believe in the Lord, they must on the Last Day be raised to that fruition of eternal life which, had they been faithful, they might have enjoyed a thousand years earlier. See John 6:40.

102. The very awful events which we have described will be followed by a purification of the earth, and its, at least partial, reconstruction. The purification will be by fire, which will be such that the very elements will melt with fervent heat, and all dross will be burnt up. Then the Lord will make all things new, and in the New Heavens, and on the New Earth, there shall be nothing that can ever offend. The curse will be altogether removed, and there shall be no more sin, or sorrow, or sighing, or tears, or sickness, or death; for the old things will have passed away.

103. But a memorable event will mark the commencement of the final and everlasting state. For, after the judgment of the Great White Throne, and the casting of all the enemies of the Lord Jesus, including Satan and Death and Hades, into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, His work as a man will have been accomplished. The earth and its heaven will have been purged by Him from sin, and restored to obedience, order, peace, and blessedness. And so, He will deliver up to His Father the royal power and authority which he received as Glorified Man, and retire into the Godhead, which will, thenceforth and through the never-ceasing ages of Eternity, be all in all. See 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.

104. We have thus given a brief outline of the course of events as indicated in the Great Revealed Scheme of God. If these events can be thoroughly realized by the student, he will have a

comprehensive idea of "God's Plan in the Bible." There are, however, many points on which the teaching may reasonably be amplified, and we will now proceed to deal with a few of these points in greater detail.

02 - The Seventy Sevens

The Seventy Sevens

105. We have already mentioned the Seventy Sevens; but there is much to be said respecting that famous prophecy which it seemed best to introduce separately. For a general outline must not be confused by too many details, nor in any way complicated more than is absolutely necessary. But a thorough insight into the facts connected with the revelation of the Seventy Sevens is essential to the comprehension of all prophetic utterances.

106. When the Jews were carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, the prophet Jeremiah announced, that God would not permit them to return until Seventy Years had passed by. But, when this term was drawing towards its close, they were found to be still so unrepentant and hardened that they were condemned to a further discipline of Seven times Seventy, or Four Hundred and Ninety, Years - a period, however, which was not to commence immediately. This period was to be divided into three portions - the first being Seven Sevens, or Forty-nine Years; the second, Sixty-two Sevens, or Four Hundred and Thirty-four Years; and the third, One Seven, or Seven Years. Now, had the Jews repented during the original period of Seventy Years, their discipline would then have terminated. In the same way, had they repented during the first Sixty nine of the Seventy Sevens of Years, the Seventieth Seven would have followed on immediately after the Sixty-ninth; and then the glorious restoration would have taken place. Seeing, however, that they did not yet repent, but rejected the Christ, God, instead of sentencing them to a still longer stated period of captivity, introduced an interval (see paragraph 59) of indefinite duration, during which they were to experience the horrors of Deut. 38:64-67.

107. We are fully authorized to make this separation between the Sixty-ninth and Seventieth Seven, because the prophet himself separates them by placing events between them (Daniel 9:26). Also Our Lord gave us a very marked example of the same sort of thing, when He was reading from Isaiah 61:1, in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-20). For He closed the Book abruptly in the middle of a sentence, because the prophecy was at that moment in process of fulfilment so far as He had read it; whereas the remainder was then, and is, still in the future. Christ Himself, therefore, recognized that a great interval may, as in that case it does, occur in a single prophecy.

108. Similarly, in Isaiah 9:6, we read, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder." But, although the Child was born, and the Son given, some nineteen hundred years ago, the government is not yet upon His shoulder. Nay, even in the first eighteen chapters of the Apocalypse, the royal diadem is found only on the heads of the Dragon and the Beast; it is not until we come to Isaiah 19:12, that the Lord Jesus is described as wearing it.

109. Other instances might be quoted; and, moreover, we know as a matter of fact, that the predicted results of the discipline appointed for the Jews have never yet been effected. Therefore,

unless the prophecy be a myth, the Seventieth Seven has not yet become history, although eighteen hundred and seventy-four years [and more] have elapsed since the last day of the Sixty-ninth Seven. And there is no possible way of accounting for this phenomenon, unless we understand, that a suspension of God's dealings with the Jews followed immediately upon their rejection of their Messiah, and must continue until the Church-period [or Christian-period] is ended, and they [the Jews] are again owned as His people. The objects to be accomplished by the Four Hundred and Ninety Years of discipline are six in number, and are thus stated:-

1. To shut up transgression.

- 2.. To seal up sins.

3. To cover iniquity.

4. To bring in everlasting righteousness.

5. To seal up vision and prophet.

6. To anoint a Holy of Holies.

110. Now we know well, that none of these things has been hitherto effected. Transgression has not been shut up, neither that of the Jews nor that of any other nation. Sins are not sealed up, but are everywhere rampant; nor is iniquity covered. Everlasting righteousness has certainly not yet been brought in; the visions and utterances of the prophets are by no means all fulfilled, so that they may be sealed up and laid aside. And the glorious Temple, which the Messiah Himself will build, as described by Ezekiel, is not yet erected; much less is its Holy of Holies anointed. These facts show, that the Seventy Sevens have not yet come to their end; and, therefore, that an interval [now more than 2,008 years, according to our calendar*] must have occurred and be still continuing.

[* See Hosea 6:2: "After two days (two thousand years according to Peter's reckoning, 2 Peter 3:8) – "he will revive us; on the third day" – (the millennial kingdom of Christ) – "he will restore us, that we may live in his presence."]

111. But much additional light is thrown on this subject by an examination of the apparent discrepancy, in the numbers of years given for the same period, between 1 Kings 6:1, and Acts 13:17-22. For the true explanation of this difficulty is very instructive and suggestive.

112. The first of the two references makes the period between the day on which Israel went out of Egypt and the founding of the Temple of Solomon to be four hundred and eighty years. But Paul, in Acts 13:17-22, mentions several portions of this period as follows. Forty years, he says, were spent in the wilderness, four hundred and fifty under the judges, and forty under King Saul. Here the Apostle stops; but, in order to complete the period, mentioned in 1 Kings 6:1, we must add forty years for the reign of David, and the three years of Solomon's reign which had passed before he began to build the Temple. Now, if we add all these years together, we shall find that they amount to five hundred and seventy-three. Hence, between this reckoning of Paul and the statement in 1 Kings 6:1, which declares the same period to have been only four hundred and eighty years, there is a discrepancy of no less than ninety-three years.

113. But, if we carefully study the Book of Judges, we shall find, that, during the four hundred and fifty years of which Paul speaks in Acts 13:1-52., the Israelites were sold by God into the hands of six different nations, and endured five periods of servitude, as punishments for their wickedness. And, while they were in servitude, God abandoned them for the time, and no longer recognized them as His chosen people. The various times of servitude were as follows:- For 8 years they served the Mesopotamians, Judges 1:3: Judges 1:8. For 18 years they served the Moabites, Judges 1:3: Judges 1:13. For 20 years they served the Canaanites, Judges 4:2-3. For 7 years they served the Midianites, Judges 1:6. For 40 years they served the Philistines, Judges 1:13. =93 So for ninety-three years out of the four hundred and fifty they were in servitude.

114. Now, if we deduct the ninety-three years of servitude from the five hundred and seventy three years obtained by Paul's reckoning, we shall find the remainder to be exactly four hundred and eighty, which is the number given in the Book of Kings. And so, the discrepancy vanishes; for we can readily assume, that Paul uses the ordinary human chronology, which makes the period between the Exodus and the founding of the Temple to be five hundred and seventy-three years. But in 1 Kings 6:1, we have a reckoning according to the Divine chronology, which embraces only those periods that God employs for special dealings with the people in question, and omits any time, or times, during which He temporarily abandons them as a chastisement for their sins. We may, then, always assume, that, whenever God's dealings with the Jews as His Own nation are suspended, He also suspends the fulfilment of His prophecies concerning them. And this is what He is now doing in the interval between the Sixty-ninth and the Seventieth Seven.

115. But we also know, that, as soon as the Jews are restored to their own Land and again recognized as a nation, God will once more resume His dealings with them, and the dread Seventieth Seven, with all its fearful terrors, will begin to become history. And, just before its commencement, the waiting saints connected with the Church will be caught away from the evil that is coming upon the earth.

116. How critical, then, are the times in which we live! For already we see the Jews gathering in their own Land, and beginning to feel, that, after eighteen weary centuries of dispersion and exile, they are still a nation. This is one of the most striking signs of the times; nor can anything more definitely prove the imminence of the great events which are foretold as preceding the end of the dispensation, and which we can see maturing under our very eyes. There are, also, many other indications of what is coming, which convey much confirmatory evidence to thinking minds, though, taken separately, they may be more or less open to argument. But, on this one point, there can be no difference of opinion. The great fact is, that the Jews are regathering; the great inference, if men will only open their eyes to realize it, is, that very soon the Lord Jesus must return for His ready, waiting, and watching people. "Prepare to meet thy God."

117. We have previously, in paragraphs 52 and 53, pointed out, that the Seventy Sevens were to commence on a certain specified day, and that the first Sixty-nine Sevens, or 483 years, were to terminate, also, on a certain specified day. We need not, then, repeat what has already been stated in those paragraphs, but will just explain how it is that we understand the 483 years to have been exactly fulfilled to a day.

118. We must, however, in making this or any other calculation as to prophetic periods, remember, that a prophetic year always contains 360 days, or twelve months of thirty days each. From remote

antiquity this was the universally recognized length of a year. But we have Biblical proof, that, in the prophecy now before us, at least, the year is reckoned as of 360 days. The Sixty-nine Sevens have passed, the Seventieth is still in the future, and the events which are to occur during the latter are described, in considerable detail, in the Book of Revelation. Now, if we search the Book of Daniel and the Revelation to discover what is said of the final Seven of Years, we shall find a thrice repeated statement, that one half of the Seven consists of "a time times and the dividing, or half of, a time." Now, in the opinion of almost all scholars, the expression "a time," that is, a circle of time or a complete time, signifies a year; while "times" must be understood as "two times." Hence the phrase means a year, two years, and half a year, or three years and a half. In two passages the same period is described as forty-two months (Revelation 11:2; Revelation 13:5); and in two others as 1,260 days (Revelation 11:3; Revelation 12:6). It is thus easy to see, that, if forty-two months contain only 1,260 days, there will be but thirty days for each month; and that a year made up of twelve such months will contain only 360 days. And this is what we may call a prophetic year.

119. The year now in use is called the "Julian" year, and contains, as we know, 365 and a quarter days, the quarter day being supplied by adding an extra day every fourth or "leap" year. When, therefore, we want to prove the accuracy of Daniel's prophecy, we must recollect that he was referring to prophetic years.

120. The first of Nisan in the 20th. year of Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2:1), the day on which the command went forth to rebuild the street and wall of Jerusalem, was the 14th. of March, B.C. 445. The tenth of Nisan, in Passion Week, the day on which Christ came to Jerusalem as an Anointed One and a Prince (Matthew 21:5; Luke 19:38; see paragraph 52), was the 6th. of April, A.D. 32. The intervening period between these two dates is 476 years and twenty-four days of ordinary reckoning. If we multiply 476 by 365, we get a total of 173,740 days. Add the twenty-four days from 14th. March to 6th. April, both inclusive 24 days. Add, also, one day for every leap year occurring during this time 116 days, and we get a total of 173,880 days. Now, the Sixty-nine Sevens were really 483 prophetic years; and, if we multiply 483 by 360 (the number of days in a prophetic year), the result is 173,880 days. Thus we see, that the prophecy was literally fulfilled to the day. The above calculation may be profitably studied in Sir Robert Anderson's book, "The Coming Prince," in which it is fully discussed. (See especially chap. vi. and x.) The publishers are Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton.

121. It is, also, well to notice how entirely the Jews were without excuse in their rejection of the Christ; for, had they paid attention to the prophecies which they professed to hold in such veneration and respect, they could have calculated the exact day on which the prophecy of Daniel, and also that of Zechariah (9:9), were to have been fulfilled. Daniel's prophecy was still further verified, because, within four days from the end of the Sixty-ninth Seven, "Messiah" was cut off, and there was nothing for Him.

112. Surely these details must greatly strengthen our faith in all utterances of God's Holy Word. We may often fail to understand, as Daniel did (Daniel 12:8); but we can believe. God does not ask us, or permit us, to understand everything. He wishes us to believe what He says whether we understand it or not. Daniel believed and prophesied at God's command that which he did not understand. We must believe in the same way; and, if we do not, we practically insist on walking by sight, and refuse to walk by faith. We can exercise faith only when we have not got sight. When

we fully understand a thing, we virtually need no faith. But "without faith it is impossible to please God," and we should have no opportunity of exercising faith if we understood everything. Nothing can more surely tend to strengthen our faith than to see apparent discrepancies, and then, after having believed confidently that God is right, notwithstanding the evidence we seem to have that He is wrong, suddenly to find that it was only our own blindness and ignorance which made it, even for a moment, appear that He might be wrong. Such an experience vastly increases our confidence that other things, which we do not understand, may, also, be perfectly explicable when we get a little more knowledge.

03 - Last or Seventieth Seven

The Last or Seventieth Seven.

123. No account of the "Seventy Sevens" could be deemed in any way complete without some reference to the details of the Last, and infinitely the most important, of them all. A careful study of the accompanying chart, D, will assist the reader to understand its momentous events. We may mention, that the Book of Revelation is mainly a history of those same events; or, since it was written a long time before they were to happen, we should rather say a prophecy. Yet, after all, prophecy is merely history written in advance.

124. An examination of the Book of Revelation will show, that, from the commencement of the fourth chapter to the end of the nineteenth, the events described are those of the Last Seven of Years only.

125. For this awful crisis will be the great period of judgment on Jew and Gentile: it will be the special season of trouble referred to in Daniel 12:1. It will be the time of desolation of Daniel 9:27: it will be the Day of Visitation and Desolation referred to in Isaiah 10:3, and in many other places. Some of these events, such as those of Revelation 7:1-17, Revelation 8:1-13, Revelation 14:1-20, and part of Revelation 19:1-21, will take place in the heavens: the remainder on earth. But they will all happen during this tremendous period of Seven Years.

126. When the appalling time commences, a certain set of circumstances will be found to be existing. Many of the Jews will then be dwelling in their own Land (see paragraph 116), though what proportion of them will be there, we cannot tell. The Antichrist will have arisen, though as yet he may not be very prominent. The Ten Kingdoms (see paragraph 68) will either have been already formed or will very shortly be so, and the ready saints will have gone (see paragraph 62). The Antichrist will then arrange his treaty with the Jews for seven years (see "Preliminary Events" on Chart D); and this covenant will usher in the Seventieth Seven, and, doubtless, be the event which will, in the sight of God, and, probably, in that of man also, give back their nationality to the Jews.

127. We are able to be certain on this point, because God will resume His dealings with the Jews as soon as He recognizes them once more as a nation, and we know, that the commencement of this final Seven is His actual resumption of dealings, in terrible judgment, with His Own stiff-necked people,* as well as with His Gentile foes.

[* That is, regenerate believers who will left to endure these terrible times of persecution, after the watchful are removed via rapture, (Luke 21:34-36).]

128. We may also remark, that there are three sets of events which claim our attention, and are indicated upon the diagram. First, the topmost of the three represents the historical and political events of the Seven Years. These all happen upon the earth, and include the great persecutions which God's people will have to undergo at the hands of their fellow-men. The middle line

represents events which will, also, happen on the earth. But these are terrible plagues, which will be sent upon mankind directly from God. All classes of men, Christian, Jew, and Gentile, will suffer from these plagues. But true Christians, if they remain "faithful unto death," will escape altogether the third series of woes, or the pouring out of the Vials. The third line of events comprises those which are to take place in heaven during the same period as that in which the others are to be fulfilled on earth.

129. It will be noticed, that certain things have been mentioned as happening during the first half of the "Seven," and others during its latter half. Between the two halves there is a division on the chart, and, at that juncture, several important events must take place, which are there enumerated. The preliminary events have been alluded to in paragraph 126.

130. It will also be noticed, that the Seventh Seal extends during the whole length of the Seven Trumpets and of the Vials, and the Seventh Trumpet, also, is prolonged during the period of the Vials. The reason is, that, when the Seventh Seal is broken, instead of one great plague resulting, seven new plagues, called Trumpets, are introduced; and in the same way, when the Seventh Trumpet is sounded, instead of one plague, seven new ones, which are caused by the outpouring of the Vials, are introduced. But all the judgments - Seals, Trumpets, and Vials - terminate on the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, marked on Chart D; on that day (a day, probably, of 24 hours) the events mentioned on the Chart will occur. This is the day on which the present Dispensation must finally close amid the most fearful catastrophes, calamities, and judgments. Then the glorious day which follows will usher in the Millennium, or the thousand years' reign of the Lord Jesus.

04 - Antichrist

The Antichrist

131. Several times in the foregoing pages we have had occasion to mention the "Antichrist," and it is very desirable that we should form some definite idea as to who and what he is, and when he will appear. In paragraph 11, we saw that God had His special plan, and His special King, Jesus Christ. We also saw that Satan had his special anti-plan, and his special King, the Antichrist. The latter is not represented as standing in Christ's stead, in any sense, as a vice-Christ; but as an unmitigated counterfeit, or a fraudulent misrepresentation of the True Christ Himself.

132. Jesus Christ is the True Friend of men, but they will not receive Him. The Antichrist, who will be the embodiment of worldly talent and accomplishments, will make himself out to be man's true friend by bringing in superhuman aid to help him to resist God, He comes in his own name, and, he will be received.

133. He will be a man, just as Christ was a man; that is to say, he will be a very prominent personality. Christ was not a mere system, nor will His great opponent be so. It is true that John in his Epistles speaks of many Antichrists as then existing in the world (1 John 4:3; 2 John 1:7); but he carefully distinguishes them from the Antichrist who was still in the future (1 John 2:18); and, in another place (1 John 4:3), further explains himself as meaning that these evil men had the spirit of the, Antichrist. Now the evil spirit, which opposes Christ and denies Him as coming in the flesh, has, of course, been manifested in men from the earliest times of our age. But, in 1 John 2:18, these many Antichrists are contrasted with a special individual, in whom their own characteristic will culminate.

134. If we consider them as individuals, there will be many points both of similarity and of contrast between the Antichrist and our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Christ was superhuman in virtue, so the Antichrist will be superhuman in vice, though, possibly, in covered and very attractive and respectable vice. The Christ represented God upon the earth, and was "the express image of His Person" (Hebrews 1:3); the Antichrist will represent Satan upon the earth (Revelation 13:2).

God gives all power and authority unto the Son (John 5:22-23); Satan gives his power to the Antichrist (Revelation 13:2).

Each of them is manifested for three and a half years, the Christ for salvation, the Antichrist for damnation (Revelation 13:5).

John 15:1-27. describes the Christ as the True Vine, the Tree of Life; Revelation 14:18-20 describes the Antichrist as the Vine of the Earth, or Tree of Death. The Good Shepherd is alluded to in Zechariah 11:7-14; the Idol Shepherd is also spoken of in the same chapter, Zechariah 11:15-17. In Matthew 4:8-10, the kingdoms of the earth are offered by Satan to the Christ, but He refuses them; in Revelation 13:2 and Revelation 7:1-17, the Antichrist is found to have accepted the same.

[Jesus] the Christ says:- "I am come in MY Father's Name, and ye receive Me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43). The Christ comes down from heaven (John 3:13); the antichrist comes up from the Abyss, that is, from a prison [in the underworld of Hades/Sheol] of lost spirits [disembodied souls] (Revelation 17:8). The translation "bottomless pit" [found in the Authorised Version translation] is absurd.

Both the Christ and the Antichrist are raised from [the place of] the dead (Luke 24:34; Revelation 17:8). The Christ is "the Bright and the Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16); the Antichrist is [the son of] "Lucifer, Son of the Morning" (Isaiah 14:12). The Christ is "the Prince of princes" (Daniel 8:25); the Antichrist "the prince that shall come" (Daniel 9:26). The Christ is "the King in His beauty" (Isaiah 33:17); the Antichrist is "the Lawless One" (2 Thessalonians 2:8, R.V.). The Christ is "the Son of the Living God" (John 6:69); the Antichrist is "the Son of Perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The Christ is "the Lamb of God" (John 1:29); the Antichrist is "the Beast" (Revelation 19:20). The Christ is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6); the Antichrist is "the deceiver" (2 John 1:7). The Christ is "the Deliverer" (Romans 11:26) the Antichrist is "the oppressor" (Isaiah 14:4). The Christ is "the Righteous Branch" (Jeremiah 23:5) ; the Antichrist is "an abominable branch" (Isaiah 14:19). The Christ "humbled Himself" (Php 2:8); the Antichrist "exalteth himself" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The Christ writes His Name in the foreheads of His followers (Revelation 3:12 and Revelation 22:4); while the Antichrist causes his name, or mark, to be written in the forehead, or hand, of his followers (Revelation 13:16).

135. The Antichrist is called by Daniel, "the prince that shall come" (Daniel 9:26). He is called by Paul, "the Man of Sin," "the Son of Perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

He is called by John, "The Beast" (Revelation 13:1-18.), and by Isaiah, "The Assyrian" (Isaiah 10:24).

All these descriptions allude to an individual, and not to a system, or to a line of individuals, like the Popes. We may be quite sure that the Antichrist is not intended to indicate the Pope, or the Papacy, for several reasons, and among them for the following:- No Pope has ever yet received power from ten kings in the way mentioned in Revelation 17:13. No ten kings have ever yet destroyed anything which could answer to the symbol of the Harlot, in order to hand over their power to the Pope (Revelation 17:16-17). No such ten kings as are described in Revelation 17:1-18. have ever yet arisen simultaneously. No Pope has ever yet worn the ten diadems of the earth as the Antichrist will (Revelation 17:17). No Pope has ever had a prophet such as we read of in Revelation 13:11-17. No image of a Pope has ever been made in order to be publicly and generally worshipped.

Many whose names are not in the Book of Life certainly do not worship the Pope (Revelation 13:8).

136. We may, then, confidently state, that this terrible being has not yet appeared; and that, when he does so, there will be no mistake as to his identity. He will be pre-eminently accomplished, powerful, wealthy, and influential; the embodiment of talented wickedness and blasphemy, the personification of Satan, with a marvellous gift of attracting unregenerate men. He will, probably, arise in somewhat the same way as, and run a similar course to, the first Napoleon, who was, perhaps, his autotype.

137. In Revelation 17:7, the Beast is described as he that "hath the Seven Heads and the Ten Horns." Then, in Revelation 17:9-10, we are told, that these Seven Heads have two significations, one in reference to the Harlot, the other in connection with the Beast. For they represent the Seven Mountains on which the Woman sitteth, and also Seven Kings, of which the Antichrist is to be the eighth. The Seven Mountains point to the Seven Hills on which Rome is supposed to have been built.

138. They also represent Seven Kings, that is, Seven Emperors of the Roman Empire: of whom five had already died by violent deaths before John wrote. One was reigning at the time when the Apostle was in Patmos: the Seventh and Eighth had not yet come. Most probably those who had already fallen were Julius Caesar, Tiberius, Claudius, Caligula, and Nero. The Sixth was the then reigning Emperor Domitian. The Seventh was, not improbably, Napoleon the Great, who did "continue only for a short space."

139. The following is a very brief summary of the reasons for supposing Napoleon to have been the Seventh King*:- [* See Pember's "Great Prophecies" (2nd or 3rd edition), pp. 153, 169.]

1st. . In 1806, Napoleon forced the Emperor Francis II. of Austria to relinquish the Imperial Crown, which had descended to the latter from Augustus.

2nd. . By so doing, he transferred the seat of the Imperial Roman Government to France, which is the mother of Socialism and Revolution.

3rd. Napoleon had a great ambition to resuscitate the Roman Empire, in just the way in which the Antichrist may be expected to do so.

4th. He made great advances to the Jews, and summoned the Sanhedrim to meet in Paris, which they did. This was the first meeting of the ancient Council for over seventeen hundred years. Such a gathering will very likely be convened by the Antichrist when he makes his "covenant" with the Jews. See paragraph 85.

5th. When he was in Egypt, he expressed his desire to make the people believe that he was the son of Jupiter Ammon; and he actually did proclaim himself to be "the Man of Destiny." He loved to be called "Your Providence," instead of "Your Majesty." He allowed his own name and that of Josephine to be blended with the Name, of God and placed over the Ark of the Covenant in the Council-chamber of the Sanhedrim. And, a little later, at a fete in Paris, he sat upon a throne, over which were inscribed the words, "I am that I am." These awful instances of blasphemy show, that he craved Divine worship, and would have accepted it, even as the previous Heads of the Beast had done, and as the Eighth King will do far more daringly than they all.

6th. The letters of his name - in the Greek language, and in the Dative case, which would signify "belonging," or, "devoted to Napoleon" -when taken as numerical figures and added together, exhibit the dread number 666.

7th. His emblems were, (1) the single-headed eagle, (2) the violet, and (3) the bee. The first of these represents the Roman Empire as one and undivided, such as it was in the days of the first Six Heads, and in contrast to its condition while divided into the Eastern and Western Empires, which is symbolized by the double-headed eagle. The colour of the violet indicates the Imperial purple. The Chaldean for "bee" has also the meaning of a "word," and may, perhaps, be intended

to mark the bearer of the emblem as the Word of God; though in this case the God would really be Satan, the Anti-god; just as his "Word" will be the Antichrist.

140. The Eighth King is he who "was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the Abyss"; and he is, also, one "of the Seven" (Revelation 17:11). These particulars indicate, that he will be one of the Seven previous Kings raised from the dead; that one, indeed, whose deadly wound is said to have been healed in Revelation 13:3. Which of the Seven he will be, we cannot decide; there was, however, among the early Christians a general anticipation that he would be a reincarnation of Nero.

But, whatever name he may have borne in a previous existence, that name and his history will be known when he appears; for it will be the undoubted fact of his resurrection from the dead that will draw the whole world after him.

Yet, while the world admires and worships him, those who have pondered and prayed over the wonderful revelations of God will recognize in him the great Antichrist, the Beast, who is so soon to run his course, and then to be cast alive into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone (Revelation 19:19-21). See paragraph 247). And, in his destruction and its consequences, the destruction of all earthly power, the closing scene in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, will be fulfilled: the Stone will smite the great political Image upon the feet, and will grind it to powder.

141. In That Day the Lord Alone shall be exalted: the King of Glory, the Christ Himself, shall take possession of the earthly Kingdom which is His by right.

05 - Mystery Babylon

Babylon : A Mystery.

Revelation 17:5.

142. Of Babylon as a Mystery some account has already been given in paragraphs 35 and 36; but, while we would avoid repetition, it will be well to add a little more information on so important a subject. And, by so doing, we shall be able to show, that those who hold Babylon a Mystery to be merely another name for Rome, or the Papal Hierarchy, although they know something, have very little conception of the whole truth.

143. We have already seen, in paragraph 35, that the city of Babylon seems to have been originally built for the purpose of providing a centre for a godless Mystery, which Mystery, or idolatrous system of religion, was the first organized rebellion against the authority of God. It was established by Nimrod, and was the original false, or Pagan, religion of the world. From it, whether we call it the false religion, or, in figure, the false Woman, or Harlot, sprang all the other false religions of the world, and this is why we can so readily detect a family likeness in each of them. A Harlot herself, Babylon thus became - as Revelation 17:5, has it - "the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth."

144. At the head of the Mystery-organization was a Priest-king, who for some time was King of Babylon. But, after the capture of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, and the expulsion of the leaders of the Mystery, the latter fled to Pergamum, and made that city their head-quarters, and its King their Pontifex Maximus - a fact which, probably, has something to do with the Apocalyptic designation of Pergamum as the place "where Satan's throne is" (Revelation 2:13). But Attalus, III., the last of the Priest-kings, who died about 133 B.C., bequeathed his royal and priestly office, together with all his dominions and his vast wealth, to the citizens of Rome. At that time, however, there was no King, or Emperor, of the Roman Empire; for the Republic had not yet been overthrown. Consequently, no citizen was competent to assume the power and dignities of Attalus, which had, therefore, to remain in abeyance for a century. But, about the end of that period, Julius Caesar, who had been previously invested with the title of Pontifex Maximus, or Supreme Pontiff of the Roman religion, became also Emperor. And so, at last, Rome had produced a citizen worthy to claim and exercise all the powers of Attalus. Forthwith he gave out that he was the son of Venus, and caused himself to be deified under the title of Divus Vulus, or the God Julius. And, from that time, the title of "Divus " was prefixed to the names of all the succeeding Emperors, who were regarded as the restored line of the Babylonian Supreme Pontiffs.

145. Thus, previously to the birth of Christ, Rome had become the centre of the Babylonian Mystery. It was, then, natural that the great persecutions of those who believed in the Lord Jesus, and were, therefore, utterly opposed to Babylonianism, should be carried on by Rome. And this, as history teaches us, was actually the case. The Ten Persecutions, from which the early Christians suffered, were directed by Roman Emperors, the later persecutions of Protestants by Popes; and

both Emperors and Popes were lineal descendants of the Babylonian Pontiffs.

146. Now, although multitudes of Christians were done to death during the Ten Persecutions, yet the Church, as a whole, was by no means diminished, but increased and flourished upon the very efforts that were made for her destruction. For God was with her, and, consequently, not all the cruel malice of her foes could avail to check her progress.

147. But, in course of time, her wily persecutors began to realize this fact, and at once set themselves to devise more subtle means, if perchance they might be able to effect by craft that which violence had failed to accomplish. The cruel face of the Babylonian Harlot began to relax into a smile: her words no longer threatened, but were full of flattery: she offered compromises: she invited the Church to take her share of the honours, power, and wealth, of the children of this world; and the gilded bait was eagerly swallowed. And so, the nominal [carnal] Christians, though they had been reared in humility and disciplined by persecutions, forgot their past, and allowed themselves to be lured from the narrow way to the haunts of pride and luxury. As Christ Himself had foretold, the humble mustard plant, instead of continuing to exist as a lowly herb, suffered itself to be forced by an unnatural and artificial growth into a great tree. And then the birds of the air - those symbols of evil, which devour the good seed - came, found it a congenial resting-place, and made their nests in it.

148. In Revelation 2:6, we read of Nicolaitanism, and are told that it is a thing specially hated by the Lord. When we inquire into the meaning of the term, we find that it is derived from two Greek words, the first a verb signifying "to conquer" or to "subdue," the second a noun which means "people," and is the root of the English word "laity." Thus a Nicolaitan is one who subdues, or keeps under, the laity. The reference is, of course, to the rise, in very early times, of Clericalism and Ecclesiasticism, that system in which a distinctive order of men set themselves over the flock of God, to exercise lordship over His heritage; and this He has specially forbidden, and declared that He hates. If anyone would gain a comprehensive view of the oppressive and desolating effects of Nicolaitanism, when thoroughly carried out, he should read McCarthy's "Priests and People in Ireland." The poverty, the ignorance, the failure in commerce, and all the woes of Catholic Ireland, are to be attributed to that cause, and to that cause alone.

149. The Roman Catholic Church is Nicolaitanism and Sectarianism in their extremist forms, and every Protestant sect is only less so in proportion as it retires from the ways of the great Roman Apostasy. Sectarianism is the natural result of the Nicolaitanism so hated by God. For, whenever men with the privileges of a caste govern a religious community, they become, in their anxiety to keep their party together, rabidly jealous of their laws and doctrines, and intolerant of those who venture to differ from them.

150. The final merging of the nominal Church in the Apostasy may be said to have taken place about A.D. 366, when Damasus, having been elected Bishop of Rome, and, therefore, head of the so-called Christian Church, was also consecrated Pontifex Maximus, or Royal High Priest of the great Pagan world or Babylonian Mystery. This horrible union of offices produced the Church of Rome. What wonder, then, that she is called a Harlot! She is not so merely because she is the actual descendant and representative of the Babylonian Whore, the original Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth; but, also, because she has played, and is playing, the whore herself in her present form and in her present habitation. For, with lying mouth, she claims to be

united to the Lord Jesus; whereas she has nothing whatever to do with Him. On the contrary, she destroys His Word, transgresses His commandments, and despises His will.

151. Rome is, therefore, the Babylon in Mystery of the Revelation, in so far as she is the direct descendant and actual representative of the Babylonian Hierarchy. But, in her character of an Apostate Christian Church, she is not at present able to discharge all the functions of the ancient Mystery. For the moment, her powers of persecution are limited; but her arrogant pretensions are in no respect diminished. By force of circumstances, she is compelled for a time to refrain from the many acts of aggression which she has in mind: but it is under vehement protest that she does so. When once she finds herself strong enough to work her own will and it may not be long before she is so - her persecuting malice may be expected to break forth with tenfold vigour and bitterness, owing to its long enforced suppression. May we once more entreat our readers to give heed to the emphatic warning contained in paragraph 63 ?

152. Before we leave the subject of Babylon in Mystery, it may be profitable to point out some of the effects of the abominable compromise between nominal Christianity and Paganism, which may be detected in Churches that are without the pale of the Roman Obedience. For Protestants of all denominations, except, perhaps, the Open Brethren and the friends, have received many of their symbols, forms, ceremonies, feast and fast days, &c., from Rome., and, therefore, ultimately from Babylon.

153. The present Episcopal Church of England is a Reformed Church of Rome; and the various Dissenting communities which have seceded from her have, some in one way some in another, still further purified themselves. In far too many Episcopal places of worship, there is little or no objection to many of the errors and harlotries of the Roman Church: the reform is very superficial, and its results seem to be rapidly disappearing. In some cases, however, a more sweeping change has, undoubtedly, been effected; but, even in these, it is not difficult to detect the marks of Rome. Not seldom, however, the relics of Paganism are retained through ignorance: hence the following particulars may be useful:-

154. CHRISTMAS. - We have grown into the habit of regarding the twenty-fifth day of December as the anniversary of the birth of the Lord Jesus. But this is an absolute error. In Judaea, shepherds cannot tend their flocks at night in the open fields during the month of December. Christ was, probably, born in April; and Christians never celebrated Christmas until the Fourth Century. But, when Constantine the Great was trying in every possible way to reconcile and unite his Pagan and Christian subjects, he induced the too yielding Christians to accept the twenty-fifth of December as the date for their principal festival in honour of Christ. His reason for fixing on that particular day was as follows:- For many centuries before Christ the Pagans throughout the world had been accustomed to observe it as the birthday of the Sun-god; and it seemed likely that the union of Pagans and Christians would be greatly promoted, if the latter could be persuaded to keep a similar festival on the same day; indeed, such an arrangement might ultimately result in the identification of Christ and Apollo. Now, the Pagans had a good reason for their choice of the day; for, in a sense, it is the actual birthday of the sun. The twenty-second of December is the shortest day; but, on the twenty fifth, the sun begins to rise above the solstice, so that the day may fairly be considered as his natal day. But the Christians, without any reason whatever, save the wish to curry favour with the Emperor and the Roman people, were induced to celebrate a festival of their

Lord at the same time, and so, as it were, to allow Apollo to dictate to Christ. This was, indeed, an undignified concession to the Pagans. And, whenever a Christian believer observes Christmas, he is indirectly, though, no doubt, unintentionally, honouring a heathen deity. Perhaps it is worth while to notice, that the feasting hilarity and exchanging of gifts, with which Christmas is celebrated, were characteristic of the Pagan festival, but have no precedent in the New Testament. The yule log and the Christmas tree are also Pagan, having been invented to typify the death and resurrection of the false Christ.

155. EASTER takes its very name from the Assyrian goddess Ishtar, who is frequently mentioned in Assyrian records. The "hot cross buns" of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Easter Sunday, were in vogue among the Babylonians 1300 years before the Christian era. We inherit them through the Roman Catholic Church.

156. LENT, again, the 'forty days' fast preparatory to the festivities of Easter, is of Babylonian origin, and was observed many a long century before the Christian era.

157. The priest's tonsure, the bishop's mitre and crozier, the priest's vestments, the nimbus, the round sacramental cakes, or wafers - all these originated in Babylon.

158. Baptismal regeneration is a purely Pagan doctrine. To this day there are Pagan religions which teach, that baptism, or washing, removes sin. At Benares, the Hindus may be seen every morning, by thousands, cleansing themselves from corporal and spiritual defilements by bathing in the Ganges. The first act in Chaldean initiation was to plunge the candidate into water, until he was half drowned, after which rite he was reckoned among the "twice born." This doctrine, again, has come to us through Rome.

159. The symbol of the cross, too, is purely Pagan, and was the ancient sign of life through the conjunction of the sexes. It is strange, indeed, that professed Christians should have taken to worship the implement of Satan on which their Lord was put to death, and that often this worship should supersede that of the Lord Himself! But He is our God: let us worship Him.

160. The Eastward position is wholly Pagan, being, naturally, connected with the worship of the sun. How well this was known even to the Jews, we may see by a remarkable passage in Ezekiel 8:15-16, which, also, tells us that the practice is an abomination to the Lord, and that it was one of the sins which caused Him to give up Jerusalem to destruction. The celibacy of the priest, also, was instituted and strictly maintained at Babylon.

161. The Virgin Mary. Under this name the chief and most popular deity of the Roman Church is worshipped as the Queen of Heaven. She has, however, nothing to do with our Lord's mother, but is the great Pagan goddess of nature, disguised, and with another name added to her long list of appellations. Down the ages she has been worshipped as Mylitta, Astarte, Aphrodite, and Venus. She was usually connected with a son; and - under the name of Isis, at least, - was, nevertheless, regarded as a virgin and immaculate. But, in the New Testament, the Lord's mother is never called a virgin after the birth of her First-born Son, and subsequently had other sons, and also daughters, His brethren and sisters in the flesh. Still further, had she been an immaculate goddess, He would not have taken our nature upon Himself, and the plan of redemption would have been frustrated.

162. Many similar facts might be cited; but these, surely, are sufficient to show, that the purer any sect desires to be, the more completely must it separate itself from the appalling corruptions of the Catholic Church. But, when we inspect the observances of many of the Protestant Churches, we are at once reminded of that Parable in which the Lord likens the Kingdom of the Heavens, in its present state of Mystery, to "leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened" (Matthew 13:33). The meal was good, and fit to be used for an offering to the Lord (Leviticus 2:1); but the leaven was corrupting, and by defiling the meal made it unfit for presentation to Him (Leviticus 2:11). Now, the woman represents the Ecclesiastical System, or Catholic Church, which, as soon as it was formed, began to put the leaven of Babylonianism into the pure flour of God's Word, until all the doctrines of Christ had become leavened and changed by it. And where can we now find a recognized form of worship which is not more or less tainted by this process?

163. But Babylon in Mystery, or the Roman Catholic Church, will not retain her influential position until the Lord comes. Her powers for evil are at present greatly paralysed, as we have already seen; but they will recover their strength. And, after she has once more made herself drunken with the blood of the saints (Revelation 17:6), the hour of her judgment will have come. The very Ten Horns, or Ten Kingdoms, which she may have been instrumental in forming, will turn against her, and there will be none to deliver her from an inexorable, cruel, and utter, destruction.

06 - The City of Babylon

The City of Babylon.

164. In the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation, we read of a sudden and terrific catastrophe falling upon a city which is called "Babylon the Great," and "that great city Babylon." Now, with the seventeenth chapter in our minds, we might be disposed to think that we were about to hear something more concerning the Babylonian Ecclesiastical system. There is, however, no mention of a Mystery; and, as we read on, we are impressed with the conviction, that the seer is describing a literal and material city of Babylon. But, although we are aware that there was once a city so named, on the banks of the Euphrates, which might with Justice have been called Babylon the Great, yet we know that it was destroyed centuries ago, and remains to this day in a state of utter ruin. And there is no other city that answers to the prophet's words.

165. Can, then, his description be in any sense applied to the Mystical Babylon of the previous chapter? To this question we can return a decided No. For we read, that the Ten Kings hate the Mystical Babylon, and cruelly destroy her (Revelation 17:16); whereas these same Kings of the Earth bewail and lament over the destruction of the great city (Revelation 18:9). Moreover, the destruction of the Mystical Babylon is effected by the hands of the Ten Kings; while that of the city is a direct judgment of God (Revelation 18:8). It is, then, clear, that the Woman and City cannot be the same.

166. Who and what the Woman is, we have already, to some extent, discovered; let us, then, try to elucidate the difficulties respecting the City. Now, were we to read the whole chapter, noting its literal sense, we could not but suppose that John was speaking of a literal and very great city named Babylon. And, inasmuch as we know that the Babylon which once sat as a Queen among the Cities of the earth is destroyed to the ground, are we not almost led to the conclusion, that its revival, rebuilding, and re-establishment as "the Lady of Kingdoms," are here foretold? Is there, then, any other indication of this, either in Biblical teachings, or in the probable outcome, in the near future, of present political tendencies? Or, on the other hand, is it not a fact, that the prophecies of the destruction of Babylon have been already and completely fulfilled; and, if this be the case, how can they possibly be fulfilled a second time? We will endeavour to answer the last of these questions first.

167. To do this, we must carefully study the awful predictions in the thirteenth chapter of Isaiah, where the prophet begins by announcing, that what he is about to utter is the burden of Babylon. He then proceeds to give the following particulars of the circumstances and extent of her destruction. We are told:- That the whole land is to be destroyed (Isaiah 13:5). That the land is to be laid desolate, and the sinners destroyed out of it (Isaiah 13:9).

(This has never yet been accomplished. The country round the ancient site of Babylon is exceptionally fine agricultural land.) That the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light, the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her

light to shine (Isaiah 13:10). That God will shake the heavens, and make the earth remove out of her place (Isaiah 13:13).

(These terrible events must be still in the future; for no record exists of their fulfilment in the past. Moreover, they are elsewhere mentioned among the signs of the Lord's coming, and appear, from Isaiah 14:1-3, to be connected with the final deliverance of Israel.) That Babylon is to be destroyed in a manner similar to the overthrowing of Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 13:19).

(These latter cities were destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven; so will Babylon be utterly burned in one hour (Revelation 18:8-10). But nothing like this has ever yet happened to her.) That Babylon shall never again be inhabited, or dwelt in, from generation to generation; that not even the Arab shall pitch his tent there, nor shepherds cause their flocks to lie down upon its site (Isaiah 13:20).

(This has by no means been fulfilled; for Arabs and shepherds still frequent the site, and villages are built upon it.)

168. Some of these predictions are very strongly emphasized in Jeremiah 51:1-64. In that chapter the prophet declares- That Babylon's destruction is to be sudden (Jeremiah 51:8). That the city shall for ever be desolate, and that no one shall take from her a stone for a corner or for a foundation (Jeremiah 51:26).

(This has most certainly not been the case with ancient Babylon; since several cities are known to have been built out of materials brought from her ruins.) That the land of Babylon shall be made a desolation, without an inhabitant (Jeremiah 51:29). That Babylon shall become heaps, without an inhabitant (Jeremiah 51:37). That the city shall sink, and shall not rise again (Jeremiah 51:63-64).

There are, also, other prophecies on the same subject; but those which we have cited will be sufficient for our purpose.

169. The past history of Babylon the Great, in very brief outline, is as follows:- The city was founded by Nimrod, and, in its earliest period, was the metropolis of a powerful kingdom. Khammurabi - the Amraphel of Genesis 14:1 - ruled over the whole of Mesopotamia, from the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates to the Mediterranean. His wonderful code of laws, recently deciphered, is now the admiration of scholars. In its second period, Babylon was made a Queen of Nations, or a World power, by Nebuchadnezzar. A little later, the city was captured by the Medes and Persians under Cyrus, by which event a number of prophecies were fulfilled - notably Isaiah 45:1-3. But Cyrus did not destroy it: he took possession of it in B.C. 541, but it remained for many years the second, if not the first city in his mighty Empire. More than two hundred years later, the great Grecian conqueror Alexander visited it; and so attracted was he by it that he proposed to make it the seat of his government and once more the capital of the world. In the year A.D. 64, Peter wrote his first Epistle (1 Peter 5:13) from the famous city, whither he had gone to carry the Gospel to the many Jews who dwelt there. And, in the year A.D. 500, the celebrated Babylonian Talmud was issued there, a proof that the place was still a seat of learning. Even at the present day, there is a town called Hillah on a part of the ancient site, with a population of about ten thousand. It thus appears, that not a single one of the prophecies mentioned above can be said to have been fulfilled.

170. May we not, then, infer, that Isaiah and Jeremiah saw in vision a state of things respecting Babylon which has not even yet emerged from the mist of the future? And have we, in their prophecies, no indications of the time when their words will be verified? Most certainly we have; for, from Isaiah 13:6, we find, that the time for howling over the destruction of Babylon, and other terrible events, is when the Day of the Lord is at hand. What is meant by the Day of the Lord, we have endeavoured to explain in paragraphs 92 and 130 (see also Diagram D). The events which we have there connected with it will be found in accord with Isaiah 13:4. The ninth verse, again, in alluding to the same period, calls it "the Day of the Lord"; while, in the tenth, we read of the stars withdrawing their light, and of the darkening of the sun and moon. This last verse reminds us of our Lord's similar prediction in Matthew 24:29, where we know that He is speaking of "that Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord." The shaking of Isaiah 13:13, is obviously the same as that which is mentioned in Joel 3:16, and in Haggai 2:6-7, Haggai 2:21-22. Since, then, we know that the latter predictions refer to the end of the age, we have here another strong proof, that the final judgments have not yet been inflicted on the city of Babylon, and that we may expect them to be poured out in the great Seventieth Seven (see paragraph 123 et seq.).

171. Yet another corroboration may be obtained, by observing the similarity of the state of things which we found to be depicted in the thirteenth chapter of Isaiah with that which is described in the Revelation as existing in the last Seven of Years, and about the time when the Babylon of the eighteenth chapter is destroyed.

172. It is also worthy of notice, that, in the prophecies of Isaiah, the judgments upon Babylon follow immediately after a prediction of the blessings that will be vouchsafed to Israel at the restoration. A similar connection may be obtained in Jeremiah 1:1-19. and Jeremiah 2:1-37, and it seems to indicate, that the time of Babylon's overthrow will be that of Israel's restoration.

173. That there are predictions respecting Babylon which have been already fulfilled, is, of course, manifest. But the most important of them, and all those which speak of the utter desolation of the land, and of the sudden destruction of the City, are evidently still in the future. And this fact fortifies us in the belief, that the great city of Babylon must yet be rebuilt upon her old site.

174. Finally, there is, in the fifth chapter of Zechariah, a curious indication of the means by which Babylon will be restored, and once more become the Mistress of the Kingdoms. But, since that subject is dealt with under the special head of "Commerce," we shall merely refer the reader to paragraph 301-4.

175. So much, then, for the testimony of the prophets as recorded in Scripture. And an intelligent glance at the political aspect of the world will reveal not a few signs, that their predictions are on the eve of fulfilment. For a grand revival of the East is in progress, and the districts near to the site of Babylon are being changed by it. What is taking place in Palestine has been already noticed. Tens of thousands of Jews and others are uniting to make the Land once more capable of supporting a large population. The long-neglected soil is being cultivated: villas, houses, and stores, are being erected: a water-scheme for Jerusalem is completed. Since the opening of the railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem, other lines have been made, some are being constructed, and more are projected. It is said, also, that God has graciously given a more copious fall than usual of fertilizing rains during the last few years. We must not, however, suppose that this has anything to do with His promise to restore the regular early and latter rains, which have been so long withheld

(Jeremiah 3:3; Jeremiah 5:24); for that promise was conditional, and will not be realized until the conditions are fulfilled (Deuteronomy 11:13-14): and the Jews will not be able to fulfil them, until they shall have looked upon Him Whom they pierced, and have mourned for Him as one mourneth for his only son. Then they will be able to love the Lord their God, and to serve Him with all their heart and with all their soul. And so, He will give them the first rain and the latter rain in their due season, that they may gather in their corn, and their wine, and their oil (Hosea 6:3; Joel 2:23).

176. Again; what is called "the Eastern Question," which may be said to have commenced with the Crusades, and has been cropping up now and then ever since their era, has assumed an acute form in our own time, and has now resolved itself into a sort of diplomatic scramble among the European Powers, likely at any time to result in war for the possession of vantage-ground in the reviving countries of the East.

177. As regards the immediate neighbourhood of Babylon itself, the projected railway, through Asia Minor and Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf, will carry Western commerce and civilization into those ancient countries; and, as many politicians, who possess neither knowledge of, nor interest in, prophecy, have said, will bring about the resuscitation of the famous cities of old upon the Euphrates and the Tigris. The railway is, apparently, to be constructed under German auspices; but the English have been lately employed in strengthening their hold upon the Persian Gulf, and especially upon Kuwait, which is, presumably, the most convenient port for the terminus of the railway. Russia, too, has been for some time intriguing in Persia; and it is possible that the interests of other nations may before long be found to affect the same countries.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that two enterprising Jews from Bagdad have purchased the site, or, possibly, a part of the site, of ancient Babylon, through a conviction that the city will soon be restored, and their newly acquired property become enormously valuable as building ground.

178. Indeed, the splendid situation and central position of ancient Babylon suggested the advantage of its restoration to one of the world's greatest men about a century ago. For Mr. Pember, in his "Great Prophecies," states, that he is acquainted with an eminent engineer who was employed by a firm of Parisian bankers to construct a railway in Spain, and who obtained permission from the French Government to examine the charts and maps of that country which were prepared for the use of Napoleon I. and his generals. And, while he was searching for what he wanted, he took down a great roll, which, when opened, proved to be a complete set of plans for the organization of the Euphrates Valley, and the rebuilding and establishment of Babylon as a great port and capital city.

179. It is now many years since the English Government sent Col. Chesney to survey the Euphrates Valley, with the view of finding a new route to India. And, since that time, there has been much talk of a railway through Mesopotamia to India. The project, now more feasible on account of our ascendancy in Egypt, has been recently discussed with great earnestness, and would, doubtless, be carried out at once but for diplomatic obstacles. Should these be removed, as they probably will be, and the railway actually constructed, it would, of course, tend mightily to the opening up and improvement of the countries through which it would run, and would certainly lead to some alteration in the condition of Hillah, the town which now stands on a part of the site of Babylon.

180. All the causes that have been enumerated, when considered together, point to a strong probability that Babylon is likely once more to rise out of her ruins to life and splendour; and, when the great event takes place, we may be sure that the resuscitated city will soon be found to answer to the description in Revelation 18:1-24.

181. We may, also, be sure, that when the final catastrophe befalls this Queen of Cities, it will happen in the manner described in the same prophecy. In one day, nay in one hour, with the awful suddenness of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, as the millstone cast by the mighty angel sank into the sea; so shall this scat of rebellion, and of worldly commerce, wealth, power, and luxury, be utterly destroyed, and never again inhabited.

182. In connection with this study, the reader will find it profitable to refer to the under mentioned passages, comparing the older with the later prophecies.

Compare Jeremiah 51:13 with Revelation 17:1 Compare Jeremiah 51:7 with Revelation 17:4
Compare Jeremiah 7:1-34 with Revelation 17:2 Compare Isaiah 47:5 with Revelation 17:18
Compare Isaiah 47:7-9 with Revelation 18:7-8 Compare Jeremiah 51:25 with Revelation 18:8
Compare Jeremiah 51:45 ; Jeremiah 50:8 ; Jeremiah 51:6 with Revelation 18:4 Compare
Jeremiah 51:9 with Revelation 18:5 Compare Jeremiah 50:15, Jeremiah 50:29 with Revelation
18:6 Compare Isaiah 21:9 ; Jeremiah 51:8 with Revelation 18:2 Compare Isaiah 13:21 with
Revelation 18:2 Compare Jeremiah 51:63-64 with Revelation 18:21.

183. Finally, the wonderful words of the prophecy of Revelation 18:1-24. cannot possibly be referred to the capture of Babylon by Cyrus; for that event had already become history some 600 years before John was banished to Patmos.

Seeing, then, that Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied of the same city as John, and that a comparison of the words of the three prophets reveals the fact, that the main points of their predictions are common to all of them, it would appear that they must have prophesied of the same event. Hence from the date of the Revelation, A.D. 96, and from the fact, that nothing in any way answering to chap. 18. has happened since that time, it follows that the event predicted must still be lying in the future.

07 - Great and Dreadful Day of the Lord

The Great and Dreadful Day of The Lord.

184. We must now say a few words respecting the final crisis of this Dispensation, which is so vividly described in Isaiah 24:1-23. and Revelation 19:1-21. Malachi calls it the day "that shall burn as an oven"; and it will, probably, be a literal day, so that all its events will take place within twenty-four hours. The greatest of them will be the return of the once despised and crucified Jesus. He will not, however, return in humiliation, but in power and great glory, followed by the Armies of Heaven, and with the Day of Vengeance in His heart; for the year of His redeemed will have come. The Kings of the Earth, deceived by the foul spirits from the mouths of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet (Revelation 16:13-14), will have set themselves, and the rulers have taken counsel together, against Jehovah and against His Anointed, or His Christ (Acts 4:25-26). "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us!" will be their cry (Psalms 2:2-3). For, in their maddened pride, they will have dared to think of measuring their strength even against God, and of making war upon the Lamb.

185. They will have seen and been deceived by the miracles of the False Prophet: they will have witnessed his superhuman power, the calling down of fire from heaven, the causing of the image of the Beast to speak, and many other mighty works, more striking, it may be, than even those which are recorded of the Lord at His First Advent. They will have been further fascinated with the flatteries, the brilliant intellect, and the reckless blasphemies of the Beast, and will have been induced to believe the lie.

186. And, as the result of all this, they will be gathered together in vast armies, fully equipped with the most effective weapons, and tinder the leadership of the Beast and the False Prophet, for the war of the Great Day of God, the Almighty, and to the battlefield of Armageddon. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Revelation 17:14). "The Lord shall have them in derision" (Psalms 2:4). He will look down upon their madness, and command the flesh-eating birds of heaven to gather themselves together, that they may feast upon the flesh of these wicked men. Then the heavens will cleave asunder, and there will appear One sitting on a white horse, with many diadems upon His head, clothed in a vesture stained with blood, Whose Name is The Word of God, Whose titles are Lord of lords and King of kings, and out of Whose mouth proceeds the sword of, death, with which He will smite the rebel nations; for He it is That will tread the winepress of the wrath and anger of God, the Almighty. His saints will be with Him; but they will merely stand by and see the vengeance and the salvation of their God; for He will tread the winepress Alone (Isaiah 63:3), and the slain of the Lord shall be many (Isaiah 66:16).

187. It is not easy to realize that which may not happen for several years; let us, therefore, for a moment suppose, that, by God's decree, the whole series of events which we have just narrated were fixed to occur within the next three months. How bewildering would be the hurry and din of preparation in every country of Europe! How bitter and malignant would be the exasperation and

ridicule of unbelievers at the very thought, that Jesus the Nazarene, Whose Name has been so well known for centuries, and Who has been so despised and neglected by the world at large, is, after all these long years of apparent inaction, about to assert Himself, and to prove, that He is not merely alive for ever more, but, also, that He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and that all power is given unto Him both in heaven and upon earth.

188. We may imagine how absolutely secure the nations would be feeling in the midst of the rumours with which the world would be full, owing to the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom that is, the good news of the Lord's immediate return to reign - by His people upon earth (Matthew 24:14). We can picture to ourselves the bitterness of their contempt for any who should hint at danger. Have we not, they will say, the great Emperor who returned from the dead - for they will not call him the Antichrist - as our general? And who is like unto him? Who is able to make war with him? What being so powerful and so Divine has ever before visited our earth? Have we not, also, on our side the great Prophet, who has shown himself to be the possessor of a power, never known before, over both matter and spirit, over material things as well as spiritual? And, yet again, is there not with us the great spiritual Prince of this World, whom we were once falsely taught to call Satan, the Adversary, and the origin of all evil; but have now discovered to be the true God, the giver of all good, who brought our mighty Emperor from the dead, to rule over us, and to be the true Christ of the world; and who gave us the all-wise and all-powerful Prophet to be our guiding Spirit? Thus will they believe the lie, and, strong in their horrid faith, be eager to carry out the total extirpation of the Israel of God, although they will have been warned, that, should they make the reckless attempt, the Son of God would descend from heaven to destroy them.

189. Now, let us suppose, that the preparations have been completed, and the armies despatched; and that, throughout Europe, the morning, noon, and evening newspapers are being eagerly searched for telegrams; for the minutest particulars are being ceaselessly wired to every part of the world by zealous reporters. Then, suddenly, just after the junction of the allied armies has been effected, and all arrangements have now been made, so that nothing remains but to commence the attack, the whole world is startled by portentous signs in the atmosphere, which no scientist can explain. But for the aid of their clocks, men could scarcely tell whether it is night or day; for it is not dark, neither is it light (Zechariah 14:7). The sun appears to be honeycombed with spots, and is rather black than white. The moon has changed her colour to a blood-red hue, dark and threatening. The stars are dimmed, and terrifying showers of countless meteors are hissing and exploding in the air. The ground quivers continuously beneath the feet of the horror stricken fugitives, and at intervals is violently shaken; while storms, frightful with thunder, lightning, rain, hail, and roaring wind, such as have never been seen or heard before, are everywhere prevalent.

Something is wrong with the universe: all nature is out of course: a fearful and final catastrophe is momentarily expected. The lightning-flashes reveal pale faces and shaking forms. What can be about to happen? In Palestine, where the armies are assembled and fill the land, everything is satisfactory so far as the condition and organization of the troops are concerned; but the leaders are bewildered and cowed by the confusion of the elements. And even the great Emperor and his superhuman Prophet are quite unable to control the feelings and terror of the vast forces under their command.

190. The appalling portents grow worse instead of better: all things seem ripening for some fearful, collapse. And suddenly a light, brighter than the sun in his strength, strikes through the gloom, and the Lord roars out of Zion, and utters His voice from Jerusalem (Joel 3:16); and, according to His word, shakes, not the earth only, but also the heavens. There is a terrific earthquake, such as has never been previously experienced since men were upon the earth, and it is followed by an awful crashing of hail-stones, accompanied by the loudest thunderings and most destructive lightnings; while, amid the confusion, the rocks and mountains are rent asunder, and the waves of the sea are terribly agitated; so that men's hearts are dead with fear.

191. But it is too late for repentance! The lightnings are carrying death in all directions: the great armies are being dissolved and rapidly reduced to ashes, to be trodden beneath the feet of delivered Israel: the King's arrows are sharp in the hearts of His enemies (Psalms 45:5): the proud rebels are being slain by the sword of Him That sitteth upon the horse (Revelation 19:21). At the same time, He sends a fire among them that dwell carelessly in the isles, that is, in the countries bordering upon the Mediterranean (Ezekiel 39:6). "For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them; He hath delivered them to the slaughter" (Isaiah 34:2).

192. The great leaders of the rebellion, the Beast and the False Prophet, are seized; and, since they have been taken red-handed in the fight against their Creator, there is no need of judgment: they are cast alive into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone. For, being both of them the spirits of deceased men who have returned from the dead, they cannot be a second time confined in Hades, the place of the First Death; but must now be hurled into the Second Death, which is the Fiery Lake (Revelation 20:14), from whence there is no return, and which has been specially prepared and lighted to receive them (Isaiah 30:33).

193. Thus will be fulfilled the prophecy of the Stone cut without hands That fell upon the feet of the Image, and brought the huge Colossus in shattered fragments to the ground. And, when this last and harrowing scene is over, and the Day of Vengeance has come to its close, then the violent agitation of the elements will cease, and the gloom be dispersed, for, at the eventide of that day, the natural light will at length return (Zechariah 14:7). The Lord has shown forth His power, and all His enemies are ashes beneath the feet of His people. After the mighty tempest comes the peaceful calm; and now will those words be fulfilled:- "Come, behold the works of the Lord, What desolations He hath made in the earth!

He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;

He burneth the chariots in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God;

I will be exalted among the nations;

I will be exalted in the earth." And so, the present Dispensation will have passed away amid the terrors of His coming; and the long-expected Millennium, the reign of the Righteous King, the time of peace and joy and reward, and the rest that is reserved for the people of God, will have come.

194. It must not, however, be imagined that only the armies which are gathered together in the Land of Israel will suffer. The wrath of the Lord will, doubtless, be centred there, because there all the blasphemous leaders of the rebellion will be found. But, as we have already hinted, death and

terror will spread to every quarter of the broad earth.

195. Jerusalem will suffer; for "the Mount of Olives will cleave in the midst thereof," Mount Zion will be thrown up into an exceeding high Mountain, and, to the south of it, all the land from Geba to Rimmon will be levelled into a plain. In the fearful convulsion which will bring about these changes, it is probable that all the surviving Jews who still remain proud and stubborn of heart will miserably perish, and the winnowing of the people be completed.

196. As to the Gentiles, it is said in the description of the earthquake, "And the cities of the nations fell" (Revelation 16:19). Now, in the Greek original, there is a definite article before "cities"; the prediction may, therefore, mean, that all the cities of the Roman world will be either consumed, swallowed down, or shattered to the ground, by the terrific convulsion. In this case, the loss of life would be prodigious, but not more than Isaiah leads us to expect, when he says, that, at the end of the judgments, the inhabitants of earth will be found to have been burnt up, so that but few men will be left (Isaiah 24:6). The mention of death by burning evidently points to the bursting out of fire or boiling water from the fissures caused by the earthquake. This kind of destruction may be included in the words, "For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (Isaiah 66:16). But, of course, the red lightnings that will proceed directly from Himself will effect no inconsiderable part of the slaughter.

08 - The Millennium

The Millennium

197. How often, when people are deploring either the state of the world in general or their own woes and sorrows in particular, do we find their thoughts running on to some future period, when all that is wrong will be put right. Most men have some such idea as this, whether they be believers or unbelievers: but the former usually imagine that their golden age will be brought about by the triumph of religion; while the latter expect it as a result of man's own efforts, when he is better educated and more enlightened; or, perhaps, look for it as the ultimate of continuous evolution. But all those who entertain such views are, of course, utterly regardless of what the Holy Spirit has taught us by the mouth of Paul, namely, that evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived (2 Timothy 3:13); and, also, of the Lord's Own words, that, in the Last Days, the love of many shall grow cold, and lawlessness shall abound (Matthew 24:12).

198. Both of the two above-mentioned parties call their happy prospect the Millennium; though the word is a strange one to come from the lips of infidels, since the only authority for the promise of a thousand years of blessing is that very Bible which they condemn.

199. What, then, is the Millennium? The world will often talk of it as a time of political happiness, when "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," will be supreme, and when the people will make their own laws, and there will be no more aristocrats.

200. But what do Christians say? Their opinions are various. Many good people affirm, that the Millennium will dawn as soon as Roman Catholicism has received its death-blow. Others, that it will come when the efforts of the Church have succeeded in converting the world to God. This last view would, at least, seem likely to be true, were it not for one unfortunate circumstance. For the Bible repeatedly, and with plainness, gives us to understand, that the world never can be converted, until Christ has returned. And, certainly, this assertion is strongly corroborated by the history of the last nineteen centuries. Finally, there are others who, although they read the daily papers, go so far as to affirm, that the Millennium is even now in progress. Thus the opinions of professed Christians, however excellent some of them may be, are far too varied to be worthy of trust: we must, therefore, have recourse to the fountain-head of all authority, and inquire with Paul, "What saith the Scripture?"

201. It tells us, that, after the destruction of the Lord's enemies at His personal appearing, He will cast Satan and his fallen angels and demons, together with the rebellious "Kings of the Earth," into the Abyss. Then He will place His ransomed Church, as the ruling spiritual Kingdom, in the heavens, with Himself as their King. And upon earth, He will establish the children of Abraham, in their own Land, as the "Kings of the Earth upon the Earth." Peace and prosperity will follow: the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea: the curse will, in great part, be removed: there will be no evil spirits of the air to tempt men to sin: every human being upon earth will render homage, in perfect outward submission, at least, to the Lord Jesus, as the King That -

rules in righteousness. Such will be the nature of the next age, which will last for the thousand years during which Satan is to be bound in the Abyss; and is, therefore, called the Millennium or 'Thousand Years' period.

202. During its course, the Lord will take the place of Prince of this World, which is now held by Satan. On the earth, Israel will be His special people;- but, apparently, He will govern them for the most part through a viceroy, who will be David, the King, raised from the dead (Ezekiel 34:23-24, Ezekiel 37:24-25; Jeremiah 30:9; Hosea 3:5; Isaiah 55:3-4). Through him the Lord Jesus will reign over the whole world: for He will "have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psalms 72:8; Zechariah 9:10). But, while David will administer this vast realm as Prince upon earth, the Lord, as the great Over-King, will probably, visit His chosen people from time to time. Meanwhile, they will be unto Him a Holy Kingdom of Priests (Exodus 19:6), nay, even the bells upon the horses, and the cooking and other utensils, at Jerusalem, will be holiness unto the Lord. Among the Gentile nations, on the other hand, the submission of many will be feigned, and evil thoughts will be treasured in their hearts; but they will not dare to disclose them, because every open sin will meet with certain and instant punishment.

203. The principal seat of the government, and the centre and capital of the world, will, of course, be Jerusalem - Satan's capital, Babylon, having perished for ever. And great will be the blessings bestowed upon the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Their unbelief, their pride, and their stiff-necked disposition, will have vanished; and, at last, as they walk in perfect and loving obedience, they will be openly manifested as God's chosen people, whom He loves, by the fulfilment of promises such as those contained in Ezekiel 36:23-30; Psalms 102:12-16; Isaiah 27:6; Jeremiah 33:7-9; and Micah 4:1-8; Micah 5:7-9.

204. Then, at length, men will obtain a practical knowledge of that which for scores of centuries they have been endeavouring to find out, namely, What is the best form of government? (Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 11:1-9; Isaiah 24:23, and Isaiah 32:1; Jeremiah 33:14-15). At last, they will find themselves under the rule of an irresistible righteous and absolutely autocratic Government. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isaiah 33:17),

205. As we have already said, Jerusalem will be the capital of the world in those happy days; and, in the closing chapters of Ezekiel, we have a description of the glorious Temple which shall be built by the Messiah Himself (Zechariah 6:12-13). In Ezekiel 42:15-20, the measurement of the outer wall of the Temple-precincts are given to us as being 500 reeds for each side of the square. Now, a reed is equivalent to 6 cubits; but the cubit, as is well known, varied in length, so that there were, probably, three distinct cubits. It is most likely that one which contains about 24 inches, or 2 feet, was intended by Ezekiel. In this case, a reed will be equivalent to 12 feet, and 500 reeds will be 6,000 feet, or 2,000 yards, or 1 mile 240 yards. And, if this be the length of one side of the square, its four sides, or its whole circumference, will be 4 miles 960 yards. Ezekiel gives a minute description of the details of this Millennial Temple, and, also, of the form of worship which will be carried on in it. And it has been a great stumbling-block to many, that he predicts a resumption of the sacrifices, even of those in which animals were offered, which will, doubtless, be commemorative. There will also be priests appointed to perform the offices of the Temple. For a solution of the difficulties connected with this subject, see Mr. Pember's work, "The Church, the

Churches, and the Mysteries," pp. 422-9.

206. The old form of worship - with modifications, no doubt - will be restored, probably because "the Mystery of God," that is, Christ in us, will then have been finished. Hence the types which once foreshadowed His coming, at the end of the ages, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, will be again required; but, this second time, to serve as memorials of the accomplished fact. Their reintroduction seems, however, to intimate, that the Lord will not dwell personally upon the earth during the Millennium, although He will be its acknowledged Sovereign, and, doubtless a frequent visitor; just as He was an occasional visitor in the Mosaic and older Dispensations. But His abode will be in the Heavens, where the glorified Church, His Body, will dwell with Him; while His viceroy and His chosen nation will represent Him upon earth. For, apparently, it is not until the New Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven that the Temple-services will be dispensed with (Revelation 21:22). That grand event will, however, take place, after the Millennium, at the beginning of the Eternal State.

207. In Ezekiel 48:1, Ezekiel 48:5-6, we are told, that the Millennial City of Jerusalem will be in the form of a square, the length of each side of which will be 4,500 reeds; or, reckoning 12 feet to the reed, as we have done above, 54,000 feet = 18,000 yards = 10 miles 400 yards. Hence the whole circumference of the city will be 40 miles 1,600 yards. The changed condition of the earth at this time will be marvellous. To appreciate it, we must bear in mind, that the population of the globe will have been terribly thinned by the judgments of God during the Seventieth Seven, and that the survivors will gladly welcome the new rule. In connection with this subject, it will be instructive, to read Psalms 46:1-11. and Psalms 47:1-9., which belong to the period; also Ps. 155., the time of the fulfilment of which is fixed by verses 11-13.

208. The face of the Land of Israel will have undergone great changes, as we may learn by reading Isaiah 35:1-10., Zechariah 14:4-11, and similar passages. Nor can we suppose that the terrible convulsions, amid which the present age will expire, will fail to leave their traces on the surface of the whole earth. It is probable that land will appear where there is sea to-day, and that the waves will cover much of what is now land. Moreover, mountains will have disappeared, islands have been submerged (Revelation 16:20), the channels of rivers altered, and so on. See Isaiah 2:10-22.

209. Again, the conditions of the atmosphere will be altogether changed. This may be seen in the fact, that the moon will then equal the sun, as it is at present, in brightness; while the sun will shine with seven times the power that it has now; and yet the atmosphere will be so modified that the accession of light will be entirely beneficial (Isaiah 30:26). Police will scarcely be required; for God will execute His Own judgments. There will be no wars, and, therefore, no armies, and, probably, no work for hospitals, or reformatories, or charitable institutions. Of sickness, at least, there will be comparatively little, and but slight need of physicians; while the length of human life will be greatly extended (Isaiah 65:20-23), and death will be feared only when it is inflicted as the direct penalty of sin. Men will die, generally, of old age. To almost every one will the words of Eliphaz the Temanite apply:- "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in its season"; and the dread and pain of death will all but disappear.

210. We must not, however, imagine, that the Millennial will be altogether a sinless age. There will still be evil in men's hearts, though its manifestation will be very slight as compared with what it is

now. See Psa. 155:20; Psalms 6:3; Psalms 81:15; Isaiah 65:20. All these passages indicate the presence of sin; for, although human nature will be freed from the temptations of evil spirits, and cowed by the majesty of the Lord and His inflexible rule of righteousness, it will, nevertheless, remain unchanged in the unregenerate. But every outward sin, as soon as it is manifested, will receive sharp and terrible judgment from the Lord.

Complete severance from sin cannot be the lot of all men upon earth, until the establishment of the Eternal State, when all things shall be made new; but that will not be until after the Millennium, when the earth has been thoroughly burned, and there is a renewed heaven and a renewed earth, wherein righteousness will dwell.

211. So much, then, for the condition of the nation, during the Millennium. But the chosen people will, apparently, be perfect even in that age, and Israelites, then true saints and servants of God, will preach the Gospel to all nations. Missionary work, no longer hindered by the Devil, will be carried onto perfection, and with the result that, not only all nations, but also every individual belonging to them, will know the truth, and vast numbers will rejoice in it (Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14). There will thus be an almost inconceivably improved condition of things on the earth in the Millennial Dispensation, as compared with the present age. And yet, there will be an even greater difference between the Millennium and the serenely joyful World-without-End which shall follow it, when sorrow and sighing will have fled away for ever, and sin and death shall be no more. We must, however, realize, that the Millennial earth will be the same as that which we now inhabit, however much it may be altered and improved; and, also, that, in all probability, men will work, build, plant, manufacture, travel, and study, just as they do now, the great difference being, that they will do all these things in totally changed and greatly improved circumstances. As to the cause of the improvement, we need mention but one fact - Satan will be bound in the Abyss, and the Lord Jesus will be enthroned as the Prince of this World and of the Power of the Air. But, as we have before said, we do not think that He will reside continually upon the earth during His Millennial reign, but only visit it from time to time, as in the earlier Dispensation. We cannot, however, speak with certainty on this matter.

212. But it is, probably, to be anticipated, that He will reign by deputy, and appoint a vicegerent to occupy His earthly throne at Jerusalem. And who that vicegerent will be, is very plainly indicated in Jeremiah 30:8-9; Ezekiel 34:23-24, Ezekiel 37:24-25; and Hosea 3:5. For David will then be permitted to carry out to the full the sentiments which he expressed, so long ago, in Psalms 101:1-8.

213. We have thus seen how glorious a time is in store for our world; but it is not for us to anticipate the enjoyment of it as dwellers upon the earth. For our portion at that time will be either far more blessed or disastrously less so. For those of us who shall be alive just as the Seventieth Seven is about to commence will, if found watching, be caught up to God and to His Throne, and so escape altogether the things that are coming upon the earth. But if, at the critical moment, we be found to be spiritually sleeping and careless, we shall not be thought worthy to escape the season of trial. Nevertheless, by repentance and earnest testimony, which will then involve much suffering, and, perhaps, even death, we may yet be chosen to meet the Lord in the air at the sound of the Seventh and Last Trumpet. If, however, we should have missed both of these opportunities, we must be destroyed from the earth by the wrath of God before the Millennium begins, and have

our portion allotted to us with those who are reserved for the judgment of the Great White Throne. That awful Assize will take place at the end of the Thousand Years, when all who are not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be cast into the Lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

09 - The Final Rebellion and the Great Judgment

The Final Rebellion and the Great Judgment.

ALL THINGS MADE NEW. THE GREAT ABDICATION.

214. The reign of the Lord Jesus will, indeed, be an age of blessing; but the Thousand Years will soon pass by, and, sad as it is to contemplate, their completion will be speedily followed by another and final outburst of sin and rebellion. During the whole period of the Millennium, Satan will remain bound in the Abyss, and be unable to deceive the children of men as he did in the previous Dispensations. Hence all the spiritual influences of the Power of the Air will then be tending to good, and no one, save the wilfully and persistently wicked, will be able to find reason or excuse for sin. But the hearts of men will still be carnal, and very many of them will render service to the Lord, not with loyalty and good-will, but merely through fear and the absence of any other leader. Consequently, when, at the expiration of the Thousand Years, Satan and his legions are loosed from the Abyss and the air again becomes tainted with evil influences, the multitudes of the insincere will yield to temptation, and will soon be breathing out hatred and defiance of God.

215. In brief, then, some or all of the nations will once more be tempted and deceived into revolt, and will raise the standard of rebellion against the Government of David, the Lord's vicegerent at Jerusalem. They will gather themselves together to march upon "the beloved city," and will even compass it about; but, before they can come near to harm it, they will be destroyed by a direct interposition of God, Who will send down fire and utterly consume them. This revolt will break up the Millennial peace, and a period of judgment will follow it. The Great White Throne will be set, and the dead, the small and the great, will be summoned before it to give an account of the deeds done in the body. And all who are condemned will be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

216. As soon as the judgment is ended, the whole earth will be purified by a fire so intense that, as Peter tells us, the very elements shall melt with fervent heat (2 Peter 3:10-12). But, as the conflagration dies out, New Heavens and a New Earth will appear, in which none of the former evils will be found. For sin, the curse, sorrow, sighing, sickness, death, and even the separating sea, will then have passed away for ever, and all things have been made new.

217. This will be the Eternal Rest, when the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind (Isaiah 65:17). And the New Heavens and New Earth are those wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Peter 3:13), and which "shall remain" (Isaiah 66:22).

218. Perhaps, it will be immediately upon the establishment of this final order of things that the great event foretold by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, will take place. For all the conditions mentioned by the Apostle will have been fulfilled. The Lord will have finally put down all opposing rule and authority and power, and have; subjugated all His foes; even Death, the last remaining enemy, will have been destroyed. The whole of the work, to do which He came forth from the Godhead, will have been perfectly accomplished, and all creation apart from men, and all those of the human race who could be saved, will have been restored to a glorious and intrinsic purity and

holiness. There will, therefore, be no longer anything to keep the Supreme Father and Most High God away from His creatures and the works of His hands. And so, the Lord Jesus will vacate His Throne, and deliver up His Kingdom to God, even the Father, that God, that is, the Glorious and Ever-blessed Trinity, may be all in all. Henceforth the Lord will cease to reign as Man; but He will continue to reign as God in conjunction with His Father; for the grand consummation of God's plan in the Bible will then have been effected. His wisdom and power, ever blended with His love and mercy, will have triumphed over every foe, and overcome every obstacle: sin and death will be no more: time will have passed away, and the endless ages of Eternity have resumed their course.

10 - The New Jerusalem or Heaven

The New Jerusalem.

HEAVEN.

221. Possibly, a difficulty may have occurred to some of our readers in their perusal of our last chapter. What, they may wish to ask, is to become of the people of God during the conflagration by which the earth is to be purified? It would certainly seem to be essential that they should be removed, and conveyed to a place of safety, before the earth and its atmosphere are set on fire; and, without doubt, their gracious Creator will be found to have provided a refuge for them. What it may be, we know not; but would reverently suggest, that they may, possibly, be rapt into the Heavenly City, which, as soon as the cleansing fires have done their work, and order and peace, brightness and beauty, are restored, will descend, and become the Capital of the renewed earth, into which nothing that defileth will ever be suffered to enter.

220. From this Heavenly City, transferred to earth, the Lord Jesus will reign, no longer as the glorified Man, but as the Son of God, and in conjunction with His Father, Who, since every trace of sin and death will have been removed, will then be able to dwell among the purified and sinless children of men. Let us now consider what this City is, who are its inhabitants, and what are their circumstances. (See 55 on Diagram C.)

221. We will begin our investigation by asking, What were the hopes and expectations of the Old Testament patriarch, and saints? If we turn to Hebrews 11:10, we shall find an answer to this question; for Abraham, we are told, "looked for the City which hath the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God." And, again, in verse 16, we read of all those who died in faith, that God "had prepared for them," not an ecstatic state, not a mere joyful existence, but "a City." Now, our Lord speaks of "many mansions" which He has prepared for them that love Him (John 14:2, 3). And is not a beautiful city suggested by the idea of many mansions grouped together? He adds, "I go to prepare a place for you." And does not the word "place" indicate a definite locality? Moreover, He says, that the many mansions are in His Father's House. And are we not told, that God and the Lamb will have Their Throne in the Golden City, and that the Lamb's servants shall serve Him there, and shall see His face (Revelation 22:1, Revelation 22:3-4)? The Father's House with the many mansions would seem, then, to be the same as the New Jerusalem; and to it Paul manifestly refers when he says, "For here we have no continuing city; but we seek one to come."

222. It is thus clear, that the New Jerusalem is not a myth, not a dream or an imagination, but a literal city; quite as real as London or New York, though far more glorious than these, and built of incorruptible and imperishable materials. Nay, we have even a detailed description of it, short indeed, but marvellously comprehensive.

223. Now, if we had before us a description of some earthly city, let us say of Paris, and were to read, that the river Seine runs through that city; that trees are planted on both sides of the Boulevards; that the streets are paved with asphalt, and lighted with the electric light; that there is

no cathedral there; that the wall round the city is, we will say, forty feet in height, and built of stone with bronze gates; and that the city is a square, each side of which is about five miles in length - with such a description we should have before us something which we could understand, and which would convey to our minds a definite idea of the general characteristics of the city described. We should never dream of spiritualizing such an account as this ; for to do so would plainly indicate our belief, that the person who wrote it was drawing upon his imagination, and calling his "airy nothings" a city. And we should have no ground for such a conclusion, unless the writer had given some hint leading thereto.

224. If, then, we have no right to turn the literal description given by a mail into a mere imaginary vision or figure, how much less right have we to do this with what is inspired? Hence we have neither right nor reason for regarding the subject matter of Revelation 21:1-27. and Revelation 22:1-6, as being anything but the literal description of a literal and material city. Of course, its magnificence and splendour must to us necessarily appear transcendent, and far beyond any human conception. But, seeing that architects among ourselves can produce beautiful buildings which excite men's admiration and enthusiasm, it is only reasonable to suppose, that, if God deigned to design a city, its glory would be something altogether surpassing our comprehension.

225. Let us, then, read very carefully Revelation 21:1-27 and Revelation 22:1-6, bearing in mind, that, whether we can realize it or not, the description is emphatically literal.

226. As a necessary inference from Revelation 21:1-2, we must regard the Holy City, New Jerusalem, as being quite distinct from the New Heavens and the New Earth. And this fact is confirmed by the twenty-fourth verse; for the nations do not live in the City, though they walk in the light of it; neither is it the habitation of the kings of the earth, although they bring their glory and honour into it.

227. What the nations here mentioned are, must be more or less a matter of conjecture. But, most probably, they are such remnants of the Millennial nations as remained faithful to the Lord Jesus during the great revolt at the close of that period. They would, doubtless, have been conveyed to some place of safety, while the purifying fires were raging, and afterwards have been retransferred to the New Earth. But, whoever they may be, they will be found on the New Earth, enlightened and blessed by the proximity of the New and Heavenly Jerusalem.

228. Now, the Glorious City contains streets and many mansions, and these mansions must have inhabitants. Who, then, are they that have obtained so blessed an inheritance? They are those who constitute the Bride of Christ; and, therefore, they must be such Israelites as will be thought worthy of that honour. And, among them, there will certainly be the father of their nation, who "looked for the City that bath the foundations," and will then realize his hope to the full. Now, we must remember the Lord's promise, that Israel should be married to Him in the age of restoration (Jeremiah 3:14); and, therefore, that the faithful of that nation must be the Lamb's wife that has made herself ready (Revelation 19:7), when He comes out of heaven to claim her, followed by the armies of heaven, which are His redeemed and glorified Church. For the Church is His Body, and Israel His Bride. And He will dwell with the latter in His beautiful Capital, from which He will rule over the saved and happy nations of the earth, and, apparently, over the whole Universe. Will, then, His Body, the glorified Church, be excluded from the Heavenly City? By no means. Jesus, their Lord and Head, will be there; and, if they are to follow Him whithersoever He goeth, they must

be there with Him. And, probably, they will inhabit the highest part of the City, close to the place of His Father and Himself. For they will be reckoned as a part of Himself, and not of His Bride.

229. As to the inhabitants of the New Earth, whoever they may be, they will live in circumstances totally different from those existing on the present earth. The Millennial Earth will be greatly blessed, but the New Earth altogether so. In the case of the latter, the physical and atmospheric changes will be such as we cannot conceive. The curse will be entirely removed: thorns thistles and weeds, and hurtful beasts birds and insects, will be unknown: sin will be no more: and neither tears, nor sorrow, nor death, nor wars, nor accidents, nor sickness, will be anywhere found. For all these former things will have passed away for ever, from the moment when the Devil and Death and Hades, together with all the unsaved, shall have been cast into the Lake of Fire. Glorious, then, and transcendently happy will be the condition of the inhabitants of the New Earth - a condition which we can, indeed, appreciate to some extent, but only in a very feeble way.

230. It is, however, far more difficult to realize the glories of the New Jerusalem, the abode of the Great God and of the Lord Jesus with His Bride. Were a gifted jeweller to make a model of the City - say some six inches square - we might, perhaps, be helped to a faint conception of its beauty. But, when we remember that the Architect and Builder of the real City is God, and that in His sight six inches or twelve thousand furlongs are practically the same thing, we are carried beyond our powers of thought, and cannot imagine, but only believe in, and look forward to, His glorious Creation. For, to pass by its costly and resplendent materials, its size, also, is superhuman and Divine. Each side of its vast square measures twelve thousand Roman stadia, that is, about 1,500 English miles!

231. Moreover, its height is said to be equal to its breadth and length. What are we to understand by this? Some explain, that it will be a vast cube, each of the sides of which will be 1,500 miles square; while its streets will be like tunnels running through it. Such an arrangement would, however, leave no appropriate place for the Throne of God and the Lamb. It is, therefore, much more probable that the City will be a pyramid, in which the perpendicular, let fall from the apex to the base, will be equal to the side of the square upon which it stands; and the courses of masonry will support the ascending rows of streets. In that case, we should find no difficulty in the wall, 288 feet in height, by which the base of the City is to be enclosed, and which would give it a beautiful finish; whereas to a cube-shaped structure, 1,500 miles high, the wall would be neither useful nor ornamental. To the pyramidal shape, also, we seem to be guided by the following passages:- Psalms 118:22; Matthew 21:42-44; Acts 4:11; and 1 Peter 2:4-8 (R.V.). For, what is meant by "THE CHIEF CORNER-STONE," or THE HEADSTONE OF THE CORNER? In an ordinary building, which is the headstone, or which is the corner? Surely there is no single stone which could be designated as the headstone, and each of the four corners is equally important. And, again, what are we to understand when we read, that the "rejected" Stone is become the head of the corner - not the foot or the foundation?

232. Now, if we regard the New Jerusalem, the acknowledged home of the Lord Jesus and His Bride, as a pyramid, on which each of the inhabitants has his mansion or dwelling-place, which would be the only possible spot for His abode? Surely it must be at the top of the pyramid. And, if that be conceded, we can readily understand which is the Headstone, and which is the corner; because on the top corner of a pyramid all the corners join in the point; so that the topstone would

be what is called the headstone, the crowning stone, and the corner; while, at the same time, it would be a complete model of the whole pyramid.

233. Again, it is easy to see, that the topstone would, and must be, "rejected, or refused," by the builders, until the structure was all but completed. For there would be only one place into which it could be fitted, that is, at the very summit of the pyramid. It would thus be the last stone to be put into position, when it would form the apex of the building, connecting all the other corners, and crowning the work. How wonderfully does this illustrate the words:- "Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner-Stone, in Whom the building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:20-22).

234. In 1 Peter 2:5, we are told, that the saints are "living-stones," being "built up a Spiritual House," "acceptable to God," that is, built into a temple for God. And it is very important to remember, that the Temple at Jerusalem, the earthly type of the spiritual building, "was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither" (1 Kings 6:7). This, indicates, that every one who would become a stone in the glorious spiritual building must be "made ready," fully and completely ready, before [and in Hades after] death; otherwise, he will be rejected. Just as nothing unclean, or unholy, will ever be admitted into the New Jerusalem, so all those who would inhabit that glorious city must be both cleansed and sanctified previously to their death, that is, they must be so in this present life.

235. We may, therefore, conclude, that the Heavenly Jerusalem, which is the literal Heaven, is the materialization upon the New Earth of the Spiritual House mentioned in 1 Peter 2:4-8. In the latter, the saints are being built up as living stones; while, in the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Bride and the Lord with His Body, the Church, will dwell in material glory, in a material house of many mansions, that is, in a material city. The Architect of both of these Buildings is the same God; and the one of them is the spiritual counterpart of the other.

236. Thoughts of these things should be continually in our mind; so that we may ever be contemplating the glory that shall be revealed, and be setting our affections, not on things on the earth, but on the things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Such meditations will increase our spiritual growth and strength, and cause us so to advance in holiness that we shall be ready to meet with joy Him Who sent His angel to testify these things to us for that very purpose.

11 - Hell

Hell

237. Since we have been learning something of what Heaven is to be, it may be interesting to inquire, also, what the Scriptures teach upon the subject of Hell.

238. What, then, do we understand by the word "Hell"? It is worth while just to ask ourselves the question, that we may know whether we have any definite idea at all. Do we imagine that it might be properly described as the prison in which the unsaved are confined after death; or, as the place which the saved escape, because they are saved? But, if these definitions were assumed to be correct, how could we explain Acts 2:31, for there the Lord Jesus is said to have been in Hell?

239. Let us look at a few passages in the Authorized Version of our New Testament:- In Acts 2:31 we read "Hell." In Luke 8:31 we read "the Deep." In Revelation 9:1-2 we read "the Bottomless Pit." In 2 Peter 2:4 we read " Hell." In Matthew 23:15 we read "Hell."

And, finally, in Revelation 20:14-15, "Hell" is said to be cast into "The Lake of Fire." Do all these words refer to the same place? And, if so, what are we to understand by the last passage, which, in that case, tells us that Hell is cast into Hell? This would scarcely be sense; but a little explanation will soon clear up the matter.

240. The fact is, that our Authorized Version is to some extent faulty and confusing. If the same passages be examined in the Revised Version, they will be found to be much clearer. For, in the original Greek, there are three principal words which indicate different places in the unseen world; and these are Hades, Gehenna, and Tartarus.

241. Hades is a place of departed spirits [souls],* in which, until the death of the Lord, all the dead, both good and bad, were detained. But, since His Resurrection, it would appear that the spirits [souls]* of the saved go to the celestial Paradise, where they remain until the time of resurrection.

[* That is, disembodied souls. (See Acts 2:27; Psalms 16:10. cf. John 3:13. Christ preached to the spirits in the underworld (Hades); but these creatures are described as "the Nephilim" or "Giants" (Genesis 6:4): the offspring ('children') of a sexual relationship between angels described as ('sons of God') and humans, described as 'daughters of men'.]

242. Hence, in the previous Dispensation, Hades was divided into two parts, separated by a great gulf, in the one of which were the people of God, and in the other the children of Belial. In Luke 16:22, we read of the death of the rich man and of Lazarus. The rich man went to Hades, and there he opened his eyes and beheld Lazarus and Abraham on the other side of the great gulf; for, like himself, they, too, were in Hades, but in the other compartment. It was into Hades that our Saviour descended. In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, Sheol is the equivalent of Hades. So, in Genesis 37:35, Jacob says, "I will go down unto Sheol," that is, "unto Hades," not "into the grave," as the Authorized Version has it.

243. Some think that the better side of Hades was called Paradise; but that is a mistake.* The first Paradise was the Garden of Eden, into which men were not allowed to enter after the Fall. Nevertheless, it seems to have remained in sight until the Flood, when it disappeared, and passed out of existence.** But, in the time of the New Heavens and the New Earth, when God will make all things new, the terrestrial Paradise will be restored.

[* Note. How can it be 'a mistake' when the 'Gates of Hades will not overcome it' (the 'Church' Matthew 16:18)? We read in Revelation 6:9-11 that the souls who were slain "because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained" were told "to wait [in Hades] a little longer, until the number of their fellow-servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed" (verse 11)? These souls, will be martyred during the Great Tribulation, and will be in Hades along with all the rest who previously were martyred; and John sees them all awaiting Resurrection, for the 'First Resurrection' has not, even at that time in the future taken place!

** Furthermore, the 'Paradise' in the underworld of Hades, is still in existence. It has not 'passed out of existence' as stated above. "Today you will be with me in Paradise," said Jesus to "the other criminal" during the time of their crucifixion and shortly before both their deaths on that day: (Luke 23:40, Luke 23:43).]

244. In 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, Paul mentions a Paradise in connection with a Third Heaven. This must be a celestial Paradise now in existence; for Paul saw it. Now, the Third Heaven may, perhaps, be the great central Heaven, where the Throne of God is, and around which revolves, not only the First Heaven, which may be that of our solar system, but also the Heaven of the fixed stars, which is, possibly, the Second. Paul, then, speaks of the Paradise which he visited as being in or near the Third Heaven. And, if we investigate the earthly meaning of Paradise, which is a Persian word, we find that it was used of the great garden, or park, which surrounded the palace of the King of Persia, as well as the residences of his chief nobles. Hence the Heavenly Paradise may, possibly, be on the outskirts of the Third Heaven, where the Throne of the Most High God is set; and it is, probably, the place to which our Lord went when He ascended on high, leading the rescued captive of death with Him. It would seem to have been the place, also, in which He said that the crucified thief should be with Him, and which is now the abode of the spirits [souls] of the saved, as it will continue to be until the morning of the resurrection.* But, since our Lord did not rise until the third day after His promise to the thief, some may think that this fact does not agree with the word., "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." The sentence is, however, wrongly punctuated: the comma should be placed after "today." Then the meaning will be: -"I will not defer the consideration of your case until I come in My Kingdom, but will promise you to-day, or, at once, that, when I go to Paradise, you shall be with Me."

[*Note. The thief did not go to any heavenly Paradise on the day he died; he descended with Christ to the Paradise below on that day; that is, at the time of his death: "THIS day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise..." It is nowhere stated that 'after My resurrection thou shalt be with me in a heavenly Paradise'. Punctuate the words as you wish, the scriptural proof states that the 'Paradise' below cannot be emptied until Resurrection: and Resurrection is the uniting of the soul in Hades to the decomposed body lying in the grave; and the "resurrection of the dead," – those whose souls and bodies are now separated - has not yet taken place. All who teach the contrary are in error, (2 Timothy 2:18). Furthermore, we cannot go to be where Christ is at present until the

time when He returns to earth: and that is at the time of the Resurrection of the dead, (1 Thessalonians 4:16) "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am:" (John 14:2, 3). Our Lord Himself did not ascend into heaven until some time after His Resurrection: and neither can we. "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father, to my God and your God" (John 20:17): and His statement recorded in John 3:13 still applies to the souls of the dead in Hades until the time of Resurrection: "No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven – the Son of Man."]

245. The word Gehenna, which is the same as Tophet in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, stands for what we now call Hell, that is, the Lake of Fire and Brimstone. It is used in Matthew 23:15 and Matthew 23:33; Mark 9:43, Mark 9:45, and Mark 9:47; James 3:6, and in several other passages. It is, however, a great mistake to suppose, that at the moment of death a lost spirit speeds its way directly to the "Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." For it goes, as did the spirit [disembodied soul] of Dives, to Hades, or, in certain cases, possibly, to the Abyss; just as a man arrested for a crime upon earth is lodged in prison, and there detained to await the time of judgment, when he will be tried and receive his sentence.

[* Note. The 'spirit' which returns to God at the time of death is God's animating spirit. "As the body without the spirit is dead..." (James 2:26). "Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up" (Luke 8:55). "The dust [of the decomposed body of the dead] returns to the ground it came from, and the [animating or life-giving] spirit returns to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). "If it were His [God's] intention and He withdrew His spirit and breath, all mankind would perish [die] together and man would return to the dust" (Job 34:14-15). "Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit" (John 19:30). It is the soul which descends into Hades at the time of death: "You will not abandon me [Lit. "my soul," See R. V. and Greek] to the grave ["Hades"] (Acts 2:27.) cf. Psalms 16:10 where "Sheol" = "Hades." Today's popular N.I.V. translation is as misleading here as the Authorised Version is throughout, where Hades – the place of the dead in the underworld – "in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40), the place where our Lord went immediately after His death, is described by several different words!]

246. From Isaiah 30:33, we learn that Tophet, or Gehenna, is prepared for the King, that is, as the context shows us, for the great Godless King, or Emperor, that is coming, that is, for the Antichrist; and that "the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." But in all probability, it is not kindled as yet; for it is not yet needed. Two beings will, however, be cast into it before the Millennium, namely, the Antichrist, or Beast, for whom it was specially prepared, and the False Prophet. But, after the Post-millennial rebellion, the Devil himself will be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, the judgment will follow, and then Death and Hades, and, finally, all those whose names are not found written in the Book of Life, will be doomed to the same place of torment (Revelation 20:10-15).

247. The third name, Tartarus, does not denote a prison for the confinement of human spirits, but a place of punishment for certain angels that were guilty of specially heinous sin. And, from what Peter (2 Peter 2:4) and Jude (Jude 1:6-7) tell us, there can be little doubt that they are those angels, or sons of God, of whom we read in Genesis 6:1-4, and who rebelliously left their own

sphere, and intermingled and intermarried with the children of men (see "Earth's Earliest Ages," PP. 205-13, 238-9). Thus they rendered themselves liable to special punishment, and were hurled down to Tartarus by God, and there cast into "pits of darkness" - such is, perhaps, the true reading of 2 Peter 2:4 - to be reserved for the dread judgment of the Great White Throne.

248. It may be that many believers, who love to think and talk of dear departed ones as being in Heaven, will be loath to admit that they are at present only in Paradise. But, while there can be no doubt that such is the case, there need be no feeling of disappointment; for, although the spirits [souls] of the Lord's people are not yet in Heaven proper, they are, nevertheless, in bliss: they are free from sin and from all temptations to it, and are enjoying the spiritual presence of their Lord in such a way as we cannot now conceive. The intermediate state is better than the present life, or how could Paul have said, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain"? But we must not forget, that the supremely blessed time, which we are exhorted to look and prepare for, is the morning of the Resurrection, when the living and the dead will be reunited, in order that they may ascend in one glorious body to meet their Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17), and to see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). For, if in the disembodied state they were already with Him in the sense in which they may hope to be when they have received bodies like unto His glorious body, what would be the object of the Resurrection out from among the dead?

12 - The Judgments

The judgments

249. Many people imagine that there is a day coming when all men, the living and the dead alike, will be summoned to stand before God's Throne, and to give an account of the things done in the body; and that some of them, through faith in the Lord Jesus, will be liberated, and, perhaps, rewarded; while others, and by far the greatest number, who have rejected Him, will receive a sentence of damnation and punishment. This, however, is only a part of the truth.

250. For the Bible-teaching on the subject instructs us, that there are yet four principal and special Assizes of judgment which must take place in the future. We must not, however, include among these such punishments or chastisements as are inflicted without a personal arraignment of the accused before the Son of Man, to Whom all judgment is committed.

251. Thus the destruction of the world by water in the Flood, the fearful visitation upon Egypt, when Pharoah refused to let the Children of Israel go, and the future plagues of the Last Days, foreshadowed in Revelation 6:1-17.; Revelation 8:1-13; Revelation 9:1-21; and Revelation 14:1-20, must be excluded from this category. But, apart from them, there is mention of four special Assizes, in which beings of different classes will be judged. And these are as follows:-

252. 1st. The judgment of the Saints for their works; for judgment must begin at the House of God. (See Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10.). This trial is before the Judgment-seat of Christ, and it will be held in the air. See paragraph 81, and NO. 41 on Chart C. The Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:11-27), and that of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), show that there are degrees of rank and reward among the saved; while the punishment of the wicked and slothful servants prove, that some of the saved will lose the First Resurrection, and be banished from the Marriage-supper and the Kingdom.

253. 2nd. The Judgment of the Living Nations (Matthew 25:31-46). This will take place before the Lord "when He sits upon the Throne of His Glory," just after His destruction of the Antichrist and of all the rebel hosts that will follow him (paragraph 91). It will, thus, happen just before the introduction of the Millennium; and the nations to be judged will be "the quick" or "living," as contrasted with the dead, which are alluded to in Acts 10:42; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5.

254. 3rd. The judgment of the Dead, which will take place at the time [after the millennium] when all that are still in their graves will come forth (John 5:28-29), some of them, who believed in the Lord but were not found worthy of the First Resurrection, to a resurrection of life [in a new heaven and new earth]; but all others to stand before the Great White Throne, and, unless their names be found written in the Book of Life, to receive the sentence of the Second Death, and be cast into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone. This judgment will take place after the final rebellion under Satan has been put down; and then the Eternal Rest will begin. See No. 51 on Chart C.

255. 4th. The judgment of Angels. Of this we know but little; but, that it will take place, we are distinctly informed in 1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Peter 2:4; and Jude 1:6; while the last-mentioned passage intimates, that it will occur about the same time as the judgment of the Dead. But the "angels" to be judged are not, of course, the glorious beings whom we usually associate with the term; they are only a certain number of that class, who left their own sphere, or habitation, and connected themselves with mankind in defiance of God's law, thus rendering themselves liable to judgment and punishment.

256. A glance at Chart C will enable us to understand how distinct these great events are. The Judgment of the Saints is indicated at 41 on the chart; that of the Living Nations will be found at about 42; that of the Great White Throne at 51; and that of Angels also at 51.

257. In regard to the judgment of the Living Nations, it will be well to point out, that the "fire for an age," or "age-long fire" - for so the words should be rendered - is not the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, which is specially prepared for the King, or the Antichrist (Isaiah 30:33), nor for the Devil and his angels. But the reference is to the Abyss which is provided for Satan and "the High Ones that are on High," or his angels, together with "the Kings of the Earth upon the Earth," or those kings and their peoples who will join in the war against the Lamb (see Isaiah 24:21-22; Revelation 20:1-3, Revelation 17:12-14). All these, as Isaiah tells us, will be gathered as prisoners into the pit, and shut up in the prison. Into that same prison, then, will those nations who are represented by the goats be cast. They must be carefully distinguished from the nations that will follow the Ten Kings; and are, probably, to be identified with certain remote peoples who, when the Lord return, will neither have heard His fame nor seen His glory (Isaiah 66:19). Hence they will be judged by the natural law of love which God has written in all human hearts, and not by their attitude towards the Lord, Whom they will not have known. And the special test applied to them will be their behaviour to the fugitive Christians, or to the Children of Abraham, who will have fled into their lands to escape the persecutions of the Antichrist. Hence, too, they will not at this time be reserved for the final and everlasting judgment, but will be thrown into the fiery Abyss prepared as a prison for the Devil and his angels during the thousand years of the Millennial age. At the end of that time, however, they will be liberated. "And after many days shall they be visited," says Isaiah - words which correspond with Revelation 20:7, "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison." But what will be the result of the new trial to the goat-nations, whether they will by that time have learned of Christ and submitted to Him, or whether they will join in the final rebellion, and afterwards have their part in the Lake of Fire, is not revealed.

258. The nations represented by the sheep will be judged upon the same principles as the others, but will be found to have acted up to their light, and will, consequently, be invited to inherit the Kingdom prepared for them. This will, of course, be in the earthly sphere of the Lord's dominions. And on earth they will live, enjoying all the blessings of the Millennial age, until, at its close, the final test will come by which their everlasting destiny will be decided.

259. If we review the judgments described above, we shall see, that, although the impenitent and unbelieving will be panic-stricken when they are summoned to face the judgment reserved for them, yet those who love and obey God in this life, believing on His Son Jesus Christ, need have no fear. They will not be called to stand at any judgment bar where they will be in danger of death. For everlasting life is secured to them, because of their faith in the Blood of the Lord: their works,

however, must be judged, that He may decide whether or not they are worthy of the First Resurrection and the Kingdom, and, if they are found to be so, may apportion their position and rank for the Age to Come.

260. May all the readers of these pages be so enabled to watch and pray always that they may make their calling and election sure, and know that to them judgment can only result in blessing, through Him That loved them and gave Himself for them.

13 - The Resurrections and Ascensions

The Resurrections and Ascensions

261. We have now to deal with a mighty subject, and one of surpassing interest to every living soul. Would that we were enabled to realize, to a far more intense degree, its vast importance! For, if we were, how much more earnestly would our thoughts be turning towards the future, and how easily should we brush aside the impeding cares and anxieties of the present! How much more firmly would our hopes and affections be fixed upon the things that are above, and how ready should we be to relinquish the things that are below!

262. In paragraph 95, we have already remarked, that the difference between the rewards of the Old Testament saints and of the children of God in this Dispensation, that is, of the Church, will be very great. For the latter will succeed to a heavenly inheritance; whereas the former will be restored to their own land, the Land of Israel, as we are distinctly taught in Ezekiel 37:12-14. But, in both cases, it will be through resurrection that the glory will be obtained.

263. Of the Israelitish resurrection we read in other passages besides the one quoted above. For instance in Isaiah 26:19, we have:- "Thy dead men shall live; My dead bodies shall arise."

264. The last verse of Daniel - as, indeed, Daniel 12:1-13, especially Daniel 12:1-3 appears to refer to the same crisis:- "Go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Daniel must go down [into Hades] the way of all flesh [the dead]; but, on the resurrection morning, he should stand in the place reserved for him.

265. In a peculiarly interesting passage - Jeremiah 31:15-17 - we have a description of Rachel weeping for her children who had been slain (Matthew 2:18). But the Lord comforts her with the promise, "They shall come again from the land of the enemy," "shall return to their own border." [Jeremiah 31:17] What, then, can the last clause mean, if it be not intended to convey an assurance, that the dead children should be raised [resurrected] and restored to their own Land? And this wonderful restoration will be effected at the time referred to in verse 10, that is, just at the commencement of the Millennial reign.

266. Again, in Jeremiah 30:9, God says, "They shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." Here we have a plain indication, that a future reign over Israel upon earth is reserved for David, after his resurrection from the dead.

267. It is also possible, perhaps, that Isaiah 49:6, may allude to the same resurrection to earthly power, when it is declared of the Lord Jesus, that He shall "raise up the Tribes of Jacob."

268. In Hosea 6:2, we find the words, "In the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." And, in Hosea 13:14, God says, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death." Then in Isaiah 33:14-17, it is said to Israel, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty: they shall behold a far-stretching land," literally, "a land of distances." Here the King is, of course, the Lord Jesus on His Millennial Throne, while the land of extended boundaries

is the whole of the great territory promised to Abraham, which will then have become Immanuel's Land.

269. Lastly, in Ezekiel 48:9-11, in the prophetic description of the Millennial Land of Israel, we read of a Holy Oblation to the Lord, in the midst of which is to be the Sanctuary. And of this Sanctuary we are told, "It shall be for the priests ... which went not astray when the Children of Israel went astray." Now, since the apostasy referred to must have taken place many centuries ago, it follows that these faithful priests will have to be brought up from the grave, according to the promise in Hosea 13:14, and Ezekiel 37:12-14.

270. But, besides all these indications, we have also certain confirmatory facts. When God for the first time promised to give the Land to Abraham (Genesis 13:14-17), He did not at once fulfil the promise, neither, indeed, has He yet done so. In Genesis 15:1-21., the promise is repeated in a somewhat different form, and it is made, not so much to Abraham personally as to his seed. Now, many have assumed that this promise was fulfilled when Israel took possession of the Land of Canaan; but a careful investigation will enable us to show that such was not the case.

271. Let us, however, first make it clear, that the promise to Abraham himself has not yet been redeemed. For, in Acts 7:5, Stephen declares, that God gave Abraham none inheritance in the Land, "no, not so much as to set his foot on." In Hebrews 11:9, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are mentioned, not as possessors, but as heirs of the promises; while, in Hebrews 11:13, we are told plainly, that they all "died in faith, not having received the promises." Romans 4:13, also, points out, that the promise to Abraham and to his seed was by faith - a plain indication that neither he nor they were at that time to inherit the Land. Yet, notwithstanding all this delay, the promises remain sure, and in due season will be fulfilled.

272. There is, however, a still stronger proof, that neither Abraham himself nor his descendants have as yet received the promised inheritance. We have already seen, that, in Genesis 13:17, God promises the Land to Abraham, and, in Genesis 15:18, to Abraham's seed. And, in Galatians 3:16, these passages are combined in the words, "Now, to Abraham and his seed were the promises made." But Paul adds a very important explanation, namely, that the "seed" is to be taken in a singular sense, and to be understood, not of the whole family of Israel who were, indeed, at one time in temporary and partial possession of the Land. but of the Christ Alone.

273. We are, therefore, forced upon the conclusion, that these promises are still unfulfilled, and are to be referred to the times of the Second Advent, when "many shall come from the East and West," and when He, the Seed, "shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33). For the Israelite, no less than the Christian believer, can obtain the fulfilment of the promises only through the Lord Jesus Who died for him.

274. We may, then, confidently accept all these wonderful indications, that the promises to Israel are yet in the future, and will be fulfilled upon earth; and that, when the Tribes of Jacob are raised from the dead, they will reign with Christ on the earth, with a restored Jerusalem as their capital City.

275. But now the question arises, Is there a distinct destiny for the spiritual people of Christ who are connected with the present Dispensation; or do they share the reward of the faithful Israelites?

276. We may reply, without hesitation, that the hope of the Church is altogether distinct from that of Israel.* This we might readily infer from the emphatic statement of Paul in Galatians 4:30, that the son of the bondwoman, that is, those who are under the law, shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman,** that is, with those who are under grace. The passage has, of course, a spiritual reference first of all; but it, also, necessarily implies a separate material inheritance. And it is significant, that, in the very same chapter (Galatians 4:25-26), Paul draws a clear distinction between the earthly Jerusalem - which is the headquarters of the earthly sphere of the Kingdom, or of the inheritance of the Twelve Tribes [those who are un-resurrected]- and the Jerusalem which is above, and which is the Mother City, or Metropolis, of us all, namely, of the Church [‘of the firstborn’] which will dwell there with Christ as His Body, and of the raised Israelites, or some of them, who will be His Bride.

[* It is difficult to see how Old Testament saints and prophets, have "a separate material inheritance." Furthermore, I see no distinction made in Scriptures, in relation regenerate believers and that promised "inheritance" as a "reward" (Colossians 3:23-24). Is it not a stated fact in the Scriptures that Abraham is described as the regenerate believer's "father" also? - "Our father Abraham" (Romans 4:1). He is the father OF ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE (verse 11); Galatians 3:7).

**Hagar's name, significantly means 'Flight' or 'Wandering'. Is there not a distinction made here also in two lines of conduct amongst the regenerate? See Galatians 5:13-26. The pull of Egypt (typical of the world) drew Hagar away from Abraham's home in Mamre. Hagar was doing wrong in returning to Egypt. Her propensity to wander had gained control: but the Lord turned her face towards the only place of blessing.

It was amazing grace for God to reveal Himself to Hagar - (in angelic or 'human-angelic' form known as 'Theophany' in the early history of Old Testament times) - and writ large over the divine record of this divine phenomenon is God's kindness. For the first time in history One of the Godhead was manifested to Hagar on earth in angelic form. "And to whom? To a low-born Egyptian woman; a slave; a wanderer; to one whose insolence to and contempt of Sarah her mistress compelled the latter abruptly to alter her attitude towards her." Is there not a lesson here which Paul alludes to those in "the churches in Galatia" (1:2)? Were there no wanderers amongst them? Are there no wanderers in God's 'churches' today? Hagar's naming of the well - a revelation from God - shows to what extent this desert experience had been to Hagar: it was an unveiling of His thoughts and counsels which filled her with wonder: and Hagar obeyed, returned; but how she ended her days we are not told. Is there not instruction here for those of us who have wandered from the narrow way? That is, from the way of obedience: (James 2:21)?]

277. We have thus found in the Old Testament very clear teaching as to the resurrection and earthly inheritance of Israel, and must now turn to the New Testament, and inquire what is revealed concerning the resurrection and subsequent destiny of the members of that Body which is the great Mystery of God.

278. Now, we have, doubtless, observed, that ascensions to God are typified by the firstfruits and the harvest; while the Law, in Leviticus 23:10-13, teaches us, that a firstfruits of every harvest had to be gathered and presented to the Lord before the harvest itself was reaped. The firstfruits was, indeed, but a handful, a mere nothing as compared with the harvest: nevertheless, God

commanded that it should be brought to Him. And, as we shall presently find, there is to be a similar division in the gathering in of His Own spiritual people.

279. A few, a very few, who, like Enoch, are walking with God, will be accounted worthy to escape the terrible period of testing and sifting which is to come upon all flesh during the Final seven of Years, to which we have so often referred in previous paragraphs.

280. In Luke 21:36, the Lord Jesus urges His disciples to watch and pray always, that they may be accounted worthy "to escape all these things that shall come to pass," these things being the plagues and judgments of the Last Seven of Years. Again, in Revelation 3:10, He promises the Philadelphian Church, that, because they have kept the word of His patience, He, also, will keep them from the hour of temptation, or trial, which is to come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. These passages, however, merely indicate a great event, which is elsewhere described with more detail.

281. In Revelation 12:1-17., we read of the Woman which represents "the House of God" set to witness upon the earth, that is, at the time intended, the Church. She is in serious straits; for she is in the pains of travail, and yet, at the same time, is faced by a Dragon, a remorseless foe, who waits hard by with intent to devour her child as soon as it is born. The Church is in that condition now, and may at any time give birth to the Firstfruits. But this is well known to the great enemy of mankind, who is zealous that not even the Firstfruits may escape him, while he is still at liberty to persecute and slay God's people, - whether Jews or Christians. Nay, we may be sure that he is specially eager to avenge himself upon the Firstfruits, since they will be those who will have obtained the most complete victory over him through the Blood of the Lamb, and who will have denounced him and his ways, and have remained faithful to the Lord Jesus, his Foe, That is about shortly to bring him to naught.

282. But, blessed be God, He, too, is well aware of the circumstances of the Firstfruits, and has accounted them worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass. Therefore, He has made provision that they may be caught away to Himself and to His Throne at the very moment in which they are made manifest. And this rapture appears to be the next event which will happen in the fulfilment of prophecy, and which may happen at any time. As soon as the appointed period has arrived for the resumption of God's dealings with His people Israel, then the Firstfruits, those living believers who by His grace are accounted worthy to escape all the impending terrors, will be caught up and presented to Him as He sits upon His Throne, just as the handful of ripe ears - the firstfruits of the harvest - was wont to be carried to His earthly Temple in the days of old.

283. Of course, this event will not, strictly speaking, be a resurrection; for those who have part in it will not have died, and, therefore, cannot be raised from the dead. But it will be an ascension, and the opening event of what, in Revelation 20:5-6, is called the First Resurrection (see NO. 35 on Diagram G).

284. It is followed by scenes of woe, anguish, and persecution, and by wars, famines, plagues, and every kind of calamity, on earth. But, while these judgments are being poured out, the Firstfruits will be safe with their Lord in heaven, and are, doubtless, the same as the 144,000 who are described in Revelation 14:1-5, who sing a new song before the Throne, and are said to be "redeemed from among men, being a Firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

285. We must carefully observe, that this ascension of the Firstfruits is not the same as the ascension referred to in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17, and 1 Corinthians 15:52, both of which passages are concerned with the Harvest, and not with the Firstfruits.

286. The Firstfruit, which will consist of saints who are found to be serving the Living and True God and waiting for His Son from heaven, will be removed before the scourge of God is lifted up against the inhabitants of the earth, and before the persecutions and Tribulation begin. But the Harvest, that is, those who not be ready at the time of the Lord's first summons, will by no means be delivered from the affliction which they will need to make the world bitter to them. On the contrary, in addition to the persecutions of the wicked, they will have to endure the woes of all the Seals and of six of the Trumpets; but they be spared the horrors of the Vials. For, just as the Seventh Angel is about to sound the Seventh or Last Trumpet, the Mystery of God - that is, His Kingdom in Mystery, or Church upon earth - will be finished, and all the remaining members of His Body, the living and the dead alike, will be summoned to meet Him in the air. These, when joined to the already translated Firstfruits, will complete the number of those blessed ones who will have part in the First Resurrection, and, after standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, "will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

287. After this great event, more than a thousand years will have to pass by before the hour comes for the next and final Resurrection. For, between these two risings of the dead, not only the Millennium, but also the time occupied by Satan's last rebellion and its suppression, must intervene. In the First Resurrection, the blessed and holy alone will be raised. But, in the Last, all that still remain in their graves will come forth, "they that have done good unto a resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto a resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29). The first-named class will include those believers who, although they had received life through their faith in the Lord Jesus, had not been "reckoned worthy to obtain that age" - namely, the Millennial Age of Reward - "and the resurrection out from among the dead" (Luke 20:35). Therefore, they will have to remain among the dead [in Hades] until the general Resurrection; but, since their names will then be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life, they will, at last, be permitted to enter into the full enjoyment of that which He has purchased for them at the price of His Own Blood. Others, also, may be raised to the Resurrection of Life at the same time. But, alas! it is to be feared that a vast number of the dead will prove to be those who have persistently rejected the Lord Jesus, and who will awake to find, that the end has come at last, and the time of grace passed by for ever; and that nothing remains for them but the fearful expectation of immediate judgment and fiery indignation.

288. May we be moved by the [Holy] Spirit to meditate continually on these interesting and most vital truths, and, by the grace of God, so to live that we may have a well-grounded hope of a joyful resurrection! Language fails when one strives to express the unspeakable importance of the stupendous events with which we have been dealing. But, if we have been enabled to concentrate our minds upon them, and in some slight degree to realize what they will be, how quickly do we feel the insignificance and triviality of all that is earthly! May, then, these sublime predictions of the future be ever impressed upon our hearts, together with the fact, that, whether for weal [an old word for 'happiness' or 'well being'] or for woe, we have, each of us, his own part to play in them. May the thought of this draw us nearer to our God, and stimulate us to pray without ceasing, that He may be pleased so to sanctify us, spirit, soul, and body, that we may be found blameless at the coming of our Lord, and be accounted worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass, and to

stand in His presence. Then, throughout the Ages of Eternity, shall we praise Him for the glorious Plan revealed in His Word, whereby He redeemed us from all our iniquities, and restored us to light and to immortality.

14 - Commerce

Commerce

289. The whole duty of man is expressed in six words:- "Fear God, and keep His commandments." Hence the height of sin is the exact opposite to this, which might be conveyed in the precept :- "Forget God, and seek your own selfish ends." Now, the great Mystery of Babylon, which has been considered in paragraphs 142, etc., was established, as we have seen, for the express purpose of enabling men, and especially the leaders of men, not only to ignore the claims of God, and seek their own ends irrespectively of His commands, but to do so in direct opposition to, and in daring defiance of, Himself. Babylon as a Mystery, seeing it was the first organized rebellion against God, from which all later rebellions have more or less sprung, is, therefore, the great parent abomination of the earth: it is genuine, unadulterated, and concentrated, WICKEDNESS; and is represented in these days by the Papacy, with its seat at Rome, as we have seen in paragraph 145.

290. But the manner in which man has endeavoured to attain his own end has undergone various modifications and changes, while the centuries were rolling by. At first, he deliberately, though for the most part in secret, or "mystery," worshipped the Devil and evil spirits; for he had realized, that, in so doing, he would be permitted to follow his own natural bent; whereas, if he should attempt to serve God, he would have to give up his own will, and accept that of God. Later on, in the early part of the Christian era, he effected a compromise with the growing power of nominal Christianity, and continued to worship his own gods under a Christian nomenclature. Such worship, and, indeed, worship of every kind, is in these days considerably slackened; but the time will come when men will once more deliberately worship Satan, and also his great king and vicegerent, the Antichrist: they will, however, do so under wholly different circumstances, and under an altogether new system. And that new system will be Commerce.

291. It may be objected that Commerce is not a religion. But the remark merely opens the question as to what religion is. Surely it is worship, the veneration for, and zealous cultivation of, that which we either love best or fear most. It may be the worship of God, or the worship of Mammon. A man may choose which of the two Deities he wills; but one of them he must worship in some form or another.

292. The two powers, apart from God, by which men have regulated society from its earliest infancy, are Religion and Imperialism. Religion represents the Spiritual Power - Babylon a Mystery - and Imperialism, the Secular. But both Religion - Babylon in Mystery - and Imperialism are fast losing, and before long will altogether lose, their ancient power. Religion, as it is now represented by the Papacy and Catholicism, will be destroyed by the Ten Kings - see paragraph 163 - and these kings themselves will be the antitypes of the Toes of the great Image which Nebuchadnezzar saw. Since, then, the latter consisted in great part of miry clay, or pottery, we understand, that the Kings will be the heads of Democratic states, and merely the mouthpieces of the people whom they nominally govern; for they will be deprived of all ancient autocratic power.

293. The authority, then, both of priest and king is rapidly waning, and some system is needed to take its place, and furnish a new and acceptable centre round which men can rally, and from which they will be able to draw satisfaction for all the desires and hopes of the unregenerate human heart. This they will find, nay, are already finding, in Commerce.

294. Do we not see signs of this tendency around us on all sides? Even now, when we look for no more than indications of those things that must shortly come to pass, what is the interest that dictates to the legislators of every civilized Power? Not religion, certainly, but Commerce. What is the great bond of union between man and man, between community and community, between nation and nation, between Jew and Gentile, between England and India, between Hindu and Mohammedan? Commerce, only Commerce. What is the power which overrides race-prejudices, religious fanaticism, and political hatreds? Again we are compelled to make the same reply, Nothing is able to do so, except Commerce. Is it for religious or political purposes that we lay cables, construct railways, cut gigantic canals, explore unknown latitudes, make treaties, invent, scheme, and strive in every possible way? Nay, we are well aware that these and such like undertakings are all done, mainly at least, in the interests of Commerce.

295. What other power, political or religious, is even now its equal? None; and yet at present we see it only in its earlier stages. It has gradually arisen and unobtrusively developed, until it has already become the chief influence in the earth; and, before long, it will be without a rival, the acknowledged centre around which human society and human interests will revolve.

296. For, when we have considered its modern history up to the present day, we are not disposed to imagine that it will require much time to establish itself as supreme. Barely a century ago, Commerce was a mere subsidiary either to Religion - Babylon in Mystery - or to Imperialism; and when we contemplate the mighty advances which it has made, at their expense, within the last few years, may we not confidently anticipate, that even these great strides will be surpassed in the immediate future?

297. Another prominent feature of these days should be noted in connection with our present subject, and that is the universal tendency to concentrate. For agitations are being ceaselessly carried on for union, or concentration, in coinage, in weights and measures, in postal affairs, in customs arrangements, and similar matters; and in what interest? Purely in that of Commerce. Moreover, the tendency to concentrate commercial interests in certain conventional centres, such as London, New York, Paris, and Vienna, is, also, worthy of notice. And, yet again, how increasingly numerous are great trading companies, "trusts," "rings," "corners," associations, monopolies, and combinations of every kind.

298. In short, all things are now tending in one direction, that is, to absolute subserviency of every other power and interest, religious or political, to Commerce. And, in the end, it will, doubtless, be found necessary, in order to ensure and to efficiently control these vast businesses and organizations, to establish one great commercial centre of the world, and to arrange for the government of this one centre by one supreme commercial King, or Chief.

299. Thus the conclusions to which we are driven are:- That, before long, the one great reigning power of the whole earth will be Commerce. That the power of Babylon in Mystery, and the autocratic power of kings, are being minimised.

That, consequently, Commerce will soon take their place as the supreme influence and motive power. And that there will, in the end, be one Central International Commercial Capital of the world; which, again, will centre in one great Commercial King, or Chief, elected by the people.

300. To this we may add, that, bearing in mind what is written immediately above, and also the paragraphs in this book respecting the City of Babylon and the Antichrist, we cannot but anticipate, that the great Central International Commercial Capital of the world will be the restored City of Babylon; and that the great Commercial King, or Chief, will be the Antichrist.

301. But there is a special and very remarkable prophecy, which seems to be directly connected with this interesting subject, and which we must now consider.

302. In the fifth chapter of Zechariah, we have an account of two visions seen by the prophet. In the first, he saw a flying roll, which was explained by the angel as a judgment, sent forth by God to cut off and consume thieves and false swearers, or liars. In the second, an ephah appeared going forth, and its interpretation seems to indicate who and what the thieves and liars of the first vision are. But, leaving our readers to peruse the chapter, we will enumerate the various symbols of the second vision, and afterwards endeavour to interpret it:- (1) The ephah; which was the largest dry measure of ancient Eastern commerce., corresponding to the English bushel.

(2) The talent of lead, which was the largest commercial "weight," similar to the English "ton."

(3) The woman, whose name is said to be Wickedness, is the system of Babylonian Mystery, or, as we have seen in paragraphs 42, 289, etc., concentrated wickedness.

(4) The two women which support the ephah, and, probably, represent evil systems.

(5) The wind in their wings, which, possibly, indicates, that the system which they support is carried, or disseminated, over the whole earth.

(6) The wings are like storks' wings, to hint that the two supporters of the ephah are of an evil nature.

(7) The ephah is, lifted up between heaven and earth - perhaps, to indicate, that, so far as profession goes, the system represented is not merely secular, but lays claim, also, to a moral, if not to a religious character.

(8) The ephah is being transferred to the Land of Shinar.

303. Now, putting these symbols together, we conclude, that we have here a representation of Commerce, which is typified by the ephah, and the talent of lead, or, as we should say, by the bushel and the ton; that the heart, centre, or mainspring, of the system is wickedness; that its supporters are two evil systems, which may possibly be interpreted by verses 3 and 4, the one being a system characterized by thieving and dishonesty, the other a system of false swearing or lying; that these disseminate their influence and doctrines over the whole earth by unscrupulous means, but under moral pretensions; and, finally, that they build a house, or a base, for Commerce in the Land of Shinar.

304. In other words, what this prophecy appears to teach is, that, in the Last Days, a powerful but godless commercial system will be developed, which will supersede and absorb the system and

spirit of wickedness - that is, Babylon in Mystery, or defiance of God; that it will dominate the whole earth; and that its headquarters will be transferred - from Rome, where it now is - to its own base, the place of its origin, namely, to Babylon in the Land of Shinar.

305. Now, although, it is well to remember the saying of the Apocryphal writer of Ecclesiasticus, that, "As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of stones, so doth sin stick close between buying and selling" (27:2); yet it is, of course, understood and freely admitted, that there is nothing essentially wrong in honest trading. Business may, most assuredly, be carried on in the fear of God and for His glory; but, even in these days, the vast majority of commercial men, however honourably they may conduct their operations, do so without any respect to God's will in the matter. Many, too, who profess and call themselves Christians, draw a very distinct line between their religious and their secular affairs, being, apparently, unconscious of the fact, that, by so doing, they are taking their stand among the godless commercial men of the day. For commerce only needs to be carried on in forgetfulness of God, and it instantly becomes sin; since "whatever is not of faith is sin."

306. But we must remember, that, before the commercial tendencies of which we have been speaking are fully matured, those who are wholly devoted to God will have been removed from the world; and that, at the same time, the Spirit of God, which now acts as a check upon dishonesty and wickedness, will have been taken out of the way, and will no longer stand between the godless and the most outrageous sins. As a natural consequence of this, lawlessness will have terribly increased; and, since all religions, even Babylon in Mystery, will by that time have been destroyed, we may be sure that the tendency of commercial enterprise will be anything but Godward. Moreover, in those days, men will worship Commerce, and, also, their chosen Commercial King; and this will make both it and him to be abominations in the sight of God.

307. Lastly. we are warned, that, in that terrible time, no man will be allowed to buy or sell, that is, to engage in any, kind of commerce, unless he shall first have received the mark of blasphemy either on his forehead or on his hand (Revelation 13:16-17). And, inasmuch as a willing submission to this law on the part of any man will, in itself, constitute him a rebel against God, and make him guilty of a sin which precludes repentance and reconciliation to God, and can in no circumstance be pardoned (Revelation 14:9-11); it necessarily follows, that all the commercial men of that period will be blasphemously godless, and doomed to "drink of the wine of the wrath of God." See paragraphs 74 and 75.

308. Surely the consideration of such truths as these should lead us to a vivid realization of the tremendous issues that are depending upon our present conduct. For, if we would escape the peril of being carried down the stream of ungodliness to perdition, now is the time to make our calling and election sure, and to show, by our walk before God, that we have chosen, and, in the power of His Spirit, irrevocably determined, that, whatever others may do, and at whatever cost to ourselves, we will serve Him Alone, and resolutely turn our backs upon Mammon and all the good things of this life that are in his hands.

15 - The Jews

The Jews

309. The history of the Jews is very important to those who would understand the counsels of God; but, at the same time, it is so copious that it becomes difficult to deal with, when a lengthy article would be out of place. And the scope of our book will only permit the briefest possible sketch of this intensely interesting subject, which carries us through many centuries, from the call of Abram, indeed, to the very end of the Divine revelation.

310. For our present purpose, then, we will merely note a few of the leading events in Jewish history, adding, however, some Scriptural references which the reader can examine and digest at his leisure.

311. The beginning of the story is, of course, the unconditional gift of the whole Land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, to Abram and to his seed (Genesis 13:14-17, Genesis 15:18, and Genesis 17:1-8). But neither Abraham (Hebrews 11:13) nor his seed have hitherto enjoyed the full possession of the gift. The seed did, it is true, enter the Land under Joshua, and subdued a portion of it. Owing, however, to their frequent rebellions against God, they were not permitted to retain even that part of it which they were holding, but were driven out of it, and carried away into captivity (2 Kings 18:9-12; 2 Kings 25:1-12). Yet they were partially restored under Ezra, and Palestine remained a Jewish country, and Jerusalem a Jewish city, until the time of the Lord's ministry. But the stiff-necked Jew., rejected Him, and brought about His death; therefore, God's patience was at last exhausted; so that He rejected them, and caused them to be nationally destroyed by Titus and Hadrian, by whom they were almost annihilated, and the survivors; banished from their own country, and scattered among all peoples.

312. This banishment, however, is not to be perpetual (Lev. 27:44-45; Romans 11:1-2, Romans 11:25-26, Romans 11:29). In God's good time, the inheritance will be restored to its rightful owners (Isaiah 11:10-12, Isaiah 14:1-3, etc.); but the period of their re-gathering will be a season of exceptional tribulation and sifting (Jeremiah 30:1-9; Ezekiel 22:17-22).

313. It is foretold that, previously to the time of the re-gathering, the Jews will be emancipated from the cruel bondage and ignominy to which they have been subjected in the lands of their exile (Zephaniah 3:19-20); also that they will have greatly increased in numbers, and have accumulated much wealth and influence.

314. Now, all these predictions are being fulfilled before our eyes. Everywhere the Jews are beginning to manifest an ability, and to exercise an influence, which provoke the jealousy of other nations. And, doubtless, this feeling will grow with their power, until, when they finally become a wealthy and influential people, and are restored to their own Land and Capital, the ever-increasing hatred of the Gentile nations will become so violent that they will combine for the purpose of wiping the whole Jewish race from off the face of the earth (Psalms 83:1-8).

315. Thus, as the time for the promised restoration draws near, the threatenings of bitter trouble will also begin to be fulfilled. Indeed, the very fulfilment of the promises will cause the fulfilment of the threats.

316. Very instructive is it to note, that, after so many centuries of desolation, Palestine is now being revived, and that by Jewish settlers; while Jerusalem, within whose walls, until not much more than a quarter of a century ago, very few Jews were permitted to dwell, is now mainly inhabited by Jews, who have flocked to it from all parts of the earth. In the first edition of this Book, we called attention to the fact, that, while it was being written, a large and representative gathering of influential Jews was being held, for the first time, at Basle, for the purpose of considering by what means the exiled children of Abraham might once more gain possession of their beloved Land. Last August (1903) the sixth of these meetings was held, and proved more remarkable, enthusiastic, and interesting, than any of the others; while, at the same time, it was more largely attended. No less than five hundred and ninety-two delegates were present: and the Congress was more truly representative of the whole Dispersion than it had ever previously been. Besides the delegates, great numbers of other Jews from both hemispheres were present - there was, of course, no possibility of making room for them in the Hall, and several well-to-do persons are said to have offered ten pounds for a ticket. The reports of the speakers, and especially of Dr. Herzl, plainly testified that the leaders are using all their ability, and straining every nerve, to effect their purpose. Truly there is, at last, a stirring among the dry bones: the Daughter of Zion is awakening after her age-long sleep, and is stretching out her hands toward Jerusalem; but, alas! not yet to her God.

317. We cannot better illustrate the strength of the desire for restoration which is now animating the Jews, than by mentioning some of the many societies which they have formed to aid in bringing about their return to Palestine, among which are the following:-

- (1) The Chovevi-Zion - or Lovers of Zion. A very large society, which has been in existence only a few years; but which has its ramifications in every place where Jews are to be found.
- (2) L'ma'an - For Zion's Sake. A similar society.
- (3) Zion - The National Society.
- (4) The "Admath Israel" - The Land of Israel.
- (5) The Society for Assisting Jewish Agriculturists and Artizans in Syria and Palestine.
- (6) Ezra - A great Austrian Society, so called because it is formed to do what Ezra did, that is, to lead the Jews back to Jerusalem. It has its own journal called "Zerubbabel," because it is intended to help the Society, as the Prince of that name helped the scribe Ezra..

318. That such Societies should recently have sprung into active existence is an exceedingly significant fact, which cries aloud, that the Word of our God is being fulfilled. It is, also, an unmistakable sign, that the present Dispensation is nearing its end, and that we may expect the Lord before long to translate His Heavenly people into His Own Presence. For the branches of the Jewish olive were broken off, that the Gentile branches of a wild olive might be grafted in. But now the times of the Gentiles and of the Church have almost passed by; and, therefore, the Lord will shortly remove His Own people to Himself, and then break off the barren branches of the merely

professing Church, in order that the Jewish branches may again be grafted in their own tree.

319. And, after that, the chief event, in the history of Israel will be these:- When the Jews have been re-gathered and finally tested in the time of Jacob's trouble, they will be delivered by the Personal Appearing of the Lord Jesus (Zechariah 14:2-4).

Satan will be bound and cast into the Abyss (Revelation 20:1-3). The Lord will sit upon the Throne of His Glory (Isaiah 9:6-7). The Millennium will commence (Revelation 20:4-5).

All Israel, and not merely the Jews, will be gathered to Palestine (Isaiah 11:11-12).

Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and inhabited in security (Isaiah 33:20; Jeremiah 31:38-40). The Temple will be rebuilt by the Messiah (Zechariah 6:12-13). The Glory of the Lord will be restored to it (Ezekiel 43:4). At the end of the Thousand Years, Satan will be loosed, and will again incite the nations to destroy Israel from off the face of the earth (Revelation 20:7-9). But the Lord will interpose to save His people, and will send down fire from heaven to consume their foes (Revelation 20:9).

320. Here the future history of Israel, so far as it is revealed in Scripture, terminates, the promises to Abraham having been fully accomplished. Of God's plans after the judgment of the Great White Throne scarcely anything has been hitherto revealed. Hence we are unable to say whether the distinction between Israel and the other inhabitants of this globe will be continued into Eternity, or not.

16 - Conclusion

Conclusion

321. It would be a delightful task to continue these studies in the glorious Word of our God: but the object of our little book is, as we have already remarked, very unpretentious. Indeed, if it be permitted to stimulate any of its readers to a deeper search into the matters with which it deals, its aim will have been accomplished. Certainly, there are many subjects of revelation upon which we have not touched; but these have been expounded by other and more competent students. We will, however, add one more chapter to our work, and endeavour to show how much light may be thrown upon apparently obscure parts of the Bible by even a slight knowledge of the threads of God's Plan.

322. The instance which we will select is the tenth chapter of Isaiah - a passage which conveys but little sense to a casual and ill-informed reader. Yet it will be found, that even the elementary studies contained in this book will help us materially to understand the apparently dark oracles of the prophet.

323. In the preceding chapter, the ninth, we find a description of the pride and perversity of Israel, and a gloomy foreshadowing of indignation upon the sinful people, with a thrice-repeated declaration, that, in spite of all that they have endured, the Lord's anger, nevertheless, is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still. Yet further chastisement is needed, and so the tenth chapter opens with a denunciation; and, in the third verse, goes on to inquire what the sinful nation will do, and to whom they will flee, in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from afar.

324. Now, what day of visitation and desolation is here meant? The reader will find an account of it in paragraph 61, and, also, in the whole chapter entitled "The Last, or Seventieth, Seven." There the question is answered, and we see, that the prophet is foretelling events which are to occur in the period of culminating judgments, just before the final deliverance of Israel. In the fourth verse, if we accept the rendering of the A.V., God shows what the people will have to endure, because they have forsaken Him, and lost His help. In the fifth, He addresses the man whom He has chosen to be the rod wherewith He will chastise them. He calls him the Assyrian; and, if we turn to paragraphs 131-41, we shall learn who this Assyrian is. The sixth describes the nation against whom the Assyrian is to be sent, and the kind of chastisement which he is to inflict. The nine verses that follow indicate, that, although God is using this Assyrian for His purposes, yet the agent marches to war in his own name, and with great pride and blasphemy. (See paragraph 134, and Revelation 13:6)

Therefore, in the sixteenth verse, we are told, that, as soon as he has accomplished the chastisement for which he was sent, he himself and his wicked hosts will be punished. See paragraphs 140 and 247. The seventeenth verse introduces the Lord Jesus as "the Light of Israel," and "the Holy One" Who shall burn and devour the thorns and the briars in one day. Compare the

splendid passage in 2 Samuel 23:6-7 (R.V.). The "one day" is the same as that which is described in Malachi 4:1. The twentieth predicts, that, as soon as the terrors of judgment are over, and the wicked, whether Jews or Gentiles, have been cut off, then the remnant of Israel "shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth." A reference to paragraph 91 will show what this means. The next three verses very clearly point to what is also foretold in Daniel 9:24. These verses explain the manner in which righteousness will be brought in; how the time is determined (5:22); and that the transgression will be finished, because the incorrigibly wicked will be destroyed, and the remnant of Israel return unto the Mighty God.

325. Now, all these points teach us the intention of the prophecy, and indicate the time in which its predictions are to find their fulfilment, namely, that which is marked by No. 42 on Diagram C. The chapter closes with a magnificent and highly poetical description of the march of the Antichrist upon Jerusalem, and his sudden destruction by the Lord Himself. Then the eleventh chapter follows with a prophecy of the Branch That shall grow out of the roots of Jesse (Revelation 5:6), and upon Whom the Seven Spirits of God will rest. He, we are told, will destroy the Wicked One, as we also learn from 2 Thessalonians 2:8 (see paragraph 140), and will then begin His Own glorious reign in righteousness, which the prophet describes in its proper order (2 Thessalonians 2:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:9). Lastly, passing on to the twelfth chapter, we have a beautiful illustration of the rapturous way in which the Israelites themselves will at length rejoice in their God, and in His salvation. We may thus see how much clearer the prophecies become when we have attained to an intelligent comprehension of God's plan. And we shall find it an excellent spiritual exercise to read through the prophetic books, and to seek out for ourselves their real and vivid meaning, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and by comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

326. But our study is now completed. Nothing further remains for us, except to inquire, Has the object of our labour been attained? Is the Word of God more intelligible to us? Has its value increased in our eyes? Is it more attractive to us than it was when we commenced this study? If we can give an affirmative answer to these questions, let us render praise to the Lord. To Him be all the glory. But let us learn one more lesson. For whatever we may now know, however much we may understand, or however deep may be our spiritual experience, the Word of God, and the spiritual experiences open to us, are infinite, and, therefore, inexhaustible. And, if it be a blessed thing to comprehend some of the teachings of the Word, and to realize some of the experiences of God's full salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, how much more blessed is it to be continually advancing, to rise to greater heights of knowledge, and to penetrate to deeper depths of experience! While, then, we should be humbly grateful for what we have been already permitted to enjoy, let us never be satisfied with present attainments, but pray without ceasing, that the God of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened; that we may know what is the hope of His calling and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe.

17 - Finis

Finis To those who desire to know more of the wonderful subjects of this little volume, the following books are recommended for careful study:- "Earth's Earliest Ages, and their connection with Modern Spiritualism and Theosophy."

"The Great Prophecies of the Centuries concerning Israel and the Gentiles."

"The Church, the Churches, and the Mysteries." These three books are by G. H. Pember, M.A., and are published by Hodder and Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row, London. The series will shortly (D. V.) be completed by the issue of two other volumes, "The Great Prophecies of the Centuries concerning the Church," and "The Great Prophecies of the End."

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