

The Coming Prince

by Sir Robert Anderson

The sermon explores the prophecy of the Coming Prince, who is a man of transcendent greatness who will leave his mark on his times and will be a persecutor of the saints.

Scripture: Psalm 104:31, Psalm 145:9, Joel 2:31, Revelation 13:7, Revelation 21:3

Topics: "Eschatology", "Antichrist"

Description

Sir Robert Anderson preaches about the rise of the Antichrist, a man of transcendent greatness who will gain pre-eminence in the world through his extraordinary combination of qualities. The sermon delves into the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, highlighting the events leading to the Antichrist's reign, including the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, the division of the Roman earth, and the rise of the ten-horned Beast. The Antichrist's career is described as a progression from a human king to a divine figure demanding worship, energized by Satan to perform signs and wonders. The sermon warns of the impending darkness, thunders of heaven, and the pouring out of God's wrath during the great and terrible day of the Lord, leading to a blessed Sabbatic age and a glorious eternity beyond.

Transcript

"WHAT is it that all Europe is looking for?" - the words are quoted from a leading article in the Times newspaper, on the recent finding of Agamemnon's tomb.[1] "What is it that all Europe is looking for? It is the KING OF MEN, the great head of the Hellenic race, the man whom a thousand galleys and a hundred thousand men submitted to on a simple recognition of his personal qualities, and obeyed for ten long years...The man who can challenge for his own the shield of Agamemnon, now waiting for the challenge, is the true Emperor of the East, and the easiest escape from our present difficulties."

1. The Times, Monday, 18th December, 1876.

The realization of this dream will be the fulfillment of prophecy.

True it is that popular movements characterize the age, rather than the power of individual minds. It is an age of mobs. Democracy, not despotism, is the goal towards which civilization is tending. But democracy in its full development is one of the surest roads to despotism. First, the revolution; then, the plebiscites; then, the despot. The Caesar often owes his scepter to the mob. A man of transcendent greatness, moreover, never fails to leave his mark upon his times. And the true King of Men must have an extraordinary combination of great qualities. He must be "a scholar, a statesman, a man of unflinching

courage and irrepressible enterprise, full of resources, and ready to look in the face a rival or a foe." [2] The opportunity too must synchronize with his advent. But the voice of prophecy is clear, that the HOUR is coming, and the MAN.

2. The Times, 18th December, 1876.

In connection with this dream or legend of the reappearance of Agamemnon, it is remarkable that the language of Daniel's second vision has led some to fix on Greece as the very place in which the Man of prophecy shall have his rise; [3] and it leaves no doubt whatever that he will appear within the territorial limits of the old Grecian empire.

3. That Antichrist is to arise from the eastern part of the Roman empire, and from that part of the east which fell under the rule of Alexander's successors, is rendered unquestionable by this chapter. But, seeing that in the eleventh chapter he is mentioned as conflicting with the king of the north (i. e., the king of Syria), and also with the king of the south (i. e., the king of Egypt), it is plain that he does not arise either from Egypt or Syria. He must, therefore, arise either from Greece or from the districts immediately contiguous to Constantinople. It is true that if he arose from the latter, or indeed from either of the four, he would be esteemed Greek in origin, because all the four were divisions of the Greek empire; but it seems far more probable that Greece proper will be the place of his rise. He is described as 'waxing great towards the south and towards the east, and towards the pleasant land'; that is, toward Egypt, Syria, and Palestine - a description that would geographically suit the position of one who was supposed to be in Greece.

"Moreover, a 'little horn' (an emblem not of that which he is as an individual, but of that which he is as a monarch) is a symbol that well suits one who should arise from one of those petty principalities which once abounded in Greece, and have even still their memorial in the throne of the sovereigns of Montenegro." - NEWTON Ten Kingdoms, p. 193.

Having predicted the formation of the four kingdoms into which Alexander's conquests became divided at his death, the angel Gabriel - the divinely-appointed interpreter of the vision - proceeded thus to speak of events which must take place in days to come. "In the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many. He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." [4]

4. Daniel 8:23-25. The entire passage is quoted ante (note).

In the vision of the seventh chapter, the last great monarch of the Gentiles was represented only as a blasphemer and a persecutor: "He shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High;" but here he is described as being also a general and a diplomatist. Having thus obtained a recognized place in prophecy, he is alluded to in the vision which follows as "the Prince who is coming," (Daniel 9:26) - a well-known personage, whose advent had already been foretold; and the mention of him in Daniel's fourth and final vision is so explicit, that having regard to the vital importance of establishing the personality of this "King," the passage is here set forth at length.

"And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished. for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate he shall honor the God of forces; and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time. and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." [5] 5. Daniel 11:36-45; 12:1. I am inclined to believe that the entire passage from ver. 5 of Daniel 11: will receive a future fulfillment, and I have no doubt of this as regards the passage beginning with ver. 21.

See especially ver. 31. But the future application of the portion quoted in the text is unquestionable. Although the chapter in part refers to Antiochus Epiphanes, "there are traits which have nothing to correspond to them in Antiochus, which are even the exact contradictory of the character of Antiochus, but which do reappear in St. Paul's account of the Antichrist to come." I quote from Dr. Pusey. He adds (Daniel p. 93): "The image of the Antichrist of the Old Testament melts into the lineaments of the Antichrist himself...

One trait only of the anti-religious character of Antichrist was true of Antiochus also; 'he shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods. ' Blasphemy against God is an essential feature of any God-opposed power or individual. It belongs to Voltaire as much as to Antiochus. All besides has no place in him ...The characteristics of this infidel king are (1) self-exaltation above every god; 'he shall magnify himself above every god'; (2) contempt of all religion; (3) blasphemy against the true God; (4) apostasy from the God of his fathers; (5) disregarding the desire of women; (6) the honoring of a god whom his fathers knew not.

Of all these six marks, one only, in the least, agrees with Antiochus." The entire passage is valuable, and the arguments conclusive. A remark at p. 96 suggests that Dr. Pusey identifies this king with the second "Beast" of Revelation 13., and this view is maintained by others on the ground that a "Beast" in prophecy typifies kingly power. This is true generally, but the second beast of Revelation 13: is expressly called "the

false Prophet" (Revelation 19:20); and the passage proves that he is immediately connected with the first beast, and claims no position independently of him. The difficulties in the way of supposing him to be a king in his own right are insuperable.

The burden of Daniel's prophecies is Judah and Jerusalem, but the Apocalyptic visions of the beloved disciple have a wider scope. The same scenes are sometimes presented, but they are displayed upon a grander scale. The same actors appear, but in relation to larger interests and events of greater magnitude. In Daniel, the Messiah is mentioned only in relation to the earthly people, and it is in the same connection also that the false Messiah comes upon the stage. In the Apocalypse the Lamb appears as the Savior of an innumerable multitude "out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," (Revelation 7:9) and the Beast is seen as the persecutor of all who name the name of Christ on earth. The visions of St. John, moreover, include an opened heaven, while the glimpses Daniel was vouchsafed of "things to come" are limited to earth.

The attempt to fix the meaning of every detail of these visions is to ignore the lessons to be derived from the Messianic prophecies fulfilled at the first advent.[6] The old Scriptures taught the pious Jew to look for a personal Christ - not a system or a dynasty, but a person. They enabled him, moreover, to anticipate the leading facts of His appearing. Herod's question, for example, "Where should Christ be born?" admitted of a definite and unhesitating answer, "In Bethlehem of Judea." (Matthew 2:4; Cf. Micah 5:2) But to assign its place and meaning to every part of the mingled vision of suffering and glory was beyond the power even of the inspired prophets themselves." (1 Peter 1:10-12) So also is it with the prophecies of Antichrist. The case indeed is stronger still, for while they "who waited for redemption in Israel" had to glean the Messianic prophecies from Scriptures which seemed to the careless reader to refer to the sufferings of the old Hebrew prophets or the glories of their kings, the predictions of Antichrist are as distinct and definite as though the statements were historical and not prophetic.[7]

6. A similar remark applies to the refusal to recognize the main outlines of the character and history of Antichrist. Fulfilled prophecy is our only safe guide in studying the unfulfilled.

7. The religious skeptic may refuse to accept their literal meaning, and the profane skeptic, in rejecting the fanciful interpretations of the pious, may dismiss the prophecies themselves as incredible; but this is only a further proof that their definiteness is too pronounced to admit of the half-faith accorded to other Scriptures.

And yet the task of the expositor is beset with real difficulties. If the book of Daniel might be read by itself no question whatever could arise. "The Coming Prince" is there presented as the head of the revived Roman empire of the future, and a persecutor of the saints. There is not a single statement respecting him that presents the smallest difficulty. But some of the statements of St. John seem inconsistent with the earlier prophecies. According to Daniel's visions the sovereignty of Antichrist appears confined to the ten kingdoms, and his career seems limited to the duration of the seventieth week. How then can this be reconciled with the statement of St. John that "power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations, and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him"?[8] Is it credible, moreover, that a man endowed with such vast supernatural powers, and filling so marvelous a place in prophecy, will be restrained within the narrow limits of the Roman earth?

8. Revelation 13:7, 8. In the best reading of ver. 7, the same four words occur as in 7:9 - "nations, kindred's, people, and tongues."

If these points be urged as objections to the truth of Scripture it is enough to mark that the prophecies of Christ were beset with kindred difficulties. Such prophecies are like the disjointed pieces of an elaborate and intricate mosaic. To fit each into its place would baffle our utmost ingenuity. To discover the main design is all we can expect; or if more be demanded of us, it is enough to show that no part is inconsistent with the rest. And these results will reward the student of the Apocalyptic visions of Daniel and St. John, if only he approach them untrammelled by the crude views which prevail respecting the career of Antichrist.

These visions are not a history, but a drama. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation we see the woman in her travail. In the twenty-first chapter she is manifested in her final glory. The intervening chapters afford brief glimpses of events which fill up the interval. It is with the thirteenth and seventeenth chapters that we have specially to do in connection with the present subject, and it is clear that the later vision unfolds events which come first in the order of time.

The false church and the true are typified under kindred emblems. Jerusalem, the Bride, has its counterpart in Babylon, the Harlot. In the same sense in which the New Jerusalem is the Jewish church, so likewise Babylon is the apostasy of Rome. The heavenly city is mother of the redeemed for ages past (Galatians 4:26) the earthly city is mother of the harlots and abominations of the earth. (Revelation 17:5) The victims who have perished in the persecutions of Antichristian Papal Rome are estimated at fifty millions of human beings; but even this appalling record will not be the measure of her doom. The blood of "holy apostles and prophets," - the martyred dead of ages before the Papacy arose, and even of pre-Messianic times, will be required of her when the day of vengeance comes.[9]

9. Revelation 18:20. So also in 17:6, the saints (the slaughtered dead of Old Testament times) are distinguished from the martyrs of Jesus. Luke 11:50, 51 sets forth the principle of God's judgments.

As it is only in its Jewish aspect that the Church is expressly symbolized as the Bride,[10] so also it is at a time when this, their normal relationship, has been regained by the covenant people, that the apostate church of Christendom, in the full development of its iniquity, appears as the Harlot[11] The vision clearly indicates moreover a marked revival of her influence. She is seen enthroned upon the ten-horned Beast, herself arrayed in royal hues and decked with gold and costliest gems. The infamous greatness of Papal Rome in times gone by shall yet be surpassed by the splendor of her glories in dark days to come, when, having drawn within her pale it may be all that usurps the name of Christ on earth,[12] she will claim as her willing vassal the last great monarch of the Gentile world.

10. In Scripture the church of this dispensation is symbolized as the Body of Christ, never as the Bride. From the close of John Baptist's ministry the Bride is never mentioned until she appears in the Apocalypse (John 3:29; Revelation 21:2, 9). The force of the "nevertheless" in Ephesians 5:33 depends on the fact that the Church is the Body, not the Bride. The earthly relationship is readjusted by a heavenly standard. Man and wife are not one body, but Christ and His church are one body, therefore a man is to love his wife "even as himself."

11. This, I believe, is the element of truth in the view of Auberlen and others, that the woman of chap. 17 is the woman of chap. 12., "the faithful city become an harlot" (Isaiah 1:21).

12. "I incline to think that the judgment (chap. 18:2) and the spiritual fornication (chap. 18:3), though finding their culmination in Rome, are not restricted to it, but comprise the whole apostate church, Roman, Greek, and even Protestant, in so far as it has been seduced from its first love to Christ, and (has) given its affections to worldly pomps and idols." - REV. A. R. FAUSSET'S Commentary.

As regards the duration of this period of Rome's final triumphs, Scripture is silent; but the crisis which brings it to a close is definitely marked. "The ten horns and the Beast shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." (Revelation 17:16)

One point in the angel's description of the Beast in relation to the harlot claims special notice. The seven heads have a twofold symbolism. When viewed in connection with the harlot, they are "seven mountains on which the woman sits;" but in their special relation to the Beast they have a different significance. The angel adds, "and they are seven kings"; that is "kingdoms," the word being used "according to its strict prophetic import, and to the analogy of that portion of the prophecy which is here especially in view." [13]

13. ALFORD, Greek Test. in loco. Comp. Daniel 7:17-23.

In the seventh chapter of Daniel the Beast is identified with the Roman Empire. In the thirteenth of Revelation he is identified also with the lion, the bear, and the panther, the three first "kingdoms" of Daniel's vision. But here he is seen as the heir and representative, not of these alone, but of all the great world-powers which have set themselves in opposition to God and to His people. The seven heads typify these powers. "Five are fallen, and one is." Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece, had fallen; and Rome then held the scepter of earthly sovereignty, the sixth in succession to the empires already named. [14] "And the other is not yet come, and when he cometh he must continue a short space," Here the prophecy is marked by the same strange "foreshortening" already noticed in each of Daniel's visions. While Rome was the sixth kingdom, the seventh is the confederacy of the latter days, heading up in "the Coming Prince." The Coming Prince himself, in the full and final development of his power, is called the eighth, though belonging to the seven. [15] The importance of these conclusions will appear in the sequel.

14. Just as the mention of the ten horns upon the beast has set men trying to discover in the past a tenfold division of the Roman earth, so also these seven heads have suggested the idea of seven successive forms of government in the Roman empire. Neither of these conceptions would ever have been heard of, but for the prophecy of which they are supposed to be the fulfillment. The second, though not so visionary as the first, is open to the special objection that the word *pipto* betokens a violent fall, such as the catastrophe of ancient Babylon, or of the Babylon of the Apocalypse (comp. Revelation 18:2). It is wholly unsuitable to express such changes as marked the government of ancient Rome.

15. Revelation 17:10 expressly states that the duration of the seventh will be brief. Dean Alford's comment on this is not marked by his usual candor. The words in ver. 11 are *ek ton hepta*, but this cannot mean merely that the Beast is "the successor and result of the seven" (Alford), for ver. 10 limits the entire succession to seven. Though because of his awful pre-eminence he is described as the eighth, yet he is really the supreme head of the seventh.

The subject of the twelfth chapter is the dragon, the woman in her travail, the birth of the man-child and his rapture to heaven; the conflict in heaven between the archangel and the dragon; (Verse 7; Compare Daniel 12:1.) the dragon's banishment to earth; his persecution of the woman, and her flight to the wilderness, where she is sustained for "a time, and times, and half a time," or 1, 260 days (Verses 6, 14.) (the second half of Daniel's seventieth week). The chapter ends by the statement that, baffled in attempting to destroy the woman, the dragon "went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." The thirteenth chapter, crossing the lines of Daniel's visions, represents the fulfillment of the dragon's purpose through the agency of the man of prophecy, whom he energizes to this end. Whatever meaning be attached to the birth and rapture of the

woman's child, there can be no reasonable doubt that the obedient, faithful "remnant of her seed" is the Jewish Church of the latter days, the persecuted "saints of the Most High" of Daniel's prophecy.

The serpent, the woman, and the man, appear together on the earliest page of Scripture, and they reappear upon the latest. But how significant and terrible the change! No longer the subtle tempter, Satan is now displayed in all his awfulness as the great fiery dragon,[16] who seeks to destroy the woman's promised seed. And instead of the humbled penitent of Eden, the man appears as a wild beast,[17] a monster, both in power and wickedness. The serpent's victim has become his willing slave and ally.

16. drakon purrhos megas, Revelation 12:3. "He is purrhos perhaps, for the combined reasons of the wasting properties of fire, and the redness of blood" (Alford, Greek Test., in loco). Compare ver. 9, "The great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan." The dragon both of Scripture and of heathen mythology is a serpent, and both refer to Satan. It is described by Homer as of huge size, coiled like a snake, of blood-red or dark color, and many-headed. "He seems to use the words drakon and ophis indifferently for a serpent" (Liddell and Scott).

17. The tharion or wild-beast of Revelation 8., etc., must not be confounded with the dzoon or living-being of chap. 4., most unfortunately rendered beast in E. V.

God has found a man to fulfill all His will, and to Him He has given up His throne, with all power in heaven and "on earth." This will hereafter be travestied by Satan, and the coming man shall have the dragon's "power, and his throne, and great authority." (Revelation 8:2) Both the Dragon and the Beast are seen crowned with royal diadems. (Revelation 12:3; 13:1.) Once, and only once, again in Scripture the diadem is mentioned, and then it is as worn by Him whose name is "King of kings and Lord of lords." (Revelation 19:12-16) It must be as pretenders to His power that the Beast and the Dragon claim it.

The personality of Satan and his interest in and close connection with our race throughout its history, are among the most certain though most mysterious facts of revelation. The popular classification of angels, men, and devils, as including intelligent creation, is misleading. The angels[18] that fell are "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the Great Day." (Jude 6) Demons are frequently mentioned in the narrative of the Gospels, and they have also a place in the doctrine of the Epistles. But THE DEVIL is a being who, like the Archangel, seems, in his own domain, to have no peer[19]

18. That is, the beings who before their fall were angels of God. The word angel in its secondary sense means no more than a messenger or attendant, and Satan has his angels (Revelation 12:7). The word is used of John Baptist's disciples in Luke 7:24.

19. Our translators have used the word devil as a generic term for fallen beings other than men, but the word from which it is derived has not this scope in Greek. A diabolos is a slanderer, and the word is so used in 1 Timothy 3:11; 2 Timothy 3:3; Titus 2:3. But the diabolos is Satan, of whom alone the term is used elsewhere in the New Testament, save only in John 6:70, where it is applied to Judas Iscariot. The word daimonion, which occurs fifty-two times in the Gospels, and seven times in the rest of the New Testament, is invariably rendered devil, save in Acts 17:18 (gods). In classical Greek it means generally the Deity, especially an inferior god; and in the New Testament, an evil spirit, a demon.

The ultimate reference of Ezekiel 28: appears to be to Satan, and in the passage beginning, "Thou hast been in Eden in the garden of God," he is apostrophized as "the anointed cherub" (ver. 14). The cherubim appear to have some special relation to our race and world, hence their connection with the tabernacle.

Can it be that our earth was at one time their domain, that Satan was of their number, and that he recognized in Adam a creature appointed to succeed him in the very scene of his glory and his fall?

Another fact which claims notice here is the hold which serpent worship has had upon mankind. Among the nations of the ancient world there was scarcely one in whose religious system it had not a place. In heathen mythology there is scarcely a hero or a god whose history is not connected in some way with the sacred serpent. "Wherever the devil reigned the serpent was held in some peculiar veneration." [20]

20. Bp. Stillingfleet; quoted in Encyc. Metro., article on "Serpent Worship," q. v. In Bryant's Ancient Mythology will be found a chapter on Ophiolatry (vol. 2., p. 197, 3rd ed., and see also p. 458) which fully warrants the general statements of the text.

The true significance of this depends on a just appreciation of the nature of idol worship. It may be questioned whether idolatry as popularly understood has ever prevailed except among the most debased and ignorant of races. It is not the emblem that is worshipped, but a power or being which the emblem represents. When the Apostle warned the Corinthian Church against participating in anything devoted to an idol, he was careful to explain that the idol in itself was nothing. "But" (he declared) "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with demons." (1 Corinthians 10:20.)

This will afford an insight into the character of the predicted serpent worship of the last days. [21] Satan's master lie will be a travesty of the incarnation: he will energize a man who will claim universal worship as being the manifestation of the Deity in human form. And not only will there be a false Messiah, but another being, his equal in miraculous power, yet having for his only mission to obtain for him the homage of mankind. The mystery of the Godhead will thus be parodied by the mystery of iniquity, and the Father, the Son, and the Spirit will have their counterpart in the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet. [22]

21. "All the world wondered after the Beast; and they worshipped the Dragon (serpent) which gave power unto the Beast; and they worshipped the Beast" (Revelation 13:3, 4).

22. The lamb-like Beast of Revelation 13:11, called the False Prophet in Revelation 19:20. The language of 13:3, 12, suggests that there will be some impious travesty of the resurrection of our Lord.

A silent heaven marks this age of grace. Whirlwind and earthquake and fire may awe, yet, as in the days of the old Hebrew prophet, [23] God is not in these, but in the "still small voice" which tells of mercy and seeks to win lost men from the power of darkness to Himself. But the very silence which betokens that the throne of God is now a throne of grace is appealed to as the crowning proof that God is but a myth; and the coarse blasphemer's favorite trick is to challenge the Almighty to declare Himself by some signal act of judgment. In days to come, the impious challenge will be taken up by Satan, and death shall seize on men who refuse to bow before the image of the Beast. [24]

23. The Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire, a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:11, 12).

24. In the persecutions under Pagan Rome, death was often the penalty for refusing to worship Caesar's image; but Revelation 13:15 clearly points to some mysterious death which shall result in the very presence of the image of the future Caesar. The same power which will enable the False Prophet to give

life to the image, will destroy the life of him who refuses to worship it.

The Antichrist will be more than a profane and brutal persecutor like Antiochus Epiphanes and some of the Emperors of Pagan Rome; more than a vulgar impostor like Barcochab.[25] Miracles alone can silence the skepticism of apostates, and in the exercise of all the Dragon's delegated power, the Beast will command the homage of a world that has rejected grace. "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life." (Revelation 8:8) If it were possible, the very elect would be deceived by his mighty "signs and wonders"; (Matthew 24:24) but faith, divinely given, is a sure, as it is the only, safeguard against credulity and superstition.

25. In one of the darkest hours of their history, when the continued persecution of the Jews threatened the race with utter extinction, Barcochab proclaimed himself the Messiah, and led them in a revolt against the Romans, which ended in a carnage of the ill-fated people more horrible than any which had preceded it (A. D. 130-132). The man seems to have been a contemptible impostor who duped the people by juggler's tricks, such as blowing fire from his mouth; and yet he attained to such an eminence, and brought about disasters so terrible, that some have sought to find in his career the fulfillment of the prophecies of Antichrist.

But this is what he will become in the zenith of his career. In his origin he is described as a "little horn," (Daniel 7:8) - like Alexander of Macedon, the king of a petty kingdom. Possibly he will be the head of some new Principality to arise in the final dismemberment of Turkey; it may be on the banks of the Euphrates, or perhaps upon the Asian shore of the Aegean Sea. The name of Babylon is strangely connected with events to come, and Pergamus, so long the home of serpent worship in its vilest forms, is the only place on earth which Scripture has identified with Satan's throne (Revelation 2:13).

Of the great political changes which must precede his advent, the most conspicuous are the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, and the predicted division of the Roman earth. The former of these events has already been considered in a previous chapter, and as regards the latter there is but little to be said. The attempt to enumerate the ten kingdoms of the future would involve a profitless inquiry.[26] History repeats itself; and if there be any element of periodicity in the political diseases by which nations are afflicted, Europe will inevitably pass through another crisis such as that which darkened the last decade of the eighteenth century. And should another revolution produce another Napoleon, it is impossible to foretell how far kingdoms may become consolidated, and boundaries may be changed. Moreover in forecasting the fulfillment of these prophecies, we are dealing with events which, while they may occur within the lifetime of living men, may yet be delayed for centuries. Our part is not to prophecy, but only to interpret; and we may well rest content with the certainty that when the Apocalyptic visions are in fact fulfilled, their fulfillment will be clear, not merely to minds educated in mysticism, but to all who are capable of observing public facts.

26. See App. 2., Note D.

Through the gradual unfolding, it may be, of influences even now in operation; or far more probably as the outcome of some great European crisis in the future, this confederation of nations[27] shall be developed, and thus the stage will be prepared on which shall appear that awful Being, the great leader of men in the eventful days which are to close the era of Gentile supremacy.

27. I say nations, not kingdoms, advisedly, for though they will ultimately be kingdoms, i. e., under monarchical government, yet before the advent of the Kaiser such may not be the case. That this division

of the Roman earth will take place before his appearance is expressly stated; but whether a year, a decade, or a century before, we are not informed.

If we are to understand aright the predicted course of the Antichrist's career, certain points connected with it must be clearly kept in view. The first is that up to a certain epoch he will be, notwithstanding his pre-eminence, no more than human. And here we must judge of the future by the past. At two-and-twenty years of age, Alexander crossed the Hellespont, the prince of a petty Grecian state. Four years later he had founded an Empire and given a new direction to the history of the world.

In the career of Napoleon Bonaparte, modern history affords a parallel still more striking and complete. When, now just a hundred years ago, he entered the French military school at Brienne, he was an unknown lad, without even the advantages which rank and wealth afford. So utterly obscure was his position that, not only did he owe his admission to the school to the influence of the Governor of Corsica, but calumny has found it possible to use that trifling act of friendly patronage to the disparagement of his mother's name. If then such a man, by the gigantic force of his personal qualities, combined with the accident of favoring circumstances, could attain the place which history has assigned to him, the fact affords the fullest answer to every objection which can be urged against the credibility of the predicted career of the man of prophecy.

Nor will it avail to urge that the last fifty years have so developed the mental activity of civilized races, and have produced such a spirit of independence, that the suggestion of a career like Napoleon's being repeated in days to come involves an anachronism. "In proportion as the general standard of mental cultivation is raised, and man made equal with man, the ordinary power of genius is diminished, but its extraordinary power is increased, its reach deepened, its hold rendered more firm. As men become familiar with the achievements and the exercise of talent, they learn to despise and disregard its daily examples, and to be more independent of mere men of ability; but they only become more completely in the power of gigantic intellect, and the slaves of pre-eminent and unapproachable talent." [28]

28. Alford, Gr. Test. Proleg. 2 Thessalonians, § 36.

By the sheer force of transcendent genius the man of prophecy will gain a place of undisputed pre-eminence in the world; but if the facts of his after career are to be understood, considerations of a wholly different kind must be taken into account. A strange crisis marks his course. At first the patron of religion, a true "eldest son of the church," he becomes a relentless and profane persecutor. At first no more than a king of men, commanding the allegiance of the Roman earth, he afterwards claims to be divine, and demands the worship of Christendom.

And we have seen how this extraordinary change in his career takes place at that epoch of tremendous import in the history of the future, the beginning of the 1, 260 days of the latter half of Daniel's seventieth week. Then it is that that mysterious event takes place, described as "war in heaven" between the Archangel and the Dragon. As the result of that amazing struggle, Satan and his angels are "cast out into the earth," and the Seer bewails mankind because the devil is come down into their midst, "having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:7, 12).

The next feature in the vision is the rise of the ten-horned Beast. (Revelation 13:1) This is not the event described in the seventh of Daniel. The Beast, doubtless, is the same both in Daniel and the Apocalypse, representing the last great empire upon earth; but in the Apocalypse it appears at a later stage of its development. Three periods of its history are marked in Daniel. In the first it has ten horns. In the second it

has eleven, for the little horn comes up among the ten. In the third, it has but eight, for the eleventh has grown in power, and three of the ten have been torn away by it. Up to this point Daniel's vision represents the Beast merely as "the fourth kingdom upon earth," the Roman empire as revived in future times, and here the vision turns away from the history of the Beast to describe the action of the little horn as a blasphemer and persecutor.[29]

29. The passage (Daniel 7:2-14) is quoted in full ante. The distinctions above noticed clear up the seeming inconsistency between Daniel's visions and the Revelation alluded to ante.

It is at this epoch that the thirteenth chapter of Revelation opens. The three first stages of the history of the empire are past, and a fourth has been developed. It is no longer a confederacy of nations bound together by treaty, with a Napoleon rising up in the midst of them and struggling for supremacy; but a confederacy of kings who are the lieutenants of one great Kaiser, a man whose transcendent greatness has secured to him an undisputed pre-eminence. And this is the man whom the Dragon will single out to administer his awful power on earth in days to come. And from the hour in which he sells himself to Satan he will be so energized by Satan, that "ALL power and signs and lying wonders" shall characterize his after course.[30]

30. ho anomos ... ou estin ha parousia kat energeian tou Satana en pasa dunamei, kai sameiois, kai tepasi pseudous (2 Thessalonians 2:8, 9).

There is a danger lest in dwelling on these visions as though they were enigmas to be solved, we should forget how appalling are the events of which they speak, and how tremendous the forces which will be in exercise at the time of their accomplishment. During this age of grace Satan's power on earth is so restrained that men forget his very existence. This, indeed, will be the secret of his future triumphs. And yet how unspeakably terrible must be the dragon's power, witness the temptation of our Lord! It is written, "The devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time; and the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be Thine." (Luke 4:5-7)

It is this same awful being who shall give to the Beast his throne, his power, and great authority, (Revelation 8:2) - all that Christ refused in the days of His humiliation. The mind that has realized this stupendous fact will not be slow to accept what follows:

"And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations; and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb" (Revelation 13:7, 8).

Of the events which afterwards must follow upon earth, it behooves us to speak with deep solemnity and studied reserve. The phenomenon of sudden and absolute darkness is inconceivably terrible, even when eagerly looked for with full intelligence of the causes which produce it.[31] How unspeakable then would be its awfulness, if unexpected, unaccounted for, and prolonged, it may be for days together. And such shall be the sign which Holy Writ declares shall mark the advent of earth's last great woe.[32] The signs and wonders of Satanic power shall still command the homage of mankind, while the thunders of a heaven no longer silent will break forth upon the apostate race. Then will be the time of "the seven last plagues," wherein "is filled up the wrath of God," - the time when "the vials of the wrath of God" shall be poured out upon the earth. (Revelation 15:1; 16:1.) And if in this day of grace the heights and depths of God's longsuffering mercy transcend all human thoughts, His WRATH will be no less Divine. "The day of vengeance of our God," "the great and the terrible day of the Lord," - such are the names divinely given to

describe that time of unexampled horror.

31. The Astronomer Royal (Sir G. B. Airy) used these words in a lecture delivered at the Royal Institution, 4th July, 1853, upon the total solar eclipses of 1842 and 1851: "The phenomenon, in fact, is one of the most terrible that man can witness, and no degree of partial eclipses gives any idea of its horror."

32. "The sun shall be turned into darkness... before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel 2:31).

And yet when in the midnight darkness of the last apostasy, Divine longsuffering will only serve to blind and harden, mercy itself shall welcome the awful breaking of the day of vengeance, for blessing lies beyond it. Another day is still to follow. Earth's history, as unfolded in the Scriptures, reaches; on to a Sabbath age of blessedness and peace; an age when heaven shall rule upon the earth, when, "the Lord shall rejoice in all His works," (Psalm 104:31) and prove Himself to be the God of every creature He has made (Psalm 145:9-16).

Further still, the veil is raised, and a brief glimpse afforded us of a glorious eternity beyond, when every trace of sin shall have been wiped out for ever, when heaven will join with earth, and "the tabernacle of God" - the dwelling place of the Almighty - shall be with men, "and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God"[33]

33. Revelation 21:3. The order of these events is noticed, ante.

It was a calamity for the Church of God when the light of prophecy became dimmed in fruitless controversy, and the study of these visions, vouchsafed by God to warn, and guide, and cheer His saints in evil days, was dismissed as utterly unprofitable. They abound in promises which God designed to feed His people's faith and fire their zeal, and a special blessing rests on those who read, and hear, and cherish them. (Revelation 1:3) One of the most hopeful features of the present hour is the increasing interest they everywhere excite; and if these pages should avail to deepen or direct the enthusiasm even of a few in the study of a theme which is inexhaustible, the labor they have cost will be abundantly rewarded.

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