THE PAROUSIA 3RD EDITION A General Inquiry Into the Doctrine of our Lord's Second Coming

James Stuart Russell

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A General Inquiry

INTO THE DOCTRINE OF

OUR LORD'S SECOND COMING

Οὐ γὰρ σεσοφισμένοις μύθοις ἐξακολουθήσαντες ἐγνωρίσαμεν ὑμῖν τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δύναμιν καὶ παρουσίαν ἀλλ' ἐπόπται γενηθέντες τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος 2 Peter 1. 16.

'HYPOTHESES NON FINGO,' -- SIR ISAAC NEWTON

J. Stuart Russell.

By James Stuart Russell M.A., D. Div., (1816 - 1895)

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PUBLISHERS NOTE

Bierton Particular Baptists have republished James

Stuart Russell's, "High Praise For The Parousia", with a view to help shed light on the book of Revelation and eschatolgy in general.

David Clarke is the sole remaining member of the Bierton Particular Baptists, which was a Strict and Particular Baptist society, formed in 1832. He joined the church, in 1976, which became a Gospel Standard cause, on 16th January 1981. He was called by the Lord and sent by the church, to preach the gospel, in 1982. David relates his testimony in his book, "Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists", and also, "The Bierton Crisis", which tells of his conversion from crime to Christ, on 16th January, 1970 and the trials and conflict he experienced in seeking to promote and defend gospel of Christ.

When called by the Lord he had no real knowledge of the bible and was virtually illiterate. He learned to read through reading the bible and in so doing learned who Jesus was and the way of salvation. He found it necessary to read a range of classical Christian literature in order to gain a clear knowledge of the truths of the gospel.

To his disappointment there were very few Christians who were able to help educate him whilst in attendance of Assemblies of God and Pentecostal Churches in Aylesbury. He also learned that the pastors of these churches were opposed to Calvinism and so was very thankful for the three's or four's of believers that came to his aid in those days.

David discovered that most believers held very odd views about the book of Revelation and had strange thinking as to the way God worked in men's lives. It was through reading Dr John Gill, John Bunyan, Martin Luther, William Huntington, J.C. Philpot and others and with the help Strict and Particular Baptist ministers that he realised the doctrines of grace were those truths taught in the bible and this led him to join the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church, in 1976.

He was aware of a range of views that were believed about the second coming of Christ, Pre-tribulation Rapture, the restoration of the nation of Israel and a building again of the Temple in Jerusalem and the restoration of animal sacrifices. He felt these were in fact all distractions from the Word of God, and the truth as revealed in the scripture about the lord Jesus Christ.

This book, The Parousia gave him great light on the subject of the second coming of Christ. David believes that it will help educate both Calvinists and also the

Arminians who need to rightly divide the word of truth.

The Bierton Particular Baptists maintains that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses. David learned that this had cause contention among Calvinists. There were many who objected to this view maintaining that the law of Moses was their rule of life. This was just one of the doctrinal issues that he had to deal with when he was the secretary and a minister of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist Church. The Parousia will help those interested in this subject.

There are two opposing views regarding the law of Moses among Calvinists:

1 The **Reformed Calvinist** - who maintain the Law of Moses is the rule life for the believer.

2 **Calvinists (some say Hyper)** such as Huntington, Gadsby and J.C. Philpot - who maintained the gospel is the rule of life for the believer. Their doctrinal statement in this connection can be found in the Gospel Standard Articles of Religion.

Those reformed Calvinists who maintain the Law of Moses to be their rule of life are identified in these following confessions:

1 Westminster Confession of Faith 1646

2 The Savoy Declaration 1658

3 The Baptists Confession 1689

Those Calvinists who maintain the gospel is the rule of life for the believer may find the following confessions representative of their views.

4 The First London Baptist Confession 1646, 2nd Edition

5 Gospel Standard Articles of Religion.

The Parousia, demonstrates that the destruction of Jerusalem, in 70 AD and the doing away of that Mosaic system of religion governing the Old Covenant has been over looked by many, and this fresh look will give light to the spiritual eye, to behold wonderful things in thy LAW.

Psalm 119:18

Remember the Law is a shadow but the body that casts the shadow is Christ

The Publisher believes this book, "The Parousia", will help the believer come to a correct understanding of eschatology, the New and Old Covenants and the believers relationship to Christ and also enable a

re-examination of a churches articles of religion or confession of faith to see if they are in line with scripture.

For further information see, "Difficulties Associated With Articles Of Religion Among Particular Baptists".

David Clarke

David Clarke

www.BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

FOREWORD BY ED STEVENS

The word "Parousia" (par-oo-see-ah) is not a Theologians who study endtime prophecy consider household word, but students of endtime prophecy Russell's book a classic defense of the Preterist view. It know it is a reference to the Second Coming of Christ. is this book, more than any other during the past 125 It comes from two Greek words ("para" beside, and years, which has moved so many toward Preterism. "ousia" state of being) and literally means "to be beside" Many in the Reformed faith (e.g., R. C. Sproul, Sr., (present with someone). It came to be a more specific David Chilton, Gary DeMar, Ken Gentry, Gary North, reference to important people coming for an extended Jim Jordan, et al) credit Russell's book as having a (but not long-term) visit to one of their subject territories significant impact on their eschatological views. R. C. (a "visitation"). It can refer either to the initial arrival or Sproul, Sr. says he looks favorably at Preterism because the afterward presence. It is used in the New Testament it is the only view of prophecy which effectively counters almost exclusively of Christ's Second Coming. the liberal-skeptic-critic attack. He has written much to Russell examines every significant New Testament recommend Russell's book and encourage the spread of text about Christ's return, to see when it would occur Preterism, even though he does not go as far as Russell and what it would be like. Since he believed the Second does. In his Foreword to the 1999 Baker Books reprint Coming occurred in the first century at the destruction of The Parousia (pp. ix-x), Sproul says:

of Jerusalem in AD 70, his view is labeled "Preterist." Russell's work is valuable chiefly for his analysis of

The word "Preterist" is another prophetic term with the timeframe references of New Testament prophecy which many are unfamiliar. According to Webster's and his understanding of the main reference to the Unabridged Dictionary, a Preterist is "a theologian who parousia. ...Russell's book has forced me to take the believes the prophecies of the Apocalypse have already events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem far been fulfilled." A Preterist is the opposite of a Futurist. more seriously than before, to open my eyes to the Futurists teach that the three major endtime events radical significance of this event in redemptive history. (parousia, resurrection, judgment) are still future in It vindicates the apostolic hope and prediction of our fulfillment, whereas Preterists teach these events Lord's close-at hand coming in judgment.... I can never have already been fulfilled. Some may wonder what read the New Testament again the same way I read it difference it makes? before reading The Parousia.

Everything crucial to Christianity is at risk. The Until this book appeared in 1878, Preterism had little systemization. This book began that process, and remains one of the most consistent and comprehensive explanations of Preterism available. The Preterist view Jesus and the NT writers repeatedly make timeflourished in Germany and Britain. But America, still recovering from civil war, took little notice. In global terms, its impact is still marginal, but it has seen significant growth in the past ten years, and the Internet is one of the big factors stimulating that. What the Gutenberg Liberals, skeptics, and Jewish/Islamic critics use printing press did for the Protestant reformation, the

Deity of Christ, the integrity of the apostles and prophets, and the inspiration of the New Testament is at stake. How so? restricted predictions about His return and the other endtime events. They do not merely suggest that Christ's Parousia might occur in their lifetime, they unequivocally affirm it.

those "time statements" to discredit Jesus and the New Internet did for the Preterist reformation.

Testament. Inspired men cannot make mistakes. Since Jesus and the NT writers predicted Christ's return to occur in their lifetime, and it supposedly didn't happen, they assume Jesus and the NT writers were mistaken. Indeed, if we cannot trust their prophetic utterances, we cannot trust anything else they say. Christianity is totally discredited if those predictions failed to materialize exactly as they prophesied.

You might wonder what these "time texts" are? Matthew 16:27-28 is a good example. This book deals with every one of them. They were not mistaken when they predicted Christ's return in their lifetime. It really occurred, at AD 70.

material like this. One of the first books to be posted on Preterist websites was Russell's Parousia. Even though from a Preterist perspective, see the three books written the electronic version has had many readers in the short by this author (Stevens Response To Gentry, Questions five years it has been available, it has not diminished demand for printed copies. This book is destined to remain a Preterist classic.

compared to previous centuries. He pointed the way in a number of areas that we are only just now beginning book of Revelation. One of his best statements is there. He uses the "time" statements in the first three verses of the interpretation of the book:

hung by the door, plainly visible to every one who had eyes to see; yet men have tried to pick the lock, or force the door, or climb up some other way, rather than avail themselves of so simple and ready a way of admission as to use the key made and provided for them. (Parousia, p. 367)

Russell leaves no excuses for Futurism. His survey of all the "Parousia" (second coming) references is a tour de force in Preterist exegesis. This book was the first wave of what has become a whole storm of books defending the AD 70 fulfillment of endtime prophecy.

hidden behind the excuse of wanting explicit "time to remain alive until His return, and that they would indicators" before assigning a text to AD 70. Russell and literally "see" it before they all died (Matt. 16:27-28 and modern Preterists have exhaustively shown that all NT endtime texts have first century "audience relevance" time indicator. The New Testament was not written to us originally. We are reading someone else's mail. The the original author intended to communicate to his to us today.

THREE DIFFICULT TEXTS SIMPLIFIED

There are three scriptures which most partial in AD 66 and its connection to Rev. 1:7 preterists think are yet to be fulfilled: Acts 1:11, 1 Cor. AD 70 fulfillment is the most consistent interpretation of these texts. However, he does not deal very much with Acts 1:11. As a result, many Futurists and Partial return of Christ still in the future. Modern Preterists have now shown that these three texts contain implicit

The Internet is the perfect place to publish helpful inseparably to the Parousia and final consummation in AD 70. For a fuller explanation of these three texts About The Afterlife, and Expectations Demand A Rapture).

In those books, we deal especially with the Russell did a remarkable job of interpretation typological imagery of Christ's ascension into the cloudfilled heavenly Holy of Holies to present His own blood to make final atonement, and His "second appearance" to develop further. He devoted over 170 pages to the back out of the heavenly temple to announce atonement to His anxiously waiting saints. The Acts 1:11 reference to the return of Christ is easy to apply to AD 70 when we Revelation to show how crucial the date of writing is to realize it is speaking of the reverse of the visible ascent of Christ in Theophany form. His descent would follow It may truly be said that the key has all the while the same Theophany pattern as His ascent, meaning that it would be visible like His departure. He ascended visibly with clouds and angels in the presence of a few disciples, and the two angels (Acts 1:10-11) promised that He would descend visibly "in like manner" in that same Theophany pattern to only those disciples whom He wished to see it. Both the going away and the return were "cloud comings" (Theophanies) accompanied by angels. He left the same way He would return (in clouds with the angels) to appear to his anxiously waiting disciples ("How long, O Lord?" and "O, our Lord, come!"). They expected His return before all of Futurists and Partial Preterists for too long have that generation died. Some of them were promised John 21:22f).

Even some partial preterists (e.g. Kenneth Gentry in written all over them, which functions as an implicit his book, Before Jerusalem Fell) have agreed that Rev. 1:7 (which mentions a "cloud coming" or Theophany which "every eye would see") was fulfilled in AD 70. primary task of a Bible interpreter is to discover what Since most expositors connect Rev. 1:7 with Acts 1:11, it seems reasonable to assign both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11 original audience, not just to ask what it "could" mean to the visible Theophany that was seen by the Jewish people just before the war in AD 66. Notice what R. C. Sproul, Sr. said about the angelic appearances in the sky

"...the Old Testament prophets, when speaking of 15:20-57, and 1 Thess. 4:13-18. Russell shows that an a real historical visitation of God in judgment upon cities and nations, used exactly this kind of language in a metaphorical way to describe that coming of divine judgment.... As some 19th century scholars...Jonathan Preterists have used this text to teach another major Edwards...B. B. Warfield and others have suggested, what Jesus is talking about here on the Mount of Olives [Matt. 24:3] ... is the end of the Jewish age. And that time indicators and contextual clues which connect them the coming that he's talking about, and that he's warning

these contemporaries about over and over again... that both Rev. 1:7 and Acts 1:11. was coming on that generation...was the judgment of The commander of the angelic hosts (Christ) was God that was coming on Jerusalem and the temple in present with His angelic armies on that occasion (AD the year 70 AD.... Was Jesus visible? Did "every eye see 66), just like Rev. 19:11-21 pictures for us. This was him" [Rev. 1:7] and all of that? No. Although, one of the visible return of Christ with His angels to judge the weirdest passages you ever read in ancient history His enemies and reward His saints, as both Rev. 1:7 is the paragraph that is found in Josephus [Wars, Bk 6, and Acts 1:11 had predicted. Matt. 24:29-31 and Luke Ch 5, Sect. 3]. I quote it in my book [The Last Days 21:25-28 also indicated there would be visible "signs" According to Jesus, p. 124]... After talking about some accompanying the return of Christ with His angels to remarkable, astonishing celestial events that some people raise the dead out of Hades, perform the judgment, had reported, he said, "Besides these a few days after and reward His faithful saints. This fulfills the "in like that feast, on the one-and-twentieth day of the month manner" terms of the Acts 1:11 text. Both Rev. 1:7 and Artemisius ... before the setting of the sun, chariots and Acts 1:11 fit the Matt. 16:27-28 "visibility" pattern. troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running It is also clear from the similarities between 1 Cor. about among the clouds...." ... The overwhelming 15 and 1 Thess. 4 that these two "parousia" texts are testimony of the contemporaries (and he was there as speaking of the same AD 70 return of Christ. Since both an evewitness) was that people did see something in the texts state that the resurrection will occur in connection clouds. And what is it they saw? They saw chariots. Is with the "parousia" (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:15-17), and that the first time the chariot throne of God is seen in since the NT does not distinguish between two different the clouds over Palestine? What took Elijah to heaven? parousias separated by thousands of years, and since What were the whirling merkabahs [chariots] Ezekiel this parousia is said to occur in the lifetime of some beheld? Was not the basic symbol in the Old Testament who would "live and remain" until it occurred (1 Cor. of the movable judgment throne of God, his chariots of 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15), then it is clear that these two texts fire? And here we have the testimony of many, many were fulfilled in AD 70. This forces some adjustment people saying they saw these chariots running about in our concepts about the nature of fulfillment once we get the time of fulfillment straightened out. All three of the clouds right before the end of Jerusalem. ...It lends credence to the further application of Jesus' predictions these difficult second coming texts have been explained of what would come in this judgment of the nation of from a consistent AD 70 fulfillment. This leaves partial Israel and of the city of Jerusalem..." [R. C. Sproul, Sr. preterists nowhere to hide. We can thank Russell for "Last Days Madness" speech, 1999 Ligonier Ministries pointing the way toward this approach to these three National Conference in Orlando. Bracketed material texts. inserted by the author of this Foreword.]

Another area in which Russell greatly served the Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History, Bk 3, Ch 8, Section 5) quotes this same material from Josephus, and Tacitus interests of future generations was the rapture. Four (Histories, Book 5, "About The Jews") alludes to the other scholars within a generation of Russell also taught same events. Sproul's comments stimulate several the idea of a literal rapture in AD 70 (Milton S. Terry, thoughts. If Rev. 1:7 was fulfilled by the appearance E. Hampden-Cook, Richard Weymouth, and William of angels and chariots in the sky at AD 66, and if Acts S. Urmy). There are minor differences in the way each 1:11 is speaking of the same judgment coming (or of these men described it, but all agreed there was a cloud coming, Theophany) of Christ, then what text removal of some true Christians in connection with the teaches a still future visible coming of Christ? If the return of Christ in AD 70. Modern advocates of a literal angelic armies literally seen in the clouds at AD 66 were AD 70 rapture (such as Garrett Brown, Walt Hibbard, the fulfillment of "every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7) Arthur Melanson, Ian Harding, Ed Stevens, and others) as Sproul has allowed as a possibility, then it was also go further to assert that all true Christians (and nothing the fulfillment of Acts 1:11! In Matt 16:27-28, which but true Christians) alive at the time of the destruction R. C. Sproul, Sr. affirms is AD 70, it states that some of Jerusalem were "snatched away" to be with Christ in of those disciples would not taste death until they saw the spiritual realm. Russell suggested that only some Christ return. It therefore seems logical that the visible Christians were caught up - a "partial rapture" with coming of Christ at AD 66-70 which is mentioned in the sleepers or unwatchful Christians left on earth. Matt. 16:27-28 must be the same coming dealt with in But it seems from Jesus' sharp criticism of that group

A LITERAL RAPTURE

sleepers or unwatchful were not true Christians. The tribulation and apostasy eliminated the insincere. By the time of the rapture the only watchful, awake, and it must have occurred, regardless of a lack of historical "worthy ones" were the true Christians. There would have been few (if any) pretenders and "mere professing historical proof for a literal rapture in AD 70, it does Christians." So in either view, the group of saints not invalidate the Bible's affirmation of it. Our concern actually raptured is basically the same, whether we see is simply, "What does Scripture actually teach?" it as only the watchful Christians, or as true Christians only.

of a literal rapture in AD 70 are exactly the same. The strongest arguments are the Biblical "expectation only authoritative material that we can use to make any final decisions about what did or did not occur in AD 70 is the Bible. If it says the Parousia was going to occur in AD 70, that should be enough. We shouldn't have to be convinced by history or any external arguments. If the text of scripture says something is going to occur to actually see and experience at the Parousia? (Matt. within a certain time frame, then we are bound to believe it, regardless of whether we can find external The same thing happened in the field of archaeology in Parousia. regard to the Hittites and Darius the Mede. The Bible people for a long time, yet that did not make advocates of sola scriptura doubt the veracity of the Bible. So for sincere believers, the question boils down to this: What did the NT writers believe, teach, and expect to see, hear, and experience at the Parousia? Did they expect to experience the Parousia in any conscious way? Did they expect to "know" it had occurred afterwards? Or did they expect it to happen totally in the invisible realm without being consciously aware of it in any way? It is these Biblical "expectation statements" that also need to be examined, not just the "time statements."

statements," and rightly so, because they are "sola scriptura" arguments. They are Biblical statements that need to be dealt with. So are the "expectation statements." What the "time statements" do for Preterism in general, the "expectation statements" do for the rapture view in particular. The time statements nail down the "time" of statements reveal the content and "nature" of those events in the experience of the Church.

in Matthew 25 (and in the book of Revelation) that the validated historically in the way some might have preferred, it never stopped us from seeing it as a fulfilled "fact." The "time statements" forced us to believe that confirmation. Even if we are unable to find external

Rapture advocates have been accused of teaching a rapture based only on external historical "arguments The arguments we all use to establish the necessity from silence." Not so! Scripture is the driving force. The expectation statements are Biblical arguments, just like the time statements. The time statements help statements." Scripture alone is our standard, not establish the time of fulfillment, while the expectation scripture plus history, tradition or anything else. The statements help determine the nature of fulfillment. As you study the following list of Biblical passages, find the answers to these two questions: (1) What does Jesus say is actually going to be seen and experienced by His saints at the Parousia? (2) What do the NT writers and pre-70 Christians indicate that they were expecting 16:27-28; 19:28; 24:31; John 14:2-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-54; 2 Cor. 5:1-4; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:6historical or traditional support for it, and regardless of 10; 2:1; and 1 Jn. 3:2). These texts show clearly what whether our credulity is stretched to the breaking point. the first century Church expected to experience at the

Paul said that when Christ would come to cast was the only evidence we had for the existence of these His enemies "away from His presence" and gather His saints (2 Thess. 1:6-2:1), that the saints would "marvel at Him" in His presence and in the presence of all who have believed, and Christ would be glorified by their collective presence with Him "on that day." That doesn't sound like a very silent occasion to me. Did they fail to "recognize the time of His visitation" and remain silent (as if it had not occurred). They should have been celebrating and proclaiming the fulfillment of His Parousia (if they were still around). There is a strange silence here, at the very time when we would have expected anything but silence, when they said they We Preterists have pressed Futurists with the "time would be marveling at Christ in His presence. Their silence does not match their expectations, unless they were doing those things in the heavenly realm (no longer on the earthly scene).

If all living Christians remained on earth after AD 70, why didn't some of those who saw these incredible events in AD 70 say something about it? Why the the parousia and its related events, while the expectation silence, if they were still around? Russell and the other four scholars mentioned above proposed the literal rapture to explain that silence. Silence is not Just because the Parousia may not have been a significant argument all by itself. But as Sherlock

Holmes would agree in the case of the dog that didn't **Edward E. Stevens** bark when a supposed outsider broke in, sometimes Bradford, Pennsylvania silence is significant, especially when the circumstances July, 2003 would force us to expect otherwise. Expectations https://www.preteristarchive.com demand our attention even in the case of silence, if the Bible clearly teaches us to expect something other than silence. And it does.

A reformation – indeed – a revolution of sorts is For more indepth studies of the rapture at the taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And parousia in AD 66-70, see this author's book entitled, while many who are joining in and helping promote this Expectations Demand A Rapture, and the excellent movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in series of articles written by Ian Harding. your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this new THE MILLENNIUM reformation. This "new" movement is sometimes called Russell was uncomfortable with any view of the Full Preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Millennium which ended at AD 70 (p. 514). He considered such a short duration of the millennium (40 prophecy is fulfilled.

Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible The 19th century was a time of tremendous years or less) to be "so violent and unnatural that we cannot hesitate to reject it" (p. 514). He suggested the academic vigor and research. Unfortunately, it was also millennium only began at AD 70 with a limited "first" a time of numerous speculative end times movements, resurrection and judgment (of the righteous only), such as the Millerites, that spawned the Seventh Day and is still ongoing in history and moving toward a yet Adventist church, The Millennial Dawn Bible Study future final resurrection and judgment of the rest of the movement of Charles Taze Russell, that gave rise to dead (the wicked only – p. 518). It seemed to him that the Jehovah's Witness cult, and a host of miscellaneous the Millennium was "introduced parenthetically" as other movements. Amidst that speculation, this book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously), and again in 1887 with author

an exception to the AD 70 time limits of the rest of the book (p. 514). He noted that some people (such as myself) consider attribution. The book was well known in scholarly the idea of a Millennium after AD 70 as challenging circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, the imminent time indicators throughout the book of both positive and negative. The public, however, Revelation. We would prefer a 40-year millennium seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or (AD 30-70) which stays within those time limits. Russell places a flashback to AD 70 at the end of unless they read of Russell's work in the footnotes of the commentaries.

the Millennium (Rev. 20:10), so that the white throne judgment in Rev. 20:11ff takes place in AD 70. Preterists There were exceptions. Famous evangelist Charles who take the 40-year approach cannot disallow his H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, flashback, since we insert one at the beginning of the solid research in the book, although he did not accept the "final" conclusions reached by Russell. In modern millennium.

Russell's millennium interpretation deserves careful times, this work has, and continues to impress those consideration. He acknowledged his understanding who read it. The reason is simple, the New Testament is of it might not be perfect, and held out the hope that emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ's coming succeeding generations "will soon correct what is and the end of the age for the first century generation. proved to be erroneous, and confirm what is shown to To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike be right." (p. 535) is an understatement of massive proportions.

In conclusion, I have to repeat how impressed I am Scholars have recognized and grappled with this with Russell's exegetical work here. Many thousands imminence element, seldom finding satisfactory of Bible students all over the world have been, and answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus will continue to be, blessed by this book. We send this of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy reprint forth with strong encouragement to seriously knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the end of the and objectively consider everything he has to say, and to world for his generation, and every school boy knows it "search the Scriptures daily to see whether these things did not happen. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity are so." (Acts 17:11) due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus

FOREWORD BY DON PRESTON

and the Bible writers. As a result of these "skeptical" it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in mistake, eschatology matters. their eschatological predictions.

many, the Bible has lost its power and authority. After prophets affirming that "without doubt" the end of the all, if Jesus made false predictions, can he truly be the world is near. From those groups mentioned above, to Son of God? Jesus himself said that if he did not do Hal Lindsay's failed predictions of Armageddon, Jack what the Father gave him to do - which included the judgment and the resurrection - then men are not to believe in him! If the apostles followed their Master in making false (failed) predictions of his return, can we truly trust them in regard to His promises of salvation and redemption? A failed Savior is no Savior! (I have personally corresponded with numerous individuals who had at one time, before discovering the truth of Covenant Eschatology, lost their faith because of this directly from a misguided and false eschatology. very perceived failure!)

While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the groundwork for the Premillennialism is insistent that America must modern revolution known as the preterist movement.

Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful Zionism is the driving force of much of what happens exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority.

Russell not only fully established the undeniable end" that Jesus and the N.T. writers were anticipating of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows how the traditional church has so badly missed much like religious Zionists of the day - that they can the incredible significance of the end of that Old Covenant Age.

Russell's work is a stunning rejection – and corrective -- of what the "Orthodox" historical "Creedal" church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the "divines" missed

Russell's main arguments are an effective, valid and

In the 19th, 20th and now in the 21st century As a result of that perceived failed eschatology, for Christianity has been plagued by a host of false Van Impe's repeated false prophecies, to Tim LaHave's misguided claims, to John Hagee's lamentable Four Blood Moon prognostications, to Harold Camping's embarrassing predictions, the landscape of Christianity is littered with the confident yet false predictions of the end. And as a result, believers are disappointed and disillusioned and skeptics have a field day. We live in dangerous times, and much of that danger comes

The Zionist movement's claims that Israel remains This is where Russell's work is of such importance. God's chosen people today, and that the land belongs to them "forever" (in spite of their rejection of Jesus) is a major influence on American politics. Dispensational support the exodus of Jews to Israel. And why? So that the end may come! The Temple must be rebuilt, the Man of Sin must be revealed, the Great Tribulation must take place (killing two thirds of all Jews) so that Jesus will appear on the clouds and "all Israel shall be saved." The eschatological base of modern religious in our world today- and what happens is dangerous! Modern Christianity must find a Biblical solution to this problem, and Russell's book, while not the final solution, it nonetheless provides a great spring board for finding a solution.

As I write this, the radical Islamic group ISIS is a reality of the first century imminence of "the end," he very real danger in the Middle East. They are killing powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that "the hundreds and thousands of those who refuse to convert to their brand of Islam. What is the motivation for was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the their military advances? Is it because they are simply world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age economically challenged young men who don't have good paying jobs? Such ludicrous claims ignores the truth. Their motivation is eschatology! They believehelp "hasten the day" the final battle. And that end is at hand- or so we are told!

> It is imperative that the modern church comes to grips with the false and failed eschatologies of Judaism, Zionism and Islam- and Christianity. Russell's book is a great place to begin to find that solution.

Russell could not find for himself a fulfilled view of the Millennium, and therefore still affirmed a future fulfilment of Revelation 20. In spite of that futurist element of "The Parousia" this book lays the groundwork for the full preterist (fulfilled) view of eschatology. Many - if not most - who have read this book will attest to this. This book can be a great tool for equipping the modern church to confront the false eschatologies that dominate the day and threaten world peace.

In spite of the one futurist element of Revelation that Russell posited, his work stands today as a tremendously influential work that will offer the reader a wealth of evidence to counter the skeptics and nay sayers who reject Jesus and the Bible. Acceptance of Russell's persuasive arguments and exegesis will lay to rest the fear inspiring, constant barrage by the tel-evangelists claiming that the end is near.

There are those, the present writer included, who have written explanations for what perplexed Russellthe idea of a forty year millennium. With that said, I urge serious Bible students to carefully and thoughtfully read this book. When you do, you will, most likely, join the modern revolution to bring sanity to the entire study of eschatology, and perhaps, just perhaps, help our world to finally find solutions to the constant fighting and pain caused by false eschatology.

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NOINE AttRatise on the Mulnelde of the Beast defail
be struck with the prominence given by the evangeli NOTE B. Dr. J. M. Macaonala's Life and Writings of and the apostles to the PAROUSIA, or coming of DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE Lord. That event is the great theme of New Testame Supplementary Note prophecy. There is scarcely a single book, from t
After of of t. Matthew to the Apocalypse of St. John,
which it is not set forth as the glorious promise of G Dollinger On The Man of Sin and the blessed hope of the church. It was frequently a Jdie Baby for Ott The Apacalypes of the set was incessantly ke
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and it was firmly believed and eagerly expected by the churches of the primitive age.
The Transolution denied that there is a remarka
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in relation to the Parousia and that of Christia Reviewed by: C.H. Spurgeon now. That glorious hope, to which all eyes and hea in the apostolic age were eagerly turned, has alm disappeared from the view of modern believe Whatever may be the theoretical optimons ex- press A Body of Doctrinal Divinity. III JU Whatever may be the theoretical optimons ex- press A Body of Doctrinal Divinity, VVI in symbols and creeds, it must in candour be admitt A Body of Doctrinal Divinity, Book VII that the second coming of Christ has all but ceased A Body of Practical Divinity, Book I, II be a living and practical Divinity, Book I, II be a living and practical Divinity, Book I, II be a second coming of Christ has all but ceased A Body Of Practical Divinity, Book I, II be a living and practical Divinity and the second coming that the second coming of Christ has all but ceased A Body Of Practical Divinity, Book I, II be a living and practical Divinity and the second coming of the that the second coming of Christ has all but ceased A Body Of Practical Divinity and the second coming of the that the second coming of the second in explanation the Cause of God And Truth, Part II have too confidently undertaken to be interpreters The Cause of God And Truth, Part II have too confidently undertaken to be interpreters The Cause of God And Truth, Part II have too confidently undertaken to be interpreters the Cause of God And Truth, Part II have too confidently undertaken to be interpreters the Cause of God And Truth, Part II have too confidently undertaken to be interpreters the Cause of God And Truth, Part II have too confidently undertaken to be interpreters the Cause of God And Truth, Part II have too confidently undertaken to be interpreters the Cause of God And Truth, Part II have too confidently undertaken to be interpreters the Everificating Covenant and the predictions have no doubt deterred reversed and sober conned and the men from entering upon the the second the the second the the second
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Although the nature of the inquiry necessitates ure somewhat frequent reference to the original of the M_{ew}^{20} ent Testament, and to the laws of grammatical construction the and interpretation, it has been the object of the Author her to render this work as popular as possible, and such as ism any man of ordinary education and intelligence may the read with ease and interest. The Bible is a book for or every man, and the Author has not written for scholars and critics only, but for the many who are deeply and interested in Biblical interpretation, and who thinks lelv with Locke, 'an impartial search into the true meaning ght of the sacred Scripture the best employment of all the me time they have.' (2) It will be a sufficient recompense extbot Dxpl Kn Ptbstugh Amhør) ot justify, the consigning his labour if he succeeds in elucidating in any degree of then whole subject at Babeisegion of hopelessly obscure those teachings of divine revelation which have been an Biefsork bergendeher Fiell obscured by traditional prejudices, or misinterpreted JOSEPHUSeyThe is Warslof a Theastein's explanation. It by an erroneous exegesis.

deserves consideration whether there may not be a 1878. fundamental difference between the relation of the Footnotes church of the apostolic age to the predicted Parousia and 1. Donier's tractate, De Oratione Christi the relation to that event sustained by subsequent ages. Eschatologica, p. 1. The first Christians undoubtedly believed themselves to 2. Locke, Notes on Ephesians i. 10. be standing on the verge of a great catastrophe, and we know what intensity and enthusiasm the expectation of the almost immediate coming of the Lord inspired; but

DIX Tip iparing tbe shown that Christians now are similarly tio. 18 aced, there would be a want of truth and reading in affecting the eager anticipation and hope of the primitive church. The same event cannot be imminent at two different periods separated by nearly $\frac{238}{100}$ ent thousand years. There must, therefore, be some grave the misconception on the part of those who maintain that in the Christian church of to-day occupies precisely the bod same relation, and should maintain the same attitude, and towards the 'coming of the Lord' as the church in 240 ept days of St. Paul. les;

The present volume is an attempt, in a candid and $\frac{240}{2}$ the reverent spirit, to clear up this misconception, an240 ascertain the true meaning of the Word of God on a ble subject which holds so conspicuous a place in $\frac{1}{243}$ ans teaching of our Lord and His apostles. It is the fruit of ans many years of patient investigation, and the Author has PUBLICATIONS inst spared no pains to test to the utmost the validity of his conclusions. It has been his single aim to ascertain what ers. saith the Scripture, and his one desire to be governed 45sed a loyal submission to its authority. The ideal of Biblical ted interpretation which he has kept before him is that $\frac{24}{36}$ to well expressed by a German theologian - 'Explicatio plana non tortuosa, facilis non violenta, eademque et of exegeticce et Chistanae conscientium pariter arridens. vho (1)of

INTRODUCTORY THE LAST WORDS OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

PREFACE

The Book Of Malachi

The canon of the Old Testament Scriptures closes in a very different manner from what might have been expected after the splendid future revealed to the covenant nation in the visions of Isaiah. None of the prophets is the bearer of a heavier burden than the last.

Malachi is the prophet of doom. It would seem that the nation, by its incorrigible obstinacy and disobedience, had forfeited the divine favour, and proved itself not only unworthy, but incapable, of the promised glories. The departure of the prophetic spirit was full of evil omen, and seemed to intimate that the Lord was about to forsake the land. Accordingly, the light of Old Testament prophecy goes out amidst clouds and thick darkness. The Book of Malachi is one long and terrible impeachment of the nation. The Lord Himself is the accuser, and sustains every charge against the guilty people by the clearest proof. The long indictment includes sacrilege, hypocrisy, contempt of God, conjugal infidelity, perjury, apostasy, blasphemy; while, on the other hand, the people have the effrontery to repudiate the accusation, and to plead ' not guilty ' to every charge. They appear to have reached that stage of moral insensibility when men call evil good, and good evil, and are fast ripening for judgment.

Accordingly, *coming judgment* is 'the burden if the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.'

Chap. iii. 5: 'I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.,

Chap. iv. 1: 'For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven [furnace]: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.'

That this is no vague and unmeaning threat is evident from the distinct and definite terms in which it is announced. Everything points to an approaching crisis in the history of the nation, when God would inflict judgment upon His rebellious people. 'The day, was coming - 'the day that shall burn as a furnace;, 'the great and terrible day of the Lord., That this 'day' refers

to a certain period, and a specific event, does not admit of question. It had already been foretold in precisely the same words by the Prophet Joel (ii. 31): 'The great and terrible day of the Lord;, and we shall meet with a distinct reference to it in the address of the Apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 20). But the period is further more precisely defined by the remarkable statement of Malachi in chap. iv. 5: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.' The explicit declaration of our Lord that the predicted Elijah was no other than His own forerunner, John the Baptist (Matt. xi. 14), enables us to determine the time and the event referred to as 'the great and terrible day of the Lord., It must be sought at no great distance from the period of John the Baptist. That is to say, the allusion is to the judgment of the Jewish nation, when their city and temple were destroyed, and the entire fabric of the Mosaic polity was dissolved.

It deserves to be noticed, that both Isaiah and Malachi predict the appearance of John the Baptist as the forerunner of our Lord, but in very different terms. Isaiah represents him as the herald of the coming *Saviour*: 'The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God' (Isa. xl. 3). Malachi represents John as the precursor of the coming Judge: 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts' (Mal. iv. 1).

That this is a coming to judgment, is manifest from the words which immediately follow, describing tile alarm and dismay caused by His appearing: 'But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth ?' (Mal. iii. 2.)

It cannot be said that this language is appropriate to the first coming of Christ; but it is highly appropriate to His second coming. There is a distinct allusion to this passage in Rev. vi. 17, where 'the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains,' etc., are represented as 'hiding from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from tile wrath of the Lamb, and saying, *The great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*'. Nothing can be more clear than that the 'day of his coming', in Mal. iii. 1 is the same as 'the great and dreadful day of the Lord' in chap. iv. 5, and that both answer to 'the great day of his wrath' in Rev. vi. 17. We conclude, therefore, that the prophet Malachi speaks, not of the first advent of our Lord, but 21

of the second. faithful. Even Malachi intimates that the door of mercy This is further proved by the significant fact, that, is not yet shut. If the nation would return unto God, He in chap. iii. 1, the Lord is represented as 'suddenly would return unto them. If they would make restitution coming to *his temple*.' To understand this as referring to of that which they had sacrilegiously withheld from the presentation of the infant Saviour in the temple by the service of the temple, He would repay them with His parents, or to His in the courts of the temple, or to blessings more than they could receive. They might His of the buyers and sellers from the sacred edifice, is even yet be a 'delightsome land,' the envy of all nations. surely a most inadequate explanation. Those were not At the eleventh hour, if the mission of the second Elijah occasions of terror and dismay, such as is implied in the should succeed in winning the hearts of the people, tile second verse, 'But who may abide the day of his coming impending catastrophe might after all be averted (chap. ?' The expression is, however, vividly suggestive of His iii. 3, 16-18; iv. 2, 3, 5, 6). final and judicial visitation of His Father's house, when Nevertheless, there is a foregone conclusion that it was to be 'left desolate,' according to His prediction. expostulation and threatening will be unavailing. The last words sound like the knell of doom (Mal. iv. 6): The temple was the centre of the nation's life, the visible symbol of the covenant between God and His people; it 'Lest I come and smite the land with a *curse!*' was the spot where 'judgment must begin,' and which The full import of this ominous declaration is not was to be overtaken by 'sudden destruction.' Taking, at once apparent. To the Hebrew mind, it suggested the then, all these particulars into account, the 'sudden most terrible fate that could befall a city or a people. The coming of the Lord to his temple, the dismay attending 'curse' was the anathema, or cherem, which denoted that 'the day of his coming,' His coming as 'a refiner's fire,' the person or thing on which the malediction was laid His coming ' near to them to judgment,' 'the day coming was given over to utter destruction. We have an example that shall burn as a furnace, 'burning up the wicked of the cherem, or ban, in the curse pronounced upon root and branch,' and the appearing of John the Baptist, Jericho (Josh. vi. 17); and a more particular statement of the second Elijah, previous to the arrival of 'the great the ruin which it involved, in the Book of Deuteronomy and dreadful day of the Lord, it is impossible to resist (chap. xiii. 12-18). The city was to be smitten with the the conclusion that the prophet here foretells that great edge of the sword, every living thing in it to be put to national catastrophe in which the temple, the city, and death, the spoil was not to be touched, all was accursed the nation, perished together; and that this is designated, and unclean, it was to be wholly consumed with fire, and

'the day of his coming.' the place given up to perpetual desolation. Hengstenberg However strange, therefore, it may seem, it is remarks: 'All the things that can possibly be thought of undoubtedly the fact that the first coming of our Lord is are included in this one word;' (2) and he quotes the not alluded to by Malachi. This is distinctly acknowledged comment of Vitringa on this passage: 'There can be no by Hengstenberg, who observes: 'Malachi passes by doubt that God intended to say, that He would give up the first coming of Christ in humiliation altogether to certain destruction, both the obstinate transgressors and leaves the interval between his forerunner end the of the law and also their city, and that they should suffer judgment of Jerusalem a perfect blank. (1) This is to be the extreme penalty of His justice, as heads devoted to accounted for by the fact, that the main object of the God, without any hope of favour or forgiveness. prophecy is to predict national destruction and not Such is the fearful malediction suspended over the national deliverance. land of Israel by the prophetic Spirit, in the moment of

prophecy is to predict national destruction and not national deliverance. At the same time, while judgment and wrath are the predominant elements of the prophecy, features of a different character are not wholly absent. The day of wrath is also a day of redemption. There is a faithful remnant, even among the apostate nation: there are gold and silver to be refined and jewels to be gathered, as well as dross to be rejected, and stubble to be burned. There are sons to be spared, as well as enemies to be destroyed; and the day which brought dismay and darkness to the wicked, would see 'the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings' on the

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period of the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Interval Between Malachi And John The Baptist

The four centuries which intervene between the conclusion of the Old Testament and the commencement of the New are a blank in Scripture history. We know, however, from the Books of the Maccabees and the writings of Josephus, that it was an eventful period in the Jewish annals. Judea was by turns the vassal of the great monarchies by which it was surrounded - Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria, and Rome, - with an interval of independence under the Maccabean princes. But though the nation during this period passed through great suffering, and produced some illustrious examples of patriotism and of piety, we look in vain for any divine oracle, or any inspired messenger, to declare the word of the Lord. Israel might truly say: 'We see not our signs, there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long' (Psa. lxxiv. 9). Yet those four centuries were not without a powerful influence on the character of the nation. During this period, synagogues were established throughout the land, and the knowledge of the Scriptures was widely extended. The great religious schools of the Pharisees and Sadducees arose, both professing to be expounders and defenders of the law of Moses. Vast numbers of Jews settled in the great cities of Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, carrying with them everywhere the worship of the synagogue and the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. Above all, the nation cherished in its inmost heart the hope of a coming deliverer, a scion of the royal house of David, who should be the theocratic king, the liberator of Israel from Gentile domination, whose reign was to be so happy and glorious that it might deserve to be called 'the kingdom of heaven.' But, for the most part, the popular conception of the coming king was earthly and carnal. There had not in four hundred years been any improvement in the moral condition of the people, and, between the formalism of the Pharisees and the scepticism of the Sadducees, true religion had sunk to its lowest ebb. There was still, however, a faithful remnant who had truer conceptions of the kingdom of heaven, and 'who looked for redemption in Israel.' As the time drew near, there were indications of the return of the prophetic spirit, and premonitions that the promised deliverer was at hand. Simeon received assurance that before his death ho should see 'the Lord's anointed;' a like intimation appears to have been made to the aged prophetess Anna. Such revelations, it is reasonable to

the ruin which overwhelmed the Jewish nation at the suppose, must have awakened eager expectation in the hearts of many, and prepared them for the cry which soon after was heard in the wilderness of Judea: 'Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand !' A prophet had again risen up in Israel, and 'the Lord had visited His people.

Footnotes

1. See Hengst. Nature of Prophecy. Christ.

2. Hengst. Christology, vol. iv. p 227

3. The meaning of this passage (Mal. iv. 6) is obscured by the unfortunate translation earth instead of land. The Hebrew ch,a, like the Greek yn, is very frequently employed in a restricted sense. The allusion in the text plainly is to the land of Israel. -See Hengst. Christology, vol. iv. p 224

Note A.-Reuss on the Number of the Beast

Note B.-Dr. J. M. Macdonald's 'Life and Writings of St. John' -Bishop Warburton on 'our Lord's Prophecy on the Mount of Olives,' and on 'the Kingdom of Heaven'.

PART I

THE PAROUSIA IN THE GOSPELS

The Parousia Predicted By John The Baptist

THERE is nothing more distinctly affirmed in the New Testament than the identity of John the Baptist with the wilderness-herald of Isaiah and the Elijah of Malachi. How well the description of John agrees with that of Elijah is evident at a glance. Each was austere and ascetic in his manner of life; each was a zealous reformer of religion; each was a stern reprover of sin. The times in which they lived were singularly alike. The nation at both periods was degenerate and corrupt. Elijah had his Ahab, John his Herod. It is no objection to this identification of John as the predicted Elijah, that the Baptist himself disclaimed the name when the priests and Levites from Jerusalem demanded: 'Art thou Elias ?' (John i. 21.) The Jews expected the reappearance of the literal Elijah, and John's reply was addressed to that mistaken opinion. But his true claim to the designation is expressly affirmed in the announcement made by the angel to his father Zacharias: 'He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias' (Luke i. 17); as well as by the declarations of our Lord: 'If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come' (Matt., xi, 14); 'I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist' (Matt., xvii, 10-13). John was the

second Elias, and exhaustively fulfilled the predictions the Lord, the same coming judgment. of Isaiah and Malachi concerning him. To dream of an But what more especially deserves remark is the 'Elijah of the future,' therefore, is virtually to discredit evident nearness of the crisis which John predicts. 'The the express statement of the word of God, and rests wrath to come' is a very inadequate rendering of the upon no Scripture warrant whatever. language of the prophet. (2) It should be 'the coming We have already adverted to the twofold aspect wrath;' that is, not merely future, but impending. 'The of the mission of John presented by the prophets wrath to come' may be indefinitely distant, but 'the Isaiah and Malachi. The same diversity is seen in the coming wrath' is imminent. As Alford justly remarks: New Testament descriptions of the second Elias. The 'John is now speaking in the true character of a prophet benignant aspect of his mission which is presented by foretelling the wrath soon to be poured on the Jewish Isaiah, is also recognized in the words of the angel by nation.' (3) So with the other representations in the whom his birth was foretold, as already quoted; and in address of the Baptist; all is indicative of the swift the inspired utterance of his father Zacharias: 'Thou, approach of destruction. 'Already the axe was lying child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for at the root of the trees.' The 'winnowing shovel' was actually in the hands of the Husbandman; the sifting thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by process was about to begin. These warnings of John the the remission of their sins, (Luke i. 76, 77). We find Baptist are not the vague and indefinite exhortations to the same gracious aspect in the opening verses of the repentance, addressed to men in all ages, which they Gospel of St. John: 'The same came for a witness, to bear are sometimes assumed to be; they are urgent, burning witness of the Light, that all men through him might words, having a specific and present bearing upon the believe, (John i. 7). then existing generation, the living men to whom he But the other aspect of his mission is no less distinctly brought the message of God. The Jewish nation was recognized in the Gospels. He is represented, not only now upon its last trial; the second Elijah had come as as the herald of the coming Saviour, but of the coming the precursor of 'the great and dreadful day of the Lord:' Judge. Indeed, his own recorded utterances speak far if they rejected his warnings, the doom predicted by more of wrath than of salvation, and are conceived Malachi would surely and speedily follow; 'I will come and smite the land with the curse.' Nothing can be more more in the spirit of the Elijah of Malachi than of the obvious than that the catastrophe to which John alludes wilderness-herald of Isaiah. He warns the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the multitudes that crowded to is particular, national, local, and imminent, and history his baptism, to 'flee from the coming wrath.' He tells tells us that within the period of the generation that them that 'the axe is laid unto the root of the trees.' He listened to his warning cry, 'the wrath came upon them

announces the coming of One mightier than himself, to the uttermost. 'whose fan is in his hand, and who will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, Footnotes but who will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire' 1. Christol.. vol. iv. p.. 232. (Matt. iii. 12). 2. thj melloushj orghj

It is impossible not to be struck with the 3. Greek Test. in loc. correspondence between the language of the Baptist THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD CONCERNING THE and that of Malachi. As Hengstenberg observes: 'The PAROUSIA IN THE SYNOPTICAL GOSPELS prophecy of Malachi is throughout the text upon which The close of John the Baptist's ministry, in John comments." (1) In both, the coming of the Lord is consequence of his imprisonment by Herod Antipas, described as a day of wrath; both speak of His coming marks a new departure in the ministry of our Lord. with fire to purify and try, with fire to burn and consume Previous to that time, indeed, He had taught the people, Both speak of a time of discrimination and separation wrought miracles, gained adherents, and obtained between the righteous and the wicked, the gold and the a wide popularity; but after that event, which may be dross, the wheat and the chaff; and both speak of the utter regarded as indicating the failure of John's mission, our destruction of the chaff, or stubble, with unquenchable Lord retired into Galilee, and there entered upon a new fire. These are not fortuitous resemblances: the two phase of His public ministry. We are told that 'from that predictions are the counterpart one of the other, and time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the can only refer to the self-same event, the same 'day of

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kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Matt. iv. 17). These are certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, the precise terms in which the preaching of John the Baptist is described (Matt. iii. 2). Both our Lord and His forerunner called 'the nation to repentance,' and announced the approach of the 'kingdom of heaven.' It follows that John could not mean by the phrase, 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand, merely that the Messiah was about to appear, for when Christ did appear, He made the same announcement. 'The kingdom of heaven is *at hand*.' In like manner, when the twelve disciples were sent forth on their first evangelistic mission, they behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the were commanded to preach, not that the kingdom of heaven was come, but that it was at hand (Matt. x. 7). Moreover, that the kingdom did not come in our Lord's the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, time, nor at the day of Pentecost, is evident from the fact that in His prophetic discourse on the Mount of Olives our Lord gave His disciples certain tokens by which they might know that the kingdom of God was nigh at I will return into my house from whence I came out; hand (Luke xxi. 31).

We find, therefore, the following conclusions plainly deducible from our Lord's teaching:

kingdom of heaven, or of God,' was proclaimed by Him to be nigh.

2. That this consummation, though near, was not to take place in His own lifetime, nor yet for some years after His death.

expect to witness its arrival.

But the whole subject of 'the kingdom of heaven' must be reserved for fuller discussion at a future period.

Prediction Of Coming Wrath Upon That Generation

preaching of our Lord and that of John the Baptist. Both time of judgment which should overtake the existing generation, on account of their rejection of the warnings and invitations of divine mercy. As the Baptist spoke of important age? 'the coming wrath,' so our Lord with equal distinctness forewarned the people of 'coming judgment' He upbraided 'the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not, and predicted that a heavier woe would overtake them than had fallen upon Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrha (Matt. xi. 20-24). That all this points to a catastrophe which was not remote, but near, and which would actually overtake the existing generation, appears evident from the express statements of Jesus.

saving, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas and, south shall rise up in the judgment with generation, and condemn it, for she came from the uttermost parts of a greater than Solomon is here. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, and when he is come he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they 1. That a great crisis, or consummation, called 'the enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

This passage is of great importance in ascertaining the true meaning of the phrase 'this generation' [genea]. It can only refer, in this place, to the people of Israel 3. That His disciples, or at least some of them, might then living- the existing generation. No commentator has ever proposed to call 'genea' here the Jewish race in all ages. Our Lord was accustomed to speak of His contemporaries as *this generation*:

Whereunto shall I liken this generation?'- that is, the men of that day who would listen neither to There is another point of resemblance between the His forerunner nor to Himself' (Matt. xi. 16; Luke vii. 31). Even commentators like Stier, who contend gave the clearest intimations of the near approach of a for the rendering of 'genea' by race or lineage in other passages, admit that the reference in these words is 'to the generation living in that then extant and most

(1) So in the passage before us there can be no controversy respecting the application of the words exclusively to the then existing generation, the contemporaries of Christ. Of the aggravated and enormous wickedness of that period our Lord here testifies. The generation has just before been addressed by Him in the very words of the Baptist- ' O brood of vipers' (ver. 34). Its guilt is declared to surpass that of the heathen; it is likened to a demoniac, from whom the unclean spirit had departed for a while, but returned Matt. xii. 38-46 (compare Luke xi. 16, 24-36): 'Then in greater force than before, accompanied by seven

other spirits more wicked than himself, so that 'the Jewish people, we have the historical attestation of the last state of that man is worse than that first. We have exhaustive fulfilment of this prophecy. in the testimony of Josephus a striking confirmation Further Allusions To The Coming Wrath of our Lord's description of the moral condition of that generation. 'As it were impossible to relate their Luke xiii. 1-9 : 'There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate enormities in detail, I shall briefly state that no other had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering city ever endured similar calamities, and no generation said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were ever existed more prolific in crime. They confessed sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered themselves to be, what they were- slaves, and the very such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye dregs of society, the spurious and polluted spawn of the shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom nation. the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that (2) 'And here I cannot refrain from expressing they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? what my feelings suggest. I am of opinion, that had the Romans deferred the punishment of these wretches, I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise either the earth would have opened and swallowed up perish.

How vividly our Lord apprehended the approaching calamities of the nation, and how clear and distinct His warnings were, may be inferred from this passage. The massacre of some Galileans who had gone up to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover, either by the command, or with the connivance of the Roman (3) 'That period had somehow become so prolific governor; and the sudden destruction of eighteen persons by the fall of a tower near the pool of Siloam, were incidents which formed the topics of conversation among the people at the time. Our Lord declares that the victims of these calamities were not exceptionally wicked, but that a *like fate* would overtake the very (4) Such was the fearful condition to which the persons now talking about them, unless they repented. The point of His observation, which is often overlooked, prophetic words. The climax had not yet been reached, lies in the *similarity* of the threatened destruction. It is not 'ye also shall all perish,' but, 'ye shall all perish in 'the same manner'. That our Lord had in view the final ruin, which was about to overwhelm Jerusalem and the nation, can hardly be doubted. The analogy between the cases is real and striking. It was at the (5) Is not this an adequate and complete fulfilment feast of the Passover that the population of Judea had crowded into Jerusalem, and were there cooped in by the legions of Titus. Josephus tells us how, in the final agony of the siege, the blood of the officiating priests was shed at the altar of sacrifice. The Roman soldiers were the executioners of the divine judgment; and as temple and tower fell to the ground, they buried in their ruins many a hapless victim of impenitence and unbelief. It is satisfactory to find both Alford and Stier recognising the historical allusion in this passage. The former remarks: the force of which is lost in the English version "likewise," should be rendered "in like manner," as indeed the Jewish people did perish by the sword of the Romans.'

the city, or it would have been swept away by a deluge, or was the contagion, both in public and private, and such towards God, and of injustice towards their neighbors.' nation was hastening when our Lord uttered these returned to his house, but he was on the way. As Stier remarks, 'In the period between the ascension of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem, especially towards the end of it, this nation shows itself, one might say, as if possessed by seven thousand devils. of our Saviour's prediction? Have we the slightest warrant or need for saying that it means something else, or something more, than this? What presence is there for supposing a further and future fulfilment of His words? distinctly to an approaching catastrophe about to befall that generation? Surely we show most reverence to the Word of God when we accept implicitly its obvious teaching, and refuse the unwarranted and merely drawn from their own fancy. We conclude, then, that, in the notorious profligacy of that age, and the signal

have shared the same destruction as the land of Sodom. For it produced a race far more ungodly than those who were thus visited. For through the desperate madness of these men the whole nation was involved in their ruin. in iniquity of every description amongst the Jews, that no work of evil was left unperpetrated; ... so universal the emulation to surpass each other in acts of impiety but it was full in view. The unclean spirit had not yet Is it not a virtual discrediting of the prophecy to seek any other than the plain and obvious sense which points so human speculations which critics and theologians have calamities which before its close overwhelmed the Impending Fate Of The Jewish Nation

THE PAROSIA IN THE GOSPELS

The Parable of the Barren Fig-tree

Luke xiii. 6-9: 'He spake also this parable: A certain man had a figtree planted in his vineyard: and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down?

The same prophetic significance is manifest in this parable, which is almost the counterpart of that in Isa. v., both in form and meaning. The true interpretation is so obvious as to render explanation scarcely necessary. Its bearing on the people of Israel is most distinct and direct, more especially when viewed in connection with the preceding warnings. Israel is the fruitless tree, long cultivated, but yielding no return to the owner. It was now on its last trial: the axe, as John the Baptist had declared, was laid to the root of the tree; but the fatal blow was delayed at the intercession of mercy. The Saviour was even then at His gracious work of nurture and culture; a little longer, and the decree would go forth- 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground ?'

No doubt there are general principles in this, as in other parables, applicable to all nations and all ages; but we must not lose sight of its original and primary reference to the Jewish people. Stier and Alford seem to lose themselves in searching for recondite and mystical meanings in the minor details of the imagery; but Neander gives a luminous explanation of its true import: 'As the fruitless tree, failing to realize the aim of its being, was destroyed, so the theocratic nation, for the same reason, was to be overtaken, after long forbearance, by the judgments of God, and shut out from His kingdom.

End Of The Age, Or Close Of Jewish Dispensation

Parables of the Tares, and of the Drag-net

Matt. xiii. 36-47: 'Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, he that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world [age]; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned

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in the fire; so shall it be at the end of this world [age]. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a [the] furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.... Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was east into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to the shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world [age]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

We find in the passages here quoted an example of one of those erroneous renderings which have done much to confuse and mislead the ordinary readers of our English version. It is probable, that ninety-nine in every hundred understand by the phrase, 'the end of the world, the close of human history, and the destruction of the material earth. They would not imagine that the ' world ' in ver. 38 and the 'world' in ver. 39 40, are totally different words, with totally different meanings. Yet such is the fact. Koinos in ver. 38 is rightly translated world, and refers to the world of men, but aeon in ver. 39, 40, refers to a *period of time*, and should be rendered age or epoch. Lange translates it aeon. It is of the greatest importance to understand correctly the two meaning of this word, and of the phrase 'the end of the aeon, or age.' aion is, as we have said, a period of time, or an age. It is exactly equivalent to the Latin word aevum, which is merely *aion* in a Latin dress; and the phrase, (Greek- coming), translated in our English version, 'the end of the world,' should be, 'the close of the age.' Tittman observes: (Greek - coming), as it occurs in the New Testament, does not denote the end, but rather the consummation, of the *aeon*, which is to be followed by a new age. So in Matt. xiii. 39, 40, 49; xxiv. 3; which last passage, it is to be feared, may be misunderstood in applying it to the destruction of the world.

(8) It was the belief of the Jews that the Messiah would introduce a new aeon: and this new aeon, or age, they called 'the kingdom of heaven.' The existing aeon: therefore, was the Jewish dispensation, which was now drawing to its close; and how it would terminate our Lord impressively shows in these parables. It is indeed surprising that expositors should have failed to recognize in these solemn predictions the reproduction

and reiteration of the words of Malachi and of John the in the kingdom of God; and you yourselves thrust out. Baptist. Here we find the same final separation between However applicable to men in general under the gospel the righteous and the wicked; the same purging of the such language may be, it is plain that it had a direct and floor; the same gathering of the wheat into the garner; specific bearing upon the contemporaries of our Lord the same burning of the chaff [tares, stubble] in the - the generation that witnessed His miracles and heard fire. Can there be a doubt that it is to the same act of His parables; and that it has a relation to them such as it judgment, the same period of time, the same historical can have to none else. event, that Malachi, John, and our Lord refer ? We find at the conclusion of the parable of the tares

But we have seen that John the Baptist predicted a an impressive nota bene, drawing special attention to the judgment which was then impending - a catastrophe so instruction therein contained: 'Who hath ears to hear, near that already the axe was lying at the root of the let him hear.' We may take occasion from this to make a trees,- in accordance with the prophecy of Malachi, that remark on the vast importance of a true conception of 'the great and dreadful day of the Lord' was to follow the period at which our Lord and His apostles taught. on the coming of the second Elijah. We are therefore This is indispensable to the correct understanding of brought to the conclusion, that this discrimination the New Testament doctrine respecting the 'kingdom between the righteous and the wicked, this gathering of God,' the 'end of the age,' and the 'coming aeon,' of the wheat into the garner, and burning of the tares or ' world to come. That period was near the close of in the furnace of fire, refer to the same catastrophe, the Jewish dispensation. The Mosaic economy, as it is viz., the wrath which came upon that very generation, called - the system of laws and institutions given to the when Jerusalem became literally 'a furnace of fire,' and nation by God Himself, and which had existed for more the aeon of Judaism came to a close in 'the great and than forty generations,- was about to be superseded dreadful day of the Lord. and to pass away. Already the last generation that was This conclusion is supported by the fact, that there to possess the land was upon the scene,- the last and is a close connection between this great judicial epoch also the worst, -the child and heir of its predecessors. and the coming of 'the kingdom of heaven.' Our Lord The long period, during which Jehovah had exhausted represents the separation of the righteous and the all the methods which divine wisdom and love could wicked as the characteristic of the great consummation devise for the culture and reformation of Israel, was which is called 'the kingdom of God.' But the kingdom about to come to an end. It was to close disastrously. The was declared to be *at hand*. It follows, therefore, that the wrath, long pent up and restrained, was to burst forth parables before us relate, not to a remote event still in and overwhelm *that generation*. Its 'last day' was to be the future, but to one which in our Saviour's time was a dies irae ' the great and terrible day of the Lord.' This is 'the end of the age,' so often referred to by our Lord, near. An additional argument in favour of this view is and constantly predicted by His apostles. Already they derived from the consideration that our Lord, in His stood within the penumbra of that tremendous crisis, explanation of the parable of the tares, speaks of *Himself* which was every day advancing nearer and nearer, and as the sower of the good seed: 'He that soweth the good which was at last to come suddenly, 'as a thief in the seed is the Son of man.' It is to His own personal ministry night.' This is the true explanation of those constant and its results that He refers, and we must therefore exhortations to vigilance, patience, and hope, which regard the parable as having a special bearing upon abound in the apostolic epistles. They lived expecting a His contemporaries. It is in perfect harmony with His consummation which was to arrive in their own time, solemn warning in Luke xiii. 26, where He describes the and which they might witness with their own eyes. This condemnation of those who were privileged to enjoy fact lies on the very face of the New Testament writings; *His personal presence and ministrations*, the pretenders it is the key to the interpretation of much that would to discipleship, who were tares and not wheat. 'Then otherwise be obscure and unintelligible, and we shall shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in see in the progress of this investigation how consistently thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But this view is supported by the whole tenor of the New

he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; Testament Scriptures. depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall The Coming Of The Son Of Man (The Parousia) be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, In The Life Time Of The Apostles

Matt. x. 23.

another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come?

In this passage we find the earliest distinct mention of that great event which we shall find so frequently alluded to henceforth by our Lord and His apostles, viz., His coming again, or the Parousia. It may indeed be a question, as we shall presently see, whether this passage properly belongs to this portion of the gospel history. (9) But waiving for the moment this question, let us inquire what the *coming* here spoken of is. Can it mean, as Lange suggests, that Jesus was to follow so quickly on the heels of His messengers in their evangelistic circuit as to overtake them before it was completed? Or does it refer, as Stier and Alford think, to two different comings, separated from each other by thousands of years: the one comparatively near, the other indefinitely remote? Or shall we, with Michaelis and Meyer, accept the plain and obvious meaning which the words themselves suggest? The interpretation of Lange is surely inadmissible. Who can doubt that 'the coming of the Son of man' is here, what it is everywhere else, the formula by which the Parousia, the second coming of Christ, is expressed? This phrase has a definite and constant signification, as much as His crucifixion, or His resurrection, and admits of no other interpretation in this place. But may it not have a double reference: first, to the impending judgment of Jerusalem; and, secondly, to the final destruction of the world,- the former being regarded as symbolical of the latter? Alford contends for the double meaning, and is severe upon those who hesitate to accept it. He tells us what He thinks Christ *meant*; but on the other hand we have to consider what He said. Are the advocates of a double sense sure that He meant more than He said? Look at His words. Can anything be more specific and definite as to persons, place, time, and circumstance, than this prediction of our Lord? It is to the *twelve* that he speaks; it is the cities of *Israel* which they are to evangelize; the subject is His own speedy *coming*; and the *time* so near, that before their work is complete His coming will take place. But if we are to be told that this is not the meaning, nor the half of it, and that it includes another coming, to other evangelists, in other ages, and in other lands - a coming which, after eighteen centuries, is still future, and perhaps remote,then the question arises: What may not Scripture mean? The grammatical sense of words no longer suffices for interpretation; Scripture is a conundrum to be guessedan oracle that utters ambiguous responses; and no

man can be sure, without a special revelation, that he 'But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into understands what he reads. We are disposed, therefore, to agree with Meyer, that this twofold reference is 'nothing but a forced and unnatural evasion,' and the words simply mean what they' say - that before the apostles completed their life-work of evangelizing the land of Israel, the coming of the Lord should take place.

> This is the view of the passage which is taken by Dr. E. Robinson.(10) 'The coming alluded to is the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jewish nation; and the meaning is, that the apostles would barely have time, before the catastrophe came, to go over the land warning the people to save themselves from the doom of an untoward generation; so that they could not well afford to tarry in any locality after its inhabitants had heard and rejected the message."

The Parousia To Take Place Within The Lifetime

Of Some Of The Disciples

This remarkable declaration is of the greatest importance in this discussion, and may be regarded as the key to the right interpretation of the New Testament doctrine of the Parousia. Though it cannot be said that there are any special difficulties in the language, it has greatly perplexed the commentators, who are much divided in their explanations. It is surely unnecessary to ask what is the coming of the Son of *man* here predicted. To suppose that it refers merely to the glorious manifestation of Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, though an hypothesis which has great names to support it, is so palpably inadequate as an interpretation that it scarcely requires refutation. The same remark will apply to the comments of Dr. Lange, who supposes it to have been partially fulfilled by the resurrection of Christ. His exegesis is so curious an illustration of the shifts to which the advocates of a double- sense theory of interpretation are compelled to resort to, as to deserve quotation.'In our opinion,' he says,

Matt. xvi. 27,28	Mark viii. 38; ix.1.	Luke ix. 26,27.
'For the Son of man shall' come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward man according to his works. 'Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of', till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.'	Whosoever therefore shall be' ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful every generation; of him also shall also the son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily I' say unto you. That there be some of them that stand here, which not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom God come with power.'	For whosoeve shall be ashamed o me and of my words of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall com in his own glory and in his Father's, and o the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be som standing here, which shall not taste o death till,they see th kingdom of God
1		1

Alford and Stier more reasonably understand the passage as referring 'to the destruction of Jerusalem and the full manifestation of the kingdom of Christ by the annihilation of the Jewish polity,' though both embarrass and confuse their interpretation by the hypothesis of an occult and ulterior allusion to another 'final coming,' of which the destruction of Jerusalem was the 'type and earnest.' Of this, however, no hint nor intimation is given either by Christ Himself, or by the evangelists. It cannot, indeed, be denied that occasionally our Lord uttered ambiguous language. He said to the Jews: 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' (John ii. 19); but the evangelist is careful to add: 'But he spate of the temple of his body.' So when Jesus spoke 'it is necessary to distinguish between the advent of of 'rivers of living water flowing from the heart of the Christ in the glory of His kingdom within the circle of believer, St. John adds an explanatory note: 'This spake His disciples, and that same advent as applying to the he of the spirit, etc. (John vii. 36). Again, when the world generally and for judgment. The latter is what is Lord alluded to the manner of His own death, 'I, if I be generally understood by the second advent: the former lifted up from the earth, etc., the evangelist adds: 'This took place when the Saviour rose from the dead and he said, signifying what death he should die' (John ix. revealed Himself in the midst of His disciples. Hence 33). It is reasonable to suppose, therefore that had the the meaning of the words of Jesus is: the moment is evangelists known of a deeper and hidden meaning in close at hand when your hearts shall be set at rest by the predictions of Christ, they would have given some the manifestation of My glory; nor will it be the lot of intimation to that effect; but they say nothing to lead us all who stand here to die during the interval. The Lord to infer that their apparent meaning is not their full and might have said that only two of that circle would die true meaning. There is, in fact; no ambiguity whatever till then, viz., Himself and Judas. But in His wisdom as to the *coming* referred to in the passage now under He chose the expression, " Some standing here shall consideration. It is not one of several possible comings; not taste of death," to give them exactly that measure of but the one, sole, supreme event, so frequently predicted hope and earnest expectation which they needed.' (12) by our Lord, so constantly expected by His disciples. It It is enough to say that such an interpretation of is His coming in glory; His coming to judgment; His our Saviour's words could never have entered into the coming in His kingdom; the coming of the kingdom of minds of those who heard them. It is so far-fetched, God. It is not a process, but an act. It is not the same intricate, and artificial, that it is discredited by its very thing as 'the destruction of Jerusalem',- that is another ingenuity. But neither does the interpretation satisfy event related and contemporaneous; but the two are not the requirements of the language. How could the to be confounded. The New Testament knows of only resurrection of Christ be called His coming in the glory one Parousia, one coming in glory of the Lord Jesus of His Father, with the holy angels, in His kingdom, Christ. It is altogether an abuse of language to speak of and to judgment? Or how can we suppose that Christ, several senses in which Christ may be said to come, -speaking of an event which was to take place in about as at His own resurrection; at the day of Pentecost; at twelve months, would say, 'Verily I say unto you, There the destruction of Jerusalem; at the death of a believer; be some standing here which shall not taste of death till and at various providential epochs. This is not the usage they see' it? The very form of the expression shows that of the New Testament, nor is it accurate language in the event spoken of could not be within the space of a any point of view. This passage alone contains so much few months, or even a few years: it is a mode of speech important truth respecting the Parousia, that it may be which suggests that not *all* present will live to see the said to cover the whole ground; and, rightly used, will event spoken of; that not *many* will do so; but that *some* be found to be a key to the true interpretation of the will. It is exactly such a way of speaking as would suit an

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interval of thirty or forty years, when the majority of the persons then present would have passed away, but some would survive and witness the event referred to.

New Testament doctrine on this subject.

We conclude then:

1. That the coming here spoken of is the Parousia, the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

-'in his own glory; 'in the glory of his Father; " with the holy angels.'

'wicked and adulterous generation ' (Mark viii. 38), and ' to reward every' man according to his works.'

'the kingdom of God;' the close of the aeon; 'the coming of the kingdom of God with power.

our Saviour to be *near*. Lange justly remarks that the words, are 'emphatically placed at the beginning of the sentence; not a simple future, but meaning, The event is impending that He shall come; He is about to come? (14)

spoke, viz., His coming in glory.

The inference therefore is, that the Parousia, or glorious coming of Christ, was declared by Himself to fall within the limits of the then existing generation,a conclusion which we shall find in the sequel to be abundantly justified.

The Coming Of The Son Of Man Certain And Speedy

Parable of the Importunate Widow

Luke xviii. 1-8: 'And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; get because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them ? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth' [in the land] ?

The intensely practical and *present-day* character, if we may so call it, of our Lord's discourses, is a feature of His teaching which, though often overlooked, requires to be steadily kept in view. He spoke to His own people,

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and to His own times. He was God's messenger to Israel; and, while it is most true that His words are for all men and for all time, yet their primary and direct bearing was upon His own generation. For want of attention 2. That the manner of His coming was to be *glorious* to this fact, many expositors have wholly missed the point of the parable before us. It becomes in their hands a vague and indefinite prediction of a vindication of 3. That the object of His coming was to judge that the righteous, in some period more or less remote, but having no special relation to the people and time of our Lord Himself. Assuredly, whatever the parable may be 4. That His coming would be the consummation of to us or to future ages, it had a close and bearing upon the disciples to whom it was originally spoken. The Lord was about to leave His disciples 'as sheep in the midst of 5. That this coming was expressly declared by wolves; 'they were to be persecuted and afflicted, hated of all men for their Master's sake; and it might well be that their courage would fail them, and their hearts would faint. In this parable the Saviour encourages them 'to pray always, and not to faint,' by the example of what persevering prayer can do even with man. If 6. That some of those who heard our Lord utter this the importunity of a poor widow could constrain an prediction were to live to witness the event of which He unprincipled judge to do her right, how much more would God, the righteous Judge, be moved by the prayers of His own children to redress their wrongs. Without allegorising all the details of the parable, after the manner of some expositors, it is enough to mark its great moral. It is this. The persecuted children of God would he surely and speedily avenged. God will vindicate them, and that speedily. But when ? The point of time is not left indefinite. It is 'when the Son of man cometh.' The Parousia was to be the hour of redress and deliverance to the suffering people of God.

> The reflection of our Lord in the close of the eighth verse deserves particular attention. 'Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth ?' We must here revert to the facts already stated with respect to the ministry of John the Baptist. We have seen how dark and ominous was the outlook of the prophet who preached repentance to Israel. He was the precursor of 'the great and terrible day of the Lord ;' he was the second Elijah sent to proclaim the coming of Him who would 'smite the land with a curse.' The reflection of our Lord suggests that He foresaw that the repentance which could alone avert the doom of the nation was not to be looked for. There would be no faith in God, in His promises, or in His threatenings. The day of His therefore, would be the 'day of vengeance (Luke xxi. 22).

> Doddridge has well apprehended the scope of this parable, and paraphrases the opening verse as follows: 'Thus our Lord discoursed with His disciples of the

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approaching destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; that the two phrases, 'The Son of man coming in his and for their encouragement under those hardships kingdom,' and, 'The Son of man sitting on the throne of which they might in the meantime expect, from their his glory,' both refer to the same thing, and to the same unbelieving countrymen or others, He spake a parable, time. That is to say, it is to the Parousia that both these to them, which was intended to inculcate upon them expressions point. this great truth, that how distressed soever their We have another note of time, and another point circumstances might be, they ought always to pray with of coincidence between the 'regeneration ' and the faith and perseverance, and not to faint under their Parousia, in the reference made by our Lord to the trials.' (15) The following is his paraphrase of ver. 8: ' 'coming age or aeon' as the period when His faithful Yes I say unto you, He will certainly vindicate them; and disciples were to receive their when He once undertakes it, He will do it speedily too; recompense (Mark x.30; Luke xviii. 30). But the and this generation of men shall see and feel it to their 'coming age' was, as we have already seen, to succeed the terror. Nevertheless, when the Son of man, having been existing age or aeon, that is to say, the period of the Jewish put ill possession of His glorious kingdom, comes to dispensation, the end of which our Lord declared to be appear for this important purpose, will He find faith in at hand. We conclude, therefore, that the 'regeneration,' the land ?' (16) the 'coming age,' and the 'Parousia,' are virtually

Matt. xix. 27-30.	Mark x. 18-31.	Luke xvii. 28-30.
27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold , we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? 28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.	Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo I we have left all and followed thee. 'And Jesus answered and Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.'	

synonymous, or, at all events, contemporaneous. The The Reward Of The Disciples In The Coming Aeon coming of the Son of man in His kingdom, or in His glory, is distinctly affirmed to be a coming to judgment i.e. At The Parousia -- 'to reward every man according to his works (Matt. xvi. 27); and His sitting on the throne of His glory, in the regeneration, is as evidently a sitting in judgment. In this judgment the apostles were to have the honour of being assessors with the Lord, according to His declaration (Luke xxii. 29, 30)- 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' But this glorious coming to judgment is expressly affirmed by our Lord to fall within the limits of the generation then living: 'There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom' (Matt. xvi. 28). It was therefore no long-deferred and distant hope which Jesus held out to His disciples. It was not a prospect that is still seen afar off in the dim perspective of an indefinite futurity. St. Peter and his fellow-disciples were fully aware that 'the kingdom of heaven' was at hand. They had learned it from their first teacher in the wilderness; they had been reassured of it by their Lord and Master; they had gone through Galilee proclaiming the truth to their countrymen. When the Lord, therefore, promised, that in the coming aeon His apostles should sit upon thrones, is it conceivable that He could mean that ages upon ages, centuries upon centuries, and even millennium upon millennium must slowly roll away To what period are we to assign the event or state before they should reap their promised honours? Are here called by our Lord the 'regeneration'? It is evidently the inheritance of 'everlasting life' and the 'sitting upon contemporaneous with 'the Son of man sitting on the twelve thrones' still among 'the things hoped for but not throne of his glory;' nor can there be any question seen ' by the disciples? Surely such a hypothesis refutes

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the disciples had they been told that the performance would be so long delayed. On the other hand, if we in precisely the same order; there most therefore be conceive of the 'regeneration' as contemporaneous with the Parousia, and the Parousia, with the close of the Stier says: 'Matthew is careless of chronology in details' Jewish age and the destruction of the city and temple (Reden Jesu, vol. iii. p. US). Neander, speaking on this of Jerusalem, we have a definite point of time, not far distant, but almost within the sight of living men, when the predicted judgment of the enemies of Christ, and the glorious recompense of His friends, would come to pass.

Footnotes

1. Reden Jesu, in loc.

2. Jewish War, bk v. c. x sec. 5. Traill's translation.

3. Ibid. G. Xiii. sec. 6.

4. Ibid. bk. vii. c. viii. sec. I.

5. sec. Reden Jesu; Matt. xii, 43-45.

6. Greek Test. in loc.

7. Life of Christ, sec. 245.

8. Synonyms of the New Test. vol. i. a. 70; Bib. Cab. No. iii.

9. There is a real difficulty in this passage which ought not to be overlooked. It seems unaccountable that our Lord, on an occasion like this, when He was sending forth the twelve on a short mission, apparently within a limited district, and from which they were to return to Him in a short time, should speak of of His coming as overtaking them before the completion of their task. It seems scarcely appropriate to the particular period, and to belong more properly to a subsequent charge, viz., that recorded in the discourse spoken on the Mount of Olives (Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.; Luke xxi). Indeed, a comparison of these passages will go far to satisfy any candid mind that the whole paragraph Matt. x. 16-23) is transposed from its original connection, and inserted x. 23-39; xii. 1-4; James i. 1-4; ii. 6. in our Lord's first charge to His disciples We find the very words relating to the persecution of the apostles, their being delivered up to the councils, their being scourged in the synagogues, brought before governors that our Lord says on any topic of conversation, which and kings, etc., which are recorded in the tenth chapter of St. Matthew, assigned by St. Mark and St. Luke to a subsequent period, viz., the discourse on the Mount of Olives. There is no evidence that the disciples met with such treatment on their first evangelistic tour There is therefore as strong evidence as the nature of the case will admit, that ver. 23 and its context belong to the discourse on the Mount of Olives. This would that God will in due time avenge His elect, and signally remove the difficulty which the passage presents in the connection in which we here find it, and give a coherence and consistency to the language, which, as

itself. The promise would have sounded like mockery to it stands, it is not easy to discover. It is an admitted fact that even the Synoptical Gospels do not relate all events greater chronological accuracy in one than in another. very charge, says: 'Matthew evidently connects many things with the instructions given to the apostles in view of their first journey, which chronologically belong later; '(Life of Christ, _174, note b); and again, speaking of the charge given to the seventy, as recorded by St. Luke: 'he says, 'The entire and characteristic coherency of everything spoken by Christ, according to Luke, with the circumstances (so superior to the collocation of Matthew), etc. (Life of Christ, 204, note 1). Dr. Blaikie observes: 'It is generally understood that Matthew arranged his narrative more by subjects and places than by chronology' (Bible History, p. 372).

> There seems, therefore, abundant warrant for assigning the important prediction contained in Matt. x .23 to the discourse delivered on the Mount of Olives.

> 10. See note In Harmony of the Four Gospels. 11. The training of the Twelve, p. 117 12. Large, Comm. on St. Matt. in loc. 13. Alford, Greek Test. in loc.

14. See Lange in loc.

15. Family Expos. on Luke xviii. 1-8

16. Doddridge teas the following note on 'Will he find faith in the land ?' 'It is evident the word often signifies not the *earth* in general, but some particular land or country; as in Acts vii. 3, 4,11, and in numberless other places. And the context here limits it to the less extensive signification. The believing Hebrews were evidently in great danger of being wearied out with their persecutions and distresses. Comp. Heb. iii. 12-14;

The interpretation given by the judicious Campbell adds confirmation, if it were needed, needed, to this view of the passage. 'There is a close connection in all rarely escapes an attentive reader. If in this, as is very probable, He refers to the destruction impending over the Jewish nation, as the judgment of Heaven for their rebellious against God, in rejecting and murdering the Messiah. and in persecuting His adherents, (the Greek) must be understood to mean "this belief," or the belief of the particular truth He had been inculcating, namely, punish their oppressors; and (the Greek) must mean "the land," to wit, of Judea. The words may be translated either way -- earth or land; but the latter evidently gives

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them a more definite meaning, and unites them more ? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him closely with those which preceded, (Campbell on the the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. Gospels, vol. ii. p. 384). The teaching of this instructive (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) parable is by no means exhausted; and we shall find it For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall throw an unexpected light on a very obscure passage, be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath at a future stage of this investigation. Meantime we shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring may refer to 2 Thess. i 4-10, as furnishing a striking commentary on the whole parable, and showing the hither, and stay them before me.' connection between the Parousia and the avenging of the elect.

Footnotes 1. Christol.. vol. iv. p.. 232. -2. thj melloushj orghj 3. Greek Test. in loc. -

Prophetic Intimations Of The ApproachingConsummation Of The Kingdom Of God

I. - The Parable of the Pounds

Luke xix. 11-27: 'And as they heard these this, He xii.; Luke xx.); the parable of the marriage of the king's added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to son (Matt. xxii.); the woes pronounced) upon that Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom generation' (Matt. xxiii. 29-36); the second lamentation of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, over Jerusalem (Matt. xxiii. 37, 38); and the prophetic A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive discourse on the Mount of Olives, with the parables and for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called parabolic illustrations appended thereto by St. Matthew, his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and all are occupied with this absorbing theme. said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens The consideration of these prophetic intimations hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will show that the catastrophe anticipated by our Lord will not have this man to reign over us. And it came was not a remote event, hundreds and thousands of to pass, that when he was returned, having received years distant, but one whose shadow already fell upon the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to that age and that nation ; and that the Scriptures give be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, us no warrant whatever to suppose that anything else, that he might know how much every man had gained or anything more than this, is included in our Saviour's by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound words. hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, The parable of the pounds was spoken by our thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a Lord to correct a mistaken expectation on the part very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the of His disciples, that 'the kingdom of God' was about second came, Saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five to commence at once. It is not surprising that they pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over should have fallen into this mistake. John the Baptist five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here had announced, 'The kingdom of God is at hand.' is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for Jesus Himself had proclaimed the same fact, and I feared thee, because thou art all austere man : thou commissioned them to publish it throughout the takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that cities and villages of Galilee. As patriotic Israelites thou didst not sow. And he saith Unto him, Out of thine they writhed under the yoke of Rome, and yearned own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou for the ancient liberties of the nation. As pious sons of knewest that I was all austere man, taking up that I laid Abraham they desired to see all nations blessed in him. not down, and reaping that I did not sow : wherefore And there were other less noble sentiments that had then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at a place in their minds. Was not their own Master the my coming I might have required mine own with usury Son of David - the coming King? What might not they

It cannot fail to strike every attentive reader of the Gospel history, how much the teaching of our Lord, as He approached the close of His ministry, dwelt upon the theme of coming judgment. When He spoke this parable, He was on His way to Jerusalem to keep His last Passover before He suffered; and it is remarkable how His discourses from this time seem almost wholly engrossed, not by His own approaching death, but the impending catastrophe of the nation. Not Only this parable of the pounds, but His lamentation over Jerusalem (Luke xix. 41); His cursing of the fig-tree (Matt. xxi. Mark xi.); the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matt. xxi. Mark

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expect who were His followers and friends? This made falsify the most express declarations of Christ and of His them contest with. each other the place of honour in the forerunner. How could they have said that the kingdom kingdom. This made the sons of Zebedee eager to secure His promise of the most honourable seats, on His right hand and on His left, where he assumed the sovereignty. And now they were approaching Jerusalem. The great national festival of the Passover was at baud; all Israel was flocking, to the Holy City, and there was not a man there but would be eager to see Jesus of Nazareth. What more probable than that the popular enthusiasm would place their Master on the throne of His father David ? hope in which they lived, the faith which they preached; As they wished, so they believed ; and 'they thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear.' But the Lord checked their enthusiastic hopes, and intimated, in a parable, that a certain interval must elapse before the fulfillment of their expectations. Taking a well-known incident from recent Jewish history as the groundwork of the parable- viz., the journey of Archelaus to Rome, in order to seek from the emperor the succession to the dominions of his father, Herod the Great, he employed it as an apt illustration of His own departure from earth, and His subsequent return in glory. Meanwhile, during the period of His absence, He gave His servants a charge to keep-' Occupy till I come'. It was for them to be diligent and faithful, until their Lord's return, when the loyal servants should be applauded and rewarded, and His enemies utterly destroyed.

Nothing can be better than Neander's explanation of this parable, though, indeed, it may be said to explain itself. Nevertheless, it may be well to subjoin his observations. "In this parable, in view of the circumstances under which it was uttered, and of the approaching catastrophe, special intimations are given of Christ's departure from the earth, of His ascension, and return to judge the rebellious theocratic nation, and consummate His dominion. It describes a great man, who travels to the distant court of the mighty emperor, to receive from him authority over his countrymen, and to return with royal power. So Christ was not immediately recognised in His kingly office, but first had to depart from the earth. and leave His agents to advance His kingdom, to ascend into heaven and be appointed theocratic Ring, and return a 'gain to exercise His contested power." (1)

Such is the teaching of the parable of the pounds. But though the kingdom of God was not to appear at the precise. time which the disciples anticipated, it does not follow that it was postponed since he, and that the expected consummation would not take place for hundreds and thousands of years. This would be to

PART 1

was at hand, if it was not to appear for acres?

How could an event be said to be near, if it was actually further off than the whole period of the Jewish economy from Moses to Christ? The kingdom might still be at hand, though not so near as the disciples supposed. It was expedient that their Lord should 'go away, but only for 'a little while,' when He would come again to them, and come 'in His kingdom.' This was the and we cannot think that their faith and hope were a delusion.

II.-Lamentation of Jesus over Jerusalem

Luke xix. 41-44: ' And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace I but now they are bid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation?

Here we are upon ground which is not debatable. This prophecy is clear and perspicuous as history. No advocate of the double-sense theory of interpretation has proposed to find here anything but Jerusalem and its approaching desolation.

It is not the conflagration of the earth, nor the dissolution of creation: it is the siege and demolition of the Holy City, and the slaughter of her citizens, as historically fulfilled in less than forty years-only this, and nothing more. But wily so? Why should not a double sense be possible here, as well as in the prediction delivered upon the Mount of Olives? The reply will doubtless be, Because here all is homogeneous and consecutive; the Saviour is looking on Jerusalem, and speaking of Jerusalem, and predicting an event which was speedily to come to pass. But this is equally the case with the prophecy in Matt. xxiv., where the expositors find, sometimes Jerusalem, and sometimes the world; sometimes the termination of the Jewish polity, and sometimes the conclusion of human history; sometimes the year A.D. 70, and sometimes a period as yet unknown. We shall yet see that the prophecy oil the Mount of Olives is no less consecutive, no less homogenous, no less one and indivisible, than this clear

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and plain prediction of the approaching destruction of forth fruits corresponding to it." (2) Jerusalem. If the double-sense theory were good for anything, it would be found equally applicable to the Saviour's prediction before us. Here, however, its own advocates discard it; for common sense refuses to see in this affecting lamentation anything else than Jerusalem, and Jerusalem alone.

III. - Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen

MATT. XXI. 33-46.	Ν
There was a certain householder, which	1 A certain ma

planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat , and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country : 34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37 But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying , They will reverence my son. 38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come , let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught him, and cast him out of

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the vineyard, and slew him. 40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken : but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder . 45 A nd when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophe

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vineyard to others .. 10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: 11 This was the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes? 12 And they ought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their

This parable, recorded in almost identical terms by the or an ulterior reference. The chief priests and Pharisees Synoptics, scarcely requires an interpreter. Its local, felt that it was 'spoken against them;' and they winced personal, and national reference is too manifest to be under the lash. As it stands, all is perfectly clear and questioned. The vineyard is the land of Israel; the lord intelligible; but the exegesis of a theologian can render of the vineyard is the Father ; His messengers are His it turbid and obscure indeed. For example, Lange thus servants the prophets; His only and beloved Son is the comments upon ver. 41 Lord Jesus Himself; the husbandmen are the rebellious The Parousia of Christ is consummated in His last and wicked Jews ; the punishment is the coming coming, but is not one with it. It begins in principle with catastrophe at the Parousia, when, as Neander well the resurrection. (John xvi. 16); continues as a power expresses it, "the theocratic relation is broken, and the through the New Testament period (John xiv. 3-19) kingdom is transferred to other nations that shall bring ; and is *consummated* in the stricter sense in the final

- The bearing of this parable on the people of our
- time is so direct and explicit, that it might be supposed that no Critic would have to seek for a hidden meaning,

MARK XII. 1-12.

an planted a vineyard, and set an and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen and went into a far country. 2 And at the seasor he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. 4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head and sent him away shamefully handled . 5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others ; beating some , and killing some 6 Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved ne sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. 7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come et us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours

3 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. 9 What shall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destry the husbandmen and will give the

9 A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. 10 And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. 11 And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. 12 And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out . 13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do ? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. 14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vinevard do unto them? said . God forbid .

16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said God forbid . 17 And he beheld them, and said , What is this then that is written , The stone which the builders rejected , the same is become the head of the corner?

18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken ; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder that stone shall be broken ; but on whomsoever it shall fall . 19 And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

LUKE XX. 9-19.

advent (I Cor. xv. 23; Matt. xxv. 31; 2 Thess. ii., etc.).' (3)

Here we have not a coming, nor the coming of Christ, but no less than three separate and distinct comings, or a coming of three different kinds- a continuous coming which has been going on for nearly two thousand years already, and may go on for two thousand more, for aught we know. But of all this not a hint is given in the text, nor anywhere else. It is a merely human gloss, without a particle of authority from Scripture, and invented in virtue of the double- and triple sense theory of interpretation.

Far more sober is the explanation of Alford. 'We may observe that our Lord makes " when the Lord cometh " coincide with the destruction of Jerusalem, which is incontestably the overthrow of the wicked husbandmen. This passage therefore forms an important key to our Lord's prophecies, and a decisive justification for those who, like myself, firmly hold that the coming of the Lord is, in many places, to be identified, primarily, with that overthrow." (4)

It is to be regretted that this otherwise sound and sensible note is marred by the phrases 'in many places ' and , 'primarily,' but it is, nevertheless, all important admission. Undoubtedly we do find here 'an important key to our Lord's prophecies; 'but the master key is that which we have already found in Matt xvi. 27, 28, and which serves to open, not only this, but many other dark sayings in the prophetic oracles.

IV.-Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son

Matt. xxii. 1-14 -. 'And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was

furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend. how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment ? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him band and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called but few are chosen.'

This parable bears a strong resemblance to that of 'The Great Supper,' contained in Luke xiv. It is possible that the two parables may be only different versions of the same original. The question, however, does not affect the present discussion, and it cannot be proved that they were not spoken on different occasions. The moral of both is the same; but the character of the parable recorded by St. Matthew is more distinctively eschatological than that of St. Luke. It points clearly to the approaching consummation of the ' kingdom of heaven.' The vengeance taken by the king oil the murderers of his servants, and on their city fixes the application to Jerusalem and the Jews. The Roman armies were but the executioners of divine justice; and Jerusalem perished for her guilt and rebellion against her King.

Alford, in his notes on this parable, while recognising a partial and primary reference to Israel and Jerusalem, finds also that it extends far beyond its apparent scope, and is divided into two acts, the first of which is past, and closes with. ver. 10; while a new act opens with ver. 11, which is still in the future. This implies that the judgment of Israel and of Jerusalem does not supply a full and exhaustive fulfillment of our Lord's words. On the one hand we have the teaching of Christ Himselfsimple, clear, and unambiguous; on the other hand, the conjectural speculation of the critic, without a scintilla of evidence or authority from the Word of God. To expound the parable according to its plain historic significance will be derided by some as shallow, superficial, unspiritual to find in it ulterior and hidden meanings, dark and profound riddles, mystical depths, which none but theologians can explore,- this is critical acumen, keen insight, high spirituality! In our opinion, all this foisting of human hypotheses and double senses into the predictions of our Lord is utterly incompatible with sober criticism, or with true reverence for the Word of God ; it is not criticism, but mysticism ; and obscures the truth instead of elucidating it.

chronological order in the narratives of the Evangelists: At the risk, then, of being considered superficial and it is admitted on all hands that they are accustomed shallow, we shall hold fast to the plain teaching of the sometimes to group together facts which have a natural words of Scripture, turning a deaf ear to all fanciful and conjectural speculations of merely human origin, no relation, quite independently of the order of time in matter how learned or dignified the quarter from which which they occurred. Stier says of the chronology of St. Luke in general they come.

V- The Woes denounced on the Scribes and Pharisees

Matt xxiii. 29-36.	Luke xi. 47-51.
29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, 30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34 Wherefore , behold , I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify ; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.	47 Woe unto you! for ye bu the sepulchres of the proph and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye al the deeds of your fathers: for t indeed killed them, and ye bu their sepulchres. 49 Theref also said the wisdom of God, I send them prophets and apost and some of them they shall s and persecute : 50 That the blo of all the prophets, which ye shed from the foundation of world, may be required of the generation; 51 From the blood Abel unto the blood of Zachar which perished between the a and the temple: verily I say u you, It shall be required of the generation.

It will be seen that St. Luke gives this passage as identical terms in which His forerunner addressed spoken in a different connection, and on a different the same class: 'Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, occasion, from those stated by St. Matthew Whether our bow can ye escape the damnation of hell?' This is no Lord spoke the same words on two different occasions, or whether they have been transposed by St. Luke from their original connection, is a question not easy the 'coming wrath'. Israel had rejected alike the stern to determine. The former hypothesis does not seem probable, and does not commend itself to the critical mind. Apophthegms, and brief parabolic sayings, such their guilt was almost full, and the 'day of wrath ' was as ' Many are called but few are chosen,' 'The last shall swiftly coming. be first, and the first last,'-may have been repeated But the point which deserves special attention is the on several occasions; but connected and elaborate particular application of this discourse to the Saviour's discourses, such as the Sermon on the Mount, the own times : ' Verily I say unto you, All these things prophetic discourse upon Olivet, and this denunciation shall come upon this generation.' ' It shall be required of the Scribes and Pharisees, can hardly be imagined to of this generation.' Surely there can be no pretence of a have been repeated verbatim on different occasions. It primary and a secondary reference here. No expositor is a mistake, as we have already seen, to look for strict will deny that these words have a sole and exclusive

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: 'Two things are sufficiently plain: First, that he mentions individual occurrences without strict regard to chronology, even repeating and Intercalating some things elsewhere recorded, etc.

Neander makes the following observation oil the passage now before us: 'As this last discourse given by Matthew contains various passages given by Luke in the table conversation (chap. xi.), so Luke inserts there this prophetic announcement, whose proper position is found in Matthew.' (5) We cannot, however, agree with Neander's opinion, that 'this discourse, as given in Matt. xxiii., contains many passages uttered on other occasions.' (6) It seems to us impossible to read the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew without perceiving that it is a continuous and connected discourse, spoken at one time, its different parts naturally growing out of and following one another. Its very structure consisting of seven woes (7) denounced against the hypocritical pretenders to sanctity, who were the blind guides of the people,-and the solemn occasion on which it was uttered being the filial public utterance of our Lord,irresistibly compel the conclusion that it is a complete whole, and that St. Matthew gives us the original form of the discourse.

But the settlement of this question is not essential to this investigation. Far more important it is to observe how our Lord closes His public ministry in almost the fortuitous coincidence : it is evidently the deliberate adoption of the words of the Baptist, when he spoke of call to repentance of the second Elijah, and the tender expostulations of the Lamb of God. The measure of

ouild hets, . 48 llow they ouild efore will stles, slay lood was the this od of rias, altar into this

application to the generation of the Jewish people then desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, living upon the earth. Even Dorner, who contends until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that most strenuously for a great variety of meanings of the word genea [generation], frankly admits that it can only refer here to the contemporaries of our Lord: 'Hoc ipsum hominum aevum." (8) This is an admission of the greatest importance. It enables us to fix the true meaning of the phrase, 'This generation', Which plays so important a part in several of the predictions of our Lord, and notably in the great prophecy spoken on the Mount of Olives. In the passage before us, the words are incapable of any other application than to the *existing* generation of the Jewish nation, which is represented by our Lord as the heir of all the preceding generations, inheriting the depravity and rebelliousness of the temple to return to it no more till he came to judgment." national character, and fated to perish in the deluge of wrath which had been accumulating through the ages, and was at length about to overwhelm the guilty land.

VI. The (second) Lamentation of Jesus over Jerusalem

and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, 30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partak- ers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be wit- nesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34 Wherefore , behold, I	MATT. xxiii, 37-39.	Luke xiii. 34, 35.
men, and scribes: and some of and the temple: verily I say unto	and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, 30 And say , If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partak- ers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be wit- nesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34 Wherefore , behold , I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify ; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the right- eous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall	47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the proph- ets, and your fathers killed them. 48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. 49 There- fore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apos- tles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute : 50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; 51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

'0 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that stonest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen together, even as a hen her brood under her wings and ye would not ! Behold, your house is left unto you

cometh in the name of the Lord.

Here, again, we have another example of those discrepancies in the Gospel history which perplex harmonists. St. Luke records this affecting apostrophe of our Lord in quite a different connection from St. Matthew. Yet we can scarcely suppose that these ipsissima verba were spoken on more than one occasion, namely, that specified by St. Matthew. Dorner says : 'That these words (" Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," etc.) were spoken by Christ, not where Luke, but where Matthew, places them, the words themselves show; for they were spoken when our Lord was departing from the (9) Lange says the passage is placed earlier by St. Luke 'for pragmatic reasons.' At all events, we may properly regard the words as spoken on the occasion indicated by St. Matthew.

As such their collocation is most suggestive. This pathetic expostulation mitigates the severity of the foregoing denunciations, and closes the public ministry of our Lord with a burst of human tenderness and divine compassion. As Dr. Lange well says: 'The Lord mourns and laments over His own ruined Jerusalem. . . . His whole pilgrimage on earth was troubled by distress for Jerusalem, like the hen which sees the eagle threatening in the sky, and anxiously seeks to gather her chickens under her wings. With such distress Jesus saw the Roman eagles approach for judgment upon the children of Jerusalem, and sought with the strongest solicitations of love to save them. but in vain. They were like dead children to the voice of maternal love!' (10)

Need it be said that here is Jerusalem, and Jerusalem alone? There is no ambiguity, no twofold reference, no proximate and ultimate fulfilments conceivable here. One thought, one feeling, one object, filled the heart of Jesus- Jerusalem, the city of God, the loved, the guilty, the doomed! Her fate was now all but sealed, and the heart of our Saviour was wrung with anguish as he bade her a last farewell.

But how are we to understand the closing words, 'Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'? This phrase, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,' is the recognised formula which was employed by the Jews in speaking of the coming of Messiah- the Messianic greeting: equivalent to 'Hail to the anointed one of God.' It is generally supposed to have been adopted from Psa. cxviii. 26. There was a time coming, therefore, when

such a salutation would be appropriate. The Lord who associated, viz., the Parousia. was leaving the temple would once more return to His We contend, then, that we are not only warranted, temple. More than this, *that same generation would* but compelled, to conclude, that our Lord here refers to witness that return. This is plainly implied in the form His coming to destroy Jerusalem and to close the Jewish of our Saviour's language, ' Ye shall not see me again till age, according to His express declarations, within the ye shall say, etc.-words which would be deprived of half period of the then existing generation. History verifies their significance if the persons referred to in the first the prophecy. In less than forty years from the time part of the sentence were not the same as those referred when these words were uttered, Jerusalem and her to in the second. Nothing can be more distinct and temple, Judea and her people, were overwhelmed by the deluge of wrath predicted by the Lord. Their land was explicit than the reference throughout to the people of Jerusalem, the contemporaries of Christ. They and He laid waste; their house was left desolate; Jerusalem, and were to meet again ; and the Messiah, the Lord whom her children within her, were engulfed in one common they professed to seek so eagerly, would suddenly come ruin. to his temple, according to the saying of Malachi the VII.-The Prophecy on the Mount of Olives. prophet. They expected that coming as an event to be welcomed with gladness; but it was to be far otherwise. THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN [THE 'Who may abide the day of his coming ? and who shall PAROUSIA] BEFORE THE PASSING AWAY OF stand when he appeareth ?' That day was to bring the THAT GENERATION desolation of the house of God, the destruction of their MATT. XXIV..; MARK XIII.; LUKE XXI. national existence, the outburst of the pent-up wrath We now enter upon the consideration of by far the of God upon Israel. This was the return, the meeting most full and explicit of our Lord's prophetic utterances together again, to which our Saviour here alludes. And respecting His coming, and the solemn events connected is not this the very thing that He had again and again therewith. The discourse or conversation on the Mount declared ? Had He not a little before said, that 'upon this of Olives is the great prophecy of the New Testament, and generation' should come the sevenfold woes which He may be not unfitly styled the Apocalypse of the Gospels. had just pronounced ? (Ver.36.) Had He not solemnly Upon the interpretation of this prophetic discourse affirmed, that some then living should see the Son will depend the right understanding of the predictions of man coming in glory, with His angels, 'to reward contained in the apostolic writings; for it may almost be every man according to his works' -- that is, coming to said that there is nothing in the Epistles which is not in judgment? Is it possible to adopt the strange hypothesis the Gospels. This prophecy of our Saviour is the great of some commentators of note, that in these words our storehouse from which the prophetic statements of the Lord means that He would never be seen again by those apostles are chiefly derived. to whom He spoke, until a converted and Christian The commonly received view of the structure of Israel, in some far distant era of time, was prepared to this discourse, which is almost taken for granted, alike welcome Him as King of Israel? This would indeed be to by expositors and by the generality of readers, is, that take unwarrantable liberties with the words of Scripture. our Lord, in answering the question of His disciples Our Lord does not say, Ye shall not see me until they respecting the destruction of the temple, mixes up with shall say, or, until another generation shall say; but, 'until that event the destruction of the world, the universal *ye* shall say, etc. It by no means follows, that because the judgment, and the final consummation of all things. Messianic salutation is here quoted, the people who are Imperceptibly, it is supposed, the prophecy slides from supposed to use it were qualified to enter into its true the city and temple of Jerusalem, and their impending significance. Those very words had been shouted by fate in the immediate future, to another and infinitely multitudes in the streets of Jerusalem only a day or two more tremendous catastrophe in the far distant and before, and yet they were changed into ' Crucify him ! indefinite future. So intermingled, however, are the crucify him !' in a very brief space. They simply denote allusions- now to Jerusalem and now to the world at the fact of His coming. The unhappy men to whom our large; now to Israel and now to the human race; now Saviour spoke could not adopt the Messianic greeting to events close at hand and now to events indefinitely in its true and highest sense; they would never say, remote; that to distinguish and allocate the several 'Blessed is he,' etc., but they would witness His comingreferences and topics, is exceedingly difficult, if not the coming with which that formula was indissolubly impossible.

Perhaps it will be the fairest way of exhibiting the have expected a plain answer to a plain question ? Call views of those who contend for a double meaning in this predictive discourse, to set forth the scheme or plan of the prophecy proposed by Dr. Lange, and adopted by many expositors of the greatest note.

'In harmony with apocalyptic style, Jesus exhibited the judgments of His coming in a series of cycles, each of which depicts the whole futurity, but in such a manner, that with every new cycle the scene seems to approximate to and more closely resemble the final catastrophe. Thus, the first cycle delineates the whole course of the world down to the end, in its general characteristics (ver. 4-14). The second gives the signs of of Lange, and Stier be correct, the disciples who listened the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and paints this destruction itself as a sign and a commencement of the judgment of the world, which from that day onward proceeds in silent and suppressed days of judgment down to the last (ver. 15-28). The third describes the sudden end of the world, and the judgment which ensues (ver. 29-44). Then follows a series of parables and similitudes, in which the Lord paints the judgment itself, which unfolds itself in an organic succession of several acts. In the last act Christ reveals His universal judicial majesty. Chap. xxiv. 45-51 exhibits the judgment upon wise and foolish virgins) exhibits the judgment upon the Church, or the people. Then follows the judgment on the individual members of the Church (ver. 14-30). of the world. (11) Not very dissimilar is the scheme proposed by Stier, who finds three different comings of Christ 'which perspectively cover each other: '

Judaism.

2. His coming to judgment upon degenerate anti-Christian Christendom.

3. His coming to judgment upon all heathen nationsthe final judgment of the world, all which together are the coming again of Christ, and in respect of their the mouth of Christ by Matthew.' (12)

Such is the elaborate and complicated scheme adopted by some expositors; but there are obvious and grave objections to it, which, the more they are considered, will appear the more formidable, if not fatal.

1. An objection may be taken, in limine, to the principles involved in this method of interpreting Scripture. Are we to look for double, triple, and multiple meanings, for prophecies within prophecies, and mysteries wrapt in mysteries, where we might reasonably

any one be sure of understanding the Scriptures if they are thus enigmatical and obscure? Is this the manner in which the Saviour taught His disciples, leaving them to grope their way through intricate labyrinths, irresistibly suggestive of the Ptolemaic astronomy - 'Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb'? Surely so ambiguous and obscure a revelation can hardly be called a revelation at all, and seems far more befitting a Delphic Oracle, or a Cumaean Sibyl than the teaching of Him whom. the common people heard gladly. (13)

2. It will scarcely be pretended that, if the exposition to the sayings of Jesus on the Mount of Olives could have comprehended or followed the drift of His discourse. They were at all times slow to understand their Master's words; but it would be to give them credit for astonishing penetration to suppose that they were able to thread their way through such a maze of comings, extending through 'a series of cycles, each of which depicts the whole futurity, but in such a manner that with every new cycle the scene seems to approximate to, and more closely resemble, the final catastrophe.'

It is not easy for the ordinary reader to follow the the servants of Christ, or the clergy. Chap. xxv. 1-13 (the ingenious critic through his convoluted scheme; but it is plain that the disciples must have been hopelessly bewildered amidst a rush of crises and catastrophes from the fall of Jerusalem to the end of the world. Perhaps we Finally, ver. 31-46 introduce the universal judgment shall be told, however, that it does not signify whether the disciples understood our Lord's answer or not : it was not to them that He was speaking; it was to future ages, to generations yet unborn, who were destined, '1. The coming of the Lord to judgment upon however, to find the interpretation of the prophecy as embarrassing to them as it was to the original bearers. There are no words too strong to repudiate such a suggestion. The disciples came to their Master with a plain, straightforward inquiry, and it is incredible that He would mock them with an unintelligible riddle for a reply. It is to be presumed that the Saviour meant similarity and diversity are most exactly recorded from His disciples to understand His words, and it is to be presumed that they did understand them.

> 3. The interpretation which we are considering appears to be founded upon a misapprehension of the question put to our Lord by the disciples, as well as of His answer to their question. It is generally assumed that the disciples came to our Lord with three different questions, relating to different events separated from each other by a long interval of time; that the first inquiry, 'When shall these things be?'- had reference to the approaching destruction of the temple; that the

second and third question-,, 'What shall be the sign of is not world, but age ; that, like its Latin equivalent thy coming, and of the end of the world ? '- referred to aevum, it refers to a period of time : thus, 'the end of events long posterior to the destruction of Jerusalem, the age ' means the close of the epoch or Jewish age and, in fact, not yet accomplished. It is supposed that or dispensation which was drawing nigh, as our Lord our Lord's reply conforms itself to this threefold inquiry, frequently intimated. All those passages which speak of and that this gives the shape to His whole discourse. 'the end' 'the end of the age,' or, 'the ends of the ages' Now, lot it be considered how utterly improbable it is , refer to the same consummation, and always as nigh that the disciples should have had any such scheme at hand. In I Cor. x. 11, St. Paul says The ends of the of the future mapped out in their minds. We know ages have stretched out to us implying, that he regarded that they bad just been shocked and stunned by their himself and his readers as living near the conclusion of Master's prediction of the total destruction of the an aeon, or age. So, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find the glorious house of God on which they had so recently been gazing with admiration. They had not yet had time remarkable expression : 'Now, once, close upon the to recover from their surprise, when they came to Jesus end of the ages' (erroneously rendered, The end of with the inquiry, 'When shall these things be ?' etc. Is it the world), 'hath be appeared to put away sin by the not reasonable to suppose that one thought possessed sacrifice of himself ' (Heb. ix. 26); clearly showing that them at that moment- the portentous calamity awaiting the writer regarded the incarnation of Christ as taking the magnificent structure, the glory and beauty of Israel place near the end of the aeon, or dispensational period. ? Was that a time when their minds would be occupied To suppose that he meant that it was close upon the with a distant future? Must not their whole soul have end of the world, or the destruction of the material been concentrated on the fate of the temple? and must globe, would be to make him write false history as well they not have been eager to know what tokens would as bad grammar. It would not be true in fact; for the be given of the approach of the catastrophe? Whether world has already lasted longer since the incarnation they connected in their imagination the destruction than the whole duration of the Mosaic economy, from of the temple with the dissolution of the creation, and the exodus to the destruction of the temple. It is futile, the close of human history, it is impossible to say; but therefore, to say that the 'end of the age' may mean a we may safely conclude, that the uppermost thought lengthened period, extending from the incarnation to in their mind was the announcement which the Lord our own times, and even far beyond them. That would had just made, 'Verily I say unto you, there shall not be an aeon, and not the close of an men. The aeon, of be left here one stone upon another which shall not which our Lord was speaking was about to close in a great catastrophe; and a catastrophe is not a protracted be thrown down.' They must have gathered from the Saviour's language that this catastrophe was imminent process, but a definitive and culminating act. We are ; and their anxiety was to know the time and the tokens compelled, therefore, to conclude that the 'end of the of its arrival. St. Mark and St. Luke make the question age, or refers solely to the approaching termination of of the disciples refer to one event and *one* time- 'When the Jewish age or dispensation. 5. It may indeed be objected, that even admitting the apostles to have been occupied exclusively with the fate of the temple and the events of their own time, there is no reason why the Lord should not overpass the limits of their vision, and extend a prophetic glance into the ages of a distant futurity. No doubt it was competent for Him to do so; but in that case we should expect to find

shall these things be, and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled ? 'It is not only presumable, therefore, but indubitable, that the questions of the disciples only refer to *different aspects of the same great* event. This harmonises the statements of St. Matthew with those of the other Evangelists, and is plainly required by the circumstances of the case. 4. The interpretation which we are discussing rests some hint or intimation of the fact; some well-defined also upon an erroneous and misleading conception of line between the immediate future and the indefinitely the phrase, end of the world' (age). It is not surprising remote. If the Saviour passes from Jerusalem and its day that mere English readers of the New Testament should of doom to the world and its judgment day, it would suppose that this phrase really means the destruction of be only reasonable to look for some phrase such as, the material earth; but such an error ought not to receive 'After many days,' or, ' It shall come to pass after these countenance from men of learning. We have already had things,' to mark the transition. But we search in vain occasion to remark that the true signification of (aion) for any such indication. The attempts of expositors to

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it ceases to speak of Jerusalem and Israel and passes the end of the world in particular: to remote events and unborn generations, are wholly unsatisfactory. Nothing can be more arbitrary than the divisions attempted to be set up; they will not bear a moment's examination, and are incompatible with the express statements of the prophecy itself. Will it be believed that some expositors find a mark of transition at Matt. xxiv. 29, where our Lord's own words make the very idea totally inadmissible by His own note of time 'Immediately'! *If*, in the face of such authority, so rash a suggestion can be proposed, what may not be expected in less strongly marked cases? But, in fact, all attempts to set up imaginary divisions and transitions in the of desolation, etc. This, surely, is not transition, but prophecy signally fail. Let any fair and candid reader judge of the scheme of Dr. Lange, who may be taken as a representative of the school of double-sense expositors, in his distribution of this discourse of our Lord, and say whether it is possible to discern any trace of a natural division where he draws lines of transition. His first section, from ver. 4 to ver. 14, he entitles, 'Signs, and the which Lange calls, manifestation of the end of the world in general

What! is it conceivable that our Lord, when about to reply to the eager and palpitating hearts, filled with anxiety about the calamities which He told them were impending, should commence by speaking of the 'end of the world in general'? They were thinking of the temple and the immediate future : would He speak of the world and the indefinitely remote? But is there anything in this first section inapplicable to the disciples themselves and their time? Is there anything which did not actually happen in their own day? ' 'Yes' it will be said ; ' the gospel of the kingdom has not yet been preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.' But we have this very fact vouched for by St. Paul (Col. i. 5, 6)-'The word of the truth of the gospel, which is come. unto you, as *it is in all the* world, etc.; and, again (Col. i. 23)-' The gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven.' There was, then, in the acre of the apostles, such a world- wide diffusion of the gospel as to satisfy the Saviour's predictions - 'The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the word' (oikemene).

But the decisive objection to this scheme is, that the whole passage is evidently addressed to the disciples, and speaks of what *they* shall see, *they* shall do, *they* shall suffer ; the whole falls within their own observation and experience, and cannot be spoken of or to an invisible audience in a far distant era of futurity, which even yet has not appeared upon the earth. Lange's next division,

draw transition lines in this prophecy, showing where comprising from ver. 15 to ver. 22, is entitled, Signs of

(a) The Destruction of Jerusalem.

Without stopping to inquire into the relation of these ideas, it is satisfactory to find Jerusalem at last introduced. But how unnatural the transition from the 'end of the world' back to the invasion of Judea and the siege of Jerusalem ! Could such a sudden and immense leap have possibly been made by the disciples ? Could it have been intelligible to them, or is it intelligible now ? But mark the point of transition, as fixed by Lange, at ver. 15: 'When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination continuity: all that precedes leads up to this point; the wars, and famines, and pestilences, and persecutions, and martyrdoms, were all preparatory and introductory to the 'end;' that is, to the final catastrophe which was to overtake the city, and temple, and nation of Israel.

Next follows a paragraph from ver. 23 to ver. 28,

(b) Interval of partial and suppressed judgment.

This title is itself an example of fanciful and arbitrary exposition. There is something incongruous and self-contradictory in the very words themselves. A day of judgment implies publicity and manifestation, not silence and suppression. But what can be the meaning of 'silent and suppressed days of judgment,' which go on from the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the world ? If it be meant that there is a sense in which God is always judging the world, that is a truism which might be affirmed of any period, before as well as after the destruction of Jerusalem. But the most objectionable part of this exposition is the violent treatment of the word ' then' (p. 62) [tote] (ver. 23). Lange says: 'Then (i.e., in the time intervening between the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world). Surely, a prodigious *then ! It* is no longer a point of time, but an aeon - a vast and indefinite period ; and during all that time the statements in the paragraph, ver. 23 to ver. 28, are supposed to be in course of fulfilment. But when we turn to the prophecy itself we find no change of subject, no break in the continuity of the discourse, no hint of any transition from one epoch to another. The note of time, 'then' [tote], is decisive against any hiatus or transition. Our Saviour is putting the disciples on their guard against the deceivers and impostors who infested the last days of the Jewish commonwealth; and says to them, '*Then*' (*i.e.*, at that time, in the agony of the Jewish war) 'if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is this prophecy, viz., the inadequate appreciation of the Christ, or there, believe it not, etc. It is Jerusalem, always importance and grandeur of the event which forms its Jerusalem, and only Jerusalem, of which our Lord here burden- the consummation of the aeon age, and the speaks. At length we come to abrogation of the Jewish dispensation.

That was an event which formed an epoch in the The Actual End of the World' divine government of the world. The Mosaic economy, (ver. 24-31). which had been ushered in with such pomp and grandeur Having made the transition from the 'end of the amidst the thunders and lightenings of Sinai, and had existed for well nigh sixteen centuries, which had been the divinely instituted medium of communication between God and man, and which was intended to realise a kingdom of God upon earth,- had proved a comparative failure through the moral unfitness of the people of Israel, and was doomed to come to an end amid the most terrific demonstration of the justice and wrath of God. The temple of Jerusalem, for ages the glory and crown of Mount Zion,- the sacred shrine, in whose holy place Jehovah was pleased to dwell,- the holy and beautiful house, which was the palladium of the nation's safety, and dearer than life to every son of Abraham,was about to be desecrated and destroyed, so that not one stone should be left upon another. The chosen people, the children of the Friend of God, the favoured nation, with whom the God of the whole earth deigned But we have gone far enough in the demonstration to enter into covenant and to be called their King, - were to be overwhelmed by the most terrible calamities that ever befell a nation; were to be expatriated, deprived of their nationality, excluded from their ancient and peculiar relation to God, and driven forth as wanderers on the face of the earth, a byword and hissing among all nations. But along with all this there were to be changes for the better. First, and chiefly, the close of the won would be the inauguration of the reign of God. There were to be honour and glory for the true and faithful servants of God, who would then enter into the full possession of the heavenly inheritance. (This will be more fully unfolded in the sequel of our investigation.) But there was also to be a glorious change in this world. The old made way for the new ; the Law was replaced by the Gospel; Moses was superseded by Christ. The narrow and exclusive system, which embraced only a single people, was succeeded by a new and better covenant, which embraced the whole family of man, and knew no difference between Jew and Gentile, circumcised and uncircumcised. The dispensation of symbols and ceremonies, suited to the childhood of humanity, was merged in an order of things in which 6. In. conclusion, we cannot help adverting to religion became a spiritual service, every place a temple, every worshipper a priest, and God the universal Father. This was a revolution greater far than any that bad ever

world backwards to the destruction of Jerusalem, the process is now reversed, and there is another transition, from the destruction of Jerusalem to the ' actual end of the world. This actual end is placed after the appearance of those false Christs and false prophets against whom the disciples were warned. This allusion to 'false Christs ' ought to have saved the critic from the mistake into which be has fallen, and to have distinctly indicated the period to which the prediction refers. But where is there any sign of a division or transition here ? There is no trace or token of any : on the contrary, the express language of our Lord excludes the idea of any interval at all ; for He says : 'Immediately after the tribulation of those days,' etc. This note of time is decisive, and peremptorily forbids the supposition of any break or hiatus in the continuity of His discourse. of the arbitrary and uncritical treatment which this prophecy has received, and have been betrayed into premature exegesis of some portion of its contents. What we contend for, is the *unity and continuity of the whole* discourse. From the beginning of the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew to the close of the twenty-fifth, it *is one* and *indivisible*. The theme is the approaching consummation of the age, with its attendant and concomitant events ; the woes which were to overtake that 'wicked generation,' comprehending the invasion of the Roman armies, the siege and capture of Jerusalem, the total destruction of the temple, the frightful calamities of the people. Along with this we find the true Parousia, or the coming of the Son of man, the judicial infliction of divine wrath upon the impenitent, and the deliverance and recompense of the faithful. From beginning to end, these two chapters form one continuous, consecutive, and homogeneous discourse. So it must have been regarded by the disciples, to whom it 'was addressed; and so, in the absence of any hint or indication to the contrary in the record, we feel bound to it. one other consideration, which we are persuaded has had much to do with the erroneous interpretation of

; it was the 'world to come,' the [oikongenh mellonoa] of the time of one of God's peculiar seasons of visitation.' Hebrews ii. 5; and the magnitude and importance of the 'For the same belief in the connexion of physical with change it is impossible to over- estimate. It is this that gives such significance to the overthrow of the temple ii. p. 672 Dr. Arnold : See 'Life by Stanley,' vol. i. p. 311. and the destruction of Jerusalem: these are the outward and visible signs of the abrogation of the old order and the introduction of the new. The story of the siege and capture of the Holy City is not simply a thrilling historical episode, such as the siege of Troy or the fall of Carthage; it is not merely the closing scene in the annals of an ancient nation;- it has a supernatural and divine significance; it has a relation to God and the human race, and marks one of the most memorable epochs of time. This is the reason why the event is spoken of in the Scripture in terms which to some appear overstrained, or to require some greater catastrophe to account for them. But if it was fitting that the introduction of that economy should be signalised by portents and wonders, earthquakes, lightenings, thunders, and trumpet-blasts, -it was no less fitting that it should go out amid similar phenomena, fearful sights and great signs from heaven.' Had the true significance and grandeur of the event been better apprehended by expositors, they would not have found the language in which it is depicted by our Lord extravagant or overstrained. (14)

We are now prepared to enter upon the more particular examination of the contents of this prophetic discourse ; which we shall endeavour to do as concisely as possible.

Footnotes

- 1. Life of Christ, sec. 239.
- 2. Life of Christ, sec. 256.
- 3. Lange on St. Matt. p. 388.
- 4. Alford, Greek Test. in loc.
- 5. Life of Christ, sec. 253, note n.
- 6. Life of Christ, sec. 253, note m.
- 7. Tischendorf rejects ver. 14,

which is omitted by Cod. Sin. and Vat.

- 8. See Dorner's tractae, De Oratione Christi Eschatologica, p. 41.
- 9. Dorner, Orat. Chris. Esch. p. 43
- 10. Comm. on Matt. p. 416
- 11. Lange, Comm. on Matt. p. 418
- 12. Stier. Red. Jes. vol. iii. 251.
- 13. See Note A, Part I., on the Double-sense Theory of Interpretation

14. The termination of the Jewish aion in the first century, and of the Roman in the fifth and sixth, were each marked by the same concurrence of calamities,

occurred in the history of mankind. It made a new world wars, tumults, pestilences, earthquakes, &c., all marking moral convulsion-, see Niebuhr, Leben's Nachrichten,

THE PROPHECY ON THE MOUNT EXAMINED

I. - The Interrogatory of the Disciples

Matt. xxiv. 1-3.

'And Jesus went and departed from the temple: with his disciples came to join for to shew him all the buildings of the temple.

Mark xiii. 1-4.

'And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, what manner of stones and what buildings are here!

Luke xxi. 5-7.

'And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones, and gifts, he said,

'As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

' 'And they asked Him, saying, , Master, but when shall these things

say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.

'And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto

buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

'And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and

' And Jesus answering said unto them, Seest

' And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I thou these great him privately, saying, Andrew asked him be, ? and what sign will Tell us, when shall privately, 'Tell us, when there be when these these thins be? and shall these things be? things shall come to what shall be the sign and what shall be the pass?' of thy coming, and of sign when all these the end of the world' things shall be fulfilled? [age] ?

We may conceive the surprise and consternation felt by the disciples when Jesus announced to them the utter destruction which Was coming upon the temple of God, the beauty and splendour of which had excited their admiration. it is no marvel that four of their number, who seem to have been admitted to more intimate familiarity than the rest, sought for fuller information

On a subject so intensely interesting. The only point deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall that requires elucidation here refers to the extent of be beaten : and ye shall be brought before rulers and their interrogatory. St. Mark and St. Luke represent it as kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. 10 And having reference to the *time* of the predicted catastrophe the gospel must first be published among all nations. 11 and the sign of As fulfilment coming to pass. St. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take Matthew varies the form of the question, but evidently no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do gives the same sense, -- 'Tell us, when shall these things ve premeditate : but whatsoever shall be given you in be ? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak , but end of the age?' Here again it is the time and the sign the Holy Ghost. 12 Now the brother shall betray the which form the subject of inquiry. There is no reason brother to death, and the father the son; and children whatever to suppose that they regarded in their own shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them minds the destruction of the temple, the coming of the to be put to death . 13 And ye shall be hated of all men Lord, and the end of the age, as three distinct or widely for my name's sake : but he that shall endure unto the separated events; but, on the contrary, it is most natural end, the same shall be saved. to suppose that they regarded them as coincident and 8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived : contemporaneous. What precise idea-, they entertained for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; respecting the end of the age and the events therewith and the time draweth near : go ye not therefore after connected, we do not know; but we do know that they them. 9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, had been accustomed to hear their Master speak of His be not terrified : for these things must first come to pass coming again ill His kingdom, coming in His glory, ; but the end is not by and by. 10 Then said he unto and that within the lifetime of some among themselves. them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom They hall also heard Him speak of the 'end of the age ; against kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes shall be in ' and they evidently connected His ' coming ' with the divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful end of the three points embraced in file form of their sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. 12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, question, is given by St. Matthew, were therefore in their view contemporaneous; and thus we find no practical and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, difference in the terms of the question of the disciples and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers as recorded by the three Synoptists. for my name's sake. 13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony. 14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer : 15 For I will give II.--Our Lord's Answer to the Disciples you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. 16 And ye shall be (a) Events which more remotely were to precede the betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, consummation. and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put Matt. xxiv. 4-14. to death . 17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my 'And Jesus answered and said unto the, Take heed name's sake. 18 But there shall not an hair of your head that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my

perish. 19 In your patience possess ye your souls. name,

Mark xiii. 5-13.

Luke xxi. 8-19.

5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you: 6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. 7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled : for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. 8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows. 9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall

THE PAROSIA IN THE GOSPELS

It is impossible to read this section and fail to perceive its distinct reference to the period between our Lord's crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem. Every word is spoken to the disciples, and to them alone. To imagine that the 'ye' and 'you ' in this address apply, not to the disciples to whom Christ wits speaking, but to some unknown and yet non-existent persons in it far distant age, is so preposterous a supposition is not to deserve serious notice.

That our Lord's words were fully verified during- the interval, between His crucifixion and the end of the age, we have the most ample testimony. False Christs and false prophets began to make their appearance at it very

the land down to the very close, of Jewish history. In the procuratorship of Pilate (A.D. 36), one such appeared Paul for such a universal diffusion Of tile gospel in his in Samaria, and deluded great multitudes. There was another in the procuratorship of Cuspius Fadus (A.D. 6, 23.) But for this explicit testimony ' from all apostle 45). During the government of Felix (53-60), Josephus if, would have been impossible to persuade some tells us 'the country was full of robbers, magicians, false expositors that our Lord's words had been in any sense prophets, false Messiahs, and impostors' who deluded fulfilled previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, it the People with promises of great events."

(1) The same authority informs its that civil commotions and international feuds, were rife in those reasonably be urged. days, especially between the Jews and their neighbours. In Alexandria, in Selucia, in Syria, in Babylonia, there were violent tumults between the Jews and the indicative of our Lord's coming: 'Verily I say unto you, Greeks, the Jews and the Syrians, inhabiting, the same cities. 'Every city was divided,' says Josephus, 'into two camps.' In the reign of Caligula great apprehensions were entertained in Judea of war with the Romans, in 14), we may see the perfect consistency of the two consequence of that tyrant's proposal to place his statue statements, and also the 'terminus ad quem' in both. In in the temple. In the reign of the Emperor Claudis (A.D. (41-54), there were four seasons of great scarcity. In the fourth year of his reign the famine in Judea was so severe, that the price of food became enormous and great numbers perished. Earthquakes occurred in each of the reigns of Caligula and Claudius.

(2) Such calamities, the Lord gave His disciples to understand, would precede the 'end.' But they were not its immediate antecedents. They were the 'beginning of language employed by Paul, as well as by our Lord in a the end; 'but 'the end is not yet.'

general to the particular; from the public to tile personal ; from the fortunes of nations and kingdoms to the empire, is sufficient to justify the prediction of our Lord. fortunes of the disciples themselves. While these events were proceeding, the apostles were to become objects of relating to a particular event, and spoken of and to suspicion to tile ruling powers. They were to be brought before councils, rulers, and kings, imprisoned, beaten in the synagogues, and hated of all men for Jesus' sake,

How exactly all this was verified in the personal experience of the disciples we may read in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of St. Paul. Yet the and convulsions. divine promise of protection ill the hour of peril was remarkably fulfilled. With the single exception of 'James the brother of John,' no apostle seems to have fallen a victim to the malignant persecution of their enemies tip to the close of the apostolic history, as recorded in the Acts (A.D. 63).

One other sign was to precede and usher in the consummation. 'The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world [oi.koume,ne] for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come? We have

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early period of the, Christian era, and continued to infest already adverted to the fulfilment of this prediction within the apostolic age. We have the authority of St. days as to verify the saving of Our Lord. (See Col. 1. would have been regarded as mere extravagance, and rhodomontade. -Now, however, the objection cannot

Here it may be proper to call to mind the note of time, given on a previous occasion to the disciples as Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come' (Matt. x. 23). Comparing this declaration with the prediction before us (Matt. xxiv. the one ease it is the evangelisation of the land of Israel, in the other, the evangelisation of the Roman empire that is referred to as the precursor of the Parousia. Both statements are true. It might well occupy the space of a generation to carry the glad tidings into every city in the land of Israel. The apostles had not too much time for their home mission, though they had upon their hands so vast a foreign mission. Obviously, we must take the popular sense and it would be unfair to press it to the At this point (ver. 9-13), our Lord passes from the extremity of the letter. The wide diffusion of the gospel both in the land of Israel and throughout the Roman

Thus far Own we have one continuous discourse, particular persons. We find four signs, or sets of signs, which were to portend the approach of the great catastrophe.

1. The appearance of false Christs and false prophets.

2. Great social disturbances and natural calamities

3. Persecution of the disciples and apostasy of professed believers.

4. The general publication of the gospel throughout the Roman empire. This last sign especially betokened the near approach of the 'end.'

(b) Further indications of the approaching doom of Ierusalem

Matt. xxiv. 15-22

'When ye therefore shall see the abomination of

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desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the Judea,-' this people ' is the people of Israel,-and the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then time the lifetime of the disciples,--' When YE therefore let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let Shall See.' him which is on the housetop not come down to take Most expositors find an allusion to the standards of any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the Roman legions in the expression, "the abomination the field return back to take his clothes. of desolation" and the explanation is highly probable. 'And woe unto them that are with child, and to them The eagles were the objects of religious worship to the that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight soldiers; and the parallel passage in St. Luke is all but conclusive evidence that this is the true meaning. We be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the know from Josephus that the attempt

beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall days shall be shortened.

'But woe unto them that are with child, and to them be. And except those days should be shortened, there that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those distress in the land, reference of this section to of a Roman general (Vitellius), in the reign of Tiberius, to Mark xiii. 14-20. march his troops through Judea, was resisted by the 'But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, Jewish authorities, on the ground that the idolatrous spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it images on their ensigns would be a profanation of the ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let law. (3) How much greater the profanation when those them that be in Judea flee to the mountains: And let idolatrous emblems were displayed in full view of the him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, temple and the Holy City ! This was the last token which neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house: portended that the hour of doom for Jerusalem had And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to come. Its appearance was to he the. signal to all in Judea take up his garment. to escape beyond the mountains for then would ensue Luke xxi. 20-20. a period of misery and horror without a parallel in the And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with annals of time.

armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

That the 'great tribulation' (Matt. xxiv. 21) has express 'Then let them which are in Judea flee to the reference to the dreadful calamities attending the siege of Jerusalem, which bore With such peculiar severity on the female sex, is too evident to be questioned. That those calamities were literally unparalleled, can easily be believed by all who have read the ghastly narrative 'But woe to them that are with child, and to them in the pages of Josephus. It is remarkable that the historian begins his account of the Jewish war with the affirmation, 'that the aggregate of human woes from the beginning of the world, would, in his opinion, be light in comparison with those of the Jews., (4)

mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. that give suck in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon the people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the The following graphic description introduces the Gentiles be fulfilled.

And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For repast may have been in our Saviour's thoughts when in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from he uttered the words recorded in Matt, xxiv. 19: the beginning of the and wrath upon this creation which 'Incalculable was the multitude of those who God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except perished in famine in the city -, and beyond description that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should the sufferings they endured. In every house, if anywhere be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, there appeared but the shadow of food, a conflict ensued he hath shortened the days. ; those united by the tenderest ties fiercely contending,

No argument is required to prove the strict and and snatching from one another the miserable supports exclusive Jerusalem and Judea. Here we can detect no of life. Nor were even the dying allowed the credit of trace of it double meaning, of primary and ulterior being in want; nay, even those who were just expiring fulfilments, of underlying and typical senses. Everything the brigands would search, lest, any, with food concealed is national, local, and near :- 'the land ' is the land of under a fold of his garment, should feign death. Gaping

tragic story of the wretched mother, whose horrible

to and fro and prowling about assailing the doors like other period. The narrative is perfectly homogeneous drunken men, and in bewilderment rushing into the and consecutive, and flows on without diverging to the same house twice, or thrice in one hour. The cravings of right hand or to the left. nature led them to gnaw anything, and what would be rejected by the Very filthiest or the brute creation they now before us. The very first word is indicative of were fain to collect and eat. Even from their belts and continuity Then [To,te] rid every succeeding word shoes they were at length unable to refrain, and they tore off find chewed the very leather of their shields. To some, wisps of old hay served for food ; for the fibres our Lord gives them intimation of what would shortly were gathered, and the smallest quantities sold for four come to pass, or at least what they might live to witness Attic pieces.

⁶ But why speak of the famine as despising restraint in the use of inanimate, When I am about to state an instance of it to which, in the history of Greeks or Barbarians, no parallel is to be found, and which is horrible to relate, and is incredible to hear? Gladly, indeed would I have omitted to mention the occurrence, lest I Should be thought by future generations to deal in the marvellous, had I not innumerable witnesses among my contemporaries. I should, besides, pay my country but a cold compliment, were I to suppress the narration historian states: of the woes which she actually suffered.⁽⁵⁾

to befall the Jews in the siege, and not any subsequent events it the end of time, is perfectly clear from the closing words of ver. 21-' No, nor ever shall be.'

(c) The disciples warned against false prophets

Matt. xxiv. 23-28.

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Mark xiii. 21-23.

And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

As yet we have found no break in the continuity of the discourse, - not the faintest indication that any

with hunger, as maddened dogs, they went staggering transition has taken place to any other subject or any

The same is equally true with respect to the section is plainly addressed to the disciples themselves, for their personal warning and guidance. It is clear that with their own eyes. It is a vivid representation of what actually occurred in the last days of the Jewish commonwealth. The unhappy Jews, and especially the people of Jerusalem, were buoyed up with false hopes by the specious impostors who infested the land and brought ruin upon their miserable dupes. Such was the infatuation produced by the boasting pretensions of these impostors, that, as we learn from Josephus, when the temple was actually in flames a vast multitude of the deluded people fell victims to their credulity. The Jewish

'Of so great a multitude, not one escaped. Their That our Lord had in view the horrors which were destruction Was caused by a false prophet, who hall on that day proclaimed to those remaining in the city, that "God commanded them to go up to the temple, there to receive the signs of their deliverance." There were at this time many prophets suborned by the tyrants to delude the people, by bidding them wait for help from God, in order that there might be less desertion, and that those who were above fear and control might be encouraged by hope. Under calamities man readily yields to persuasion but when the deceiver pictures to him deliverance from pressing evils, then the sufferer is wholly influenced by hope. Thus it was that the before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he impostors and pretended messengers of heaven at that time beguiled the wretched people., (6)

> Our Lord forewarns His disciples that His coming to that judgment- scene would be conspicuous and sudden as the lightning-flash, which reveals itself and seems to be everywhere at the, same moment. 'For,' He adds, ' wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together; that is, wherever the guilty and devoted children of Israel were found, there the destroying ministers of wrath, the Roman legions, -would overwhelm them.

(d) The arrival of the 'end,' or the catastrophe of Jerusalem

Matt. xxiv. 29 31.

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Immediately after the tribulation of those days limitation to the land of Israel is obvious. This is the Zech. xii. 12--'All the families [tribes] of the land,'- where And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in its restricted sense is obvious and undisputed. The two passages are in fact exactly parallel, and nothing could be more misleading than to understand the phrase as including 'all the races of the earth.' The structure of the discourse, then, inflexibly resists the supposition of a change of subject. Time, place, circumstances, all continue the same. It is therefore with unfeigned Mark xiii. 24-27 wonder that we find Dean Alford commenting in the But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall following fashion : ' All the difficulty which this word [immediately - e.uqe,wj) has been supposed to involve has arisen from confounding, the fulfilment of the prophecy with it's ultimate one. The important insertion And then shall they see the Son of man coming in ver. 23,24, in Luke xxi. shows us that be " tribulation " [qliyij] includes o.rgh. e,n tw/ law tou,tw (wrath And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather upon this people), which is yet being inflicted, and the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, still going on; and immediately after that tribulation, which shall happen when the cup of Gentile iniquity is full, and when Luke x xi. 25-28. this gospel shall have hem preached it all the world for a And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, witness, and rejected by the Gentiles, shall the coming of the, Lord Himself happen. . . . (The expression in Mark is equally indicative of a considerable interval -- in those days after that tribulation.) The fact of His coming and its attendant circumstances being known to Him, but

shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give view adopted by Dr. Campbell and Moses Stuart, and it powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in the clouds with great power and glory. uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those

her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the is indeed self- evident. We find a similar expression in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they one end of heaven to the other. be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And heaven shall be shaken. together his elect from the four winds, from the heaven. and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of

heaven shall be shaken. the exact time unknown, He speaks without regard to

And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the interval, which would be, employed in His waiting a cloud with power and great glory. And when these till all things are put under His feet, etc. (7) things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up It may be said that in this comment there are almost

your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. as many errors as words. Indeed, it is not the explanation Here also the phraseology absolutely forbids the idea of a prophecy so much as an independent prophecy of of any transition from the subject in hand to another. the commentator himself. First, there is the groundless There is nothing to indicate that the scene has shifted, hypothesis of it double sense, it *partial* and an *ultimate* or a new topic been introduced. The section before, us fulfilment, for which there is no foundation in the text, connects itself most distinctly with the 'great tribulation' but which is a mere arbitrary and gratuitous supposition. spoken of in ver. 21 of Matt. xxiv., and it is inadmissible Next, we have it 'tribulation,' not 'shortened,' as the Lord to suppose any interval of time in the face of the adverb declares, but protracted so as be 'still going on' in the ' immediately ' But the scene of the 'great tribulation' is present day. Then the word 'immediately ' is made to undeniably Jerusalem and Judea (ver. 15, 16), so that no refer to a period not yet come, so that between ver. 28 break in the subject of the discourse is allowable. Again, and ver. 29, where the unassisted eye can perceive no in ver. 30, we read that 'all the tribes of the land shall trace of any line of transition, the critic intercalates an mourn,' referring evidently to the population of the land immense period of more than eighteen centuries, with of Judea; and nothing can be more forced and unnatural the possibility of an indefinite duration in addition. Still than to make it include, as Lange does, 'all the races and further we have an implied contradiction of St. Paul's peoples' of the globe. The restricted sense of the word statement that the gospel was preached 'in all the world' (gh) [=land] in the New Testament is common ; and (Col. i. v. 23), and the assumption that the gospel is to when connected, as it is here, with the word 'tribes', its be rejected by the Gentiles. Then the commentator finds

he expressly says In *those very days* after that tribulation' [en ekeinaij taij hmeraij meta thn glivin ekeinhn] -precluding the possibility of any interval at all, and lastly we have what appears like an apology for the this passage is almost identical with that of our Lord. If veracity of the prediction, on the ground that our Lord, not, knowing the exact time when His coming would take place, ' speaks without regard to the, interval,' etc.

It is obvious, that if this is the way in which Scripture is to be interpreted, the ordinary laws of exegesis must the desolation of Bozrah, the capital of Edom, in the be thrown aside as useless. He is the best interpreter who following language : is the boldest guesser. Is there any ancient book which liberties were taken with Homer or Plato ? Would it not have been a mockery to propound such riddles to the disciples as an answer to their question, 'When shall these things be ?

How could they know of partial and ultimate fulfilments, and double senses? and what effect could be produced in their minds, but titter perplexity and bewilderment? We cannot help protesting against such treatment of the words of Scripture, as not only unscholarly and uncritical, but in the highest degree presumptuous and irreverent. But, it is answered, Lord 'to judge and punish Samaria and Jerusalem -- a the character of our Lord's language in this passage necessitates. As application to a grand and awful catastrophe which is still future, and can be properly understood of nothing less than the total dissolution of the fabric of the universe, and the mid of all things. How can any one pretend it is said, that the sun has been darkened, that the moon has withdrawn her light, that the stars have fallen from heaven, that the Son of *waters that arc poured down a steep place'* (*Micah i. 3, 4*). man has been seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory ? Did such phenomena occur at the destruction of Jerusalem, or can they apply to anything else than the Enid consummation of all things?

To argue in this strain is to lose sight of the very nature and genius of prophecy. Symbol and metaphor belong to the grammar of prophecy, as every reader of the Old Testament prophets must know. Is it not reasonable that the doom of Jerusalem should be depicted in language as glowing and rhetorical as the destruction of Babylon, or Bozrah, or Tyre? How then does the prophet Isaiah set forth by convulsion; and cataclysms in the natural de scribe the downfall of Babylon ?

'Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel tooth with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate : and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of a. For Me skin of *heaven and the constellations thereof shall not their light* : the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, awl /he on the figurative language of Scripture are judicious.

that St. Mark suggests a 'considerable interval,' whereas moon shall not cause her light to shine. . . . I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place' (Isa. xiii. 9. 10, 13).

> It will at once be seen that the imagery employed in these symbols therefore were proper to represent the fall of Babylon why should they be improper to set forth a still greater catastrophe -- the destruction of Jerusalem ?

Take another example. The prophet Isaiah announces

' *The mountains shall be melted with the blood of the* a grammarian would treat after this fashion? Would it *slain.... All the host of heaven shall be dissolved and the* not be pronounced intolerable and uncritical if such heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll : and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from mv vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold it - shall come down upon *Idumea*, *etc.* (*Isa. xxxiv.* 4, 5.)

> Here again we have the very imagery used by our Lord in His prophetic discourse ; And if the fate of Bozrah might properly be described in language so lofty, why should it be thought extravagant to employ similar terms in describing the fate of Jerusalem ?

Again, the prophet Micah speaks of a 'coming of the coming to judgment which had unquestionably taken place long before our Saviour's time, -- and in what magnificent diction does he represent this scene !

'Behold, the Lord cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high Oar, of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be as wax before the fire, and as Me

It would be easy to multiply examples of this characteristic quality of prophetic diction. Prophecy is of the nature of poetry, and depicts events, not in the prosaic style of the historian, but in the glowing imagery of the poet. Add to this that the Bible does not speak with the cold logical correctness of the Western peoples, but with the tropical fervour of the, gorgeous East. Yet it would be improper to call such language extravagant or overcharged. The moral grandeur of the events which such symbols represent may be most fitly world. Nor is it necessary to construct a grammar of symbolology and End an analogue for every sacred hieroglyphic, by which to translate each particular metaphor into its proper equivalent, for this would be to turn prophecy into allegory. The following observations

What is grand in nature is used to express what is heads; for your redemption draweth nigh' (Luke xxi. dignified and important among men, ---the heavenly 28). Were not these words spoken to the disciples, who bodies, mountains, stately trees, kingdoms or those listened to the discourse ? Did they not apply to them ? in authority. . . . Political changes are represented by Is there anywhere even a suspicion that they were meant earthquakes, tempests, eclipses, the turning of waters for another audience, thousands of years distant, and and seas into blood? (8) not for the eager group who drank in the words of Jesus The conclusion then to which we are irresistibly ? Surely such a hypothesis carries its own refutation in its very front.

led, is, that the imagery employed by our lord in His prophetic discourse is not inappropriate to the But, its if to preclude even the possibility of dissolution of the Jewish state and polity which took misconception or mistake, our Lord in the next place at the destruction of Jerusalem. It is appropriate, paragraph draws around His prophecy a line so plain both as it is in keeping with the acknowledged style and palpable, shutting it wholly within a limit so definite and distinct, that it ought to be decisive of the whole of the ancient prophets, and also because the moral grandeur of the event is such as to justify the use of such question. language in this particular case.

But we may go further than this, and affirm that away of the existing generation. it is not only appropriate as applied to the destruction Matt. xxiv. 32-31. of Jerusalem, but that this is its true and exclusive Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch application. We find no vestige of an intimation that our is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that Lord had any ulterior and occult signification in view. summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all But we do find that there is scarcely a feature in this these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. sublime and awful description which He Himself had Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, not already anticipated, and fixed in its application to till all these things be fulfilled. a particular event and a particular time. Let the reader Mark xiii. 28-30. carefully compare the description in the passage before Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her us, of 'the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know with power and great glory' (Matt. xxiv. 30) (9), with that summer is near: So ye in like manner, when ye shall our Lord's declaration (Matt. xvi. 27)- 'For the Son see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his at the doors. angels,'- an event which He expressly affirms would be Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not witnessed by some of His disciples then living. Again, pass, till all these things be done. the sending forth of His angels to gather together His Luke xxi. 29-32. elect, corresponds exactly with the representation of And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, what would take place in the 'harvest,' at the end of and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and the won, as described in the parables of the tares and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at the dragnet (Matt. xii. 41-50)- 'The Son of man shall hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. kingdom all things that offend, and them which do Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass iniquity. 'So shall it be at the end of the age [won]: the away, till all be fulfilled. angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from Words have no meaning if this language, uttered on among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace so solemn an occasion, and so precise and express in its of fire.' Here the prophecy and the parable represent import, does not affirm the near approach of the great the self- same scene, the self-same period : they alike event which occupies the -whole discourse of our Lord. speak of the close of the won or age, not of the end of First, the parable of the fig-tree intimates that as the the world, or material universe; and they alike speak of buds on the trees betoken the near approach of summer, that great judicial epoch as *at hand*. How plainly does so the signs which He had just specified would betoken St. Luke, in his record of the prophecy on the Mount of that the predicted consummation was at hand. They, the Olives, represent the great catastrophe as falling within disciples to whom He was speaking, were to see them, the lifetime of the disciples : 'And when these things and when they saw them to recognise that the end was ' begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your

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(e) The Parousia to take place before the passing

near, even at the doors.' Next, our Lord sums up with an affirmation calculated to remove every vestige of doubt or uncertainty,

'Verily i say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

One would reasonably suppose that after a note of time so clear and express there could not be room for controversy. Our Lord Himself has settled the question. Ninety-nine persons in every hundred would undoubtedly understand His words as meaning that the predicted catastrophe would fall within the limits of the lifetime of the existing generation. Not that *all* would probably live to witness it, but that *most* or many would. There can be no question that this would be the interpretation which the disciples would place upon the words. Unless, therefore, our Lord intended to mystify His disciples, He gave them plainly to understand that His coining, the judgment of the Jewish nation, and the xi. 16.) Here it is admitted by Lange and Stier that the close of the age, would come to pass before the existing generation had -wholly passed away, and within the limits of their own lifetime. This, as we have already seen, was no new idea, but one which on several occasions He sign.' 'The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment had previously expressed.

Far, however, from accepting this decision of our Lord as final, the commentators have violently resisted that which seems the natural and common-sense meaning of His words. They have insisted that because the events predicted did Hot so come, to pass in that generation, therefore the word generation (genea) cannot possibly mean, what it is usually understood to mean, the people of that particular age or period, the contemporaries of our Lord. To affirm that these things did not conic to pass is to beg the question, and something more.

But we submit that it is the business of grammarians not to be apprehensive of possible consequences, but to settle the true meaning of words. Our Lord's predictions may be safely left to take care of themselves; it is for us to try to understand them.

It is contended by many that in this place the word genea should be rendered 'race, or nation; ' and that our Lord's words mean no more than that the Jewish race or nation Should Hot pass away, or perish, until the predictions which He had just uttered had come to pass. This is the meaning which Lange, Stier, Alford, and many other expositors attach to the word, and it is maintained with conspicuous ability and copious learning by Dorner in his tractate, 'Do Oratione Christi Eschatologica.' It is true, no doubt, that the word genea,

like most others, has different shades of meaning, and that sometimes, in the Septuagint and in classic authors it may refer to a nation or a race. But we think that it is demonstrable without any shadow of doubt that the expression ' this generation,' so often employed by our Lord, always refers solely and exclusively to His contemporaries, the Jewish people of His own period. It might safely be left to the candid judgment of every reader, whether a Greek Scholar or not, whether this is Hot so: but as the point is one of great importance, it may be desirable to adduce the proofs of this assertion.

1. In our Lord's final address to the people, delivered on the same day as this discourse on the Mount of Olives, He declared, ' All these things shall come upon this generation ' (Matt xxiii. 36). No commentator has ever proposed to understand this as referring to any other than the *existing* generation.

2. 'Whereunto shall I liken this generation?' (Matt. word refers to ' the then existing last generation of Israel '(*Lange, in loc.* Stier, vol ii. 98).

3. 'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a with *this generation*.' 'The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation.' Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation '(Matt. xii. 39, 41, 42, 45).

In these four passages Dorner endeavours to make out That our Lord is not speaking of His contemporaries, the men of His own period, ' For,' be says, 'the Gentiles ' (the Ninevites and the Queen of the South) 'are opposed to the Jews; therefore "this generation " [h, genea. a[uth] 'must signify the nation or race of the Jews' (Dorner, Orat. Chr. Esch., p. 81). His argument, however, is not convincing. Surely the generation which sought after a sign was the *then existing generation*; and can it be supposed that it was against any other generation than that which had resisted such preaching as that of John the Baptist and of Christ that the Gentiles were to rise up in the judgment? There is only one interpretation of our Lord's language possible, and it is that which refers His words to His own perverse and unbelieving contemporaries.

4. 'That the blood of all the prophets . . . may be required of *this generation*.' 'It shall be required of *this* generation '(Luke xi. 50, 51).

Here Dorner himself admits that it is of *the existing* generation (hoc ipsum hominum avum) that these words are spoken (p. 41).

5. 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of me in this

adulterous and sinful generation' (Mark viii. 38). to the blood of Zacharias, should be required of that 6. ' The Son of man must be rejected of this generation (Matt. xxiii. 35, 36). It was, therefore, of that generation (Luke xvii. 25). It is only necessary to quote generation that He spoke. It should never be forgotten these passages in order to determine their sole reference that there was a speciality about that generation. It to the particular generation that rejected the Messiah. was the last and worst of all the generations of Israel, These are all the examples in which the expression inheriting the guilt of all its predecessors, and was about 'this generation' occurs in the sayings of our Lord, to be visited with signal and un- paralleled judgments. and they establish beyond all reasonable question the Whether the predicted catastrophe came to pass is another question, which will come to be considered in reference of the words in the important declaration now before us. But suppose that we were to adopt its proper place. (10)

the rendering proposed, and take genea as meaning a Other interpretations which have been suggested, race, what point or significance would there be in the as 'the human race,' 'the generation of the righteous,' prediction then ? Can any one believe that the assertion and 'the generation of the wicked,' do not require so solemnly made by our Lord, 'Verily I say unto you,' consideration. etc., Amounts to no more than this, 'The Hebrew race A word or two may be needful respecting the length shall not become extinct till all these things be fulfilled of time covered by a generation. Of course, it is not an exact measure of time, like a decade or a century, but has '? Imagine a prophet in our own times predicting a great catastrophe in which London would be destroyed, St. a certain indefiniteness or elasticity, yet within certain Paul's and the Houses of Parliament levelled with the limits, say between thirty and forty years. In the book of ground, and a fearful slaughter of the inhabitants be Numbers we find that the generation which provoked perpetrated; and that when asked, 'When shall these the Lord to exclude them from the land of Canaan, and were doomed to fall in the wilderness, were to die out in things come to pass ? ' he should reply, 'The Anglothe space of forty years. In the ninety-fifth psalm we read, Saxon race shall not become extinct till all these things be fulfilled' ! Would this be a satisfactory answer ? ' Forty years long was I grieved with this generation.' In the genealogical table given by St. Matthew we have Would not such an answer be considered derogatory to data for estimating the length of a generation. We there the prophet, and an affront to his hearers? Would they not have reason to say, 'It is safe prophesying when the find that 'from the carrying" away into Babylon unto event is placed at an interminable distance ! ' But the Christ are fourteen generations' (Matt. 1. 17). Now the bare supposition of such a sense in our Lord's prediction date of the captivity, in the reign of Zedekiah, is said shows itself to be a *reductio ad absurdum*. Was it for this to be circa B.C. 586, which, divided by fourteen, gives that the disciples were to wait and watch ? Was this the forty-one years and a fraction as the average length of lesson son that the budding fig- tree taught? Was it not each generation. The Jewish war under Nero broke Out until the Jewish race was about to become extinct that A.D. 66, and assuming our Lord to have been about they were to 'look up, and lift up their beads '? Such a thirty-three years of age at the time of His crucifixion, hypothesis is its own refutation. this would give a space of about thirty-three years when We fall back, therefore, upon the only tenable and the signs betokening the approach of 'the end' would ' possible interpretation, and understand our Lord to begin to come to pass.' The destruction of the temple mean, what in so many words He says, that the events and city of Jerusalem took place in September A.D. 70, specified in His prediction would assuredly come to pass that is, about thirty-seven years after the prophecy of before the existing generation had wholly passed away. the Mount of Olives, a space of time that amply satisfies This is the only interpretation which the words will the requirements of the case. It is neither so short as to bear; every other involves a wresting of language, and a make it inappropriate to say, 'This generation shall not violence to the understanding. Besides, it is in harmony pass away, etc., nor so long as to throw it beyond the with the uniform teaching of our Saviour. He had long lifetime of many who might have seen and heard the before assured His disciples that some of them should Saviour, or of the disciples themselves.

'That generation' would indeed be then passing away, live to witness His return in glory (Matt. xvi. 27, 28).

He had told them that before they had completed but it would not have wholly passed. their apostolic mission to the cities of Israel the Son of (f) Certainty of the consummation, yet uncertainty man should come (Matt. x. 23). He had declared that all of its precise date the blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel

Matt. xxiv. 35, 36.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth

Mark xiii. 31, 32.

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not

Luke xxi. 33.

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away, no man, no, not the angels which are in angels of heaven, but heaven, neither the Son, my Father only but the Father.

Although our Lord has defined the limits of the time within which the predicted consummation would take place, yet a certain amount of indefiniteness remains respecting the moment of its arrival. He does not specify the exact date, the 'hour, or the day,' or even the month or the year. This does not mean that the whole question of time is left unsettled: it refers merely to the precise date. The consummation was to fall within the term of the existing generation, but the particular hour when the knell of doom should sound was not revealed to man, nor angel, nor (what is stranger still) to the Son of man Himself. It was the secret which the Father kept 'in His own power.' There were doubtless sufficient reasons for this reserve. To have specified 'the day and the hour'-to have said, 'In the seven and-thirtieth year, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning : lest coming in the sixth month and the eighth day of the month, the city shall be taken and the temple burnt with fire I say unto all, Watch.' '-would not only have been inconsistent with the manner of prophecy, but would have taken away one of the strongest inducements to constant watchfulness and prayer-the uncertainty of the precise time.

(g) Suddenness of the Parousia, and calls to watchfulness

Matt. xxiv. 37-42.

Luke xvii. 26-37.

But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until

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the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

Matt. xxiv. 42.

Mark xiii. 33-5.

' Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

'Watch ye therefore : for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you,

Luke xxi. 34-6.

'And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth [land].

'Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. '

'Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. '

All the representations given by our Lord of the coming catastrophe and its concomitant events imply that it would take men by surprise. As the deluge came suddenly upon the antediluvians, and the storm of fire and brimstone on the cities of the plain, so the final catastrophe would overtake Jerusalem and Judea at an unexpected hour, when the business and the pleasure of life occupied men's hands and hearts. In Luke xvii. we have the fullest record of our Lord's discourse on this point. Whether the passage in St. Luke has been

In all this we observe the continuation of that transposed by him from its original connection, or whether our Lord uttered the same words on separate direct personal address which proves that our Lord was occasions, does not particularly concern ushere. Neander speaking to His disciples of that in which they were is of opinion that 'Luke gives the natural connection of personally concerned. There is not the faintest hint that these words,' and that in St. Matthew 'they are placed there was an undercurrent of meaning in His words, with many other similar passages referring to the last and that when He said 'Jerusalem,' and 'this generation,' crisis? (11) We doubt this ; but, waiving this question, and 'ye,' He meant ' the world,' and ' distant ages,' and one thing is indubitable, viz., that both St. Matthew and 'disciples yet unborn.' St. Luke describe the same thing, the self-same period, At this point St. Mark and St. Luke close their record the self-same catastrophe. It is surprising to find Alford of the prophecy on the Mount of Olives, and it cannot be asserting, in regard to the passage in St. Luke, ' There is denied that their ending here is natural and appropriate. not a word in all this of the destruction of Jerusalem.' It We have in the Gospel of St. Matthew, however, a series would be more correct to say, 'Every word here is of the of parables appended to our Lord's discourse, such as He was accustomed to employ in teaching the people. destruction of Jerusalem. Observe the note of *time* so distinctly marked by our Lord: ' But first must he suffer It strikes us as somewhat singular that our Lord should many things, and be rejected of this generation' (Luke speak in parables to His disciples, especially on such xvii. 25). What other catastrophe belongs to the period an occasion; and there is not a little to be said for the opinion of Neander, that ' it was peculiar to the editor of that generation which could fitly be compared with the destruction of the antediluvian world by a flood of of our Greek Matthew to arrange together congenial water, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by sayings of Christ, though uttered at different times and in different relations. We need not therefore wonder if a deluge of fire ? From the certainty and suddenness of the we find it impossible to draw the lines of distinction approaching consummation our Lord draws the lesson in this discourse with entire accuracy; nor need such which He impresses on His disciples, -the necessity for It result lead us to forced interpretations, inconsistent vigilance. Here He first utters the admonition which with truth, and with the love of truth. It is much easier from that time never ceased to be the watchword of to make such distinctions in Luke's account (chap. His disciples throughout the apostolic age, 'Watch xxi.), though even that is not without its difficulties. and pray! 'We shall find how constantly and urgently In comparing Matthew and Luke together, however, this call was addressed by the Apostles to the faithful we can trace the origin of most of these difficulties to in their day, and how it is continually repeated, down the blending of different portions together, when the to the latest moment that we catch the sound of an

discourses of Christ were arranged in collections? (13) apostolic -voice. This watchfulness was essential to the But without discussing this question, it is very safety of the followers of Christ, for so sudden would evident that the parables recorded by St. Matthew in be the catastrophe that it would overtake the unready connection with this discourse, even if not originally and unwary, as birds that are caught in a net. 'For as a spoken on this particular occasion, are strictly germane snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face to the subject; while, if this be their true place in the of the whole land (pashi thi ghi) - words which plainly narrative, their bearing on the matter in hand is still intimate the local character of the event. more close and intimate.

We have a striking commentary on this passage in the history of Josephus. Accounting for the prodigious numbers slaughtered in the siege of Jerusalem, -one million one hundred thousand, -he says, 'Of these the greater proportion were of Jewish blood, though not natives of the place. Having assembled from the whole country for the feast of unleavened bread, they were suddenly hemmed in by the war. On this occasion the whole nation had been shut up as in a prison, by fate; and the war encircled the city when it was crowded with, men.' (12) A more exact verification of our Lord's prediction (Luke xxi. 35) it is impossible to conceive.

THE PAROSIA IN THE GOSPELS

We now proceed to consider the parables and parabolic sayings of our Lord recorded in connection with this prophecy, chiefly by St. Matthew.

(h) The disciples warned of the suddenness of the Parousia

Parable of the Goodman of the House

Matt. xxiv. 43-51.

But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house

an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in Luke, gave rise to the concluding remarks of our Lord, due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

'But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he as St. Luke tells us, Jesus was speaking to His disciples looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware in the presence of a great multitude (Luke xii. 1). It is of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Mark xiii. 34-37.

'For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Luke xii. 39-46.

'And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, of this parable, if it may be so called, of the goodman that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

'But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is him his portion with the unbelievers.

'Watch ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch therefore: for ye It will be seen that this parabolic saying of our Lord is recorded in quite different connections by St. Matthew and St. Luke. The verbal resemblance, however, is too exact to render it probable that it was spoken on two different occasions. The slightest attention will satisfy the reader that St. Luke's report is

to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such the more full and circumstantial, and that be assigns to it its true chronological position. This appears from the fact that the question of St. Peter, recorded only by St. which, as given by St. Matthew without this connecting link, seem somewhat incoherent and abrupt. Besides, we can scarcely suppose that St. Peter, conversing in private with only three other disciples in company with the Lord, would ask, 'Speakest thou this parable to us, or even to all? '--a question which was most natural when, worthy of notice also that in Mark xiii. 34-37, where we can detect evident traces of this parable, the question of St. Peter is distinctly answered, 'What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch;' a statement which would be out of place when our Lord was speaking to four persons, but quite appropriate when speaking to a multitude.

There is no impropriety, therefore, in supposing that St. Matthew, perceiving the words of Jesus, spoken on another occasion, to be admirably illustrative of the necessity for watchfulness in view of the Lord's coming, inserted them in this eschatological discourse. Stier suggests that St. Mark gives a short abridgment of Matt. xxiv. 43, with the two parables of the servant, Matt. xxiv. 45-51 and xxv. 14, and even with a slight echo of the parable of the virgins.' (14) We have no more reason to require strict chronological arrangement in the Evangelists than strictly -verbatim reports: neither the one nor the other entered into their plan.

But what is chiefly important for us is the bearing of the house watching against the midnight thief, on the preceding discourse of our Lord. Nothing can be more evident than that it is wrought into the very warp and woof of that discourse. There is Do introduction of a new topic at the forty- third verse of the twentyfourth chapter of St. Matthew: no transition to another not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint catastrophe, or another coming different from those of which He had all along been speaking. There is no hiatus, no break, in the continuity of the discourse ; no indication of passing away from the grand event which engrossed the thoughts of the disciples to another in the far distant futurity. It seems incredible that any critical judgment should select Matt. xxiv. 43 as the commencement of a new subject of discourse. Yet this is done by Dr. Ed. Robinson, who says, ' Our Lord here makes a transition, and proceeds to speak of his final coming at the day of judgment. This appears from the fact that the matter of these sections is added

by Matthew after Mark and Luke have ended their Harmony of the Four Gospels, § 129. II. Our Lord's parallel reports relative to the Jewish catastrophe; and Answer to the Disciples, cont.:-Matthew here commences, with ver. 43, the discourse (i) The Parousia a time of judgment alike to the which Luke has given on another occasion, Luke xii. friends and the enemies of Christ. Parable of the Wise and 39, &c." (15) But there is not the faintest shadow of any Foolish Virgins. transition. The finest instrument cannot draw a dividing Matt. xxv. line between the parts of the discourse, and assign Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto one portion to the judgment of the Jewish nation and ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to another to the judgment of the human race. There is not meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and transition, but continuation, at ver. 43. Nothing can be five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, more consecutive and concatenated. 'Watch therefore,' and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their says our Lord to His disciples in ver. 42, 'for ye know not vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, what hour your Lord doth come? 'Therefore, be ye also they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was ready,' He says in ver. 44, ' for in such an hour as ye think a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out not the Son of man cometh.' The suggestion that a new to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed topic, having reference to a totally different event, in a their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give far distant age of time, is introduced here, is altogether us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise arbitrary and groundless. answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us Footnotes and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for 1. Jos. Antiq. bk. xx. x. xiii. § 5, 6. yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom 2. Conybeare and Howson, Life and Epist. of St. came; and they that were ready went in with him to the Paul. marriage; and the door was shut. Afterwards came also c. iv the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he 3. Jos. Antiq. bk. xviii. c. v, § 3 answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you 4. Traill's Jos. Jewish War, pref. \sim 4. not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor 5. Traill's Jos. Jewish War, bk. vi. c. v. § 3 the hour' [wherein the Son of man cometh].

- 6. Traill's Jos. Jewish War, bk. vi. c. v. § 2
- 7. See Alford Gr. Test, Matt. xxiv. 29,
- 8. Angus's Bible Handbook p. 20 § i.

9. The phenomena described by our Lord as 10. The note in Robinson's Harmony of the Four

our Lord refers exclusively to the final consummation of all things and the judgment of the human race. This accompanying the Parousia (ver. 29), cannot be supposed transition is rendered more easy to the English explained by the portents slid prodigies alleged by reader by a new chapter commencing at this point. Josephus to have preceded the capture of Jerusalem But has our Lord really dropped the subject with (Jewish War, bk. vi. c. v. § 3). That some at least of those which He and His disciples had been hitherto occupied portents actually appeared there seems no reason to ? Has He passed from the near and imminent to a far doubt, and they serve to verify the prediction in Luke distant era, separated from His own time by hundreds xxi. 11, -- ' Fearful sights and great signs shall there be and thousands of years ? If it were so, we might surely from heaven? expect some very distinct indication of the change of subject. But there is absolutely none. On the contrary, Gospels, part vii. § 128, is excellent. 'This generation,' the supposition of a new theme being introduced by etc. These words (genea) cannot be understood (as this parable is entirely forbidden by the express terms in some have explained them) of the Jewish nation or the which the parable opens and closes. it opens with a very human race. The meaning is, that the men of that age explicit note of time, - then, at that time. There is no hiatus should not all die (See Matt. xvi. 28, in § 74) before between the end of chap. xxiv. and the commencement the prophecy would be accomplished, which began to of chap. xxv. The connecting link 'then' carries forward come to pass thirty-seven years after its utterance in the the discourse, and knits it into close connection as destruction of Jerusalem,' etc. regards theme, time, and the persons addressed. This 11. Life of Christ, c. xii. § 214, note. 12. Traill's is further confirmed by the fact that the moral of the Josephus, Jewish War, b. -vi. ch. ix. § § 3, 4 13. Life of parable of the ten virgins is precisely the same as that

Christ, § 254, Note. 14. Reden Jesu, vol. iii. p. 304 15.

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Almost all expositors suppose that Jerusalem and Israel now disappear wholly from the scene, and that

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of the good man of the house in the preceding chapter, and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: viz. the necessity of watchfulness. The closing words,-'Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the His lord said unto him, Well clone, good and faithful hour,'- so evidently addressed to the disciples, are the servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I win very same which our Lord had already spoken in chap. xxiv. 42; so that in both passages the reference must be joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one to the self-same event.

detailed exposition of this parable. There are theologians who find a mystery in every word: in the number ten, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou in the number five, in virginity, in lamps, in oil, etc. (See hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Lange *in loc.*) As Calvin sarcastically observes, 'Multum se torquent quidam, in lucernis, in vasis, in oleo.' Suffice it here to note the great lesson of the parable. It is the strewed; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money necessity for constant readiness and watchfulness for the sudden and speedy return of the Son of man. Unwatchfulness and unreadiness would involve the penalty which befell the foolish virgins, viz. exclusion from the marriage supper of the Lamb.

We find therefore in this parable an organic connection with the whole previous discourse of our Lord. It is still the same great theme of which He is speaking,- the consummation which was to take place within the limits of the existing generation, -- and concerning which the disciples expressed so natural an anxiety.

(k) The Parousia a time of judgment

Parable of the Talents

Matt xxv. 14-30.

'For [the kingdom of heaven is] as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I Will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came

behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art It does not come within our province to give a an hard mail, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed: and I was afraid, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

> In this parable we find an evident continuation of the same sub though presented in a somewhat different aspect. The moral of the preceding parable was *vigilance* ; that of the present is *diligence*. It can hardly be said that a new element is introduced in this parable, for the representation of the coming of Christ as a time of judgment runs through the whole prophetic discourse of our Lord. It is this fact which gives point and urgency to the oft- reiterated call to watchfulness. Not only was it to be a time of judgment for Jerusalem and Israel, but even for the disciples of Christ themselves. They too were 'to stand before the Son of man.' There was danger lest 'that day' should come upon them unprepared and unaware. This association of judgment with the Parousia comes out in the parable of the good man of the house, and still more in that of the good and the evil. servants. It is yet more vividly expressed in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, has greater prominence still in the parable of the talents; but it reaches the climax in the concluding parable, if it may be so called, of the sheep and the goats.

> It is not necessary to enter into the details of the parable of the talents. Its leading features are simple and obvious. It contains a solemn warning to the servants of Christ to be faithful and diligent in the absence of their Lord. It points to a day when He would return and reckon with them. It sets forth the abundant recompense of the good and faithful, and the punishment of the

unfaithful servant. saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, The point, however, which chiefly concerns us in or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not this investigation is the relation of this parable to the minister unto thee ? Then shall he answer them, saying, preceding discourse. What can be more plain than the Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one intimate connection between the one and the other? of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall The connective particle 'for' in ver. 14 distinctly marks go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous the continuation of the discourse. The theme is the into life eternal. same, the time is the same, the catastrophe is the same. Up to this point we have found the discourse of Jesus Up to this point, therefore, we find no break, no change, on the Mount of Olives one connected and continuous no introduction of a different topic ; all is continuous, prophecy, having sole reference to the great catastrophe homogeneous, one. Never for a moment has the impending over the Jewish nation, and which was to discourse swerved from the great, all absorbing theme,take place, according(, to our Lord's prediction, before the approaching doom of the guilty city and nation, the existing generation should pass away. Now, however, with the solemn events attendant thereon, all to take we encounter a passage which, in the opinion of almost place within the period of that generation, and which all commentators, cannot be understood as referring to the disciples, or some of them, would live to witness. Jerusalem or Israel, but to the whole human race and the consummation of all things. If the consensus of (1) The Parousia a time of judgment expositors can establish an interpretation, no doubt this passage must be regarded as wholly quitting the subject The Sheep and the Goats of the disciples' interrogatory, and describing the last Matt. xxv. 31-46. scene of all in this world's history.

'When the Son of man shall come in his glory and It may be freely admitted that this parable, or all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the parabolic description, has many points of difference throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered from the preceding portion of our Lord's discourse. all [the] nations; and he shall separate them one from It seems to stand separate and distinct from the rest, another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the without the connecting links which we have found in goats; and he shalt set the sheep on his right hand, but other sections. Still more, it seems to take a wider range the goats on the left. than Jerusalem and Israel; it reads like the judgment, 'Then shall the King say unto them on his right not of a nation, but of all nations; not of a city or a country, but of a world ; not a passing crisis, but final consummation.

hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I It is therefore with a deep sense of the difficulty of was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and the task that we venture to impugn the interpretation ye took Die in: naked, and ye clothed Die: I was sick, of so many wise and good men, and to contend that and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto the passage is not only an integral part of the prophecy, me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, but also belongs wholly to the subject of our Lord's when saw we thee ,in hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, discourse,- - the judgment of Israel and the end of the and gave thee drink ? When saw we thee a stranger, and [Jewish] age. took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? Or when saw 1. This parable, though in our English version we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ? And the standing apart and unconnected with the context, is King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto really connected by a very sufficient link with what you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of goes before. This is a parent in the Greek, where we find these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

the particle, the force of which is to indicate transition 'Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand and connection, -- transition to a new illustration, and Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire., connection with the foregoing Context. Alford, in his prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an revised New Testament, preserves the continuative hungered, and ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye particle-- 'But when the Son of man shall have come in gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not his glory, etc. It might with equal propriety be rendered in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, -- And when,' etc. and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, 2. This 'coming of the Son of man' has already been

predicted by our Lord (Matt. xxiv. 30, and parallel passages, and the time expressly defined, being included in the comprehensive declaration, 'Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled' (Matt. xxiv. 34).

of the coming of the Son of man in his glory' given in this parable tallies in all points with that in Matt. xvi. 27, 28, of which it is expressly affirmed that it would Lord. In Matt. xxiv. 22, speaking of the 'great tribulation,' be witnessed by some then present when the prediction was made.

It may be well to compare the two descriptions

Matt xvi. 27, 28.

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Matt. xxv. 31-33.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations,' etc. 'Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Here the reader will note

(a) That in both passages the subject referred to is the same, *viz. the coming of the Son of* man- the Parousia.

(b) In both passages He is described as coming in glory. (c) In both He is attended by the holy angels.

(d) In both He comes as a King. ' Coming in his King,' etc.

(e) 'In both He comes to judgment. (f) In both the judgment is represented as in some sense universal. 'He shall reward every man 'Before him shall be gathered all the nations."

(g) In Matt. xvi. 28 it is expressly stated that this coming in glory, etc., was to take place in the lifetime of some then present. This fixes the occurrence of the Parousia within the limit of a human life, thus being in perfect accord with the period defined by our Lord in His prophetic discourse. 'This generation shall not pass,' etc.

We are fully warranted, therefore, in regarding the coming of the Son of man in Matt. xxv. as identical with that referred to in Matt. xvi., which some of the disciples were to live to witness.

Thus, notwithstanding the words ' all the nations ' in Matt. xxv. 32, we are brought to the conclusion that it is not the 'final consummation of all things ' which is there spoken of, but the judgment of Israel at the close

of the [Jewish], aeon or age.

4. But it will still be objected that a very formidable difficulty remains in the expression 'all the nations.' The difficulty, however, is more apparent than real; for

(1) It is not at all uncommon to find in Scripture 3. It deserves particular notice that the description universal propositions which must be understood in a qualified or restricted sense.

> There is a case in point in this very discourse of our He Says, ' Except those days should be shortened *there* should no flesh be saved.' Now it is evident that this 'great tribulation' was limited to Jerusalem, or, at all events, to Judea, and yet we have an expression used in regard to the inhabitants of a city or country -which is wide enough to include the whole human race, in which sense Lange and Alford actually understand it.

(2) There is great probability in the opinion that the phrase ' all the nations ' is equivalent to 'all the tribes of the land' (Matt. xxiv. 30). There is no impropriety in designating the tribes as nations. The promise of God to Abraham was that he should be the father of many nations (Gen. xvii. 5; Rom. iv. 17, 18).

In our Lord's time it was usual to speak of the inhabitants of Palestine as consisting of several nations. Josephus speaks of ' the nation of the Samaritans,' 'the nation of the Batanaeans,' the nation of the Galileans,'-using the very word (etnoj) which we find in the passage before us. Judea, was a distinct nation, often with a king of its own; so also was Samaria; and so with Idumea, kingdom; 'He shall sit upon his throne; Then shall the Galilee, Paraea, Batanea, Trachonitis, Ituraea, Abilene,-all of which had at different times princes with the title of Ethnarch, a name which signifies the ruler of a nation. It is doing no violence, then, to the language to understand as referring, to 'all the nations' of Palestine, or 'all the tribes of the land.'

> (3) This view receives strong confirmation from the fact that the same phrase in the apostolic commission (Matt. xxviii.19), 'Go and teach all the nations,' does not seem to have been understood by the disciples as referring to the whole population of the globe, or to any nations beyond Palestine. It is commonly supposed that the apostles knew that they had received a charge to evangelise the world. If they did know it, they were culpably remiss in not acting upon it. But it is presumable that the words of our Lord (lid not convey any such idea to their mind. The learned Professor Burton observes : "It was not until fourteen years after our Lord's ascension that St. Paul travelled -for the first time, and preached the gospel to the Gentiles. Nor is there any evidence that during that period the other

apostles passed the confines of Judea.⁽¹⁾ standard ? How could the nations which never heard The fact seems to be that the language of the of Christ,-- or those which flourished in the ages when apostolic commission did not convey to the minds of Christianity was prosperous and powerful, be tried by the apostles any such ecumenical ideas. Nothing more such a standard ? It is manifestly inappropriate and astonished them than the discovery that 'God had inapplicable. But the difficulty is easily and completely granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life' (Acts solved if we regard this judicial transaction as the xi. 18). When St. Peter was challenged for going in 'to judgment of Israel at the close of the Jewish aeon. It men uncircumcised, and eating with them,' it does not is the rejected King of Israel who is the judge: it is the appear that he vindicated his conduct by an appeal to hostile and unbelieving generation, the last and worst of the terms of the apostolic commission. If the phrase ' the nation, that is arraigned before His tribunal. Their all the nations' had been understood by the disciples in treatment of His disciples, especially of His apostles, its literal and most comprehensive sense, it is difficult might most fitly and justly be made the criterion of to imagine bow they could have failed to recognise, it character in 'discerning between the righteous and the once the universal character of the gospel, and their wicked.' Such a test would be most appropriate in an commission to preach it alike to Jew and Gentile. It age when Christianity was a persecuted faith, and this required a distinct revelation from heaven to overcome is evidently supposed by the very terms of the King's address : -- 'I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, was naked, the Jewish prejudices of the apostles, and to make known to them the mystery 'that the Gentiles should be sick, and in prison.' The persons designated as 'these my fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the brethren,' and who are taken as the representatives of promise in Christ by the gospel ' (Ephes. iii. 6). Christ Himself, are evidently the apostles of our Lord, In view of these considerations we hold it reasonable in whom He hungered, and thirsted, was naked, sick, and warrantable to give the phrase ' all the nations' a and in prison. All this is in perfect harmony with the restricted signification, and to limit it to the nations words of Christ to His disciples, when He sent them of Palestine. In this sense it harmonises well with the forth to preach-- 'He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. words of our Lord, "Ye shall not have gone over the He that receiveth. a prophet in the name of a prophet cities of Israel till the Son of man be come' (Matt. x. 23). shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that receiveth 5. Once more, the peculiar test of character which a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto

is applied by the Judge in this parabolic description is strongly opposed to the notion that this scene represents the final judgment of the whole human race. It will be observed that the destiny of the righteous and the wicked is made to turn on the treatment which they you, he shall in no wise lose his reward' (Matt. x. 40-42). respectively offered to the suffering disciples of Christ. We are thus brought to the conclusion, the only All moral qualities, all virtuous conduct, all true faith, one which in all respects suits the tenor of the entire are apparently thrown out of the reckoning, and acts discourse, that we have here, not the final judgment of of charity and beneficence to distressed disciples are the whole human race, but that of the guilty nation or alone taken into account. It is not surprising that this nations of Palestine, who rejected their King, despitefully circumstance should have occasioned much perplexity treated and slew His messengers (Matt. xxii. 1-14), and both to theologians and general readers. Is this the whose day of doom was now near at hand. doctrine of St. Paul ? Is this the ground of justification This being so, the entire prophecy on the Mount of before God set forth in the New Testament? Are we Olives is seen to be one homogeneous and connected to conclude that the everlasting destiny of the whole whole: 'simplex duntaxat et unum'. It is no longer human race, from Adam to the last man, will finally turn a confused and unintelligible medley, baffling all on their charity and sympathy towards the persecuted interpretation, seeming to speak with two voices, and suffering disciples of Christ? and pointing in different directions at the same time. The difficulty is a grave one, on the supposition It is a clear, consecutive, and historically truthful that we have here a description of 'the general representation of the judgment of the Theocratic nation judgment at the last day, and ought not to be slurred at the close of the age, or Jewish period. The theory of over, as commonly it is. How could the nations which interpretation which regards this discourse as typical of existed before the time of Christ be tried by such a the final judgment of the human race, and of a world-

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finds no countenance in the prediction itself, while it such disregard should have been shown by expositors involves inextricable perplexity and confusion. If, on the one hand, it could be shown that the prophecy, *as a whole*, is in every part equally applicable to two different and widely separated events; or, on the other hand, that at a certain point it guits the. one subject, and takes tip the discourse where none exist,-- and generally that the the other, then the double sense, or twofold reference, would stand upon some intelligible basis. But we have found no dividing line in the prophecy between the near and the remote, and all attempts to draw such a line are unsatisfactory and arbitrary in the extreme. Still more untenable is the hypothesis of a double meaning running through the whole; a hypothesis and the very form and substance of the truth will come which supposes a 'verifying faculty ' in the expositor or forth to view. (2) reader, and gives so large a discretionary power to the ingenious critic that it seems utterly incompatible with prophecy it may be proper to advert to the marvellously the reverence due to the Word of God.

involves is placed in a strong light by the confession of Dean Alford, who, at the close of his comments on this views which he had propounded. 'I think it proper,' he says, ' to state, in this third edition, that, having now entered upon the deeper study of the prophetic portions of the New Testament, I do not feel by any means that full confidence which I once did in the exegesis, quoad prophetical interpretation, here given of the three portions of this chap. xxv. But I have no other system to substitute, and some of the points here dwelt on seem to me as weighty as ever. I very much question whether the thorough study of Scripture prophecy will not make me more and more distrustful of all human and the history that the old objection of Porphyry systematising, and less willing to hazard strong assertion on any portion of the subject.' (July 1855.) In the fourth edition Alford adds, 'Endorsed, October 1858.' This is there the slightest pretense for such an insinuation. candour highly honourable to the critic, but it suggests the reflection, --if, with all the light and experience of eighteen centuries, the prophecy on the Mount of Olives still remains an unsolved enigma, bow could it have been intelligible to the disciples who eagerly listened to it as it fell from the lips of the Master ? Can we suppose that at such a moment he would speak to is no reason for believing that the disciples were unable to comprehend the words of Jesus, and if these words reason why the new and splendid temple of Jerusalem have been misapprehended in subsequent times, it is because a false and unnatural method of interpretation has obscured and distorted what in itself is luminous she had ever known under her native princes. Yet before

wide catastrophe attendant upon that event,-- really and simple enough. It is matter for just surprise that to the express limitations of time laid down by our Lord ; that forced and unnatural meanings should have given to such words as ai, w.n genea. entew.j, \mathcal{C} .; that arbitrary lines of division should have been drawn in prophecy should have been subjected to a treatment which would not be tolerated in the criticism of any Greek or Latin classic. Only let the language of Scripture be treated with common fairness, and interpreted by the principles of grammar and common sense, and much obscurity and misapprehension will be removed,

Before passing away from this deeply interesting minute fulfilment which it received, as testified by The perplexity which the double-sense theory an unexceptionable witness,-- the Jewish historian Josephus. It is a fact of singular interest and importance that there should have been preserved to posterity a prophecy, honestly expresses his dissatisfaction with the full and authentic record of the times and transactions referred to in our Lord's prophecy; and that this record should be from the pen of a Jewish statesman, soldier, priest, and man of letters, not only having access to the best sources of information, but himself an eyewitness of many of the events which he relates. It gives additional weight to this testimony that it does not come from a Christian, who might have been suspected of partisanship, but from a Jew, indifferent, if not hostile, to the cause of Jesus.

> So striking is the coincidence between the prophecy against the Book of Daniel, that it must have been written after the event, might be plausibly alleged, were

Though the Jewish people were at all times restless and uneasy under the voke of Rome, there were no urgent symptoms of disaffection at the time when our Lord delivered this prediction of the approaching destruction of the temple, the city, and the nation. The higher classes were profuse in their professions of loyalty to the Imperial government: 'We have no king them in inexplicable riddles ?-that when they asked for but Caesar' was their cry. It was the policy of Rome bread He would give them a stone ? Impossible. There to grant the free exercise of their own religion to the subject provinces. There was, therefore, no apparent should not stand for centuries, and Judea enjoy a greater tranquillity and prosperity under the aegis of Caesar than

the generation which rejected and crucified the Son of accomplished. One thing is certain, the veracity of our David had wholly passed away, the Jewish nationality Lord is committed to the assertion that the whole and was extinguished : Jerusalem was a desolation; 'the holy every part of the events contained in this prophecy were and beautiful house' on Mount Zion was razed to the to take place before the close of the existing generation. ground; and the unhappy people, who knew not the If any language may claim to be precise and definite, it time of their visitation, were overwhelmed by calamities is that which our Lord employs to mark the limits of the time within which all His words were to be fulfilled. without a parallel in the annals of the world.

All this is undeniable; and yet it would be too much, Whatever other catastrophes, of other nations, in other to expect that this will be regarded as an adequate ages, there may be in the future, concerning them our fulfilment of our Saviour's words by many whom Lord is silent. He speaks of His own guilty nation, and prejudice-or traditional interpretations have taught to of His judicial coming at the close of the age, as had see more in the prophecy than ever inspiration included been often and clearly foretold by Malachi, by John the in it. The language, it is said, is too magnificent, the Baptist, and by Himself. (5) For this His words are to transactions too stupendous to be satisfied by so be bold responsible; but beyond this all is mere human speculation, the hypothesis of theologians, grounded inadequate an event as the judgment of Israel and the destruction of Jerusalem. We have already endeavoured upon no warranty of Scripture. to point out the real significance and grandeur of that We have thus endeavoured to rescue this great event. But the one sufficient answer to all such objections prophecy from the loose and uncritical method of is the express declaration of our Lord, which covers the interpretation by which it has been so much obscured whole ground of this prophetic discourse, 'Verily I say and perplexed; to let it speak the same distinct and unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these definite meaning to us as it did to the disciples. things are fulfilled. No doubt there are some portions Reverence for the Word of God, and due regard to the of this prediction which are capable of verification by principles of interpretation, forbid us to impose nonhuman testimony. Does any one expect Tacitus, or natural constructions and double senses, which in Suetonius, or Josephus, or any other historian, to relate effect would be 'to add to the words of this prophecy.' We dare not play fast and loose with the express and that 'the Son of man was seen coining in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; that He summoned precise statements of Christ. We find but one Parousia; the nations to his tribunal, and rewarded every man one end of the age; one impending catastrophe; one according to his works '? There is a region into which terminus ad quem, -- 'this generation.' We protest witnesses and reporters may not enter; flesh and blood against the exegesis which handles the Word of God may not gaze upon the mysteries of the spiritual and in such free fashion as commends itself to many. 'The immaterial. But there is also a large portion of the Lord, it is said, 'is always coming to those who look for prophecy which is capable of verification, and which has His appearing. We see His coming on a large scale in been amply verified. Even an assailant of Christianity, every crisis of the great human story. In revolutions, in who impugns the supernatural knowledge of Christ, reformations, and in the crises of our individual history. is compelled to admit that ' the portion relating to For each one of us there is an advent of the Lord, as the destruction of the city is singularly definite, and often as new and larger views of truth are presented to corresponds very closely with the actual event. (4) The us, or we are called to enter on new and perchance more punctual fulfilment of that part of the prophecy which laborious and exciting duties.' (6) In this way it might be difficult to say what is not a 'coming of the Lord.' But by comes within the field of human observation is the guarantee for the truth of the remainder, which does making it anything and everything we make it nothing. It is evacuated -of all precision and reality. There is no not fall within that sphere. We shall find in the sequel of this discussion that the events which now appear to reason why the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the many incredible were the confident expectation and resurrection should not Similarly become common and hope of the apostolic age, and that the early Christians everyday transactions as well as the Parousia. It is one were fully persuaded of their reality and nearness. We thing to say that the principles of the divine government are placed, therefore, in this dilemma -- either the words are eternal and immutable, and therefore what God of Jesus have failed, and the hopes of His disciples have does to one people, or to one age, He will do in similar been falsified; or else those words and hopes have been circumstances to other nations and other ages; and it fulfilled, and the prophecy in all its parts has been fully is quite another thing to say that this prophecy has two

for the world and the final consummation of all things. We hold, with Neander, that 'the words of Christ, like His works, contain within them the germ of an infinite development, reserved for future ages to unfold. (7) But to the parable of the tell virgins, he finds the object of this does not imply that prophecy is anything that an ingenious fancy can devise, or hag occult and ulterior truth. The twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew must senses underlying the apparent and natural signification of the language. The duty of the interpreter and student of Scripture is not to try what Scripture may be made to say, but to submit his understanding to 'the true viz. from ver. 43 to 51, is intimately connected with the sayings of God, which are usually as simple as they are opening parable of chap. xxv., which seems to furnish profound. (8)

1. Professor Burton's Bampton Lecture, p. 20.

article in the first volume of the Bibliotheca Sacra (1843), by Dr. E. Robinson, entitled 'The coming of Christ.' Up to ver. 42 of chap. xxiv. of St. Matthew, Dr. Robinson maintains the exclusive reference of the prediction to Jerusalem, and thus notices the interpretations which refer it to the 'end of the world:'

limitations of time, a reference of our Lord's language to the day of judgment and the end of the world, in our sense of these terms, is possible. Those who maintain Part I this view attempt to dispose of the difficulties arising from these limitations in different ways. Some assign to (genea) the meaning suddenly, as it is employed by passage the purpose of the writer is simply to mark an immediate sequence -- to intimate that another and consequent event happens forthwith. Nor would anything be gained even could the word (genea) be thus disposed of, so long as the subsequent limitation to 'this generation' remained. And in this again others have tried to refer genea to the race of the Jews, or to the disciples of Christ, not only without the slightest ground, but contrary to all usage and all analogy. All these attempts to apply force to the meaning of the language are in vain, and are now abandoned by most commentators of note.'

After so luminous an exposition it is disappointing to find Dr. Robinson failing to carry out the principles with which he started consistently to the end. Embarrassed by the foregone conclusion that the 'final judgment' and 'the end of the world' are somewhere to be found in the prophecy, and unable to see where the theme of Jerusalem ends, and the other and greater theme of the world's catastrophe begins, he adopts the following method. Starting with the assumption that the parable

meanings: one for Jerusalem and Israel, and another of the sheep and the goats must describe the latter event, he feels his way backwards to the preceding parable of the talents, in which he finds the same subject, the doctrine of final retribution. Going still further back, that parable to be the inculcation of the same important therefore, he concludes, refer wholly to the transactions of the last great day.

'But,' he continues, 'the latter portion of chap. xxiv., a sufficient ground for regarding this passage also as referring to the future judgment. At ver. 43 of Matthew 2. The following extract is taken from an excellent xxiv., therefore, Dr. Robinson conceive that our Lord leaves the subject of Jerusalem altogether and takes up a new topic, the judgment of the world.

It will at once be apparent that the whole of this reasoning is vitiated by the false premise with which it starts, viz., the assumption that the parable of the sheep and the goats refers to the judgment of the human race. 'The question now arises whether, under these We have already shown that there is no new departure at Matt. xxiv. 48.

4. Contemporary Review, Nov. 1876. See Note B,

5. Jonathan Edwards says, referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, -' Thus there was a final end to the Old Testament world : all was finished with a kind the LXX in Job v. 3, for the Hebrew. But even in this of day of judgment, in which the people of God were saved, and His enemies terribly destroyed.' -- History story of Redemption, vol. i. p. 445

6. Evang. Meg. Feb. 1877, p. 69

7. Life of Christ, 165

8. See Note A, Part I.

Our Lord's declaration before the High Priest

Matt. xxvi. 61.

'Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said : nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven?

Mark xiv. 62

'And Jesus said, I am : and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'

Luke xxii. 69.

'Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

The reply of our Saviour to the solemn adjuration of the high priest is the almost verbatim repetition of

what He had declared to the disciples on the Mount of be, that immediately after the moment of His answer He Olives,-- 'They shall see the Son of man coming in the should so come, and they so see Him; but rather that He would now depart from them, and that when they next clouds of heaven with power and great glory ' (Matt. xxiv. 30). It is evidently the same event and the same saw Him, after His rejection by them, it would be at His period that are referred to. The language implies that coming in glory, as foretold by the prophet Daniel. (2) the persons addressed, or some of them, would witness We find, then, in this declaration of our Lord an the event predicted. The expression 'Ye shall see' would additional confirmation of His previous statements that not be proper if spoken of something which the hearers His coming again would take place within the period would none of them live to witness, and which would of the existing generation. Some of His judges, as well not take place for thousands of years. Our Lord therefore as some of His disciples, were to witness it; and there told His judges that they, or some of them, would live would be no meaning in such an assertion if it did not to see Him coming to judgment, or coming in His imply that they were to witness it 'in the flesh.' kingdom. This declaration is in harmony with what our Prediction of the Woes coming on Jerusalem Saviour said to His disciples,-' The Son of man shall Luke xxiii. 27-31. come in the glory of his Father with his angels.... Verily 'And there followed him a great company of people, I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall and of women, which also bewailed and lamented not taste of death, till they see the Son of man in his him. But Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of kingdom' (Matt. xvi. 27, 28). Some of His disciples, and Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, some of His judges, would live long enough to witness and for your children. For, behold, the (lays are coming that great consummation, less than forty years distant, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and when the Son of man would come in His kingdom, to the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never execute the judgments of God on the guilty nation. This gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, is precisely what the prophecy on the Mount of Olives Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these asserts: 'This generation shall not pass,' etc. Here again things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry ?' we have neither obscurity nor ambiguity. But can as Here we have a statement so clear, so definite in every much be said for the interpretation which makes our point that can fix its reference, - time, place, persons, Lord's words refer to a time still future, and an event circumstances,-- that no room is left for uncertainty. which has not yet taken place ? Can as much be said It points to a time which was not far distant, but at for the interpretation which finds in this scene, which hand-' the days are coming; '-a time which the persons the Jewish Sanhedrim were to witness, no one distinct addressed and their children would live to see; -- a time and particular event, but a prolonged and continuous of great tribulation, which would fall with peculiar process, which began at the resurrection of Christ, is severity upon womanhood and childhood; -- a time still going on, and will continue to go on to the end of when, in the agony of their terror, despairing multitudes the world ? would cry to the mountains and the hills to fall on them This strange interpretation, which is that of Lange and cover them.

and Alford, is based partly on the assumption that our Those memorable details will be found most valuable Lord's prediction has never yet been fulfilled, and partly in the elucidation of Scripture prophecy at a subsequent on the word 'henceforth,' which is held to indicate a stage of this investigation. Meanwhile it is clear that this continuous process. (1) But is such an explanation pathetic description can refer only to the catastrophe of credible, or even conceivable ? Is it true that the high Jerusalem in the last days of her history. We have only priest and the Sanhedrim began from that time to see to turn to the pages of Josephus for the facts which the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven ? etc. illustrate and confirm our Saviour's language. The How could such an apparition be a continuous process ? horrors of that tragic history culminate in the episode Plainly, the words can only refer to a definite and specific of Mary of Peraea, whose Thyestean banquet horrified event; and we can be at no loss to determine what that even the merciless banditti who prowled like famished event is. It can be no other than the Parousia, so often wolves through the city. It is in the light of an incident predicted before. That was not a protracted process, like this that we see the full meaning of the words, but a summary act,-- sudden, swift, conspicuous as the 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare.' lightning. The sense is well expressed by the editors of It is with a movement of something like impatience the 'Critical English Testament: ' The meaning cannot

a double sense, insisting on a hidden meaning in our Saviour's words: 'He spoke expressly and primarily of the he thought of it as near. A dying man would scarcely judgment of Jerusalem and Israel, yet He contemplated and refers to that which was shadowed out in this historical type,-the judgment of all the impenitent, and of all unbelievers in common, down to the last." (3) So also Alford, following Stier. It is only in the imagination of the expositor, however, that this ulterior reference exists: there is no suggestion of it in the text; and it is with a degree of wonder that we find a scholarly critic so far forgetting his true vocation as to pronounce 'the historical and actual specific fulfilment' to be 'the least thing: the meaning of the word reaches much further.' If ever there was a case in which double meanino's and typical fulfilments are not to be thought of, surely it is here. At such an hour of anguish, there could be but one thought present to the heart of Jesus. He saw the gathering storm of wrath in which the devoted city was soon to be enveloped, and which would burst with such violence on the tender and delicate, the children and the mothers of Jerusalem., and He reciprocated the pity which He received from those compassionate hearts,-more touched in that moment by their anticipated woes, than by His own. What need is there to go beyond that tragical catastrophe, and seek for another concerning which the context is altogether silent ?

The Prayer of the Penitent Thief

Luke xxiii. 42.

'And He said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.'

The single point which concerns us in this memorable incident is the reference made by the malefactor to our Lord's *coming* in his kingdom.' In whatever way he had come by the knowledge, He recognised in the rejected Prophet by his side the King of Israel, the Son of God. He believed that, notwithstanding His rejection and crucifixion by Israel, He would one day 'come again in his kingdom'. Marvellous faith in such a man and at such a moment! If the thief on the cross had listened to the testimony of Jesus before the high priest, or if he had known what He said to the disciples, that 'some of them should not taste of death till they had seen the Son of man coming in his kingdom,' we could better account for his faith and his prayer. At any rate, there could not have been more intelligence and precision in the language of a disciple than in the words of this 'brand plucked out of the fire.' What notion the malefactor entertained respecting the *time* of that

that we listen to Stier, beguiled by the *ignis fatuus* of coming,-- whether he conceived it to be near or distant, we have no means of knowing; but it is presumable that pray to be remembered in some distant age, after centuries and millenniums had rolled away. In such a crisis it could only be the imminent, or the immediate, that could be in his thoughts. One thing seems certain: the most incredible of all interpretations is that which would represent his prayer as still unanswered, and the coming' of which he spoke as still among the events of an unknown futurity.

The Apostolic Commission

Matthew 28: 19

'Go ve therefore, and teach all [the] nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age?

'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

'And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following?

Luke xxiv. 47.

'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all [the] nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' It is usual to regard this commission as if it were addressed to the whole Christian Church in all ages. No doubt it is allowable to infer from these words the perpetual obligation resting upon all Christians in all times, to propagate the Gospel among all nations ; but it is important to consider the words in their proper and original reference. It is Christ's commission to His chosen messengers, designating them to their evangelistic work, and assuring them of His constant presence and protection. It has a special application to the apostles which it cannot have to any others. We have already adverted to the fact that the disciples, to whom this charge was given, do not seem to have understood it as directing them to extend their evangelistic labours beyond the bounds of Palestine, or to preach the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles indiscriminately. It is certain that they did not immediately, nor yet for years, act upon this commission in its largest sense ; nor does it seem probable that they would ever have done so without an express revelation. As Dr. Burton has shown, no less than fifteen years elapsed between the conversion of St. Paul and his first apostolic journey to preach among the Gentiles. "Nor is there any evidence that during that

glory ; ' the King seated on the throne ; the judgment period the other apostles passed the confines of Judea." (4) There is much probability therefore in the opinion set, and the books opened. It reveals the sheep and the that the language of the apostolic commission did not goats separated the one from the other ; the righteous convey to their minds the same idea that it does to us, entering into everlasting life; the wicked sent away into and that, as we have already seen, the phrase 'all the everlasting punishment. If we have not the historical nations ' is really equivalent to 'all the tribes of the land.' verification of the unseen and spiritual, as we have of But what especially deserves notice is the remarkable the visible and material elements of this consummation, limitation of time, the 'terminus ad quem,' here specified it is because they are not in the nature of things equally by our Saviour. 'Lo, I am with you always [all the days], cognizable by the senses. But we accept them on the even to the close of the age'. Nothing can be more faith of His word who declared, 'Verily I say unto you, misleading to the English reader than the rendering 'the All these things shall come upon this generation ; ' and end of the world; ' which inevitably suggests the close again, 'Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled.' ' Heaven and of human history, the end of time, and the destruction of the earth,-- a meaning which the words will not earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. bear. Lange, though far from apprehending the true The literal fulfilment of all that falls within the sphere of significance of the phrase, rightly gives the sense, 'the human observation is the voucher for the credibility of consummation of the secular won, or the period of time the remainder, which belongs to the realm of the unseen which comes to an end with the Parousia. What can be and the spiritual.

more evident than that the promise of Christ to be with Footnotes His disciples to the close of the age, implies that they were 1..(a/rti) in later Greek came to signify soon, to live to the close of the age? That great consummation 'presently:' see Liddell and Scott; and thus our translators, Was Dot far off; the Lord had often spoken of it, and correctly, Here-after,' which leaves the actual time of the always as an approaching event, one which some of event future, but not necessarily immediate,'-- Critical them would live to see. It was the winding up of the English Test. vol. iii. P. 860, note. Mosaic dispensation ; the end of the long probation of 2. Critical English Test. vol. iii. p. 860, note 3. Reden the Theocratic nation; when the whole frame and fabric Jesu, vol. vii. p. 426 of the Jewish polity were to be swept away, and 'the THE PAROUSIA IN THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN kingdom of God to come with power.' This great event, our Lord had declared, was to fall within the limit of In the Synoptical Gospels we have generally been the existing generation. The 'close of the age' coincided able to compare the allusions to the Parousia, recorded by the Evangelists, one with another; and have often with the Parousia, and the outward and visible sign by found it advantageous to do so. It is not easy, however, which it is distinguished is the destruction of Jerusalem. to interweave the Fourth Gospel with the Synoptics, This is the *terminus by* which in the Now Testament the and it is somewhat remarkable that not one allusion to field is bounded. To Israel it was 'the end,' 'the end of the Parousia in the latter is to be found in the former. all things, 'the passing away of heaven and earth,' the abrogation of the old order, the inauguration of the new. It is therefore preferable on all accounts to consider the Gospel of St. John by itself, and we shall find that Of this great providential epoch, history tells us much, the references to the subject of our inquiry, though not but prophecy more. History shows us the predicted many in number, are very important and full of interest. Signs Coming to pass; the premonitory symptoms of the approaching catastrophe --the false Christs, The Parousia and the Resurrection of the Dead the wars and rumours of wars, the insurrections and John v. 25-29. commotions, the earthquakes, famines, and pestilences 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, ; the persecutions and tribulations; the invading legions and now is, when the dead shall bear the voice of the of Rome; the besieged and captured city; the burning Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the temple; the slaughtered myriads; the extinguished Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son nation. But history cannot lift the veil which hangs to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to over the spirit world ; it leads us up to the very border, execute judgment also, because lie is the Son of man. and bids us guess the rest. But we have a more sure ' Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the word of prophecy which, instead of conjecture, gives which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and us assurance. It reveals 'the Son of man coming in his

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shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the the resurrection of damnation.

which we have found in the Synoptical Gospels, it is impossible not to be struck with the constant association of the Parousia with a great act of judgment. From the is coming, without the addition of the words 'and now very first notice of this great event to the last, the idea of is:' intimating that the event specified, viz., the raising warns the nation of 'the coming wrath.' The men of time, although still not far off. The formula ' the hour close of the age the tares were to be burned, and the it brings it within a comparatively brief period. We find come in His glory to reward every man according to hour is coming, and now is, employed by our Lord in his works. The judgment of Capernaum and Chorazin His conversation with the woman of Samaria (John iv. closing parables in our Lord's ministry are nearly all their force in the passage before us. When our Lord wicked husbandman, the marriage of the king's son, worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in the ten virgins, the talents, the sheep and the goats. truth,' He intimates that the time was already present, occupied with the same subject.

makes to this event recognises its judicial character. hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, description of the approaching consummation. It is in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth,' would be 'ploughed as a field,' and Mount Gerizirn etc.

There can be no doubt that the passage just quoted (ver. 28, 29) refers to the literal resurrection of the dead. It may also be admitted that the preceding verses (25, 26) refer to the communication of spiritual life to the swept away to make room for the nobler worship 'in spiritually dead.(1) The time for this life-giving process had already commenced,-' The hour is coming, and now is.' The dead in trespasses and sins were about to be made alive by the quickening power of the divine Spirit acting upon men's souls in the preaching of the presumption is strong that it does. Let it suffice, at gospel of Christ. This life giving power belonged by divine appointment to the Son of God, to whom also wag committed, in virtue of His humanity, the office of events which were not distant, but so near that it might supreme Judge (ver. 27).

Anticipating that this claim to be the Judge of mankind would stagger His hearers, our Lord proceeds to strengthen His assertion and heighten their admiration by declaring that at His voice the buried dead would ere long come forth from their graves to stand before His judgment throne.

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The reader will particularly note the indications resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto of time specified by our Lord in these important passages. First we have 'the hour is coming, and now In the references to the approaching consummation is: ' this intimates that the action spoken of, viz. the communication of spiritual life to the spiritually dead, has already begun to take effect. Next we have 'the hour judgment is put prominently forward. John the Baptist of the dead from their graves, is at a greater distance of Nineveh and the queen of the south are to appear *in* is coming' always denotes that the event referred to is the judgment with this generation. In the harvest at the not far distant. It does not indeed define the time, but wheat gathered into the barn. The Son of man was to these two expressions, 'the hour is coming,' and 'the was to be heavier than that of Tyre and Sidon. The 21, 23), and their use there may help us to determine declaratory of coming judgment -the pounds, the says, 'the hour cometh, and now is, when the true The great prophecy on the Mount of Olives is wholly for had He not begun to collect the materials of that spiritual Church of true worshippers of which He spoke It is remarkable that the first allusion which St. John ? When, however, He says, 'Woman, believe me, the But we now find a new element introduced into the nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father,' He speaks of a time which, though not distant, was not yet come. connected with *the resurrection of the dead*; of 'all that He foresaw the period of which He spoke, when the are in the graves.' The hour is coming when all that are worship of the temple would cease,-- when Mount Zion also be overwhelmed in the deluge of wrath. But the abrogation of the local and material was necessary to the inauguration of the universal and spiritual ; and therefore it was that the temple with its ritual must be spirit and in truth.

Of course, it cannot be absolutely proved that the phrase 'the hour is coming' refers to precisely the same point of time in these two instances, though the this stage, to note the fact that our Lord here speaks of the resurrection of the dead and the judgment as properly be said, 'The hour is coming,' etc.

The Resurrection, the Judgment, and the Last Day

John vi. 39.

' This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which lie hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

'1 will raise him up at the last day.' JOHN vi. 44-- '1 It is usual to explain these words as meaning that a will raise him up at the last day.' JOHN ix. 24.-' He shall great crisis in the spiritual history of the world was now rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' JOHN xii. at hand : that the death of Christ upon the cross was the 48.-- 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge turning-point, so to speak, of the great conflict between him in the last day. good and evil, between the living and true God and the We have in these passages another new phrase in false usurping god of this world- that the result of Christ's death would be the ultimate overthrow of Satan's power and the final establishment of the kingdom of truth and righteousness on the ruins of Satan's empire.

connexion with the approaching consummation, which is peculiar to the Fourth Gospel. We never find in the Synoptics the expression 'the last day,' although we do find its equivalents, 'that day,' and 'the day of judgment.' No doubt there is much important truth in this It cannot be doubted that these expressions are explanation, but it fails to satisfy all the requirements synonymous, and refer to the same period. But we have of the very distinct and emphatic language of our Lord already seen that the judgment is contemporaneous with respect to the nearness and completeness of the with the 'end of the age ' (sonteleia ton aiwnoj), and event to which He refers : 'Now is the judgment of this we infer that ' the last day' is only another form of the world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.' It is expression 'the end of the age or Aeon.' The Parousia not enough to say that, to the prophetic foresight of our also is constantly represented as coincident in point of Saviour, the distant future was as if it were present; nor, time with the ' end of the age,' so that all these great that by His approaching death the judgment of the world events, the Parousia, the resurrection of the dead, the and the expulsion of Satan would be virtually secured, judgment, and the last day, are contemporaneous. Since, and might therefore be regarded as accomplished facts. then, the end of the age is not, as is generally imagined, Nor is it enough to say, that from the moment when the the end of the world, or total destruction of the earth, great sacrifice of the Cross was offered, the power and but the close of the Jewish economy; and since our Lord influence of Satan began to ebb, and must continually Himself distinctly and frequently places that event decrease until it is finally annihilated. The language of within the limits of the existing generation, we conclude our Lord manifestly points to a great and final judicial that the Parousia the resurrection, the judgment, and transaction, which was soon to take place. But judgment the last day, all belong to the period of the destruction is an act which can hardly be conceived as extending over of Jerusalem. an indefinite period, and especially when it is restricted

However startling or incredible such a conclusion by the word now, to a distinct and imminent point of may at first sight appear, it is what the teachings of the time. The phrase 'cast out,' also, is evidently an allusion New Testament are absolutely committed to, and as to the expulsion of a demon from a body possessed by we advance in this inquiry, we shall find the evidence an unclean spirit. But this suggests a sudden, violent, in support of it accumulating to such a degree as to and almost instantaneous act, and not a gradual and be irresistible. We shall meet with such expressions protracted process. No figure could be less appropriate as ' the last times,' ' the last days,' and ' the last hour,' to describe the slow ebbing and ultimate exhaustion of evidently denoting the same period as the last day,---Satanic power than the *casting out* of a demon. We are yet spoken of as being not far off, and even as already compelled, therefore, to set aside the explanation which come. Meanwhile we can only ask the reader to reserve makes our Lord's words refer to a judgment which, his judgment, and calmly and impartially to weigh the after the lapse of many ages, is still going on; or to an evidence, derived, not from human authority, but from expulsion of Satan which has not yet been effected. He the word of inspiration itself. would not speak of a judgment which was not to take place for thousands of years as 'now,' nor of a 'casting The Judgment of this World, and of the Prince of this out' of Satan as imminent, which was to be the result of a slow and protracted process.

World

John xii. 31.

John vi. 40.

We conclude, then, that when our Lord said, ' Now 'Now is - the judgment of this world: now shall the is the judgment of this world, etc., He had reference prince of this world be cast out. to an event which was near, and in a sense immediate: John xvi. 11. that is to say, He had in view that great catastrophe 'Of judgment, because the prince of this world is which seems to have been scarcely ever absent from

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judged.

'the Son of man was to sit upon the throne of his glory '-the great ' harvest' at the end of the age, when the angel reapers were to 'gather out of his kingdom all things that this world at the period when his kingdom, 'this world,' offend, and them that do iniquity. If it be objected to this that the word kosmos (world) is too comprehensive to be restricted to one land or one nation, it may be out of Satan did then take place, it ought to be marked by replied that kosmos is employed here, as in some other passages, especially in the writings of St. John, rather in an ethical sense than as a geographical expression. (See by the assertion that such evidence of the abatement of John vii. 7 ; viii. 23 ; 1 John ii. 15 ; v. 14.)

Israel be spoken of as 'now,' any more than a judgment which is still in the future ? Forty years hence is no more now than four thousand years. To this it may be our days. The mysterious influence called 'demoniacal replied, That event was now imminent which more than any other would precipitate the day of doom for Israel. The crucifixion of Christ was the climax of crime,-- the divine commission that He, 'by the finger of God, cast culminating act of apostasy and guilt which filled the cup of wrath, and sealed the fate of 'that wicked generation.' The interval between the crucifixion of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem was only the brief space age of the apostles, for we have many allusions to their between the passing of the sentence and the execution of the criminal; and just as our Lord, when quitting the temple for the last time, exclaimed, 'Behold, your house is left unto you desolate !' though its desolation did not actually take place till nearly forty years after, so He might say, 'Now is the judgment of this world'-- though a like space of time would elapse between the utterance with the representations of the New Testament. and the accomplishment of His words.

world' is represented as coincident with 'the judgment now under consideration. of this world, and both are manifestly the result of the cast out at the period referred to, viz. the judgment at the close of the age ? That event marked a great epoch their Master: in the divine administration. It was the inauguration of a new order of things : the 'coining of the kingdom of God' in a high and special sense, when the peculiar relation subsisting between Jehovah and Israel was dissolved, and He became known as the God and Father of the whole human race. Thenceforth Satan was no longer to be the god of this world, but the Most High effected by the atoning death of Christ upon the cross, which is declared to be 'the reconciliation of all things unto God, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven' (Col. i. 20). But the formal inauguration of the new order is represented as taking place at ' the end of the age, the period when 'the kingdom of God was he had thus far held among men. Before the intuitive

His thoughts- the solemn judicial transaction when to come with power, and the Son of man was to sit as Judge 'on the throne of his glory.' What, then, could be more appropriate than the 'casting out ' of the prince of was judged ?

It may be objected that if any such event as the casting some very palpable diminution of the power of the devil over men. The objection is reasonable, and it may be met Satanic influence in the world does exist. The history But it may be said, How could this judgment of of our Saviour's own times furnishes abundant proof of the exercise of a power over the souls and bodies of men then possessed by Satan which happily is unknown in possession' is always ascribed in Scripture to Satanic agency; and it was one of the credentials of our Lord's out devils.' At what period did the subjection of men to demoniacal power cease to be manifested ? It was common in our Lord's days : it continued during the casting out of unclean spirits; but we have no evidence that it continued to exist in the post-apostolic ages. The phenomenon has so completely disappeared that to many its former existence is incredible, and they resolve it into a popular superstition, or ,in unscientific theory of mental disease,-- an explanation totally incompatible

It is worthy of remark that our Lord, on a previous In like manner the 'casting out of the prince of this occasion, made a declaration closely resembling that

When the severity disciples returned from their death of Christ. But how can it be said that Satan was evangelistic mission they reported with exultation their success in casting out demons through the name of

> Lord, even the demons are subject unto us through thy name' (Luke x. 17). In His reply, Jesus said, I beheld Satan ,is lightening fall from heaven ; ' an expression nearly equivalent to the words, 'Now shall the prince of this world be cast out,' and on which Neander makes the following suggestive remarks :

'As Christ had previously designated the cure was to take the kingdom to Himself. This revolution was of demoniacs wrought by Himself as a sign that the kingdom of God had come upon the earth, so now he considered what the disciples reported as a token of the conquering power of that kingdom, before which every evil thing must yield: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," *i.e.* from the pinnacle of power which

glance of His spirit lay open the results which were to John xvi. 22. ' 1 will see you again, and your heart shall flow from His redemptive work after His ascension into heaven. he saw, in spirit, the kingdom of God advancing rejoice.

Simple as these words may seem they have occasioned great perplexity to commentators. Their very simplicity maybe the chief cause of their difficulty: for it is so hard to believe that they mean what they seem to say. It has been Supposed that our Lord refers in some of these passages to His approaching departure from earth, and His final return at the 'end of all things,' In comparing these two remarkable sayings of our the consummation of human history; and that in the others He refers to His temporary absence from His disciples during the interval between His crucifixion 1. They are both uttered on occasions when the and His resurrection.

in triumph over the kingdom of Satan. He does not say, " I see now," but, "I saw." He saw it before the disciples brought their report of their accomplished wonders. While they were doing these isolated works he saw the one great work, of which theirs were only particular and individual signs -- the victory over the mighty power of evil which had ruled mankind completely achieved.⁽²⁾ Lord there are three points that deserve particular notice :

approaching triumph of His cause was vividly brought A careful examination of our Lord's allusions to His departure and His coming again will satisfy every before Him. 2. In both, the casting out of Satan is represented as intelligent reader that His coming, or coming again, always refers to one particular event and one particular an accomplished fact. 3. In both it is regarded as a swift and summary act, period. No event is more distinctly marked in the New Testament than the Parousia, the 'second coming' of the not a slow and protracted process : in the one case Satan

Lord. It is always spoken of as an act, and not a process falls ' as lightning from heaven,' in the other he is 'cast ; a great and auspicious event ; a 'blessed hope,' eagerly out' as an unclean spirit from a demoniac.

Neander, therefore, has somewhat missed the real anticipated by His disciples and confidently believed to point of the expression, in his otherwise admirable be at hand. The apostles and the early believers knew nothing of a Parousia spread over a vast and indefinite remarks. We think the words plainly point to a great period of time; nor of several 'comings,' all distinct and judicial transaction, taking place at a particular point separate from one another; but of only one coming,-of time, that time very near, and as the consequence the Parousia, 'the glorious appearing of the great God and result of the Saviour's death upon the cross. Such a transaction and such a period we can find only in the even our Saviour Jesus Christ' (Titus ii. 13). If anything great catastrophe so vividly depicted by our Lord in is clearly written in the Scriptures it is this. It is therefore with astonishment that we read the comments of Dean His prophetic discourse, and we can therefore have no hesitation in understanding His words to refer to that Alford on our Lord's words in John xiv. 3 The coming again of the Lord is not one single act, memorable event.

as His resurrection, or the descent of the Spirit, or His No other explanation satisfies the requirements of the declaration : 'Now is the judgment of this world; second personal advent, or the final coming to judgment, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. but the great complex of all these, the result of which shall be His taking His people to Himself to where He Christ's Return [The Parousia] Speedy is. This ercomai is begun (ver. 18) in His resurrection; John xiv. 3 carried on (ver. 23) in the spiritual life, making them 'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will ready for the place prepared; farther advanced when again, and receive you unto myself. each by death is fetched away to be with Him (Phil. i. John xiv. 18. 23); fully *completed* at His coming in glory, when they '1 will not leave you orphans, I will come to shall ever be with Him (I Thess. iv. 17) in the perfected John xiv. 28.

come you. resurrection state.' (3) 'l go away, and come again unto you.' This is all evolved out of the single word ercomai! John xvi. 16 But if ercomai has such a variety and complexity of A little while, and ye shall not see me: and meaning, why not npayw and porenomai? Why should little while, and ye shall see me, again, a not the 'going away' have as many parts and processes as because I go to the the 'coming again?' It may be asked likewise, How could Father? the disciples have understood our Lord's language, if it

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men be expected ever to come to the apprehension of *to be* fulfilled at the resurrection; then received its main the Scriptures if the simplest expressions are so intricate *fulfilment* at the day of Pentecost; and shall have its *final* and bewildering?

English common sense, but in the mystical jargon of Lange and Stier. What can be more plain than that the presented to us.' (4) 'coming again' is as definite an act as the 'going away,' great prophecy and promise of the New Testament, the other by a long interval, and the last still uncompleted Parousia ? That this event was not to be long deferred is evident from the language in which it is announced: 'Ercomai -- 'I am coming.' The whole tenor of our Lord's address supposes that the separation between His and intricate an explanation could never have occurred disciples and Himself is to be brief, and their reunion speedy and perpetual. Why does He go away ? To prepare a place for them. Is it, then, not yet prepared ? Has he not yet received them to Himself? Are they while,' soon fully comprehended our Lord when He not yet where he is ? If the Parousia be still in the future said, these hopes are still unfulfilled.

far-off event, many centuries distant, but one that was at hand, is shown in the subsequent references made to it by our Lord. 'A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to Parousia: the Father' (John xvi. 16). He was soon to leave them; but it was not for ever, nor for long,-- 'a little while,' a where I am there ye way be also ' (John xiv. 3). few short years, and their sorrow and separation would be at an end; for 'I will see you again, and your heart (John xiv. 18). shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you' (chap. xvi. 22). It will be observed that our Lord does little while, and ye shall see me John xvi. 16). not say that *death* will reunite them, but His coming to them. That coming, therefore, could not be distant.

That it is to this interval between His departure and the Parousia that our Lord refers when He speaks of 'a little while' is evident from two considerations: First, because he distinctly states that He is going to the Father, which shows that His absence relates to the period subsequent to the ascension; and, secondly, because in the Epistle to the Hebrews this same period, viz. the interval between our Lord's departure and His coming again, is expressly called 'a little while.' For yet *a little while*, and be that is coming shall come, and will not tarry' (Heb. x. 37).

Here again we are constrained to protest against the forced and unnatural interpretation of this passage (John xvi. 16) by Dr. Alford:

'The mode of expression,' he observes, 'is purposely enigmatical; the gewreite and oesge not being coordinate : the first referring to physical, the second

had such a 'great complex' of meaning? Or how can plain also to spiritual sight. The odesqi (ye shall see) began completion at the great return of the Lord hereafter. This comment is not conceived in the spirit of lucid Remember, again, that in all these prophecies we have a perspective of continually unfolding fulfilments

Conceive of an act of vision, 'ye shall see,' divided and can only refer to that one coming which is the into three distinct operations, each separated from the after the lapse of eighteen centuries, and this in the face of our Lord's express declaration that it was to be 'in *a little* while.' This is not criticism, but mysticism. So artificial to the disciples, and it is surprising that it should have occurred to any sober interpreter of Scripture. But even the disciples, though at first perplexed about I the little

' I came forth from the Father, and am come into That this anticipated return and reunion was not a the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father' (John xvi. 28).

> Supplement this by three other words of Jesus, and we have the substance of His teaching respecting the

I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that

I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you'

A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again, a

Language is incapable of conveying thought with accuracy if these words do not affirm that the return of our Saviour to His disciples was to be speedy.

St. John To Live Till The Parousia

John xxi. 22.

' Jesus said unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?'

It would serve no purpose to specify and discuss the various - interpretations of this passage which learned men have conjectured. Had it been a riddle of the ancient Sphinx, it could not have been more perplexing and bewildering. Those who wish to see some of the numerous opinions which have been broached on the subject will find them referred to in Lange. (5)

The words themselves are sufficiently simple. All the obscurity and difficulty have been imported into them by the reluctance of interpreters to recognise in the ' coming' of Christ a distinct and definite point of time

within the space of the existing generation. Often as our preference 'not to be unclothed [of the bodily vesture], Lord reiterates the assurance that he would come in His but to be clothed upon' [with the spiritual vesture]-kingdom, come in glory, come to judge His enemies in other words, not to die, but to be changed (2 Cor. and reward His friends, before the generation then v. 4). The disciples might be justified in this belief by living on earth -bad wholly passed away, there seems an the words of Jesus on the evening of the paschal supper: almost invincible repugnance on the part of theologians 'I will come again, and receive you unto myself.' How to accept His words in their plain and obvious sense. could they suppose that this meant death? Or they may have remembered His saying on the Mount of Olives, They persist in supposing that He must have meant something else or something more. Once admit, what 'The Son of man Shall send his angels with a great sound is undeniable, that our Lord Himself declared that of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect, His coming was to take place in the lifetime of some etc. (Matt. xxiv. 31). This, He had assured them, would of His disciples (Matt. xvi. 27, 28), and the whole take place before the existing generation passed away. They were, therefore, not wholly unprepared to receive difficulty vanishes. He had just revealed to Simon Peter such an announcement as our Lord made respecting St. by what death he was to glorify God, and Peter, with characteristic impulsiveness, presumed to ask what John.(6) should be the destiny of the beloved disciple, who at that We may therefore legitimately draw the following moment caught his eye. Our Lord did not give an explicit inferences from this important passage: answer to this question, which savoured somewhat 1. That there was nothing incredible or absurd in of intrusiveness, but his reply was understood by the the supposition that John might live till the coming of disciples to mean that John would live to see the Lord's the Lord. return. 'If I will that he tarry till I come.' This language 2. That our Lord's words suggest the probability that is very significant. It assumes as *possible* that John might he would actually do so. 3. That the disciples understood live till the Lord's coming. It does more, it suggests it our Lord's answer as implying besides that John would as *probable*, though it does not affirm it as *certain*. The not die at all. disciples put the interpretation upon it that John was 4. That St. John himself gives no sign that there not to die at all. The Evangelist himself neither affirms was anything incredible or impossible in the inference, nor denies the correctness of this interpretation, but though he does not commit himself to it. contents himself with repeating the actual words of the 5. That such an opinion would harmonise with our Lord's express teaching respecting the nearness and Lord,-- 'If I will that he tarry till I come.' It is, however, a circumstance of the greatest interest that we know how coincidence of His own coming, the destruction of the words of Christ were generally understood at the Jerusalem, the judgment of Israel, and the close of the time in the brotherhood of the disciples. They evidently aeon or age. concluded that John would live to witness the Lord's 6. That all these events, according to Christ's coming; and they inferred that in that case he would declarations, lay within the period of the existing not die at all. It is this latter inference that John guards generation. against being committed to. That he would live till the Having thus gone through the four gospels, and coming of the Lord he seems to admit without question. examined all the passages which relate to the Parousia, or coming of the Lord, it may be useful to recapitulate Whether this implied further that he would not die at all, was a doubtful point which the words of Jesus did and bring into one view the general teaching of these not decide. inspired records on this important subject.

Nor was this inference of 'the brethren' so incredible a thing or so unreasonable as it may appear to many. To live till the coming of the Lord was, according to the apostolic belief and teaching, tantamount to enjoying exemption from death. St. Paul taught the Corinthians,-' We shall not all Sleep [die], but we shall all be changed' (I Cor. xv. 51). He spoke to the Thessalonians of the possibility of their being alive at the Lord's coming: ' We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord' (I Thess. iv. 15). He expressed his own personal

THE PAROSIA IN THE GOSPELS

Summary Of The Teaching Of The Gospels Respecting The Parousia.

1. We have the link between Old and New Testament prophecy in the announcement by John the Baptist (the Elijah of Malachi) of the near approach of the coming wrath, or the judgment of the Theocratic nation.

2. The herald is closely followed by the King, who announces that the kingdom of God is at hand, and calls upon the nation to repent.

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but rejected the message, of Christ are threatened with a doom more intolerable than that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

4. Our Lord expressly assures His disciples that His coming would take place before they should have completed the evangelisation of the cities of Israel.

5. He predicts a judgment at the 'end of the age ' or aeon [sunteleia ton aiwnos], a phrase which does not mean the destruction of the earth, but the *consummation* of the age, i.e. the Jewish dispensation.

6. Our Lord expressly declares that He would *speedily* come [mellei epcesqai] in glory, in His kingdom, with His angels, and that some among His disciples should throughout the whole passage; but it seems impossible not die until His coming took place.

7. In various parables and discourses our Lord predicts the doom impending over Israel at the period of His coming. See Luke xviii., parable of the importunate widow.

Luke xix., *parable of the pounds*.

Matt. xxi., parable of the wicked husbandmen.

Matt. xxii., parable of the marriage feast.)

8. Our Lord frequently denounces the wickedness of the generation to which He preached, and declares that the crimes of former ages and the blood of the prophets would be required at their bands.

9. The resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the world, and the casting out of Satan are represented as coincident with the Parousia, and near at hand.

10. Our Lord assured His disciples that He would come again to them, and that His coming would be in 'a little while.'

connected and continuous discourse, having exclusive reference to the approaching doom of Jerusalem and Israel, according to our Lord's express statement (Matt. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; Luke xxi. 32.)

12. The parables of the ten virgins, the talents, and the sheep and the goats all belong to this same event, and are fulfilled in the judgment of Israel.

13. The disciples are exhorted to watch and pray, and to live in the continual expectation of the Parousia, because it would be sudden and speedy.

14. After His resurrection our Lord gave St. John reason to expect that He would live to witness His coming.

Footnotes

1. Some interpreters prefer to understand 'the dead' in verse 25 as having reference to such cases as the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain, and

3. The cities which were favoured with the presence, Lazarus of Bethany, persons literally raised from the dead and restored to life by our Lord. They understand the argument of our Lord to be something like this : 'You are astonished at the wonderful work which I have wrought upon this impotent man, but you will yet see far greater wonders. The moment is at hand when I will recall even the dead to life; and if this appear incredible to you, a still mightier work will one day be accomplished by my power: for the hour is coming when all that are in the grave shall come forth at my call, and stand before me in judgment.' (Dr. J. Brown. Discourses and Sayings of our Lord vol. i. p. 98.) This explanation has the advantage of consistency, in giving the same sense of the word 'dead' to admit that our Lord in verse 24 is speaking of literal death. To say that the believer has already 'passed from death unto life' obviously is the same thing as to say that he has passed from condemnation to justification. We feel compelled, therefore, to adopt the generally received interpretation, which regards verses 24 and 25 as referring to the spiritually dead, and verses 28 and 29 to the corporeally dead.

2. Life of Christ, chap. xii. 205.

3. Greek Test., *in loc.*.

4. Alford, Greek Test., in loc..

5. Commentary of St. John.

6. It is scarcely necessary to point out that, on the hypothesis that the 'coming' of Christ was not to take place until the 'end of the world,' in the popular acceptation of the phrase, the answer of our Lord would involve an extravagance, if not an absurdity. It would have been equivalent to saying, 'Suppose I please that 11. The prophecy on the Mount of Olives is one he should live a thousand years or more, what is that to you?' But it is evident that the disciples took the answer seriously.

APPENDIX TO PART I

NOTE A. On the Double-sense Theory of Interpretation

The following extracts, from theologians of different ages, countries, and churches, exhibit a powerful consensus of authorities in opposition to the loose and arbitrary method of interpretation adopted by many German and English commentators:

'Unam quandam ac certam et simplicem sententiam ubique quaerendam esse.'- Melanethon.

('One definite and simple meaning of [Scripture] is in every case to be sought.')

'Absit a nobis ut Deum faciamus o, i,glwtton, aut multiplices sensus affingamus ipsius verbo, in quo potius tanquarn in speculo limpidissimo sui autoris

simplicitatem contemplari debemus. (Ps. xii. 6; xix. B.) heard and read them.' - Professor Jowett, Essay on the Unicus ergo sensus scripturae, nempe grammaticus, Interpretation of Scripture, § i. 3, 4. est admittendus, quibuscunque demum terminis, vel 'I hold that the words of Scripture were intended to have one definite sense, and that our first object should

propriis vel tropicis et figuratis exprimatur.' - Maresius. (Far be it from us to make God speak with two be to discover that sense, and adhere rigidly to it. I tongues, or to attach a variety of senses to His Word, believe that, as a general rule, the words of Scripture in which we ought rather to behold the simplicity of its are intended to have, like all other language, one plain divine author reflected as in a clear mirror (Ps. xii. 6 definite meaning, and that to say that words do mean a ; xix. 8.) Only one meaning of Scripture, therefore, is thing merely because they can be tortured into meaning admissible: that is, the *grammatical*, in whatever terms, it, is a most dishonourable and dangerous way of whether proper or tropical and figurative, it may be handling Scripture? expressed.) Canon Ryle, Expository Thoughts on St. Luke, vol. 'Dr. Owen's remark is full of good sense-" If the i. P. 383.

Scripture has more than one meaning, it has no meaning at all: " and it is just as applicable to the prophecies as Sufferings and Glories of the Messiah, p. 5, note.

Let us proceed to the predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem. These predictions, as is well known, in all the gospel narratives (which, by the way, are singularly The consequences of admitting such a principle consentaneous, implying that all the Evangelists drew from one consolidated tradition) are inextricably mixed What book on earth has a double sense, unless it up with prophecies of the second coming of Christ and the end of the world -a confusion which Mr. Hutton fully admits. The portion relating to the destruction of the city is singularly definite, and corresponds very closely with the actual event. The other portion, on the contrary, is vague and grandiloquent, and refers, chiefly to natural phenomena and catastrophes. From the precision of the one portion, most critics infer that the gospels were compiled after or during the siege and conquest of Jerusalem. From the confusion of the two portions Mr. Hutton draws the opposite inference -- namely, that the prediction existed in the present 'For these and such-like reasons, the scheme recorded form before that event. It is in the greatest degree improbable, he argues, that if Jerusalem had fallen, and the other signs of Christ's coming showed no indication of following, the writers should not have recognised and disentangled the confusion, and corrected their records to bring them into harmony with what it was then beginning to be seen might be 'First, it may be laid down that Scripture has one the real meaning of Christ or the actual truth of history.

to any other portion of Scripture.'- Dr. John Brown, should be well weighed. is a book of designed *enigmas*? And even this has but one real meaning. The heathen oracles indeed could say, "Aio te, Pyrrhe, Romanos vincere posse; " but can such an *equivoque* be admissible into the oracles of the living God ? And if a *literal* sense, and an occult sense, can at one and the same time, and by the same words, be conveyed, who that is uninspired shall tell us what the occult sense is? By what laws of interpretation is it. to be judged ? By none that belong to human language; for other books than the Bible have not a double sense -attached to them. of attaching a double sense to the Scriptures is inadmissible. It sets afloat all the fundamental principles of interpretation by which we arrive at established conviction and certainty and casts us on the boundless ocean of imagination and conjecture without rudder or compass.'- Stuart on the Hebrews, Excurs. xx.

meaning, -the meaning which it had to the mind of the

'But the real perplexity lies here. The prediction, as prophet or evangelist who first uttered or wrote to the we have it, makes Christ distinctly affirm that His second hearers or readers who first received it.' coming shall follow "immediately," -- "in those days," after Scripture, like other books, has one meaning, the destruction of Jerusalem, and that "this generation" which is to be gathered from itself, without reference to (the generation he addressed) should not pass away till the adaptations of fathers or divines, and without regard all "these things are fulfilled." Mr. Hutton believes that to a *priori* notions about its nature and origin.

these last words were intended by Christ to apply only The office of the interpreter is not to add another [interpretation], but to recover the original one : to the destruction of the Holy City. He is entitled to his opinion; and in itself it is not an improbable solution. the meaning, that is, of the words as they struck on But it is, under the circumstances, a somewhat forced the ears or flashed before the eyes of those who first

THE PAROSIA IN THE GOSPELS

NOTE B. On the Prophetic Element in the Gospels

THE PAROUSIA IN THE ACTS AND THE EPISTLES

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The 'Going Away' And The 'Coming Again

Acts I. 11.

This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go unto heaven?

The last conversation of Jesus with His disciples world would take place at a very early date. Not only before His crucifixion was concerning His coming to them again, and the last word left with them at His ascension was the promise of His coming again.

The expression 'in like manner' must not be pressed too far. There are obvious points of difference between the manner of the Ascension and the Parousia. He departed alone, and without visible splendour; He was kingdom " (Matt. xvi. 28); " Verily I say unto you, Ye to return in glory with His angels. The words, however, imply that His coming was to be visible and personal, which would exclude the interpretation which regards it till I come, what is that to thee 2 (John xxi. 23): and the as providential, or spiritual. The visibility of the Parousia is supported by the uniform teaching of the apostles 'If, therefore, Jesus did not say these things, the and the belief of the early Christians: 'Every eye shall see him' (Rev. i. 7).

> There is no indication of *time* in this parting promise, but it is only reasonable to suppose that the disciples would regard it as addressed to them, and that they would cherish the hope of soon seeing Him again, according to His own saying, 'A little while, and ye shall see me.' This belief sent them back to Jerusalem with great joy. Is it credible that they could have felt this elation if they had conceived that His coming would not take place for eighteen centuries ? Or can we suppose that their joy rested upon a delusion ? There is no conclusion possible but that which holds the belief of the disciples to have been well founded, and the Parousia nigh at hand.

The Last Days Come

ACTS ii. 16-20.

' This is that which is spoken by the prophet Joel: It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; moreover on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour

And with many other words did he testify and of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of exhort them, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward the Lord come.' generation.

In these words of St. Peter, the first apostolic utterance This verse fixes the reference of the apostle's address. spoken in the power of the divine afflatus of Pentecost, It was the existing generation whose coming doom he we have an authoritative interpretation of the prophecy foresaw, and it was from participation in its fate that he which he quotes from Joel. He expressly identifies the urged his hearers to escape. It was but the echo of the time and the event predicted by the prophet with the Baptist's cry, time and the event then actually present on the day of 'Flee from the coming wrath.' Here, again, there can Pentecost. The 'last days 'of Joel are these days of St. be no question about the meaning of 'genea', it is that 'wicked generation' which was filling up the measure Peter. The ancient prediction was in part fulfilled ; it was receiving its accomplishment before their eyes in of its predecessor; the perverse and incorrigible nation the copious effusion of the Holy Spirit. over which judgment was impending.

Before leaving this address of St. Peter we may point This outpouring of the Spirit was introductory to other events, which would in like manner come to pass. out another example of a universal proposition which The day of judgment for the Theocratic nation was at must be taken in a restricted sense. 'I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.' The effusion of the Holy Spirit hand, and ere long the presages of 'that great and notable day of the Lord' would be manifested. on the day of Pentecost was not literally universal, but It is impossible not to recognise the correspondence it was indiscriminate and general in comparison of between the phenomena preceding the day of the Lord former times. The necessarily qualified use of so large a as foretold by Joel, and the phenomena described by phrase shows how a similar limitation may be justifiable our Lord as preceding His coming, and the judgment of in such expressions as 'all the nations,' ' every creature,' and ' the whole world.'

Israel (Matt. xxiv. 29). The words of Joel can refer only to the last days of the Jewish age or aeon, the ounteleia ton aiwnoj, which was also the theme of our Lord's prophecy on the Mount of Olives. In like manner the words of Malachi as evidently refer to the same event and the same point of time,-- 'the day of his coming,' ' the day that shall burn as a furnace,' ' the great and dreadful day of the Lord' (Mal. iii. 2; iv. 1-5).

We have here a consensus of testimonies than the restoration of all things, of which God hath spoken which nothing can be conceived more authoritative by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world and decisive,-- Joel, Malachi, St. Peter, and the great began? Prophet of the new covenant Himself. They all speak It is scarcely possible to doubt that in this address of the same event and of the same period, the great the apostle speaks of that which be conceived his day of the Lord, the Parousia, and they speak of them bearers might and would experience, if they obeyed as near. Why encumber and embarrass a prediction his exhortation to repent and believe. Indeed, any so plain with supposititious double references and other supposition would be preposterous. Neither the ulterior fulfilments? Nothing else will fit this prophecy apostle nor his auditory could possibly be thinking of ' save that event to which alone it refers, and with which times of refreshing' and 'times of restoration' in remote it corresponds as the impression with the seal and ages of the world; blessings which were at a distance of the lock with the key. The catastrophe of Israel and centuries and millenniums would hardly be powerful Jerusalem was at hand, long foreseen, often predicted, motives to immediate repentance. We must therefore and now imminent. The self-same generation that had conceive of the times of refreshing and of restoration as, seen, rejected, and crucified the King would witness the in the view of the apostle, near, and within the reach of fulfilment of His warnings when Jerusalem perished in that generation. 'blood and fire, and vapour of smoke.'

The Coming Doom Of That Generation

Acts ii. 40.

powers of Jesus could not be at fault; secondly, it assumes or implies that the gospel narratives of the utterances of Jesus are to be relied upon, even though in these especial predictions he admits them to be essentially confused and, thirdly (what at we think he ought not to have overlooked), the sentence he quotes is by no means the only one indicating that Jesus Himself held the conviction, which He undoubtedly communicated to His followers, that His Second coming to judge the was it to take place "immediately" after the destruction of the city (Matt. xxiv. 29), but it would be witnessed by many of those who heard Him. And these predictions are in no way mixed up with those of the destruction of *Jerusalem* : "There be some standing here that shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come (Matt. x. 23); " If I will that he tarry corresponding passages in the other Synoptics.

is rendered necessary only by the assumption which

Mr. Hutton is maintaining --namely, that the prophetic

gospels must be strangely inaccurate. If He did, His prophetic faculty cannot have been what Mr. Hutton conceives it to have been. That His disciples all confidently entertained this erroneous expectation, and entertained it on the supposed authority of their Master, there can he no doubt whatever. (See 1 Cor. x. 11,bxv. 51; Phil. iv. 5; I Thess. iv. 15; James v. 8; I Peter iv. 7; 1 John ii. 18; Rev. i. 13, xxii. 7, 10, 12.) Indeed, Mr. Hutton recognises this at least as frankly and fully as we have stated it.'- W. R. Greg, in Contemporary Review, Nov. 1876.

To those who maintain that our Lord predicted the end of the world before the passing away of that generation, the objections of the sceptic present a formidable difficulty -- insurmountable, indeed, without resorting to forced and unnatural evasions, or admissions fatal to the authority and inspiration of the evangelical narratives. We, on the contrary, fully recognise the common-sense construction put by Mr. Greg upon the Language of Jesus, and the no less obvious acceptance of that meaning by the apostles. But we draw a conclusion directly contrary to that of the critic, and appeal to the prophecy on the Mount of Olives as a signal example and demonstration of our Lord's supernatural foresight.

THE PAROUSIA IN THE ACTS AND THE EPISTLES

The Parousia And The Restitution Of All Things.

ACTS iii. 19-21

'Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may Send Jesus Christ, who was before appointed unto you; whom the heavens must receive until the times of.

But if so, what are we to understand by 'the times of refreshing and of restoration'? Are they the same, or are they different, things ? Doubtless, virtually the Same ;

and the one phrase will help us to understand the other. The restitution, or rather restoration [apokatustasij] of all things, is said to be the theme of all prophecy; then it can only refer to what Scripture designates 'the of the times of refreshing, and of the restoration of all kingdom of God,' the end and purpose of all the dealings of God with Israel. It was a phrase well understood by the Jews of that period, who looked forward to the days of the Messiah, the kingdom of God, as the fulfilment as the destruction of Jerusalem be associated with times of all their hopes and aspirations. It was the coming age or aeon, aiwn o mellwn, when all wrongs were to be redressed, and truth and righteousness were to reign. The whole nation was pervaded with the belief that this happy era was about to dawn. What was our Lord's doctrine on this subject? He Said to His disciples, 'Elias suffering of God, 'then, instead of restoration, there indeed cometh first, and restoreth all things' (Mark ix. 12). That is to say, the second Elijah, John the Baptist, had already commenced the restoration which He righteous judgment of God' (Rom. ii. 4, 5). Himself was to complete ; had laid the foundations of the kingdom which He was to consummate and crown. For the mission of John was, in one aspect, restorative, that is in *intention*, though not in effect. He came to recall the nation to its allegiance, to renew its covenant generation. relation with God: he went before the Lord, 'in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the that it coincides with the Parousia. just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord' (Luke i. 17). What is all this but the description of 'the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and 'the times of restoration of all things,' which were held forth as the gifts of God to Israel ?

But have we any clear indication of the period at which these proffered blessings might be expected ? Were they in the far distant future, or were they nigh at baud ? The note of time is distinctly marked in verse 20. The coming of Christ is specified as the period when these glorious prospects are to be realized. Nothing can be more clear than the connection and coincidence But this is the period when He comes to judge the of these events, the coming of Christ, the times of refreshing, and the times of restoration of all things. This of mistaking the time; no difficulty in identifying the is in harmony with the uniform representation given in event: it is the end of the age, and the judgment of Israel. the eschatology of the New Testament: the Parousia, the end of the age, the consummation of the kingdom of God, the destruction of Jerusalem, the judgment of Israel, all synchronise. To find the date of one is to fix the date of all. We have already seen how definitely the time was fixed for the fulfilment of some of these events. The Son of man was to come in His kingdom before the death of some of the disciples. The catastrophe of Jerusalem was to take place before the living generation bad passed away. The great and notable day of the Lord

is represented by St. Peter in the preceding chapter as overtaking that 'untoward generation.' And now, in the passage before us, he as clearly intimates that the arrival things, was contemporaneous with the 'sending of Jesus Christ' from heaven.

But it may be said, How can so terrible a catastrophe of refreshing or of restoration? There were two Bides to the medal: there was the reverse as well as the obverse. Unbelief and impenitence would change 'the times of refreshing' into 'the days of vengeance.' If they ' despised the riches of the goodness and forbearance and longwould be destruction; and instead of the day of salvation there would be 'the day of wrath, and revelation of the

We know the fatal choice that Israel made; how 'the wrath came upon them to the uttermost;' and we know how it all came to pass at the appointed and predicted period, at the 'close of the age,' within the limits of that

We are thus enabled to define the period to which the apostle makes allusion in this passage, and conclude

We are conducted to the same conclusion by another path. In Matt. xix. 20 our Lord declares to His disciples, 'Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, etc. We have already commented upon this passage, but it may be proper again to notice that the 'regeneration' [paliggenesia] of St. Matthew is the precise equivalent of the 'restoration' [apokatastasij] of the Acts. What is meant by the regeneration is clear beyond the shadow of a doubt, for it is the time 'when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory. guilty nation (Matt. xxv. 31). There is no possibility

We thus arrive at the same conclusion by another and independent route, thus immeasurably strengthening the force of the demonstration.

Christ Soon To Judge The World

ACTS xvii. 31.

'Because he hath appointed day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained.

We have already seen that the Lord Jesus Christ is

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declared to be constituted the Judge of men (John v. 22, is constantly recognised in the New Testament, though 27). As clearly it is declared that the time of judgment is it is often ignored by theologians and almost forgotten the Parousia. With equal distinctness we are taught that by Christians in general. St. Paul lays great stress upon the Parousia was to fall within the term of the generation it. then living. The judgment was therefore viewed by St. 'Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the Paul as being near. We have in the passage now before *circumcision*, to confirm the promises made unto the us an incidental but unnoticed confirmation of this fathers' (Rom. xv. 8); and we might well add, 'to fulfil the fact. The words 'he will judge' do not express a simple threatenings' as well. The phrase 'the kingdom of God' future, but a speedy future, mellei krinein, He is about is distinctly a Messianic and Theocratic idea, and has a to judge, or will soon judge. This shade of meaning special and unique reference to Israel, over whom the is not preserved in our English version, but it is not Lord was King in a sense peculiar to that nation alone unimportant. (Deut. vii. 6; Amos iii. 2). We shall see that 'the kingdom Here, then, we are again met by the oft-recurring of God' is represented as arriving at its consummation association of the Parousia and the judgment, both of at the period of the destruction of Jerusalem.

hand.

which were evidently regarded by the apostle as nigh at That event marks the denouement of the great scheme of divine providence, or economy, as it is called, which began with the call of Abraham and ran a course THE PAROUSIA IN THE APOSTLOTIC EPISTLES of two thousand years. We may regard that scheme, the Jewish dispensation, not only as an important factor in Introduction the education of the world, but also as an experiment, We have seen how the Parousia, or coming of on a large scale and under the most favourable Christ, pervades the Gospels from beginning to end. circumstances, whether it were possible to form a people We find it distinctly announced by John the Baptist at for the service, and fear, and love of God ; a model the very commencement of his ministry, and it is the nation, the moral influence of which might bless the last utterance of Jesus recorded by St. John. Between world. In some respects, no doubt, it was a failure, and these two points we find continual references to the its end was tragic and terrible; but what is important for event in various forms and on various occasions. We us to notice, in connection with this inquiry, is that the have seen also that the Parousia is generally associated relation of Christ, the Son of David and King of Israel, with judgment,- that is, the judgment of Israel and the to the Jewish nation explains the prominence given destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem. The in the Gospels to the Parousia, and the events which reason of this association of the coming of Christ with accompanied it, as having a special bearing upon that the judgment of Israel is very apparent. The Parousia people. Inattention to this has misled many theologians was the culminating event in what may be called and commentators :- they have read 'the earth,' when Messianic history, or the Theocratic government of only 'the land' was meant; ' the human race,' when only the Jewish people. The incarnation and mission of the 'Israel' was intended; 'the end of the world,' when 'the Son of God, though they had a general relation to the close of the age, or dispensation,' was alluded to. At the whole human race, had at the same time an especial and same time it would be a serious mistake to undervalue peculiar relation to the covenant nation, the children of the importance and magnitude of the event which took Abraham. Christ was indeed the 'second Admit,' the place at the Parousia. It was a great era in the divine new Head and Representative of the race, but before government of the world: the close of an economy which that, He was the Son of David and the King of Israel. His had endured for two thousand years; the termination own declared view of His mission was, that it was first of of one aeon and the commencement of another; the all special to the chosen people,-- 'I am not sent but to abrogation of the 'old order' and the inauguration of the the lost sheep of the house of Israel ' (Matt. xv. 24). The new. It is, however, its special relation to Judaism which very title which He claimed, 'Christ,' the Messiah, or gives to the Parousia its chief significance and import. Anointed One, was indicative of His relation to Judaism Passing from the Gospels to the Epistles we find and the Theocracy, for it recognised Him as the rightful that the Parousia occupies a conspicuous place in the King, come in the fullness of time 'to His own,' to take teaching and writings of the apostles. It is natural and possession of the throne of His father David. This reasonable that it should be so. If their Master taught special Judaic character of the mission of the Lord Jesus them in His lifetime that He was soon to come again;

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that some of themselves would live to see Him return ; if in His farewell conversation with them at the Paschal supper He dwelt upon the shortness of the interval of His absence, and called it 'a little while ;' and if at His ascension divine messengers bad assured them that He would come again even as they had seen Him go; it and that of the 'weighty and powerful' writer of this would be strange indeed if they could have forgotten or lost sight of the inspiring hope of a speedy reunion with Sentiments and beliefs which were manifestly current the Lord. They certainly often express their expectation of His coming. That hope was the day-star and dawn that cheered them in the gloomy night of tribulation the expectation of Christ's advent. So praiseworthy was through which they had to pass : they comforted one another with the familiar watchword, 'The Lord is at hand.' They felt that at any moment their hope might become a reality. They waited for it, looked for it, longed for it, and exhorted one another to watchfulness and prayer. So the Lord had commanded them, and so they did. Could they be mistaken ? Is it possible that they is the praiseworthiness of labouring under a delusion cherished illusions on this subject? May they not have ? If it was an amiable weakness, 'sancta simplicitas,' to misunderstood the teachings of the Lord ? If this were possible, it would shake the foundations of our faith. If the apostles could have been in error respecting a matter of fact about which they had the most ample means of information, and on which they professed to speak with authority as the organs of a divine inspiration, what faith. confidence could be reposed in them on other subjects, in their nature obscure, abstruse, and mysterious ? No one who has any faith in the assurance which the Saviour gave His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit to 'guide them into all the truth,' to ' teach them all things,' and to ' bring all things to their remembrance that he had said unto them,' can doubt that the authority with which the apostles speak concerning the Parousia is equal to that of our Lord Himself. The hypothesis that a distinction may be made between what they believed and taught on this subject, and what they believed and taught on other subjects, will not bear a moment's examination. The whole of their teaching rests upon the same foundation, and that foundation the same on which rests the doctrine of Christ Himself.

We now proceed to examine the references to the Parousia contained in the Epistles of St. Paul,-- taking them in their chronological order, so far as this may be said to be ascertained.

IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

It is generally agreed that this is the earliest of all the apostolic epistles, and its date is assigned to the year A.D. 52, sixteen years after the conversion of St. Paul, [1] and twenty- two Years after the crucifixion of our Lord. It is

evident, therefore, that any suggestions of inexperience, or new-born enthusiasm, being visible in this epistle, afterwards toned down by the riper judgment of subsequent years, are quite out of place. We can detect no difference in the faith and hope of 'Paul the aged' epistle. It is, therefore, most instructive to observe the and prevalent in the minds of the early Christians.

Bengel remarks : 'The Thessalonians were filled with their position, so free and unembarrassed was the rule of Christianity among them, that they were able to look each hour for the coming of the Lord Jesus' [2] This is strange reasoning. It is true the Thessalonians were filled with the expectation of Christ's speedy coming, but if in this expectation they were deceived, where expect the speedy return of Christ, it seems a poor compliment to praise their credulity at the expense of their understanding.

We shall find, however, that the Christians of Thessalonica stand in no need of any apology for their

Expectation Of The Speedy Coming Of Christ

1 THESS. i. 9, 10.

'Ye turned to God from your idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from the heavens, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the coming wrath.

This passage is interesting as showing very clearly the place which the expected coming of Christ held in the belief of the apostolic churches. It was in the front rank; it was one of the leading truths of the Gospel. St. Paul describes the new attitude of these Thessalonian converts when they 'turned from their idols to serve the living and true God;' it was the attitude of 'waiting for his Son.' It is very significant that this particular truth should be selected from among all the great doctrines of the Gospel, and should be made the prominent feature which distinguished the Christian converts of Thessalonica. The whole Christian life is apparently summed up under two heads, the one general, the other particular : the former, the service of the living God; the latter, the expectation of the coming of Christ. It is impossible to resist the inference, (1) That this latter doctrine constituted an integral part of apostolic teaching. (2) That the expectation of the speedy return

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of Christ was the faith of the primitive Christians. [3] Parousia is associated with the judgment. For, how were they to wait ? Not Surely, in their graves; The Wrath Coming Upon The Jewish People not in Heaven; nor in Hades; plainly while they were I Thess. ii. 16 alive on the earth. The form of the expression, 'to wait 'But the wrath is come upon them to the for his Son from the heavens, manifestly implies that uttermost. they, while on earth, were waiting for the coming of Here the apostle represents the 'coming wrath' Christ from heaven. Alford observes 'that the especial as already come. Now it is certain that the judgment aspect of the faith of the Thessalonians was *hope*; hope of Israel, that is, the destruction of Jerusalem and the of the return of the Son of God from heaven;' and he extinction of the Jewish nationality, had not yet taken adds this singular comment: 'This hope was evidently place. Bengel seems to think that the apostle alludes entertained by them as pointing to an event more to a fearful massacre of Jews that bad just occurred at immediate than the church has subsequently believed Jerusalem, where 'an immense multitude of persons it to be. Certainly these words would give them an idea (some say more than thirty thousand) were slain? [4] of the nearness of the coming of Christ; and perhaps the Alford's explanation is : ' He looks back on the fact in misunderstanding of them may have contributed to the the divine counsels as a thing in past time, q.d. " was notion which the apostle corrects, 2 Thess. ii. 1.' This appointed to come;" not "has come." Jonathan Edwards, is a suggestion that the Thessalonians were mistaken in his sermon on this text, refers it to the approaching in expecting the Saviour's return in their own day. But destruction of Jerusalem. "The wrath is come," i.e. it is whence did they derive this expectation ? Was it not just at hand; it is at the door : as it proved with respect from the apostle himself ? We shall presently see that to that nation : their terrible destruction by the Romans the Thessalonians erred, not in *expecting* the Parousia, was soon after the apostle wrote this epistle." [5] Either or in *expecting it in their own day*, but in supposing that Bengel's supposition is correct, or the final catastrophe the time had actually arrived. was, in the apostle's view, so near and so sure that he The last clause of the verse is no less important,-'

spoke of it as an accomplished fact. Jesus, who delivereth us from *the coming wrath*.' These We may trace a very distinct allusion in the words carry us back to the proclamation of John the language of the apostle in verses 15 and 16 to our Lord's Baptist,-- 'Flee from the coming wrath.' It would be denunciations of 'that wicked generation' (Matt. xxiii. a mistake to suppose that St. Paul here refers to the retribution which awaits every sinful soul in a future 31, 32, 36). state; it was a particular and predicted catastrophe which The Bearing Of The Parousia On The Disciples Of Christ he bad in view. 'The coming wrath' [h orgh h ercomenh] I Thess. ii. 19. of this passage is identical with the 'coming wrath' [orgh 'For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? mellousa] of the second Elijah ; it is identical with Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his 'the days of vengeance,' and 'wrath upon this people,' coming ?' predicted by our Lord, Luke xxi. 23. It is 'the day of The uniform teaching, of the New Testament is, that wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,' the event which was to be so fatal to the enemies of Christ spoken of by St. Paul, Rom ii. 5. That coming 'dies irae' was to be an auspicious one to His friends. Everywhere always stands out distinct and visible throughout the the most malignant opposers and persecutors of whole of the New Testament. It was now not far off, and Christianity were the Jews; the annihilation of the Jewish though Judea might be the centre of the storm, yet the nationality, therefore, removed the most formidable cyclone of judgment would sweep over other regions, antagonist of the Gospel and brought rest and relief to and affect multitudes who, like the Thessalonians, suffering Christians. Our Lord had said to His disciples, might have been thought beyond its reach. We know when speaking of this approaching catastrophe, 'When from Josephus how the outbreak of the Jewish war was these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift the signal for massacre and extermination in every up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh' (Luke city where Jewish inhabitants had settled. It was to this xxi. 28). But this explanation is far from exhausting the ubiquity of 'the coming Wrath' that our Lord referred whole meaning of such passages. It cannot be doubted when He said, 'Wheresoever the body is, thither will the that the Parousia is everywhere represented as the eagles be gathered together' (Luke xvii. 37). Here again, crowning day of Christian hopes and aspirations; when as we have so frequently had occasion to remark, the

they would 'inherit the kingdom,' and 'enter into the joy of their Lord.' Such is the plain teaching both of Christ to both. There is nothing in the text to determine the and His apostles, and we find it clearly expressed in the reference. It is true that in the next chapter (ver. 14) we words of St. Paul now before us. The Parousia was to be the consummation of glory and felicity to the faithful, and the apostle looked for 'his crown' at the Lord's 'coming.'

Christ To Come With All His Holy Ones

I Thess. iii. 13.

' To the end that he may stablish ' your hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy' [ones].

This passage furnishes another proof that the 1). apostle regarded the period of our Lord's coming as the consummation of the blessedness of His people. He here represents it as a judicial epoch when the moral condition and character of men would be scrutinised and revealed. This is in accordance with I Cor. iv. 5 : ' Judge nothing before the time, *until the Lord come*, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts : and then shall every man have praise of God.' Similarly in Col. i. 22 we find an almost identical expression,-'To present you holy, and unblamable, and unreproveable in his sight,' words which can only be understood as referring to a judicial investigation and approval.

That this prospect was not distant, but, on the contrary, very near, the whole tenor of the apostle's rejoicing? Are his Thessalonian converts Still waiting for the Son of God from heaven ? Are they not yet ' stablished in holiness before God' ? not yet presented holy, and unblamable, and unreproveable in His sight? For this was to be their felicity 'at the coming of the Lord Jesus,' and not before. If that event therefore has never yet taken place, what becomes of their eager expectation thousands of years must first Slowly run their course, could St. Paul and his children in the faith have been thus filled with transport at the thought of the coming glory? But on the supposition that the Parousia was the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.' close at hand; that they might all expect to witness its arrival, then how natural and intelligible all this eager requires any argument to prove it. The only question is, were they mistaken, or were they not?

the passage. 'Agioi, holy, may refer to angels, or men, or are told that them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him but this seems to refer rather to the raising of the sleeping saints from their graves, than of their coming from heaven with Him. We are therefore precluded from referring agioi to the dead in Christ. The more so that Christ at His coming is always represented as attended by His angels.

'He shall come with his angels' (Matt. xvi. 27); 'with the holy angels' (Mark viii. 38); 'with his mighty angels' (2 Thess. i. 7); 'all his holy angels with him' (Matt. xxv.

This is in accordance also with Old Testament usage. The royal state of Jehovah when He came to give the law at Mount Sinai is thus described,-- 'He came with ten thousands 'i.e., of saints, angels (Dent. xxxiii. 2). 'The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them as in Sinai' (Ps. lxviii. 17). 'Ye received the law by the disposition [at the injunction, - Alford] of angels' (Acts vii. 53). We may therefore take it as probable that the reference in this passage is to the angels.

Events Accompanying The Parousia

- 1. The Resurrection of the Dead in Christ
- 2. The Rapture of the Living Saints to Heaven.
- I Thess. iv. 13-17

' But I would not have .you to be ignorant, brethren, language implies. Is St. Paul still without his crown of concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even , is others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by [in] the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent [come before, take precedence of] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from and hope? If they could have known that hundreds and heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God: and first the dead in Christ shall rise then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in

These explanations of St. Paul are evidently intended to meet a state of things which had begun to manifest anticipation and hope become. That both the apostle itself among the Christians of Thessalonica, and which and the Thessalonians believed that 'the coming of the had been reported to him by Timotheus. Eagerly Lord was drawing nigh, is so evident that it scarcely looking for the coming of Christ, they deplored the death of their fellow Christians as excluding them from participation in the triumph and blessedness of the A remark may be added on the concluding word of Parousia. 'They feared that these departed Christians

would lose the happiness of witnessing their Lord's should in this matter of detail have found their personal second coming, which they expected soon to behold. expectation liable to disappointment respecting a day [6]- To correct this misapprehension the apostle makes of which it is so solemnly said that no man knoweth its the explanations contained in this passage. appointed time, not the angels in heaven, not the Son, First, be assures them that they had no reason to but the Father only (Mark xiii. 32).

regret the departure of their friends in Christ, as if they In like manner we find the following remarks in bad sustained any disadvantage by dying before the Conybeare and Howson (chap. xi.): coming of the Lord; for as God had raised up Jesus from 'The early church, and even the apostles themselves, expected their Lord to come again in that very generation. St. Paul himself shared in that expectation,

the dead, so He would raise u His sleeping disciples from their graves, at His return in glory. Secondly, he informs them, on the authority of the but, being under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, Lord Jesus, that those of themselves who lived to see he did not deduce therefrom any erroneous practical His coming would not take precedence of, or have any conclusion. But the question is, had the apostles sufficient grounds for their expectation ? Were they not fully

justified in believing as they did ? Had not the Lord Thirdly, he describes the order of the events expressly predicted His own coming within the limit 1. The descent of the Lord from heaven with a shout, of the existing generation ? Had He not connected it with the overthrow of the temple and the subversion of 2. The raising up of the dead who had departed in the national polity of Israel ? Had He not assured His disciples that in 'a *little while*' they should see Him again 3. The simultaneous rapture of the living saints, ? Had He not declared that some of them should live to witness His return ? And after all this, is it necessary to find excuses for St. Paul and the early Christians, as if 4. The everlasting reunion of Christ and His people they had laboured under a delusion ? If they did, it was not they who were to blame, but their Master. It would The legitimate inference from the words of St. have been strange indeed if, after all the exhortations which they bad received to be on the alert, to watch, to live in continual expectancy of the Parousia, the apostles had not confidently believed in His speedy coming, and taught others to do the same. But it Would seem that St. Paul rests his explanations to the Thessalonians on the authority of a special divine communication made to 'Then, beyond question, he himself expected to be himself, 'This I say unto you by the word of the Lord,'etc. This can hardly mean that the Lord had so predicted in His prophetic discourse on the Mount of Olives, for no such statement is recorded; it must therefore refer to a revelation Which he had himself received. How, then, could he be at fault in his expectations? It is strange that so great incredulity should exist in this day respecting the plain sense of our Lord's express declarations on this subject. Fulfilled or unfulfilled, right or wrong, there is no ambiguity or uncertainty in His language. It may be said that we have no evidence of such facts having occurred as are here described,-- the Lord descending with a shout, the sounding of the trumpet, the raising of senses ? is their place in the region of the material and

advantage over, the faithful who had deceased before that event. attending the Parousia :with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. the Lord. along with the resuscitated dead, into the region of the air, there to meet their coming Lord. in heaven. Paul in ver. 15, 'we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,' is that he anticipated it as possible, and even probable, that his readers and himself would be alive at the coming of the Lord. Such is the natural and obvious interpretation of his language. Dean Alford observes, with much force and candour, alive, together with the majority of those to whom he was writing, at the Lord's coming. For we cannot for a moment accept the evasion of Theodoret and the majority of ancient commentators (viz. that the apostle does not speak of himself personally, but of those who should be living at the period), but we must take the words in their only plain grammatical meaning, that "we which are alive and remain" are a class distinguished from "they that sleep" by being yet in the flesh when Christ comes, in which class by prefixing "we "he includes his readers and himself. That this was his expectation we know from other passages, especially from 2 Cor. v. [7] But while thus admitting that the apostle held this the sleeping dead, the rapture of the living saints. True; expectation, Alford treats it as a mistaken one, for he but is it certain that these are facts cognisable by the goes on to say :

"Nor need it surprise any Christian that the apostles the visible ? As we have already said, we know and are

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by our Lord, and expected by His apostles, did actually persons to whom he wrote, and who read this epistle, come to pass at that very crisis called 'the end of the and he thought of none others. We cannot accept the age.' There is no difference of opinion concerning the Suggestion of Bengel that the 'we which are alive and destruction of the temple, the overthrow of the city, the remain' are only imaginary personages, like the names unparalleled slaughter of the people, the extinction of the nationality, the end of the legal dispensation. But one can read this epistle without being conscious of the the Parousia is inseparably linked with the destruction of Jerusalem; and, in like manner, the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment of the 'wicked generation,' with the Parousia. They are different parts of one great catastrophe; different scenes in one great drama. We accept the facts verified by the historian on the word of man; is it for Christians to hesitate to accept the facts which are vouched by the word of the Lord ?

Exhortations To Watchfulness In Prospect Of The Parousia

I Thess. v. 1-10.

'But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have Lord Jesus Christ.' [8] no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall ray, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day : we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others ; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the *that event*. night. But let us, who axe of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, should live together with Him.'

It is manifest that there would be no meaning in these urgent calls to watchfulness unless the apostle believed in the nearness of the coming crisis. Was it to the Thessalonians, or to some unborn generation in the far distant future, that St. Paul was penning these lines ? Why urge men in A.D. 52 to watch, and be on judgment to take place in his own time, or near to it.'-the alert, for a catastrophe which was not to take place Paley's Horae Paulinae, chap. ix. for hundreds and thousands of years ? Every word of and imminent.

generation, nor to any persons in particular, is to throw an air of unreality into his exhortations from which

sure that a very large portion of the events predicted reverent criticism revolts. He certainly meant the very Caius and Titius (John Doe and Richard Roe); for no warm personal attachment and affection to individuals which breathe in every line. We conclude, therefore, that the whole bad a direct and present bearing upon the actual position end prospects of the persons to whom the epistle is addressed.

Prayer That The Thessalonians Might Survive Until The **Coming Of Christ.**

1 Thess. v. 23

' Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit, and soul, and body, all together be preserved blameless at the appearing of our

If any shadow of a doubt still rested on the question whether St. Paul believed and taught the incidence of the Parousia in his own day, this passage would dispel it. No words can more clearly imply this belief than this prayer that the Thessalonian Christians might not die ve, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should before the appearing of Christ. Death is the dissolution of the union between body, soul, and spirit, and the apostle's prayer is that spirit, soul, and body might 'all together' be preserved in sanctity till the Lord's coming. This implies the continuance of their corporeal life until

Footnotes

1. Convbeare and Howson.

2. Gnomon, in loc.

3. ' It is known to every reader of Scripture that the who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we First Epistle to the Thessalonians speaks of the coming of Christ in terms which indicate an expectation of His speedy appearance: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we," etc. (chap. iv. 15-17; v. 4). Whatever other construction these texts may *bear*, the idea they leave upon the mind of an ordinary reader is that of the author of the epistle looking for the day of

'If we were asked for the distinguishing characteristic this exhortation supposes the crisis to be impending of the first Christians of Thessalonica, we should point to their overwhelming sense of the nearness of the To say that the apostle writes not for any one second advent, accompanied with melancholy thoughts concerning those who might die before it, and with gloomy and un practical views of the shortness of life

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and the vanity of the world. Each chapter in the First of the Lord.' There is nothing, however, in the epistle Epistle to the Thessalonians ends with an allusion to to suggest that the Parousia was a distant event, but the this subject; and it was evidently the topic of frequent contrary. conversations when the apostle was in Macedonia. But The Parousia A Time Of Judgment To The Enemies Of St. Paul never spoke or wrote of the future as though the Christ present was to be forgotten. When the Thessalonians were admonished of Christ's advent, he told them also of And Of Deliverance To His People other coming events, full of practical warning to all ages, 2 Thess i.7-10. though to our eyes still they are shrouded in mystery,--'And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the of " the falling away," and of " the man of sin." " These Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty awful revelations," he said, " must precede the revelation angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that of the Son of God. Do you not remember," he adds, with know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord emphasis, in his letter, " that when I was still with you, Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting *I often told you this ! You know therefore* the hindrance destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the why he is not revealed, as he will be in his own season." glory of his power: in that day when he shall come to He told them, in the words of Christ Himself, that " the be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them times and the seasons of the coming revelations were that believed. known only to God; " and he warned them, as the first It is obvious from the allusions in the commencement disciples had been warned in Jude, that the great day of this epistle that the Thessalonians were at this time would come suddenly on men unprepared, .. as the suffering severely from the malice of their Jewish pangs of travail on her whose time is full," and "as a thief persecutors, and those 'lewd fellows of the baser sort,' in the night; " and he showed them both by precept and who were in league with them (Acts xvii.5). The apostle example that though it be true that life is short and the comforts them with the prospect of deliverance at the world is vanity, yet God's work must be done diligently appearing of the Lord Jesus, which would bring rest to and to the last.'-- Conybeare and Howson, Life and them and retribution to their enemies. This is in perfect Epistles of St. Paul, chap. ix

4. Gnomon, in loc.

5. Works, vol. iv. p. 281

6. Conybeare and Howson ch. xi.

7. Greek Testament, in loc.

8. Conybeare and Howson's Translation

IN THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians appears suffering Christians have yet entered into that rest. It to have been written shortly after the First, to correct will be observed that it is not said that *death* is to bring the misapprehension into which some had fallen them rest, but 'the apocalypse' of the Lord Jesus from respecting the time of the Parousia, whether through an heaven: a clear proof that the apostle did not regard that erroneous interpretation of the apostle's former letter, apocalypse as a distant event. or in consequence of some pretended communication That this approaching 'apocalypse,' or revelation circulated among them purporting to be from him. We of the Lord Jesus from heaven, is identical with the learn from this epistle the precise nature of the mistake Parousia predicted by our Saviour, is so evident that it which some of the Thessalonians had committed. I was needs no proof. It is 'the day of the Lord' (Luke xvii. 24); that the time of the Parousia had actually arrived. In 'the day when the Son of man is revealed' (Luke xvii. 30); consequence of this opinion some had begun to neglect 'the day which shall be revealed in fire' (1 Cor. iii. 13); their secular employments and subsist upon the charity 'the day which shall burn as a furnace' (Mal. iv. 1); 'the of others. To check the evils which might arise, or had great and dreadful day of the Lord' (Mal. iv. 5). It is the arisen, from such erroneous impressions, St. Paul wrote day when 'the Son of man shall come in the glory of his this second epistle, reminding them that certain events, Father with his angels, to reward every man according which had not yet taken place, must precede the 'day

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accordance with the representations constantly made with respect to the Parousia,--- that it would be the time of judgment to the wicked, and the reward to the righteous. The apostle seems not to anticipate the 'rest' of which he speaks until the Parousia, 'when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven,' etc. It follows that the rest was conceived by St. Paul to be very near; for if the revelation of the Lord Jesus be an event still future, then we must conclude that neither the apostle nor the

day concerning which our Lord declared, 'Verily I say beseech you, brethren, that ye be not soon shaken from unto you, There be some standing here which shall not your mind, nor be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by kingdom' (Matt. xvi. 28).

everywhere meets us in the New Testament, that the shall have come the apostasy first, and the man of sin Parousia, the day of Israel's judgment, and the close of the Jewish dispensation, was not a distant event, but Messiah.

with Thessalonica and the Christians there? How could the destruction of Jerusalem, or the extinction hindereth his being revealed in his own time. For the of the Jewish nationality, or the close of the Mosaic mystery of lawlessness is already working, only he who economy, affect persons at so great a distance from Judea as Thessalonica? Even if it were impossible to give a satisfactory answer to this objection, it would the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, not alter the plain and natural meaning of words, or make it incumbent upon us to force an interpretation upon them which they will not bear. The Scriptures and signs and wonders of falsehood, and in all deceit must be allowed to speak for themselves --- a liberty of unrighteousness for them that are perishing, because which many will not concede. But with regard to the they received not the love of the truth, that they might bearing of the Parousia on Christians in Thessalonica, or outside of Judea in general, it cannot be denied that the language of this passage, as of many others, intimates that it was an event in which all had a deep and personal interest. Nor is it enough to say that the most bitter antagonists of the Gospel in Thessalonica were commentators, or are regarded to this day as involved Jews, and that the Jewish revolt was the signal for the in deeper obscurity, than the one before us. There is no massacre of the Jewish inhabitants in almost every city of the Empire. This may be true, but it is not the whole to the Thessalonians, for it refers to matters which had truth, according to apostolic teaching. We must admit, therefore, that as the eschatological scheme of the New Testament unfolds itself, it becomes apparent that the Parousia, and its accompanying events, did not relate to Judea exclusively, but had an ecumenical or world-wide to give hints, rather than full explanations. aspect, so that Christians everywhere might look and long for it, and hail its coming as the day of triumph and on which he is desirous of setting the Thessalonians of glory. As we proceed we shall find ample evidence of this larger aspect of 'the day of Christ,' as a great epoch in the divine administration of the world.

Events Which Must Precede The Parousia

1. The Apostasy

2. The Revelation of the Man of Sin

2 Thess. ii. 1-12.

'But, as concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus

to his works' (Matt. xvi. 27). And once more, it is that Christ, and our gathering together unto him, we taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his word, nor by letter, as from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is come. Let no man deceive you by We are thus brought back to the same truth which any means; for [that day shall not come] unless there shall have been revealed, the son of perdition: who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called within the limit of the generation which rejected the God, or an object of worship: so that he seateth himself in the temple of God, and openly declareth himself The objection will be urged, What had that to do a god. Remember ye not that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what now hindereth will hinder until he be taken out of the way. And then shall the lawless one be revealed, whom and shall destroy with the appearance of his coming: whose coming is after the working of Satan in all power be saved. And for this cause God is sending them the working of delusion, that they should believe the lies: that they all may be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness'

> Few passages have more exercised and baffled reason, however, to suppose that it was unintelligible formed the topic of frequent conversation between them and the apostle, and possibly not a little of the obscurity of which expositors complain may arise from the fact that, to the Thessalonians, it was only necessary

> The apostle begins by distinctly stating the subjects right. They are, (1) 'the coming of Christ,' and (2) 'our gathering together unto him.' These are evidently regarded by the apostle as simultaneous, or, at all events, closely connected. What are we to understand by this 'gathering together unto Christ' at the Parousia? There is no doubt a reference here to our Lord's own words, Matt. xxvi. 31: 'He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, etc. The [shall gather together] in the gospel in evidently the [the gathering together] of the epistle; and we have another reference to the same event

and the same period in 1 Thess. iv. 16,17: 'For the Lord We hold by the 'definite historical and chronological himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with sense' of the Parousia, and by no other. It is the only sense the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,' which is respectful to the Word of God and satisfactory etc. This can be nothing else, then, than the summoning to sober criticism. The apostle does not correct of the living and the dead to the tribunal of Christ. himself, nor does he refer to two different 'comings,' That great and solemn 'gathering' the Thessalonians but he corrects the mistake of the Thessalonians, who to competent authorities.

had been taught to 'wait for;' but it appears they were affirmed that the day of Christ had actually come. In labouring under some misapprehension concerning every instance in which the word occurs in the New the time of its arrival. Some of them had formed the Testament it refers to what is *present*, and not to what is opinion that 'the day of Christ' had actually arrived []. future. To Greek scholars it is unnecessary to point this It is important to observe that our English version does out, but to English readers it may be satisfactory to refer not give the correct rendering of this word. The apostle does not say, 'as that the day of Christ is at hand,' but 'as Dr. Manton, comparing the force of the words and that the day of Christ is present, or, is actually come, The [draweth nigh] (Jas. v. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 17), observes:--constant teaching of St. Paul was, that the day of Christ 'There is some difference in the words, for signifies was at hand, and it would have been to contradict it draweth near, , it is begun already? Bengel says:-himself to tell Christians of Thessalonica that that day - 'Extreme proximity is signified by this word; for is was *not* at hand. Yet nothing is more common than to present.' Whiston, the translator of Josephus, has the find some of our most respectable scholars and critics following note:--deny that the apostles and early Christians expected ' is here, and in many other places of Josephus, the Parousia in their own day, on the strength of the *immediately* at hand; and is to be so expounded 2 Thess. erroneous rendering of this word. Even so eminent an ii. 2, where some falsely pretended that St. Paul had said, authority as Moses Stuart says, in reply to Tholuck:--either by word of mouth or by an epistle, or by both, 'This interpretation (viz. The speedy advent of "that the day of Christ was immediately at hand;" for still St. Paul did then plainly think that day not many Christ) was formally and strenuously corrected in 2 Thess. ii. Is it not enough that Paul has explained his vears future.

own words? Who can safely venture to give them a meaning different from what he gives?'

So, too, Albert Barnes:---

'If Paul here refers to his former epistle, ---which might easily be understood as teaching that the end of the world was near,---we have the authority of the apostle himself that he meant to teach no such thing.

Most singular of all is the explanation of Dr. Lange:-

'The first epistle [to the Thessalonians] is pervaded by "That the day of the Lord is come;" adding the the fundamental thought, "the Lord will come speedily:" following note:---'Literally, "is present." So the verb is always used in New Testament.' the second, by the thought, "the Lord will not yet come *speedily.*" Both of these are in accordance with the truth; Dean Alford comments thus:--because, in the first part, the question is concerning the 'The day of the Lord is present (not is at hand), coming of the Lord in His dynamic rule in a religious occurs six time besides in the New Testament, and sense; and, in the second part, concerning the coming always in the sense of being present. Besides which, St. of the Lord in a definite historical and chronological Paul could not have so written, nor could the Spirit have sense? so spoken by him. The teaching of the apostles was, and What can be more arbitrary and whimsical than of the Holy Spirit in all ages has been, that the day of the such a distinction? What more empirical than such Lord is at hand. But these Thessalonians imagined it to treatment of Scripture, by which it is made to say Yes be already come, and accordingly were deserting their and No; to affirm and to deny; to declare that an event pursuits in life, and falling into other irregularities, as if is nigh and distant, in the same breath? Who would the day of grace were closed.

presume to interpret Scripture if it spoke in such The very general misconception which prevails ambiguous language as this? respecting the meaning of this verse renders it of

Dr. Palev observes:---

'It should seem that the Thessalonians, or some however amongst them, had from this passage (1 Thess. iv. 15-17) conceived an opinion (and that not very unnaturally) that the coming of Christ was to take place instantly : and that persuasion had produced, as it well might, much agitation in the church.

Conybeare and Howson translate,---

apprehended.

of the Thessalonians should have 'troubled and shaken' their minds. It was calculated to produce panic and disorder. History tells us that a general belief prevailed in Europe towards the close of the tenth century that the our Lord, and described by His apostles, as indicative of year 1000 would witness the coming of Christ, the day of judgment, and the end of the world. As the time drew near, a general panic seized the minds of men. Many abandoned their homes and their families, and repaired to the Holy Land; others made over their lands to the Church, or permitted them to be uncultivated, and the whole course of ordinary life was violently disturbed and deranged. A similar delusion, though on a smaller scale, prevailed in some parts of the United States in the year 1843, causing great consternation among multitudes, and driving many persons out of their senses. Facts like these show the wisdom which 'hid the day and the hour' of the Son of man's coming, so that, while all might be watchful, none should be thrown into agitation.

In the third verse the apostle intimates that 'the day of Christ' must be preceded by two events:---(1) The coming of 'the apostasy,' and (2) the manifestation of 'the man of sin.'

Could we place ourselves in the situation and circumstances of the Christians of Thessalonica when this epistle was written; could we call up the hopes and fears, the expectations and apprehensions, the social and political agitations of that period, we might be better able to enter into the explanations of St. Paul. Doubtless the Thessalonians understood him perfectly. As Paley justly observes, 'No man writes unintelligibly on purpose, and we cannot suppose that he would tantalise them with enigmas which could only perplex and bewilder them more than ever.

The first question that presents itself is, Are the 'apostasy' and the 'man of sin' identical? Do they both point to the same thing? It is the opinion of many, perhaps of most, expositors that they are virtually one and the same. But evidently they are distinct and separate things. The apostasy represents a *multitude*, the man of sin a person; so that though they may be in some He says, 'Remember ye not, that when I was yet with respects *connected*, they are not to be *confounded*; they may exist *contemporaneously*, but they are not *identical*. The Apostasy

St. Paul does not at present dwell upon 'the apostasy,' but, having simply named it as to come, passes on to the description of 'the man of sin.' We may here, however, refer to the fact that 'the falling away' was no new idea

the utmost importance that it should be correctly to the disciples of Christ. The Saviour had expressly predicted its coming in His prophetic discourse, It is easy to understand how the erroneous opinion Matt. xxiv. 10,12, and St. Paul elsewhere gives as full a delineation of the apostasy as he here does of the man of sin. (See 1 Tim. iv. 1-3; 2 Tim. iii. 1-9.) It can only refer to that *defection from the faith* so clearly predicted by 'the last days.' But this topic will come to be considered in its proper place.

The Man of Sin

It is of utmost importance in entering upon this field of inquiry to find some principle which may guide and govern us in the investigation. We find such a principle in the very simple and obvious consideration that the apostle is here referring to circumstances which lay within the ken of the Thessalonians themselves. If the Parousia itself, to which the development of the apostasy and the appearing of the man of sin were antecedent, was declared by the word of the Lord to fall within the period of the existing generation, it follows that 'the apostasy' and 'the man of sin' lay nearer to them than the Parousia. Besides, if we suppose 'the apostasy' and 'the man of sin' to lie far beyond the times of the Thessalonians, what would be the use of giving them explanations and information about matters which were not at all urgent, and which, in fact, did not concern them at all? Is it no obvious that whoever the man of sin may be, he must be someone with whom the apostle and his readers had to do? Is he not writing to living men about matters in which they are intensely interested? Why should he delineate the features of this mysterious personage to the Thessalonians if he was one with whom the Thessalonians had nothing to do, from whom they had nothing to fear, and who would not be revealed for ages yet to come? It is clear that he speaks of one whose influence was already beginning to be felt, and whose unchecked and lawless fury would ere long burst forth. All this lies on the very surface, obvious and unquestionable. But this is not all. It appears certain that the Thessalonians were not ignorant what person was intended by the man of sin. It was not the first time that the apostle had spoken with them on the subject. you, I kept telling you these things? and now ye know what hindereth his being revealed in his own time? This language plainly indicates that the apostle and his readers were well acquainted with the name 'man of sin,' and knew who was designated thereby. If so, and it seems unquestionable, the area of investigation becomes greatly contracted, and the probabilities of discovery

proportionately increased. What the Thessalonians h 'talked about,' 'remembered,' and 'knew,' must have be something of living and present interest; in short, m have belonged to contemporary history.

But why does not the apostle speak out frank Why this reserve and reticence in darkly hinting w he does not name? It was not from ignorance; it cou not be from the affectation of mystery. There must have been some strong reason for this extreme caution. doubt; but of what nature? Why should he have been the habit, as he says, of *speaking* so freely on the subj in private, and then write so obscurely in his epist Obviously, because it was not safe to be more expli-On the one hand, a hint was enough, for they cou all understand his meaning; on the other, more than hint was dangerous, for to name the person might ha compromised himself and them.

From what quarter, then, was danger to apprehended from too great freedom of speech? The were only two quarters from which the Christians of apostolic age had just cause for apprehension, --- Jew bigotry and Roman jealousy. Hitherto the Gos had suffered most from the former: the Jews we everywhere the instigators in 'stirring up the Genti against the brethren.' But the power of Rome was jealo and the Jews knew well how to awaken that jealousy Thessalonica itself they had got up the cry, 'These all contrary to the decrees of Cæsar? Which of these caus then, may have sealed the lips of the apostle? Not fear the Jews, for nothing that he could say was likely to ma their hostility more bitter; nor had the Jews any dir civil authority by which they could inflict injury up the Christian cause. We conclude, therefore, that it v from the Roman power that the apostle apprehend danger, and that his reticence was occasioned by desire not to involve the Thessalonians in the suspici of disaffection and sedition.

Let us now turn to the description of 'the man of emperors; the violator of all laws, human and divine; sin' given by the apostle, and endeavour to discover, if the monster whose cruelty and crimes entitle him to the possible, whether there was any individual then existing name 'the man of sin.' in the Roman Empire to whom it will apply. It will at once be apparent to every reader that all

the features in this hideous portraiture belong to Nero; but it is remarkable how exact is the correspondence, especially in those particulars which are more recondite and obscure. He is an individual---a public person--holding the highest rank in the State; heathen, and not Jewish; a monster of wickedness, trampling upon all law. But how striking are the indications that point to Nero in the year when this epistle was written, say A.D. 52 or 53. At that time Nero was not yet 'manifested;' his true

1. The description requires that we should look, not for a system or abstraction, but an individual, a 'man'. 2. He is evidently not a private, but a *public person*. The powers with which he is invested imply this. 3. He is a personage holding the highest rank and authority in the State.

THE PAROUSIA IN THE ACTS AND THE EPISTLES

HE A	CTS AND THE EPISTLES 89)
een	4. He is heathen, and not Jewish.	
nust kly?	5. He claims divine names, prerogatives, and worship.	
vhat ould	6. He pretends to exercise miraculous power.	
ave No n in ject	7. He is characterised by enormous wickedness. He is 'the man of sin,' <i>i.e.</i> the incarnation and embodiment of evil.	
tle? <i>icit</i> .	8. He is distinguished by lawlessness as a ruler.	
ould in a iave	9. He had not yet arrived at the fullness of his power when the apostle wrote; there existed some hindrance or check to the full development of his influence.10. The hindrance was a person; was known to the	
be nere the	Thessalonians; and would soon be taken out of the way.	
vish spel vere tiles	11. The 'lawless one,' the 'man of sin,' was doomed to destruction. He is 'the son of <i>perdition</i> ,' 'whom the Lord shall <i>slay</i> .'	
ous, 7; in l do ses, r of	12. His full development, or 'manifestation,' and his destruction are immediately to precede the Parousia. 'The Lord shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming.'	
ake rect pon	With these descriptive marks in our hands can there be any difficulty in identifying the person in whom they all are found? Were there three men in the Roman	า า
was ded the	Empire who answered this description? Were there two? Assuredly not. But there was <i>one</i> , and only one. When the apostle wrote he was on the steps of the	e
cion	Imperial thronea little longer and he sate on the throne of the world. It is NERO , the first of the persecuting	

to the Empire. Claudius, his step-father, lived, and stood The same is true with respect to another note in this in the way of the son of Agrippina. But that hindrance was soon removed. In less than a year, probably, after this epistle was received by the Thessalonians, Claudius was 'taken out of the way,' a victim to the deadly practice of the infamous Agrippina; her son also, according to Suetonius, being accessory to the deed. But 'the mystery of lawlessness was already working;' the influence of be credited with the possession of supernatural powers; Nero must have been powerful in the last days of the and we find a very remarkable side-light thrown upon wretched Claudius; the very plots were probably being hatched that paved the way for the accession of the son investigation, however, it would not be desirable to of the murderess. A few months more would witness the advent to the throne of the world of a miscreant fully avail ourselves of its aid at the proper time. whose name is gibbeted in everlasting infamy as the most brutal of tyrants and the vilest of men.

true to the original. The claim to divine honours; the opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, or an object of worship; his seating himself in the temple of God, showing himself to be a god; all are expression we have a note of the *time* when the man distinctive of Nero.

The assumption of divine prerogatives, indeed, was common to all Roman Emperors. 'Divus,' god, was inscribed on their coins and statues. The Emperor might be said to 'exalt himself above all that is called God, or an object of worship,' by monopolising to himself all worship. This fact is placed in a striking light in the his coming' should be 'the appearance of his coming', following remarks of Dean Howson:---

object of religious reverence; he was a deity on earth; and the worship paid to him was a real worship. It is a forms of religion) the only two genuine worships in the civilised world were the worship of a Tiberius or a Nero on the one hand, and the worship of Christ on the other.

The attempt of Caligula to set up his statue in the temple of God in Jerusalem had driven the Jews to the may have given their peculiar form to the description of the apostle. Certainly it suggested to Grotius that Caligula must be the person intended to be portrayed; but the date of the epistle renders this opinion untenable. for the tyrant's destruction. Nero, however, came behind none of his predecessors in his impious assumption of divine prerogatives. Dio Cassius informs us that when he returned victorious from the Grecian games, he entered Rome in triumph, breath of his mouth, etc. Herod Agrippa was smitten and was hailed with such acclamations as these, 'Nero the Hercules! Nero the Apollo! Thou August, August! Sacred voice! Eternal One.' In all this we see sufficient

character was not discovered; he had not yet succeeded evidence of the assumption of divine honours by Nero. delineation,---the pretension to miraculous powers. 'Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders' (ver. 9). This pretension follows almost as a matter of course from the assumption of the prerogatives of deity.

> It is to be supposed that the Imperial Divus would this subject in Rev. xiii. 13-15. At this stage of the enter into that region of symbolism, though we shall

Further, 'the man of sin' is doomed to perish. He is 'the son of *perdition*,' a name which he bears in The remaining notes of the description are no less common with Judas, and indicative of the certainty and completeness of his destruction. 'The Lord is to slay him with the breath of his mouth, and to destroy him with the appearance of his coming.' In this significant of sin is destined to perish, marked with singular exactitude. It is the coming of the Lord, the Parousia, which is to be the signal of his destruction; yet not the full splendour of that event so much as the first appearance or dawn of it. Alford (after Bengel) very properly points out that the rendering 'brightness of and he quotes the sublime expression of Milton,---'far 'The image of the Emperor was at that time the off His coming shone'. Bengel, with fine discrimination, remarks, 'Here the appearance of His coming, or, at all events, the first glimmerings of His coming, are prior to striking thought, that in those times (setting aside effete *the coming itself*.' This evidently implies that the man of sin was destined to perish, not in the full blaze of the Parousia, but at its first dawn or beginning. Now what do we actually find? Remembering how the Parousia is connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, we find that the death of Nero preceded the event. It took place brink of rebellion, and it is just possible that this fact in June A.D. 68, in the very midst of the Jewish war which ended in the capture and destruction of the city and the temple. It might therefore be justly said that 'the appearance, or dawn, of the Parousia' [] was the signal

> It does not follow that the death of Nero was to be brought about by immediate supernatural agency because it is said that 'the Lord shall slay him with the by the angel of the Lord, but this does not exclude the operation of natural causes: 'he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost' (Acts xii.23). So Nero was overtaken

by the divine judgment, though he received his death- pronounce a name more hateful to Jewish ears than hand. Lastly, it is scarcely necessary to make good the title of Nero to the appellation 'the man of sin.' It will be observed that it is the profligacy of his personal 'the man the sinner' given to Antiochus (1 Macc. ii. 48, character that stamps him with this distinctive epithet, 62), and it seems highly probable that the character and as if he were the very impersonation and embodiment of vice. Such, indeed, was Nero, whose name has become a synonym for all that is base, cruel, and vile; the highest wrath of God.

blow from the sword of the assassin, or from his own the name of Antiochus Epiphanes. He was the Nero of his age, the inveterate enemy of Israel, the profaner of the temple, the sanguinary persecutor of the people of God. In the first Book of Maccabees we find the name destined to a similar fate with Antiochus, the relentless tyrant and persecutor who became a monument of the in rank and the lowest in Character in the Roman world: The parallel between 'the man of sin' and Antiochus a monster of wickedness even among Pagans, who were Epiphanes is particularly noticed by Bengel, who not squeamish about morality and who were familiar points out that the description of the former in ver. 4 is borrowed from the description of the latter in Dan. xi. with the most corrupt society on the face of the earth. The following graphic delineation of the character of 36. The comment of Bengel is well worthy of quotation:-'This, then, is what Paul says: The day of Christ does Nero is taken from Conybeare and Howson:---

not come, unless there be fulfilled (in the man of sin) 'Over this distinguished bench of judges presided the representative of the most powerful monarchy what Daniel predicted of Antiochus; the prediction is which has ever existed,---the absolute ruler of the more suitable to the man of sin, who corresponds to whole civilised world. But the reverential awe which his Antiochus, and is worse than he.' We shall find in the sequel that this is not the only position naturally suggested was changed into contempt and loathing by the character of the sovereign who now passage in which Antiochus Epiphanes is referred to as presided over that supreme tribunal. For Nero was a the prototype of Nero. man whom even the awful attribute of "power equal to But the question may be asked, Why should the the gods" could not render august, except in title. The revelation of Nero in his true character be a matter fear and horror excited by his omnipotence and his of such concern to the apostle and the Christians of cruelty, were blended with contempt for his ignoble lust Thessalonica? The answer is not far to seek. It was the of praise and his shameless licentiousness. He had not ferocity of this lawless monster that first let loose all the as yet plunged into that extravagance of tyranny which, power of Rome to crush and destroy the Christian name. at a later period, exhausted the patience of his subjects It was by him that torrents of innocent blood were to and brought him to destruction. Hitherto his public be shed and the most exquisite tortures inflicted upon measures had been guided by sage advisers, and his unoffending Christians. It was before his sanguinary cruelty had injured his own family rather than the State. tribunal that St. Paul was yet to stand and plead for his But already, at the age of twenty-five, he had murdered life, and from his lips that the sentence was to come that his innocent wife and his adopted brother, and had doomed him to a violent death. But more than this, it dyed his hands in the blood of his mother. Yet even was under Nero, and by his orders, that the final Jewish these enormities seem to have disgusted the Romans war was commenced, and that darkest chapter in the less than the prostitution of the Imperial purple by annals of Israel was opened which terminated in the publicly performing as a musician on the stage and a siege and capture of Jerusalem, the destruction of the charioteer in the circus. His degrading want of dignity temple, and the extinction of the national polity. This and insatiable appetite for vulgar applause drew tears was the consummation predicted by our Lord as the from the councillors and servants of his house, who 'end of the age' and the 'coming of his kingdom'. The could see him slaughter his nearest relatives without revelation of the man of sin, therefore, as antecedent to the Parousia, was a matter that deeply concerned every remonstrance.

But there is probably another reason why Nero is Christian disciple. branded with this epithet. The name 'man of sin' was We can now understand why the apostle should use not unknown to Hebrew history. It had already been such caution in writing on a subject like this. It was from given to one who was not only a monster of cruelty and no affection of oracular obscurity, but from prudential wickedness, but also a bitter enemy and persecutor of motives of the most intelligible kind. There were many the Jewish people. It would not have been possible to prying eyes and calumnious tongues in Thessalonica,

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Christians as disaffected and seditious men, secret every candid mind. plotters against the authority of Caesar. To write openly on such subjects would be in the highest degree of this deeply interesting passage without some indiscreet and perilous. Nor was it necessary; for they had discussed these matters before in many a private interpretation, which finds here the rise and development conversation. 'Do you not recollect,' he asks, 'that when I was with you I was often telling you these things?" More than hints were unnecessary to the Thessalonians, for they had a key to his meaning which subsequent surprising that it should have found favour with perhaps readers had not. Nor is it greatly to be wondered at if the majority of commentators. There is a certain family obscurity has gathered round the teaching of the apostle likeness among all systems of superstition and tyranny, on this subject. Events which to contemporaries are full of intense interest often become not only uninteresting but unintelligible to posterity. Yet it is somewhat strange of any note or weight will now contend that all the that the very obvious reference to contemporary history, and to Nero, should have been so generally overlooked. This is the most ancient interpretation of the passage on the mystery of iniquity, says, 'He (St. Paul) speaks here of *Nero* as being the type of the Antichrist; for he also wished to be thought a god. This opinion is also referred to by Augustine, Theodoret, and others. Bengel, referring to the obstacle to the manifestation of the man of sin, says: 'The ancients thought that Claudius was this check: hence it appears they deemed Nero, Claudius' successor, the man of sin. Moses Stuart has collected a great number of authorities for the identification of Nero with the man of sin. He remarks: 'The idea that Nero was the man of sin mentioned by Paul, and the Antichrist spoken of so often in the epistles of St. John, prevailed extensively and for a long time in the early church.' And again: 'Augustine says: What means the declaration, that the mystery of iniquity already works?... Some suppose this to be spoken of the Roman emperor, and therefore Paul did not speak in plain words, because he would not incur the charge of calumny for having spoken evil of the Roman emperor: although he always expected that what he had said would be understood as applying to Nero?

We consider it a fact of peculiar importance that a conclusion arrived at on quite independent grounds should be found to have the sanction of some of the greatest names of antiquity. We are, however, not at all disposed to rest this interpretation upon external authority; we are inclined to think that the internal evidence in favour of the identification of Nero as the man of sin amounts almost, if not altogether, to demonstration. But we have yet to deal with the confirmation of this fact furnished by the Apocalypse,

that only waited an opportunity to denounce the which we presume to think will produce conviction in

It would be improper to pass from the consideration notice of what may be called the popular Protestant of Popery and identifies the Pope as the man of sin. The interpretation is in may respects so plausible, and the points of correspondence so numerous, that it is not which makes it probable that some of the features which distinguish one may be found in all. But few expositors descriptive notes of the man of sin are to be found in the Pope. Dean Alford justly observes:---

'In the characteristic of ver. 4, the Pope does not, relating to the man of sin. Chrysostom, commenting and never did, fulfil the prophecy. Allowing all the striking coincidences with the latter part of the verse which have been so abundantly adduced, it never can be shown that he fulfils the former part; so far is he from it, that the abject adoration and submission to and has ever been one of his most notable peculiarities. The second objection, of an external and historical character, is even more decisive. If the papacy be Antichrist, then has the manifestation been made, and endured now for nearly fifteen hundred years, and yet that day of the Lord is not come which, by the terms of our prophecy, such manifestations is immediately to precede.

The Parousia In The Epistles To The Corinthians

The two epistles to the church in Corinth are believed to have been written in the same year (A.D.57). The contents are more varied than those of the Epistles to the Thessalonians, but we find many allusions to the anticipated coming of the Lord. That was the consummation to which, in St. Paul's view, all things were hastening, and that for which all Christians were eagerly looking. It is represented as the decisive day when all the doubts and difficulties of the present would be resolved and all its wrongs redressed. That this great event was regarded by the apostle as at hand is implied in every allusion to the subject, while in several passages it is expressly affirmed in so many words.

Attitude Of The Christians Of Corinth In Relation To The Parousia.

1 Cor. i. 7.

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'Waiting [looking earnestly] for the coming of our the teaching of the apostles and the words of Christ? Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the To say that it was a mistaken opinion is to strike a blow end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord at the authority of the apostles as trustworthy reporters Iesus Christ? of the sayings of Christ and competent expounders of The attitude of expectation is which the Corinthians His doctrine. If they could be so egregiously mistaken placed in their teaching on the more difficult questions of doctrine and duty?

stood is here distinctly indicated, although it is feebly as to a simple matter of fact, what confidence can be expressed by the rendering 'waiting.' The phrase used by the apostle is the same as in Romans viii. 19, where the whole creation is represented as 'groaning and The confidence expressed by the apostle that the travailing in pain *waiting for the revelation* of the sons of Christians of Corinth would be confirmed unto the end, God' []. Conybeare and Howson translate,---'looking and be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, earnestly for the time when our Lord Jesus Christ shall recalls his prayer for the Thessalonians: 'That he may be revealed to sight. Such an attitude plainly implies that stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness at the the object expected was understood to be near; for it is coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' (1 Thess. iii. 13). The obvious that if it were a great way off, the earnest looking two passages are exactly parallel in signification, and and longing would end only in bitter disappointment. refer to the same point of time, 'the end,' the 'Parousia.' It may be said, Did not the Old Testament saints wait Obviously, by 'the end' the apostle does not mean the for the day of Christ? Did not Abraham rejoice to see 'end of life;' it is not a general sentiment such as we express when we speak of being 'true to the last;' it has His day, and was not that a distant prospect? True; but the Old Testament saints were nowhere given to a definite meaning, and refers to a particular time. It understand that the first coming of Christ would take is 'the end' [] spoken of by our Lord in His prophetic place in their own day, or within the limits of their own discourse on the Mount of Olives (Matt. xxiv. 6, 13, 14). generation, nor were they urged and exhorted to be It is 'the end of the age' [] of Matt. xiii. 40, 49. It is 'the continually on the watch, waiting and looking for His end' [then cometh the end] (1 Cor. xv. 24. See also Heb. coming. We have no reason whatever to suppose that iii. 6, 14, vi. 11, ix. 26; 1 Pet. iv. 7). All these forms of their minds were constantly on the stretch, and their expression [,,] refer to the same epoch---viz., the close eyes eagerly straining in expectation of the advent, as of the aeon or Jewish age, *i.e.* the Mosaic dispensation. was the case with the Christians of the apostolic age. This is pointed out by Alford in his note on the passage The case of the aged Simeon is the proper parallel to the before us: 'To the end,' *i.e.* to the , not merely 'to the early Christians. It was revealed to him that he should end of your lives.' It refers, therefore, no to *death*, which not see death till he had seen the Lord's anointed: he comes to different individuals at a different time, but to waited therefore 'for the consolation of Israel'. In like one specific event, not far off, the Parousia, or coming of manner it was revealed to the Christians of the apostolic the Lord Jesus Christ. age that the Parousia would take place in their own day; No less definite is the phrase, 'the *day* of our Lord,' the Lord had over and over again distinctly assured His etc. The allusions to this period in the apostolic writings disciples of this fact, they therefore cherished the hope are very frequent, and all point to one great crisis which of living to see the longed-for-day, and all the more was guickly approaching, the day of redemption and because of the sufferings and persecutions to which they recompense to the suffering people of God, the day of retribution and wrath to their enemies and persecutors. were exposed. Like the Thessalonians they regarded death as a calamity, because it seemed to disappoint the The Judicial Character Of 'The Day Of The Lord.' hope of seeing the Lord 'coming in his kingdom.' They 1 Cor. iii. 13. wished to be 'alive and remain unto the coming of the 'Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the Lord.' Billroth remarks: 'The [revelation] refers to the day shall declare it, because it [the day] shall be revealed visible advent of Christ, an event which Paul and the with fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what believers of that day imagined would take place within sort it is.' the term of an ordinary life, so that many of them would In this passage, again, there is a distinct allusion to be then alive. Paul here commends the Corinthians for the 'day of the Lord' as a day of discrimination between expecting or waiting for it. The critic evidently regards good and evil, between the precious and the vile. The the opinion as a delusion. But whence did the early apostle likens himself and his fellow-labourers in the Christians derive their expectation? Was it not from

a great building. That building is God's church, the only day has not yet come, we are led to the conclusions foundation of which is Jesus Christ, that foundation which he (the apostle) had laid in Corinth. He then warns every labourer to look well what kind of material he built up on that one foundation: that is to say, what sort of characters he introduced into the fellowship of God's church. A day was coming which would test the quality of every man's work: it must pass through a fiery ordeal; and in that scorching scrutiny the flimsy and worthless must perish, while the good and true remained unscathed. The unwise builder indeed might escape, but his work would be destroyed, and he would forfeit the reward which, if he had builded with better materials, he would have enjoyed.

There can be no doubt what day is here referred to. It is the day of Christ, the Parousia. This is said to be revealed 'with *fire*,' and the question arises, Is the expression literal or metaphorical? The whole passage, it will be perceived, is figurative: the building, the builders, the materials; we may therefore conclude that the fire is figurative also. Moral qualities are not tested in the same way as material substances. The apostle teaches Jesus.' that a judicial scrutiny of the life-work of the Christian labourer is at hand. He 'who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire' is coming to 'search the reins and hearts, and to give every man according to his work' (Rev. ii. 18, 23). How clearly these representations of 'the day of the Lord' connect themselves with the prophetic words of Malachi, 'Who may abide the day of his coming? For he is like a refiner's fire.' 'For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as a furnace, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble' (Mal. iii. 2, 3; iv. 1). In like manner John the Baptist represents the day of Christ's coming as 'revealed with fire,' 'He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire' (Matt. iii. 12). See also 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, etc.

Yet, if any should be disposed to maintain that the fire here is not wholly metaphorical, a not improbable case might easily be made out. In the central spot where that revelation took place, the city and the temple of Jerusalem, the Parousia was accompanied with very literal fire. In that glowing furnace in which perished all that was most venerable and sacred in Judaism, men might well see the fulfilment of the apostle's words, 'that day will be revealed in fire?

Since, then, the Parousia coincides in point of time with the destruction of Jerusalem, it follows that the period of sifting and trial here alluded to,---the day which shall be revealed in fire---is also contemporaneous

service of God to workmen employed in the erection of with that event. Otherwise, on the hypothesis that this that 'the proving of every man's work' has not yet taken place: that no judgment has yet been pronounced on the work of Apollos, or Cephas, or Paul, or their fellowlabourers; it has still to be ascertained with what sort of material every man built up the temple of God; that the labourers have not yet received their reward. For the great proving day has not yet come, and the fire has not tried every man's work of what sort it is. But this is a *reductio ad absurdum*, and shows that such a hypothesis is untenable.

Judge Nothing Before the time

1 Cor. iv. 5.

'Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who shall both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have [his] praise from God.'

1 Cor. v. 5.

'That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord

In both these passages the Parousia is represented as a time of judicial investigation and decision. It is the time when characters and motives shall be disclosed, and every man receive his appropriate meed of praise or blame. The apostle deprecates hasty and ill- informed judgments, apparently not without some personal reason, and exhorts them to wait 'till the Lord come,' etc. Does not this manifestly imply that he thought they would not have long to wait? Where would be the reasonableness of his exhortation if there were no prospect of vindication or retribution for ages to come? It is the very consideration that the day is at hand that constitutes the reason for patience and forbearance now.

In like manner the case of the offending member of the Corinthian church points to a speedily approaching time of retribution. St. Paul argues that the effect of present discipline exercised by the church may prove the salvation of the offender 'in the day of the Lord Jesus.' That day, therefore, is the period when the condemnation or salvation of men is decided. But on the supposition that the day of the Lord Jesus is not yet come, it follows that the day of salvation has not come either for the apostle himself or for the Christians of Corinth, or for the offender whom he calls upon the church to censure. All this clearly shows that the apostle believed and taught the speedy coming of the day of the Lord.

Parousia seems to grow and expand: it is more than a national, it becomes an ecumenical, crisis. Certainly we Nearness Of The Approaching Consummation. must infer from the representation of the apostles, as 1 Cor. vii. 29-31. well as from the sayings of the Master, that the Parousia 'But this I say, brethren, the time henceforth is short had a significance for Christians everywhere, whether [the time that remains is short]: in order that both they within or without the boundaries of Judea. It is more that have wives be as though they had none: and they seemly to inquire into the true import of the doctrine that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice of the apostles on this subject than to assume that they as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though were mistaken, and invent apologies for their error. If it they possessed not; and they that use this world as not be an error, it is common to the whole teaching of the abusing it: for the fashion of this world is passing away? New Testament, and will meet us in the writings of St. No words could more distinctly show the deep Peter and St. John, for they, no less than St. Paul, declare that 'the end of all things is at hand,' and that 'the world ii. 17).

impression on the mind of the apostle that a great crisis was near, which would powerfully affect all the is passing away, and the lust thereof' (1 Pet. iv. 7; 1 John relations of life, and all the possessions of this world. There is a significance in this language, as spoken at that The End Of The Ages Already Arrived time, very different from that which it has in these days. These are not the ordinary platitudes about the brevity 1 Cor. x. 11. of time and the vanity of the world, the stock common-'Now all these things happened unto them for places of moralists and divines. Time is always short, ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, and the world always vain; but there is an emphasis upon whom the ends of the world are come.' [to whom and an urgency in the declaration of the apostle which the ends of the ages have arrived]. imply a speciality in the time then present: he knew The phrase 'the end of the ages' [] is equivalent to that they were on the verge of a great catastrophe, and 'the end of the age' [], and 'the end' []. They all refer that all earthly interests and possessions were held by to the same period, viz. the close of the Jewish age, a slight and uncertain tenure. It is not necessary to ask or dispensation, which was now at hand. It will be what that expected catastrophe was. It was the coming observed that in this chapter St. Paul brings together of the day of the Lord already alluded to, and the near some of the great historical incidents which took place approach of which is implied in all his exhortations. at the *commencement* of that dispensation, as affording Alford correctly expresses the force of the expression, warning to those who were living near its close. He 'the time is shortened henceforth, *i.e.* the interval evidently regards the early history of the dispensation, between now and the coming of the Lord has arrived especially in so far as it was supernatural, as having at an extremely contracted period.' But, unhappily, he a typical and educational character. 'These things goes on to treat the opinion of St. Paul as a mistaken happened unto them by way of ensample; and they one: 'Since he wrote, the unfolding of God's providence were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends has taught us more of the interval before the coming of of the ages are come.' This not only affirms the typical character of the Jewish economy, but shows that the the Lord than it was given even to an inspired apostle to see.' What the private opinion of St. Paul might be apostle regarded it as just about to expire. respecting the date of the Parousia, or what would Conybeare and Howson have the following note take place when it did arrive, we do not know, and it on this passage:---'The coming of Christ was "the end would be useless to speculate; but we have a right to of the ages," *i.e.* the commencement of a new period of conclude that in his official teaching (save when he the world's existence. So, nearly the same phrase is used expressly states that he speaks his private opinion) he Heb. ix. 26. A similar expression occurs five times in St. was the organ of a higher intelligence than his own. We Matthew, signifying the coming of Christ to judgment. are really not competent to say how far the shock of This note does not distinguish with accuracy which the tremendous convulsion that took place at 'the end coming of Christ was the end of the age. It is the Parousia, of the age' may have extended, but every one can see the second coming which is always so represented. That that the exhortations of the apostle would have been event was, therefore, believed to be at hand when the peculiarly appropriate within the bounds of Palestine. end of the age, or ages, was declared to have arrived. As we pursue this investigation, the area affected by the It is sometimes said that the whole period between

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in the New Testament as 'the end of the age.' But this bears a manifest incongruity in its very front. How could the *end* of a period be a long protracted duration? Especially how could it be longer than the period of which it is the end? More time has already elapsed since the incarnation than from the giving of the law to the first coming of Christ: so that, on this hypothesis, God may be all in all. the end of the age is a great deal longer than the age itself. Into such paradoxes interpreters are led by a false investigation to enter into any detailed exposition of theory. But as in a true theory in science every fact fits easily into its place, and lends support to all the rest, so in a true theory of interpretation every passage finds an easy solution, and contributes its quota to support the to the argument and remonstrance of St. Paul. correctness of the general principle.

Events Accompanying The Parousia

The Resurrection of the Dead;

the Change of the Living;

he Delivering up of the Kingdom

In entering upon this grand and solemn portion of the Word of God we desire to do so with profound reverence and humility of spirit, dreading to rush in where angels might fear to tread; and anxiously solicitous 'to bring out of the inspired words what is really in them, and to put nothing into them that is not really there?

We venture also to bespeak the judicial candour of the reader. A demand may be made upon his forbearance and patience which he may scarcely at first be prepared to meet. Old traditions and preconceived opinions are not patient of contradiction, and even truth may often be in danger of being spurned as foolishness merely because it is novel. Let him be assured that every word is spoken in all honesty, after every effort to discover the true meaning of the text has been exhausted, and in the spirit of loyalty and submission to the supreme authority of Scripture. It is no part of the business of an interpreter to vindicate the sayings of inspiration; his whole care should be to find out what those sayings are.

1 Cor. xv. 22-28.

'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order. Christ the first-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's, at his coming. Then the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must

the incarnation and the end of the world is regarded reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy, death, shall be destroyed. For, he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that

> Although it does not fall within the scope of this passages which do not directly affect the question of the Parousia, yet it seems necessary to refer to the state of opinion in the church of Corinth which gave occasion

> The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the great vouchers for the truth of Christianity itself. If this be true, all is true; if this be false, the whole structure falls to the ground. In the brief summary of the fundamental truths of the Gospel given by the apostle in the commencement of this chapter, special stress is laid upon the fact of Christ's resurrection, and the evidence on which it rested. It was 'according to the scripture. It was attested by the positive testimony of eye-witnesses: 'He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, most of whom are still living at the writing of the apostle. After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 'Last of all he was seen of me also.' The emphasis laid upon the words 'he was seen' cannot fail to be remarked. The evidence is irresistible; it is ocular demonstration, testified not by one or two, but by a multitude of witnesses, men who would not lie, and who could not be deceived.

> Yet, it appears, there were some among the Corinthians who said, 'that there is no resurrection of the dead.' It seems incomprehensible to us how such a denial should be compatible with Christian discipleship. It is not said, however, that they question the fact of Christ's resurrection, though the apostle shows that their principles led to that conclusion. His argument with them is a *reductio ad absurdum*. He lands them in a state of blank negation, in which there is no Christ, no Christianity, no apostolic veracity, no future life, no salvation, no hope. They have cut away the ground under their own feet, and they are left, without a Saviour, in darkness and despair.

> But, as we have said, they do not seem to have denied the fact of Christ's resurrection; on the contrary, this is the argument by means of which the apostle convicts them of absurdity. Had they not admitted this,

the apostle's argument would have had no force, neither ascribes the glorious boon of the resurrection to the could they have been regarded as Christian believers at mediatorial interposition of Christ. It is part of the all. benefits arising from His redemptive work. As the first Some light, however, is thrown upon this strange Adam brought death, so the second Adam brings life; and, as the pledge of the resurrection of His people, He himself rose from the dead, and became the first-fruits of the great harvest of the grave.

scepticism by the Epistles to the Thessalonians. An opinion not very dissimilar appears to have prevailed at Thessalonica. So at least we may infer from 1 Thess. iv. 13, etc. They had given themselves up to despair on But there is a due order and succession in this new account of the death of some of their friends previous to life of the future. As the first-fruits precede and predict the coming of the Lord. They appear to have regarded the harvest, so the resurrection of Christ precedes and this as a calamity which excluded the departed from a guarantees the resurrection of His people: 'Christ the participation in the blessedness which they expected at first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's AT HIS the revelation of Jesus Christ. The apostle calms their COMING? fears and corrects their mistake by declaring that the This is a most important statement, and departed saints would suffer no disadvantage, but would unambiguously affirms, what is indeed the uniform teaching of the New Testament, that the Parousia was with the living in to the presence and joy of the Lord. to be immediately followed by the resurrection of the

be raised again at the coming of Christ, and enter along This shows that there had been doubts about the sleeping dead. He comes 'that he may awake them out of sleep.' The First Epistle to the Thessalonians supplies resurrection of the dead in the Thessalonian church as well as in the Corinthian; and it is highly probable that the hiatus which the apostle leaves here: 'For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with they were of the same nature in both. The anxious desire the voice of the archangel and the trump of God: and of all Christians was to be alive at the Lord's coming. Death, therefore, was regarded as a calamity. But it first, the dead in Christ shall arise: then we who are alive would not have been a calamity had they been aware and remain shall be caught up all together with them in that there was to be a resurrection of the dead. This the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we was the truth which they either did not know, or did ever be with the Lord' (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). not believe. St. Paul treats the doubt in Thessalonica as In the passage before us the apostle does not enter into those details; he is arguing for the resurrection, and *ignorance*, in Corinth as *error*; and it is highly probable he stops short for the present at that point, adding only that, among a people so conceited and pragmatical as the Corinthians, the opinion would assume a more the significant words, 'Then the end' [], as much as to decided and dangerous shape. It may be observed, also, say, 'That is the end;' 'Now it is done;' 'The mystery of that the apostle meets the case of the Thessalonians with God is finished. much the same reasoning as that of the Corinthians, viz. But we may venture to ask, What is this 'end,' this by an appeal to the fact of the resurrection of Christ: 'If ; It is no new term, but a familiar phrase which we we believe that Jesus died and rose again, etc. (1 Thess. have often met before, and shall often meet again. If we iv. 14). The two cases, therefore, are very similar, if not turn to our Lord's prophetic discourse we find almost the self-same significant words, 'Then shall the end precisely parallel. We can easily imagine that to the early Christians, often smarting under bitter persecution, and come' [] (Matt. xxiv. 14), and they furnish us with the watching eagerly for the expected coming of the Lord, it key to their meaning here. Answering the question of must have been a grievous disappointment to be taken the disciples, 'Tell us, when shall these things be; and away by death before the fulfilment of their hopes. Add what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of to this the difficulty which the idea of the resurrection the age?' our Lord specifies certain signs, such as the of the dead would naturally present to the Gentile persecution and martyrdom of some of the disciples converts (1 Cor. xv. 35). It was a doctrine at which the themselves; the defection and apostasy of many; the philosophers of Athens mocked; which made Festus appearance of false prophets and deceivers; and, lastly, the general proclamation of the Gospel throughout the exclaim, 'Paul, thou art mad,' and which the scientific nations of the Roman Empire; and 'then,' he declares, men of the time declared to be preposterous, a thing 'impossible even to God.' 'shall come the end.' Can there be the slightest doubt So much for the probable nature and origin of this that the of the prophecy is the of the epistle? Or can error of the Corinthians. The apostle in combating it there be a doubt that both are identical with the of the

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latter phrase refers, not to 'the end of the world,' or the nation itself, the chief priests and rulers of the people. destruction of the material earth, but to the close of the The highest authorities and powers of the nation were age, or dispensation, then about to expire. We conclude, therefore, that 'the end' of which St. Paul speaks in 1 Cor. xv. 24 is the same grand epoch so continually and prominently kept in view both in the gospels and the of Israel. The Roman procurator was only the reluctant epistles, when the whole civil and ecclesiastical polity of Israel, with their city, their temple, their nationality, and their law, were swept out of existence by on tremendous that incessantly and systematically pursued the sect wave of judgment.

close of the Jewish economy or age, seems to furnish a satisfactory solution of a problem which has greatly perplexed the commentators, viz. *Christ's delivering up* of the kingdom. It is stated twice over by the apostle, as one of the great events attending the Parousia, that the Son, having then put down all rule and all authority and power, 'shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even hither, and slay them before me' (Luke xix. 27). the Father' (vers. 24, 28). What kingdom? No doubt the kingdom which the Christ, the Anointed King, undertook enemy, death?' Is it not fatal to this interpretation that to administer as the representative and vicegerent of His Father: that is to say, the Theocratic kingdom, with the sovereignty of which He was solemnly invested, according to the statement in the second Psalm, 'Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee' (Ps. ii. 6, 7). This Messianic sovereignty, or Theocracy, necessarily came end, it follows either that he was in error in making such to its termination when the people who were its subjects ceased to be the covenant nation; when the covenant him say so is an erroneous one. That he does affirm that was in fact dissolved, and the whole framework and apparatus of the Theocratic administration were abolished. What more reasonable than that the Son should then 'deliver up the kingdom,' the purposes of its institution having been answered, and its limited, local, not follow that we are to understand that expression and universal system, the ',' or new order of a 'better human race did not cease to exist in its present earthly covenant.

Parousia---at the end of the age---is represented as consequent on the subjugation of all things to Christ, the Theocratic King. This cannot refer to the gentle and peaceful conquests of the Gospel, the reconciliation of all things to Him: the language implies a violent and victorious conquest affected over hostile powers,--feet.' Who those enemies are may be inferred from the closing history of the Theocracy. Unquestionably be convoked before the Theocratic King seated on the most formidable opposition to the King and the the throne of His glory. That was the predicted and

disciples? (Matt. xxiv. 3.) But we have seen that the kingdom was found in the heart of the Theocratic the bitterest enemies of the Messiah. It was a domestic, and not a foreign, antagonism---a Jewish, and not a Gentile, enmity---that rejected and crucified the King instrument in the hands of the Sahedrin. It was the Jewish rule, the Jewish authority, the Jewish power of the Nazarenes with the persistent malignity, and This view of 'the end,' as having reference to the this was 'the rule and authority and power' which, by the destruction of Jerusalem and the extinction of the Jewish State, was 'put down' and annihilated. The terrible scenes of the final war, and especially of the siege and capture of Jerusalem, show us what this subjugation of the enemies of Christ implies. 'But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring

But what shall we say of the destruction of 'the last it requires us to place the abolition of the dominion of death, and the resurrection, in the past, and not the future? Does not this contradict fact and common sense, and consequently expose the fallacy of the whole explanation? Of course, if the language of the apostle can only mean that at the Parousia the dominion of death over all men was everywhere and for ever brought to an an assertion, or that the interpretation which makes at the Parousia (the time of which is incontrovertibly defend in the New Testament as contemporaneous with the destruction of Jerusalem) death will be destroyed, is what no one can with any fairness deny; but it does and national character being superseded by a larger in an absolutely unlimited and universal sense. The conditions at the destruction of Jerusalem; the world This surrender of the kingdom to the Father at the did not then come to an end; men continued to be born and to die according to the law of nature. What, then, did take place? We are to conceive of that period as the end of an aeon, or age; the close of a great era; the winding up of a dispensation, and the judgment of those who were placed under that dispensation. The whole of the subjects of that dispensation (the kingdom of 'He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his heaven), both the living and the dead, were, according to the representation of Christ and His apostles, to

appointed period of that great judicial transaction set argument in the 26th, 54th, and following verses really before us in the parabolic description of the sheep and affirms no more than this,---To those who are raised the goats (Matt. xxv. 31, etc.), the outward and visible from the dead there is no more liability to death; their signs of which were indelibly stamped on the annals deliverance from his bondage is complete; his sting is of time by the awful catastrophe which effaced Israel taken away; his power is at an end; they can shout, O from its place among the nations of the earth. True, death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? the spiritual and invisible accompaniments of that Even as 'Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no judgment are not recorded by the historian, for they more, death hath no more dominion over him,' so, at the Parousia, His people were emancipated for ever from were not such as the human senses could apprehend or verify; yet what Christian can hesitate to believe that, the prison-house of the grave: 'the last enemy, death, to contemporaneously with the outward judgment of the them was destroyed. seen, there was a corresponding judgment of the unseen? The Living (Saints) Changed At The Parousia. Such, at least, is the inference fairly deducible from the 1 Cor. xv. 51. teachings of the New Testament. That at the great epoch 'Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all of the Parousia the dead as well as the living---not of the sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the whole human race, but of the subjects of the Theocratic twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet kingdom---were to be assembled before the tribunal shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, of judgment, is distinctly affirmed in the Scriptures; and we shall be changed. the dead being raised up, and the living undergoing an This declaration supplies what was lacking in the instantaneous change. In this recall of the dead to life-statement made at ver. 24, and brings the whole into -the resuscitation of those who throughout the duration accordance with 1 Thess. iv. 17. The language of St. Paul of the Theocratic kingdom had become the victims and implies that he was communicating a revelation which captives of death---we conceive the 'destruction' of death was new, and presumably made to himself. It cannot be referred to by St. Paul to consist. Over them death lost his said that it is derived from any recorded utterance of the dominion; 'the spirits in prison' were released from the Saviour, nor do we find any corresponding statement in custody of their grim tyrant; and they, being raised from any other apostolic writing. But the question for us is, To the dead, 'could not die anymore;' 'Death had no more whom does the apostle refer when he says, 'We shall not dominion over them.' That this is in perfect harmony all sleep, etc.? Is it to some hypothetical persons living in with the teaching of the Scriptures on this mysterious some distant age of time, or is it of the Corinthians and subject, and in fact explains what no other hypothesis himself that he is thinking? Why should he think of the can explain, will more fully appear in the sequel. distant future when it is certain that he considered the Meantime, it may be observed that much expressions Parousia to be imminent? Why should he not refer to as the 'destruction' or 'abolition' of death do not always himself and the Corinthians when their common hope imply the total and final termination of its power. WE and expectation was that they should live to witness the read that 'Jesus Christ had abolished death' (2 Tim. i. Parousia? There is no conceivable reason, then, why we 10). Christ Himself declared, 'If a man keep my saying, should depart from the proper grammatical force of the he shall never see death' (John viii. 51); 'Whosoever language. When the apostle says 'we,' he no doubt means liveth and believeth in me shall never die' (John xi. 26). the Christians of Corinth and himself. This conclusion We must interpret Scripture according to the analogy of Alford fully endorses: 'We which are alive and remain Scripture. All that we are fairly warranted in affirming unto the coming of the Lord,---in which number the respecting the 'destruction of death' in the passage apostle firmly believed that he himself should be. (See 2 before us is, that it is co-extensive with all those who Cor. v. 1 ff. And notes). at the Parousia were raised from the dead. This seems The revelation, then, which the apostle here to be referred to in our Lord's reply to the Sadducees: communicates, the secret concerning their future 'They which shall be accounted worthy to attain that destiny, is this: That they would not all have to pass period [], and the resurrection from among the dead, through the ordeal of death, but that such of them as neither marry nor are given in marriage; for neither can were privileged to live until the Parousia would undergo they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels, a change by which they would be qualified to enter into etc. (Luke xx. 35, 36). For them death is destroyed; for the kingdom of God, without experiencing the pangs of them death is swallowed up in victory. So, the apostle's

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dissolution. He had just before (ver. 50) been explaining could not, in the nature of things, be fit for a spiritual inherit the kingdom of God.' Hence the necessity for a transformation of the material and corruptible into important to observe the representation of the true nature of 'the kingdom of God.' It is not 'the gospel;' blood are incapable of entering.

The sum of all is, that the apostle evidently contemplates the event of which he is speaking as nigh at hand: it is to come to pass in their own day, before the natural term of life expires. And is not this precisely what we have found in all the references of the New aught we know, it may realise the fancy of the poet,---Testament to the time of the Parousia? That event is never spoken of as distant, but always as imminent. It is looked for, watched for, hoped for. Some even leap to the conclusion that it has arrived, but their precipitancy is checked by the apostle, who shows that certain antecedents must first take place. We conclude, therefore, that when St. Paul said, 'We shall not all sleep,' he referred to himself and the Christians of Corinth, events might have taken place without observation, who, when they received this letter and read these words, could put only one construction upon them, viz. that many, perhaps most, possibly all of them, would live to witness the consummation which he predicted.

But the objection will recur, How could all this take place without notice or record? First, as regards the resurrection of the dead, it is to be considered how little we know of its conditions and characteristics. Must it come with observation? Must it be cognizable by material organs? 'It is raised a spiritual body.' Is a spiritual body one which can be seen, touched, handled? We are not certain that the eye can see the spiritual, or the hand can grasp the immaterial. On the contrary, the placed therefore in this dilemma,--presumption and the probability are that they cannot. All this resurrection of the dead and transmutation of and the events which he predicted came to pass; or, the living take place in the region of the spiritual, into which earthly spectators and reporters do not enter, and could see nothing if they did. A miracle may be necessary to empower the 'unassisted eye' to see the invisible. The prophet at Dothan saw the mountain full of 'chariots of fire, and horses of fire,' but the prophet's servant saw nothing until Elisha prayed, 'Lord, open his eyes, that he may see' (2 Kings vi. 17). The first Christian martyr, full of the Holy Ghost, 'saw the glory of God,

of the multitude that surrounded him beheld the vision that material and corruptible bodies of flesh and blood (Acts vi. 56). Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus saw 'that Just One,' but his fellow-travellers saw no man and heavenly state of existence: 'Flesh and blood cannot (Acts ix. 7). It is not improbable that traditional and materialistic conceptions of the resurrection,---opening graves and emerging bodies, may bias the imagination that which is immaterial and incorruptible. Here it is on this subject, and make us overlook the fact that our material organs can apprehend only material objects.

Secondly, as regards the change of the living saints, nor 'the Christian dispensation;' nor any *earthly* state of which the apostle speaks of as instantaneous,---'in things at all, but a *heavenly state*, into which flesh and a moment, in the twinkling of an eye;'---it is difficult to understand how so rapid a transition could be the subject of observation. The only thing we know of the change is its inconceivable suddenness. We know nothing of what residuum it leaves behind; what dissipation or resolution of the material substance. For

'Oh, the hour when this material

Shall have vanished as a cloud.

All we know is that 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,' the change is completed; 'the corruptible puts on incorruption, the mortal puts on immortality, and death is swallowed up in victory.

What, then, hinders the conclusion that such and without record? There is nothing unphilosophical, irrational, or impossible in the supposition. Least of all is there anything *unscriptural*, and this is all we need concern ourselves about. 'What saith the Scripture?' Does the language of St. Paul plainly affirm or imply that all this is just about to take place, within the lifetime of himself and those to whom he is writing? No fair and dispassionate mind will deny that it is so. Right or wrong, the apostle is committed to this representation of the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the transmutation of the living saints, within the natural lifetime of the Corinthians and himself. We are

1. Either the apostle was guided by the Spirit of God,

2. The apostle was mistaken in his belief, and these things never took place.

The Parousia And 'The Last Trump.'

There is still one circumstance in this description which requires notice, as bearing upon the question of time. The change which is said to pass upon 'us who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord' follows immediately on the signal of 'the last trump.' and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, but none It is remarkable that there are two other passages

which connect the great event of the Parousia, and its nearness of His coming, and the duty of being found concomitant transactions, with the sound of a trumpet. ready for it? Hengstenberg sees in it an obvious allusion to Mal. iii. 1: 'The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly 'He shall send his angels with *a great sound of a trumpet*, and they shall gather together his elect, etc. (Matt. come to his temple, . . . behold, he shall come, saith xxiv. 31). So also St. Paul in 1 Thess. iv. 16: 'The Lord the Lord of hosts.' 'The word Maran-atha, which is so himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with striking in an epistle written in Greek, and to Greeks, the voice of the archangel, and with *the trump of God*,' is in itself a sufficient indication of an Old Testament etc. But the questions arises, Why the *last* trumpet? foundation. The retention of the Aramean form can This epithet necessarily suggests other preceding only be explained on the supposition that it was *a kind* trumpets or signals, and we are irresistibly reminded of watchword common to all the believers in Israel; and no of the apocalyptic vision, in which seven angels are expression could well have come to be so used if it had represented as sounding as many trumpets, each of not been taken from the Scriptures. There can hardly be which is the signal for the outpouring of judgments and any doubt that it was taken from Mal. iii. 1.' We may add woes upon the earth. Of course the seventh trumpet is that the occurrence of this Aramaic word in a Greek epistle suggests the existence of a strong Jewish element the last, and it becomes an interesting question what in the Corinthian church. This was probably true of all connection there may be between the revelation in the Gentile churches: the synagogue was the nucleus of the Epistle and the vision in the Apocalypse. Alford (in opposition to Olshausen) considers that it is a refining Christian congregation, and we know that in Corinth upon the word *last* to identify it with the seventh especially it was so: Justus, Crispus, and Sosthenes all trumpet of the Apocalypse; but his own suggestion, that belonged to the synagogue before they belonged to the it is the last 'in a wide and popular sense,' seems much church; and this fact explains what might otherwise less satisfactory. We refrain at this stage from entering appear a difficulty,---the direct interest of the church of upon any discussion of the apocalyptic symbols, but Corinth in the great catastrophe the seat and centre of content ourselves with the single observation, that the which was Iudea. sounding of the seventh trumpet in the Apocalypse is In The Second Epistle To The Corinthians actually connected with the time of the judgment of the Anticipation Of 'The End' And 'The Day Of The Lord.' dead (Rev. xi. 18). The whole subject will come before us 2 Cor. i. 13, 14. at a subsequent stage of the investigation, and we now 'Even to the end;'... 'the day of the Lord Jesus.' pass on, merely taking note of the fact that we here find 'The end' (ver. 13) does not mean 'to the end of my an undoubted link of connection between the prophetic life,' as Alford says. It is the great consummation which element in the Epistles and that in the Apocalypse.

The Apostolic Watchword, Maran-Atha,

The Lord Is At Hand.

1 Cor. xvi. 22.

'Maran-atha' [The Lord cometh.] In ver. 14 we find St. Paul anticipating the coming of The whole argument for the anticipated near the Lord as the time of joyful recompense to the faithful approach of the Parousia is clenched by the last word servants of God, and which was so near that, as he had of the apostle, which comes with the greater weight told them in his former epistle, human judgments and as written with his own hand, and conveying in one censures might well be adjourned till its arrival. (1 Cor. word the concentrated essence of his exhortation,--iv. 5.) When that day came, the apostle and his converts 'Maran-atha. The Lord is coming.' This one utterance would rejoice in each other. Can it be supposed that he speaks volumes. It is the watchword which the apostle could think of that day as otherwise than very near? passes along the line of the Christian host; the rallying Have those mutual rejoicings yet to begin? For if the day of the Lord be still future, so also must be the rejoicing. cry which inspired courage and hope in every heart. 'The Lord is coming!' It would have no meaning if the The Dead In Christ To Be Presented Along With event to which it refers were distant or doubtful; all its force lies in its certainty and nearness. 'A weighty The Living At The Parousia. watchword,' says Alford, 'tending to recall to them the 2 Cor. iv. 14.

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the apostle ever keeps in view, the goal to which they were so rapidly advancing. has a definite and recognised signification in the New Testament, as may be seen by reference to such passages as Matt. xxiv. 6, 14; 1 Cor. xv. 24; Heb. iii. 16; vi. 11, etc.

shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with slept (1 Thess. iv. 14, 15). you.'

We now enter upon a most important statement, which deserves special attention. Perhaps its true meaning has been somewhat obscured by regarding it as a general proposition, instead of something personal to the apostle himself. Conybeare and Howson observe:--- 'Great confusion is caused in many passages by not translating, according to his true meaning, in the first person *singular*; for thus it often happens that what St. Paul spoke of himself individually, appears to us as if it were meant for a general truth; instances of this will repeatedly occur in the Epistle to the Corinthians, especially the Second. We propose, therefore, to change the pronouns we and us in this passage into I and me.'

We have already seen (1 Thess. iv. 15, and 1 Cor. xv. 51) that the apostle cherished the hope that he himself would be among those 'who would be alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord.' In this epistle, however, it would seem as if this hope regarding himself were somewhat shaken. His experience in the interval between the First Epistle and the Second had been such as to lead him to apprehend speedy death. (See chap. i. 8, etc.) His 'trouble in Asia' had made him despair of life, and he probably felt that he could not calculate on good or bad. escaping the malignant hostility of his enemies much longer. He had now 'the sentence of death in himself;' he bore about 'in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus,' and felt that he was 'always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake.'

But this anticipation did not diminish the confidence with which he looked forward to the future; for even should he die before the Parousia, he would not on that account lose his part in the triumphs and glories of that day. He was assured that 'he which raised up the Lord Jesus would raise up *him* also by Jesus, and would present him along with the living saints who might survive to that period. He would not be absent from the great at the coming of the Lord (2 Thess. ii. 1), but would be 'presented,' along with his friends at Corinth and elsewhere, 'before the presence of his glory.' In fact, the apostle now comforts himself with the same words with which he had comforted the bereaved mourners in Thessalonica. He appears to have relinquished the hope that he would himself live to witness the glorious appearing of the Lord; but not the less was he persuaded that he would suffer no loss by having to die; for, as he had taught the Thessalonians, 'them also which sleep in Jesus God would bring with him;' and the living saints

'Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus would in that day have no advantage above those who

Expectation Of Future Blessedness At The Parousia

2 Cor. v. 1-10,

'For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be

This is the most complete account that we possess of the mysterious transition which the human spirit experiences when it quits its earthly tenement and enters the new organism prepared for its reception in the eternal world. It comes to us vouched by the highest authority,---it is the profession of his faith made by an inspired apostle,---one who could say 'I know.' It is the declaration of that hope which sustained St. Paul, and doubtless also the common faith of the whole Christian church. Nevertheless, the passage ought to be studied from the standpoint of the apostle, as his personal expectation and hope.

Observe the form of the statement---it is rather hypothetical than affirmative: "If my earthly tabernacle be dissolved, etc. This is not the way in which a Christian now would speak respecting the prospect of dying; there would be no 'if' in his utterance, for what more certain than death? He would say, "When this earthly tabernacle shall be taken down;" not, 'if it should be, etc. But not so the apostle; to him death was a problematical event; he believed that many, perhaps most, of the faithful of his day would never suffer the change of dissolution; would not be unclothed, that is disembodied, but would 'be alive and remain unto the

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103 coming of the Lord.' Perhaps at this time he had begun personal and practical issue. All were alike on their way to have misgivings about his own survival; but what to the judgment seat of Christ, and there they would then? Even if the earthly tenement of his body were to all meet at last. Some might die before the coming of be dissolved, he knew that there was provided for him the Lord, and some might live to witness that event; a divinely prepared habitation, or vehicle of the soul; but there, at the judgment seat, all would be gathered an indestructible and celestial mansion, not made with together; and to be accepted and approved there was, hands; not a material, but a spiritual body. His present after all, a greater matter than living or dying, 'falling residence in the body of flesh and blood he found to be asleep in the Lord, or being 'changed' without passing attended with many sorrows and sufferings, under the through the pangs of dissolution. The judgment seat burden of which he often groaned, and for deliverance was the goal before them all, and we have seen how from which he longed, earnestly desiring to be endued near and imminent that solemn appearing was believed with the heavenly vesture which was awaiting him to be. That all this heartfelt faith and hope, cherished and taught by the inspired apostles of Christ, was after above (ver. 2). The Pagan conception of a disembodied spirit, a naked shivering ghost, was foreign to the ideas all a mere fallacy and delusion appears an intolerable of St. Paul; his hope and wish were that he might be supposition, fatal to the credit and authority of apostolic found 'clothed, and not naked;' 'not to be unclothed, doctrine. but clothed upon.' Convbeare and Howson have, of The Parousia In The Epistle To The Galatians:all commentators, best caught and expressed the idea We find no direct allusion to the Parousia in the Epistle to the Galatians. It contributes, however, an illustration of the early appearance and rapid growth of that defection from the faith predicted by our Lord, and designated by St. Paul 'the apostasy,' or 'falling away,' Matt. xxiv. 12; 2 Thess. ii. 3; 1 Tim. iv.; 2 Tim. iii. Iv. 3, 4.) The plague had already broken out in the churches

indirectly to the elucidation of the subject, by furnishing which was a sign and precursor of the Parousia. (See of Galatia, and we see in this epistle how earnestly the The following comment of Dean Alford well conveys apostle endeavoured to check its progress, vehemently protesting against this perversion of the Gospel, and 'The feeling expressed in these verses was one most denouncing its originators and propagandists as enemies of the cross of Christ. The evil arose from the arts of the Judaising teachers, who were everywhere the inveterate opponents of St. Paul, and who seem to have been possessed with the same spirit of proselytism which distinguished the Pharisees, who 'compasses sea and land to make one proselyte.' In this manifestation of the predicted apostasy we have a marked indication of the approach of the 'last times,' or 'the end of the age.'

of the apostle: 'If indeed I shall be found still clad in my fleshly garment.' It was not *death*, but *life*, that the apostle anticipated and desired; not to be divested of the body, but invested with a more excellent organism, and endued with a nobler life. There is an unmistakable allusion in his language to the hope which he cherished of escaping the doom of mortality, 'not for that we (I) would be unclothed, etc., *i.e.* 'not that I wish to put off the body by dying, but to merge the mortal in the immortal, 'that mortality might be swallowed up of life.' the sentiment of this important passage:--natural to those who, like the apostles, regarded the coming of the Lord as *near*, and conceived the possibility of their living to behold it. It was no terror of death as to its *consequences*, but a natural reluctance to undergo *the mere act of death as such*, when it was written possibility that this mortal body might be superseded by the immortal one, without it.'

In the succeeding verses the apostle intimates his full confidence that in either alternative, living or dying, all was well. 'To be at home in the body was to be absent from the Lord; to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord.' In either case, whether present or absent, his great concern was to be accepted by the Lord at last; 'For,' he adds, 'we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that every on may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad' (verses 6-10).

Thus the apostle brings the whole question to a

'This Present Evil Age, Or Aeon.'

Gal. i. 4.

'Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.

The apostle here speaks of the existing state of things as evil, and of the Lord Jesus Christ as the deliverer therefrom. The word age [aion] does not of course refer to the material world, the earth; but to the moral world, or age. It is equivalent to the phrase so often occurring in the gospels, 'this wicked generation' (Matt. xii. 45,

etc.). 'The present evil age' is regarded as passing away, and about to be succeeded by a new order, the . (Heb. necessary to repeat that this 'end' is declared to fall ii. 5.)

The Two Jerusalems---The Old And The New

Gal. iv. 25, 26.

'For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother.

It is not our intention at present to do more than simply take note of this remarkable contrast between the two cities, the new and the old Jerusalem. We purposely refrain at this stage from entering upon symbols and their significance, until the whole subject comes before us in the Book of Revelation.

In the meantime the reader is requested to not well the contrast here presented. The Jerusalem which now is, and the Jerusalem which is to be; the earthly Jerusalem, and the heavenly Jerusalem; the Jerusalem the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. which is in bondage, and the Jerusalem which is free; the Jerusalem which is beneath, and the Jerusalem which is above, the Jerusalem which is the mother of slaves; and the Jerusalem which is *our* mother. We shall yet find this contrast of no little use in determining the meaning of some of the symbols in the Apocalypse.

In The Epistle To The Romans:-

The allusion to the coming of the Lord in this epistle are not many in number, but they are very important and instructive. It is spoken of as a thing most surely hoped- for consummation was eagerly expected and believed and eagerly expected by the Christians of the apostolic age; and the fact of its nearness is either implied or affirmed in every allusion to the event.

The Day Of Wrath

Rom. ii. 5, 6,

'But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds.

Rom. ii. 12, 16,

'As many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.'

There can be no doubt concerning this 'day of wrath' and 'revelation of the righteous judgment of God.' It is the same which was predicted by Malachi as 'the great and dreadful day of the Lord' (Mal. iv. 5); by John the Baptist as 'the coming wrath' (Matt. iii. 7); and by the Lord Jesus Christ as 'the day of judgment' (Matt. xi. 22,

24). It was the closing act of the aeon, the . It is scarcely within the period of the existing generation, when the Son of man, the appointed Judge, would render to every man according to his deeds' (Matt. xvi. 27).

The Eschatology Of St. Paul

Rom. viii. 18-23.

'For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed [which is about to be revealed] in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [] waiteth [is looking eagerly] for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for

There are some things in this passage which are, and must probably remain, obscure from the nature of the subject; but there is also much that is plain and clear. We cannot mistake the exulting anticipation expressed by St. Paul of a coming day of deliverance from the sufferings and miseries of the present; a deliverance which was at hand, and not far off. There was a day of redemption coming which would bring freedom and glory to the sons of God, in the benefits of which the whole creation would participate. The arrival that desired, not only by those who like the apostle himself had the prospect of an endless and glorious inheritance above, but by the burdened and groaning creation at large, by whom they were surrounded. So exhilarating was the prospect of the coming emancipation that in the view of it the apostle could say, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is about to be revealed in us;' or, as in a similar passage, 'our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory' (2 Cor. iv. 17).

We now proceed to examine the whole passage more particularly.

The first point that demands attention is the distinct indication of the nearness of this coming glory. This is entirely lost sight of in our Authorised Version; and it has been similarly ignored by almost all commentators. Even Alford, who is usually so careful in his attention to tenses, passes by this glaring instance without remark,

though nothing can be more grammatically emphatic But what is meant by the creature or creation? than the indication of the nearness of the expected Some commentators regard it as embracing the revelation. Tholuck notices that the apostle speaks whole universe, or the material creation, animate and of the time as near,---'In joyful exultation the apostle inanimate, rational and irrational,-- -the whole frame conceives its commencement at hand,'---but regards of nature. They speak of the earthquake, the storm, and him as mistaken, and carried away by his feelings. the volcano as symptoms of the sore distemper of the Convbeare and Howson give the proper force of the natural world. But this seems far too vague and general language,---'the glory which is about to be revealed, for the argument of the apostle. It is evident that the can only refer to conscious, voluntary, rational, and moral which shall soon be revealed. []. 'The coming glory' is the counterpart or antithesis of 'the coming wrath;' different beings. It has 'intense longings;' it has 'its own will;' it has aspects of the same great event; for the Parousia, which 'hope;' it is capable of being 'made subject to vanity;' of was the revelation of glory to the sons of God, was the being 'set free from corruption;' of participating in 'the revelation of the day of wrath to His enemies (Rom. ii. glory of the children of God.' These characters exclude

the inanimate and irrational creation, and *include* the Thus, it will be perceived it is not to *death* that the human race in its totality. Besides, the antithesis in verse 23 between the as a whole, and 'ourselves who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, would be very unnatural and imperfect if it did not differentiate Christians, not contrast lies between those who have the first-fruits of the Spirit and those who have not the first-fruits of the *Spirit*; and it would be manifestly incongruous to speak of the irrational and inanimate creation as 'not having the Spirit.' To make the apostle refer here to universal nature may be admissible perhaps as poetry, but would be quite out of place in a sober and serious argument. The next point that deserves notice is the statement We understand, then, by --- the human race, mankind generally; the meaning which the word bears in such passages as Mark xiv. 15, 'Preach the gospel to every creature'; Col. i. 23, 'Which was preached to every creature which is under heaven'.

5,7). apostle looks as the period of deliverance from present evils; still less to some far distant epoch in the future. It would indeed have been cold comfort to men writhing under the anguish their sufferings to tell them of a from beasts and plants, but from other men. The true period in some future age which would bring them compensation for their present distress. The apostle does not so mock them with hope deferred. The day of deliverance was *at hand*; the glory was just *about to* be revealed; and so near and so great was that 'weight of glory' that it reduced to insignificance the passing inconveniences of the present hour. which the apostle proceeds to make respecting the interest felt in that approaching consummation beyond the limits of the suffering people of God. These indeed were to be the chief gainers by the coming redemption, but its benefits were to extend far beyond them. This brings us to the question, Can the human

This is a most important and interesting topic, and race be said to be in this eager and expectant attitude, groaning and travailing in pain, waiting and longing 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for deliverance and freedom? Undoubtedly it may; and never more truly so than in the very period when Whatever meaning we attach to the word 'creature' the apostle wrote. It was an age of the deepest social corruption and degradation; humanity might be said to groan under the burden of its misery and bondage; and yet there was a strange and mysterious feeling in the minds of men that, somehow and somewhere, deliverance was at hand. How accurately the description of the apostle suits the moral and social condition of the Jewish people at this period needs no proof. They groaned under the yoke of Roman bondage. They eagerly panted for the promised Deliverer. The case of the Greeks and the Romans was not very dissimilar, as the following passages from Conybeare and Howson strikingly prove; indeed, they might have been written as a commentary on the passage before us:---

requires very careful consideration. for the manifestation of the sons of God.' it will make no difference to the eager and expectant attitude in which it is represented as waiting for the coming consummation. Lange observes that as the word means to expect with raised head, implies intense expectation, and intense longing, waiting for satisfaction. But this very attitude implies the nearness, or a persuasion of the nearness, of the wished-for deliverance. Taking, then, these two statements together, first, that the glory is 'soon to be revealed;' secondly, that the is 'waiting with intense longing for its manifestation, we have as strong demonstration as it is possible to conceive that the event in question is represented by the apostle as nigh at hand.

during this period, into the lowest corruption; . . . but period significant traces of a positive preparation for the very diffusion and development of this corruption the Gospel. was preparing the way, because it showed the necessity, for the interposition of a gospel. The disease itself the social and moral condition of the world in the seemed to call for a *Healer*. And if the prevailing evils of the Greek population presented obstacles on a large the illustration of the passage now before us, should scale to the progress of Christianity, yet they showed to unwittingly adopt not merely the spirit, but to a great all future time the weakness of man's highest powers if unassisted from above; and there must have been many who groaned under the bondage of a corruption for deliverance of the creation as it appeared to his which they could not shake off, and who were ready to welcome the voice of Him "who took our infirmities in the immediate future to respond to and satisfy this and bare our sicknesses."

the Roman world is thus described:---

world was reduced under one sceptre, any real principle The answer to this question is found in almost every of unity held its different parts together. The emperor was deified because men were enslaved. There was no true peace when Augustus closed the temple of Janus. The Empire was only the order of external government, to give recompense and salvation to His people, and with a chaos both of opinions and morals within. The to tread His enemies under His feet. But the Parousia writings of Tacitus and Juvenal remain to attest the Senate and the family. The old soverity of manners, and the old faith in the better part of the Roman religion, covenant-bond between Jehovah and the Jewish people, were gone. The licentious creeds and practices of Greece and made way for a new and better covenant which and the East had inundated Italy and the West, and the embraced all mankind. Christianity is the proclamation Pantheon was only the monument of a compromise of the universal Fatherhood of God, but the new era among a multitude of effete superstitions. It is true was not fully inaugurated until the narrow and local of things, and it is probable that for some short time King resigned His jurisdiction into the Father's hands. Christianity itself shared the advantage of it. But, still, the temper of the times was essentially both cruel and profane, and the apostles were soon exposed to its in the all- comprehensive and world-wide system in of that unity which the Gospel give to mankind. It was a kingdom of this world, and the human race were but only Man. Christ had made all men One, 'that God groaning for the better peace of a "kingdom not of this might be All in all." world."

a Healer. A Messiah was needed by the whole Empire from the hopeless despair which was crushing them in going much further than this, and we cannot hesitate the children of God;' investing Gentiles, 'aliens from

'The social condition of the Greeks had been falling, to discover in the circumstances of the world at this

It is certainly remarkable that a description of apostolic age, written apparently without any view to extent the very words, in which St. Paul sets forth the misery, the bondage, the groaning, and the yearning apprehension. But, it may be said, Was there anything eager longing of the enslaved and groaning world? So much for the state of the Greeks: the condition of What is this *'terminus ad quem?'* this revelation of the sons of God? And in what sense could it, or did it, bring 'It would be a delusion to imagine that when the deliverance and consolation to oppressed humanity? page of the apostle's writings. To his view a great event appeared just at hand; the Lord was about to come, according to His promise, to exercise His kingly power, was to bring more than this. It marked a great epoch corruption which festered in all ranks, alike in the in the divine government of man. It terminated the period of exclusive privilege for Israel. It dissolved the that a remarkable toleration was produced by this state theocratic kingdom was superseded, and the Theocratic Then the national and exclusive relation between God and one single people was dissolved, or merged bitter persecution. The Roman Empire was destitute which 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free,

Surely, this was an adequate response to the groans 'Thus in the very condition of the Roman Empire, and travail of suffering and down- trodden humanity; and the miserable state of its mixed population, we the prospect of such a consummation may well be can recognise a negative preparation for the Gospel of represented as the dawn of a day of redemption. It Christ. This tyranny and oppression called for a *Consoler* was nothing less than opening the gates of mercy to as much as the moral sickness of the Greeks called for mankind; it was the emancipation of the human race as much as by the Jews, though not looked for with the down into ever deeper corruption and degradation; same conscious expectation. But we have no difficulty it was introducing them 'into the glorious liberty of

the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the in His work until the whole visible fabric and frame of covenants of promise, with the privileges of 'fellow- Judaism were swept away. This fact is clearly brought out citizenship with the saints and membership of the in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer states that 'the way into the holy place has not yet been made manifest, household of God. It is this admission of the whole human race so long as the first, or outer, tabernacle is still standing. into [adoption of sons] which had hitherto been the exclusive privilege of the chosen people, of which the the present time'---serving a temporary purpose--apostle speaks in such glowing language in Rom. viii. 19-21. It was a theme on which he was never weary of expatiating, and which filled his whole soul with wonder and thanksgiving. He speaks of it as 'the following observations of Conybeare and Howson set mystery that was hid from ages and from generations'forth its meaning very clearly:---

He says that this tabernacle is 'a figure or parable for 'until a time of reformation,' that is, the introduction of a new order (Heb. ix. 8, 9). This passage is of very great importance in connection with this discussion, and the --the manifold wisdom of God' (Ephes. iii. 10; Col. 'It may be asked, How could it be said, after Christ's i. 26). The first three chapters of the Epistle to the ascension, that the way into the holy place was not made fully manifest? The explanation is, that while the temple-Ephesians are occupied with an animated description worship, with its exclusion of all but the high priest of the revolution which had been brought about by the from the holy of holies, still existed, the way of salvation redemptive work of Christ in the relation between God and the uncovenanted Gentiles. 'The dispensation of would not be *fully manifest* to those who adhered to the fulness of times' had arrived, in which God meant the outward and typical observances, instead of being 'to gather together in one all things in Christ, making thereby led to the antitype?---Life and Epistles of St. him head over all things,' breaking down the barriers of Paul, chap. xxviii. separation between Jew and Gentile, making both one; There was a fitness and fullness of time at which abolishing the ceremonial law, fusing the heterogeneous the old covenant was to be superseded by the new; the elements into one homogeneous whole, reconciling the old and the new were permitted to subsist for a time mutual antipathy, and bringing both to unite as one together; the goodness and forbearance of God delaying the final stroke of judgment. Although, therefore, the family at the feet of the common Father.

But it may be said, Had not all this been already great barriers to the introduction of all men, without accomplished by the atoning death of the cross? And is distinction, into the privileges of the children of God it not a revelation of a future and approaching glory, to were virtually removed by the death of Christ upon the which the apostle here alludes? No doubt it is so. Yet the cross, yet the formal and final demonstration that 'the New Testament always speaks of the work of redemption way into the holiest of all' was not thrown open to all being incomplete till the Parousia. It will be observed mankind, was not made until the whole framework of the Mosaic economy, with its ritual, and temple, and that the apostle, in the twenty-third verse, represents himself and his fellow-believers as still waiting for the city, and people, was publicly and solemnly repudiated; . Even the sons of God had only received the earnest and Judaism, with all that pertained to it, was for ever and first-fruits, and not the full harvest of their sonship. swept away. That was not to be completely theirs until the coming of There is still one portion of this deeply interesting passage on which much obscurity rests. In the twentieth the Lord, when 'the saints who were alive and remained,' would exchange the present mortal and corruptible body verse the apostle states that 'the creature was made for a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him The Parousia was the public and formal proclamation who had subjected the same in hope, etc. The common that the Messianic or Theocratic dispensation had come interpretation put upon these words is, that 'the visible to an end; and that the new order, in which God was creation has been laid under the sentence of decay and All in all, was inaugurated. Until the judgment of Israel dissolution, not by its own choice, but by the act of God, had taken place, all things were not put under Christ the who has not, however, left it without hope. Theocratic King; His enemies even were not yet made This no doubt gives a good sense to the passage, His footstool. Until that time the adoption might still be though we venture to think not exactly the sense which said, 'to pertain to Israel.' When the apostle wrote this the apostle intended. It fails to apprehend the nature of epistle Christ was 'expecting till his enemies should be the evil to which 'the creation' was made subject; and made his footstool. There was still an incompleteness consequently the nature of the deliverance from that

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evil which is hoped for.

the reasons already specified, we observe that it is said to have been made subject to vanity. What is this vanity? The word is a very significant one, especially in the lips of a Jew. To such an one 'vanity' was a synonym for *idolatry*. It is the word which the Septuagint employs to denote the folly of idol-worship. Idols are 'lying vanities' (Ps. xxxi. 6; Jonah ii. 8); 'the stock is a doctrine of *vanities*;' idols are 'vanity, and the work of errors' (Jer. x. 8, 15). 'They that make a graven image are all of them vanity' (Isa. xliv. 9). The word is almost set apart for this special use. The same may be said of the New Testament usage. At Lystra St. Paul besought the people 'to turn from those *vanities* [] *i.e.* idolatrous worship, to serve the living God (Acts xiv. 15). In this very epistle (Rom. i. 21) we have a remarkable instance of the use of the word, where St. Paul, accounting for the apostasy of the human race from God, explains it by the fact that 'they became *vain*' in their imaginations []; a passage in which Alford, with Bengel, Locke, and many others, recognises the allusion to idolatrous worship. It is only necessary to look at the passage to see its bearing upon the origin and prevalence of idolatry (see also Ephes. iv. 17). here looks back upon in chap. i. 21, and thus furnishes us with the key to the true interpretation. *Idolatry* was the 'vanity' to which the human race was subjected; idolatry, the religion of the Gentiles, the degradation of man, the dishonour of God.

But can it be said that man was made subject to this evil by the act of God---('by reason of him who hath subjected the same')? Undoubtedly, such a statement would be in harmony with the Word of God. In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans the significant fact is thrice stated, 'God gave them up,' in reference to this very apostasy (Rom. i. 24, 26, 28). This abandonment can only be regarded as a judicial act. We find a still stronger expression in Rom. xi. 32 'God hath concluded [] them all in unbelief;' which Alford makes equivalent to 'subjected to.' Indeed, the doctrine that God delivers over the contumacious and rebellious to the fatal consequences of their sin pervades in Scriptures. Thus it may be said that the subjection of the human race to the inevitable conclusion. evil of idolatry was not simply the will of man himself, but the judicial act of divine justice.

Yet it was not a hopeless decree. 'The preservation of one nation from the universal apostasy had in it a germ of hope for mankind. In the fullness of the time God's purpose of mercy and redemption for the human race was manifested, and 'the adoption of sons,' which

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had been the exclusive privilege of one people, was now Understanding by [creature] the human race, for declared to be open to all without distinction. For this high privilege the race is represented as waiting with eager expectation, and now the Gospel, which was the divinely appointed means of rescuing men from the moral corruption and degradation of heathenism, was proclaiming deliverance and salvation 'to Gentile and Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free.'

> In what sense this proclamation of the new era may be said to be made in the most public and formal manner at the Parousia has been already shown.

The Nearness Of The Coming Salvation

Rom. xiii. 11, 12.

'And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand,' etc.

It is not possible for words more clearly to express the apostle's conviction that the great deliverance was at hand. It would be preposterous to regard this language, with Moses Stuart, as referring to the near approach of death and eternity. In that case the apostle would have said, 'The day is far spent, the night is at hand.' But this is not the manner of the New Testament; it is never death and the grave, but the Parousia, the 'blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, to which the apostles look forward. Professor Jowett justly observes that 'in the New Testament we find no exhortation grounded on the shortness of life. It seems as if the end of life had no practical importance for the first believers, because it would surely be anticipated by the day of the Lord.' This undoubtedly true; but what then? Either the apostle was in error, or our confidence must be withheld from him as an authoritative expounder of divine truth; or else he was under the guidance of the spirit of God, and what he taught was unerring truth. To this dilemma those expositors are shut up who cannot bring themselves even to imagine the possibility of the Parousia having come to pass according to the teaching of St. Paul. It is curious to see the shifts to which they resort in order to find some way of escape from the

Tholuck frankly admits the expectation of the apostle, but at the sacrifice of his authority:---

'From the day when the faithful first assembled around their Messiah until the date of this epistle, a series of years had elapsed; the full daybreak, as Paul deemed, was already close at hand. We find here corroborated, what is also evident from several other passages, that

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the apostle expected the speedy advent of the Lord. The the churches of the primitive age was, 'The Lord is at reason of this lay, partly in the general law that man is hand.' He believed this; he taught this; and it was the fond to imagine the object of his hope at hand, partly in faith and hope of the whole church. the circumstance that the Saviour had often delivered Washemistaken? Did the whole primitive church live to their expectation come to pass? Where is the temple of God? Where is the city of Jerusalem? Where is the law of Moses? Where is the Jewish nationality? But all these Stuart protests against Tholuck's surrender of the things perished at the same moment; and all these were predicted to pass away at the Parousia. The fulfilment of those other events in the region of the spiritual and 'The spiritual salvation which believers are to unseen which were indissolubly connected therewith, but of which, in the nature of things, there can be no record in the pages of human history.

the admonition to be every moment prepared for the and die in the belief of a lie? Did nothing corresponding crisis in question, and had also, according to the usus *loquendi* of the prophets, described the period as fast approaching. correctness of the apostle's judgment, but adopts the untenable position that St. Paul is here speaking of--experience when transferred to the world of everlasting life and glory.

Alford, on the other hand, admits that---

'A fair exegesis of this passage can hardly fail to Rom. xvi. 20. recognise the fact that the apostle here, as well as 'And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your elsewhere (1 Thess. iv. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 51), speaks of feet shortly. the coming of the Lord as rapidly approaching. To We have here another unmistakable reference to the reason, as Stuart does, that because Paul corrects in near approach of the day of deliverance. The bruising the Thessalonians the mistake of imagining it to be of the serpent's head is the victory of Christ, and that immediately at hand (or even actually come), therefore victory was shortly to be won. Among the enemies who he did not himself expect it soon, is surely quite beside were to be made His footstool was death, and he that the purpose. had the power of death, that is, the Devil. The American editor of Lange's Commentary on the

In the prospect of His crucifixion, the Lord declared, 'Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the 'Dr. Hodge objects at some length to the reference prince of this world be cast out,' and we have already endeavoured to show in what sense and how truly that prediction was fulfilled. In like manner a day was approaching when suffering and persecuted Christians would be delivered by the Parousia from the enemies by whom they were surrounded, and when the malignant instigator and abettor of all that enmity would lie prostrate beneath their feet.

Romans has the following note:--to the second coming of Christ. On the other hand most modern German commentators defend this reference. Olshaousen, De Wette, Philippi, Meyer, and others, think no other view in the least degree tenable; and Dr. Lange, while careful to guard against extreme theories on this point, denies the reference to eternal blessedness, and admits that the Parousia is intended. This opinion gains ground among Anglo-Saxon exegetes.'

There are some interpreters who evade the difficulty by denying that such terms as *near* and *distant* have any reference to time at all. For example, we are told that---

In none of St. Paul's Epistles do we find less a direct 'This is in line of all our Lord's teaching, which mention of the Parousia, and yet it may be said there is represents the decisive day of Christ's second appearing none which is more pervaded by the idea of that event. as at hand, to keep believers ever in the attitude of The thought of it underlies almost every expression of wakeful expectancy, but without reference to the the apostle; it is implied in 'the hope which is laid up for chronological nearness or distance of that event. you in heaven;' 'the inheritance of the saints in light;' This is a non-natural method of interpretation, 'the kingdom of his dear Son;' 'the reconciliation of all which simply evacuates words of all meaning. There is things to God;' 'the presentation of his people holy, and only one way out of the difficulty, and that is to believe unblamable, and unreproveable in his sight.

that the apostle says what he means, and means what But there is a least one very distinct allusion to the he says. He was the inspired apostle and ambassador of Parousia in which the apostle speaks of the expected Christ, and the Lord let none of his words fall to the consummation. ground. His continual watchword and warning cry to

Prospect Of Speedy Deliverance

The Parousia In The Epistle To The Colossians

110 The Approaching Manifestation Of Christ

Col. iii. 4.

'When Christ who is our life, shall appear [shall be made manifest], then shall you also appear [be made manifest] with him in glory.

We find here a distinct allusion to the same event and the same period as in Rom. viii. 19, viz. 'the manifestation of the sons of God.' In both passages it is evidently conceived to be near. In Rom viii. 19, indeed, it is expressly affirmed to be so; the glory is 'about to be revealed;' while here the Colossian disciples are represented as 'dead,' and waiting for the life and glory which would be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ, *i.e.* at the Parousia. It is inconceivable that the apostle could speak in such terms of a far-off event; its nearness is evidently one of the elements in his exhortation that they should 'set their heart on things above, and not on things on the earth.' Are we to suppose that they are still in a state of death---that their life is still hidden? Yet their life and glory are represented as contingent on the 'manifestation of Jesus Christ.'

The Coming Wrath

Col. iii. 6.

'On account of which [idolatry] the wrath of God is coming.

The foregoing conclusion (respecting the nearness of the coming glory) is confirmed by the apostle's reference to the nearness of the coming wrath. The clause 'on the children of disobedience' is not found in some of the most ancient MSS. and is omitted by Alford. It has probably been added from Ephes. v. 6. Taking the passage as thus read, there is something very suggestive as well as emphatic in its declaration, 'The wrath of God is coming.' There is an unmistakable contrast between 'the coming glory of the people of God' and 'the coming wrath' upon His enemies. No less distinct is the allusion to 'the coming wrath' predicted by John the Baptist, and so frequently referred to by our Lord and His apostles. Both the *glory* and the *wrath* are 'about to be revealed;' they were coincident with the Parousia of Christ; and of the speedy manifestation of both the apostolic churches were in constant expectation.

The Parousia In The Epistle To The Ephesians

The Economy Of The Fullness Of The Times

Ephes. i. 9, 10.

'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed

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in himself: that in the dispensation [] of the fullness of the times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in the earth,' etc.

Though this passage does not affirm anything directly respecting the nearness of the Parousia, yet it has a very distinct bearing upon the event itself. The field of investigation which it opens is indeed far too wide for us now to explore, yet we cannot wholly pass it by. The theme is one on which the apostle loves to expatiate, and nowhere does he dwell upon it more rapturously than in this epistle. It may be presumed therefore that, however obscure it may seem to us in some respects, it was not unintelligible to the Christians of Ephesus, or those to whom this epistle was sent, for, as Paley well observes, no man write unintelligibly on purpose. We may also expect to find allusions to the same subject in other parts of the apostle's writings, which may serve to elucidate dark sayings in this.

There are two questions which are raised by the passage before us: (1) What is meant by the 'gathering together in one of all things in Christ?' (2) What is the period designated 'the economy of the fullness of the times,' in which this 'gathering together in one' is to take place?

1. With regard to the first point we are greatly assisted in determination by the expression which the apostle employs in relation to it, viz. 'the mystery of his will.' This is a favourite word of St. Paul in speaking of that new and wonderful discovery which never failed to fill his soul with adoring gratitude and praise,--the admission of the Gentiles into all the privileges of the covenant nation. It is difficult for us to form a conception of the shock of surprise and incredulity which the announcement of such a revolution in the divine administration excited in the Jewish mind. We know that even the apostles themselves were unprepared for it, and that it was with something like hesitation and suspicion that they at length yielded to the overpowering evidence of facts,---'Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life' (Acts xi. 18). But to the apostle of the Gentiles this was the glorious charter of universal emancipation. Of all men he saw its divine beauty and glory, its transcendent mystery and marvelousness, most clearly. He saw the barriers of separation between Jew and Gentile, the antipathies of races, 'the middle wall of partition,' broken down by Christ, and one great family of brotherhood formed out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, under the all-reconciling and uniting power

of the atoning blood. We cannot be mistaken, then, in It is in favour of such an interpretation of 'heaven understanding this mystery of the 'gathering together in and earth' that these expressions must apparently be one all things in Christ' as the same which is more fully taken in a similar restricted sense in other passages explained in chap. iii. 5,6, 'the mystery which in other where they occur. For example, 'Till heaven and ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it earth pass' (Matt. v. 18); 'Heaven and earth shall pass is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by away' (Luke xxi. 33). In the first of these passages the the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and context shows that it cannot possibly refer to the final of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ dissolution of the material creation, for that would by the gospel.' This is the *unification*, 'the summing up,' assert the perpetuity of every jot and tittle of that which or consummation [], to which the apostle makes such has long ago been abrogated and annulled. We must, frequent reference in this epistle: 'the making of both therefore, understand the 'passing away of heaven and one,' 'the making of twain one new man;' 'reconciling earth' in a tropical sense. A judicious expositor makes the following observations on this passage:--both unto God in *one* body' (Ephes. ii. 14, 15, 16). This 'A person at all familiar with the phraseology of the was the grand secret of God, which had been hidden from past generations, but was now disclosed to the Old Testament Scriptures knows that the dissolution admiration and gratitude of heaven and earth. of the Mosaic economy and the establishment of the

But it may be said, How can the reception of Christian, is often spoken of as the removing of the old earth and heavens, and the creation of a new earth period of the close of the one dispensation and the Some very able critics have supposed that the commencement of the other, is spoken of as "the last days," and "the end of the world," and is described as such a shaking of the earth and heavens, as should lead to the removal of the things which were shaken (Hag. ii. 6; Heb. xiv. 26, 27).

the Gentiles into the privileges of Israel be called the comprehension of all things, both which are in the and new heavens. (See Isa. lxv. 17, and lxvi. 22.) The *heavens*, and in *the earth?* words *heaven* and *earth* in this, and in several other passages, are to be understood in a *limited* and, so to speak, *technical* sense. To the Jewish mind, the covenant nation, the peculiar people of God might fitly be styled There seems, therefore, to be Scripture warrant for understanding 'things in heaven and things in earth' in the sense indicated by Locke, as meaning Jew and Gentiles. It is possible, however, that the words point

'heavenly,' while the degraded and uncovenanted Gentiles belonged to an inferior, an *earthly*, condition. This is the view taken by Locke in his note on this passage:---'That St. Paul should use "heaven" and "earth" for to a still wider comprehension and a more glorious Jews and Gentiles will not be thought so very strange consummation. They may imply that the human race, if we consider that Daniel himself expresses the nation separated from God and all holy beings, and divided of the Jews by the name of "heaven" (Dan. viii. 10). Nor by mutual enmity and alienation, was destined by the does he want an example of it in our Saviour Himself, gracious purpose of God to be reclaimed, restored, who (Luke xxi. 26) by "powers of heaven" plainly and reunited under one common Head, the Lord signifies the great men of the Jewish nation. Nor is this Jesus Christ, to the one God and Father of mankind, the only place in this Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians and to all holy and happy beings in heaven. The whole intelligent universe, according to this view, was to be which will bear this interpretation of heaven and earth. He who shall read the first fifteen verses of chap. iii. and brought under one dominion, the dominion of God the carefully weigh the expressions, and observe the drift of Father, through His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the great the apostle in them, will not find that he does manifest consummation presented to us in so many forms in the violence to St. Paul's sense if he understand by "the New Testament. It is the 'regeneration' of Matt. xix. 28; family in heaven and earth" (ver. 15) the united body the 'times of refreshing'; and the 'times of restoration of of Christians, made up of Jews and Gentiles, living still all things' of Acts. iii. 19, 21; the 'subjection of all things promiscuously among those two sorts of people who to Christ' of 1 Cor. xv. 28; the 'reconciliation of all things continued in their unbelief. However, this interpretation to God' [] of Col. i. 20; the 'time of reformation' of Heb. I am not positive in, but offer it as matter of inquiry ix. 10; the ''---'the new age'---of Ephes. i. 21. All these to those who think an impartial search into the true are only different forms and expressions of the same meaning of the Sacred Scriptures the best employment thing, and all point to the same great coming era; and to of all the time they have. this category we may unhesitatingly assign the phrase,

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'the economy of the fullness of the times,' and 'the gathering together in one of all things in Christ.' Before this universal dominion of the Father could be publicly assumed and proclaimed, it was necessary that the exclusive and limited relation of God to a single nation should be superseded and abolished. The Theocracy had therefore to be set aside, in order to make way for the universal Fatherhood of God: 'that God might be All in all.

2. The next question for consideration is, Have we any indication of the period at which this consummation was to take place?

We have the most explicit statements on this point; for almost every on of those equivalent designations of the event enables us to fix the time. The regeneration is 'when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory; the times of 'restitution of all thing' are when 'God shall send Jesus Christ;' the 'subjection of all things to Christ' is 'at his coming' and 'the end.' In other words, all these events coincide with the Parousia; and this, therefore, is the period of 'the reuniting of all things' under Christ.

We arrive at the same conclusion from the consideration of the phrase, 'the economy of the fullness of the times.' An economy is an arrangement or order of things, and appears to be equivalent to the phrase, or covenant. The Mosaic dispensation or economy is designated the 'old covenant' (2 Cor. iii. 14), in contrast to the 'new covenant,' or the 'Gospel dispensation.' The 'old covenant' or economy is represented as 'decaying, waxing old, and ready to vanish away,'---that is to say, the Mosaic dispensation was about to be abolished, and to be superseded by the Christian dispensation' (Heb. viii. 13). Sometimes the old, or Jewish, economy is spoken of as this aeon, the present aeon ; and the Christian, or Gospel, dispensation as 'the coming aeon,' and the 'world to come' (Ephes. i. 21; Heb. ii. 5). The close of the Jewish age or economy is called 'the end of the age, and it is reasonable to conclude that the end of the old is the beginning of the new. It follows, therefore, that the economy of the fullness of the times is that state or order of things which immediately succeeds and supersedes the old Jewish economy. The economy of the fullness of the times is the final and crowning dispensation; the 'kingdom which cannot be moved;' 'the better covenant, established upon better promises. Since, then, the old economy was finally set aside and abrogated at the destruction of Jerusalem, we conclude that the new aeon, or 'economy of the fullness of times,' received its solemn and public inauguration at the same period, which coincides with the Parousia.

The Day Of Redemption.

Ephes. i. 13, 14.

'The holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until [for] the redemption of the purchased possession.

Ephes. iv. 30.

'The holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.

These two passages obviously point to the same act and the same period. What is the redemption here referred to---the redemption of the purchased possession? Ancient Israel is called the Lord's inheritance (Deut. xxxii. 9); and the people of God are said to be His inheritance (Ephes. i. 11, Alford's translation). Here, however, it is not God's inheritance, but our inheritance, that is referred to; and that inheritance is not yet in possession, but in prospect; the pledge or earnest of it only (viz. the Holy Spirit) having been received. We are therefore compelled to understand by the inheritance the future glory and felicity awaiting the Christian in heaven. This, then, is the inheritance, and also the purchased possession, for they both refer to the same thing. Obviously it is something future, yet not distant, for it is already purchased, though not yet possessed. It stood in the same relation to the Ephesian Christians as the land of Canaan to the ancient Israelites in the wilderness. It was the promised rest, into which they hoped to live to enter. The day when the Lord Jesus should be revealed from heaven was the day of redemption to which the apostolic churches were looking forward. Our Lord had foretold the tokens of that day's approach. 'When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.' He had also declared that the existing generation should not pass away till all was fulfilled' (Luke xxi. 28, 32). The day of redemption, therefore, was in their view drawing nigh.

In the same manner St. Paul, writing to the Christians in Rome, speaks of the eager longing with which they were 'waiting for the adoption, or redemption of their body from the bondage of corruption' (Rom. viii. 23). This passage is precisely parallel with Ephes. i. 14 and iv. 30. There is the same *inheritance*, the same *earnest* of it, the same *full redemption* in prospect. The change of the material and mortal body into an incorruptible and spiritual body was an important part of the inheritance. This was what the apostle and their converts expected at the Parousia. The day of redemption, therefore, is coincident with the Parousia.

THE PAROUSIA IN THE ACTS AND THE EPISTLES The Present Aeon And That Which Is Coming

notice. 'The assumes the nearness of the coming of the Lord. Here, as elsewhere, commentators have Ephes. i. 21. endeavoured to escape from this inference,' etc. This 'Not only in this world [aeon], but also in that which is just; but Alford's own inference, that St. Paul was is to come' [which is coming]. mistaken, is equally untenable.

We have often had occasion to remark upon the true sense of the word, so often mistranslated 'world,' Locke observes: 'It may be worth while to consider whether hath not ordinarily a more natural signification of the New Testament by standing for a considerable *length of* time, passing under some one remarkable dispensation.' There were in the apostle's view at least two great periods or aeons: the one present, but drawing to a close; the other future, and just about to open. The former was the present order of things under the Mosaic law; the latter was the new and glorious epoch which was to be inaugurated by the Parousia.

'The Ages [Aeons] To Come.'

Ephes. ii. 7.

'The words assume, as St. Paul always does when 'That in the ages to come he might show the speaking incidentally, his surviving to witness the coming of the Lord. The change from the dust of death On this passage the following observation is made in the resurrection, however we may accommodate the expression to it, was not originally contemplated by it? "In the ages which are coming;" viz. the time of

exceeding riches of his grace.' etc. by Convbeare and Howson:---

Christ's perfect triumph over evil, always contemplated Nearness Of The Parousia in the New Testament as near at hand.' Phil. iv. 5.

It would be perhaps be more proper to say that it 'The Lord is at hand.' refers to the approaching salvation of these Gentile Here the apostle repeats the well-known watchword believers, and their glorification with Christ; for this of the early church, 'The Lord is at hand:'---equivalent is the consummation always contemplated in the New to the 'Maran-atha' of 1 Cor. xvi. 22. To doubt his Testament as near at hand (Rom. xiii. 11). full conviction of the nearness of Christ's coming is incompatible with a due respect for the plain meaning In The Epistle ToThe Philippians of words; to set down this conviction as a mistake The Day Of Christ is incompatible with a due respect for his apostolic Phil. i. 6. authority and inspiration.

'He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.'

Phil. i. 10.

'That ye may be sincere and without offence until 1 Tim. iv. 1-3.---'Now the Spirit speaketh expressly the day of Christ.' that in the latter times some shall depart [apostatize] The day of Christ is evidently regarded by the from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and apostle as the consummation of the moral discipline doctrines of devils [demons] speaking lies in hypocrisy; and probation of believers. There can be no doubt that having their conscience seared as with a hot iron, he has in view the day of the Lord's coming, when He forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from would 'render to every man according to his works.' On meats, which God hath created to be received with the supposition that the day of Christ is still future, it thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. follows that the moral discipline of the Philippians is not

One of the signs which our Lord predicted as yet completed; that their probation is not finished; and among the precursors of the great catastrophe which that the good work begun in them is not yet perfected. was to overwhelm the Jewish polity and people was a

Alford's note on this passage (chap. i. 6.) deserves

The Expectation Of The Parousia

Phil. iii. 20, 21.

'For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, etc.

These words bear decisive testimony to the expectation cherished by the apostle, and the Christians of his time, of the speedy coming of the Lord. It was not death they looked for, and waited for, as we do; but that which would swallow up death in victory: the change which would supersede the necessity of dying. Alford's notes on this passage is as follows:---

In The First Epistle To Timothy:-

The Apostasy Of The Last Days

wide-spread and portentous defection from the faith, manifesting itself among the professed disciples of Christ. Our Lord's reference to this defection, though distinct and pointed, is not so minute and detailed as the description of it which we find in the Epistles of St. Paul; hence we infer, as the language of the first verse of this chapter also suggests, that subsequent revelations of its nature and features had been made to the apostles. It is designated by St. Paul, in 2 Thess. ii. 3, 'the apostasy,'---but he does not there stay to delineate its characteristic features, hastening on to portray the lineaments of 'the man of sin.' We have already pointed out the distinction between 'the apostasy' and 'the man of sin,' to confound which has been a common but egregious mistake. We shall find in the sequel that St. Paul's description of the apostasy is as minute as that of the 'man of sin,' so as to enable us to identify the one as readily as the other.

The first point which it will be well to determine is the *period* of the apostasy; *i.e.* the *time* when it was to declare itself. It is said to be 'in the latter times', an expression which, taken by itself, might seem somewhat indefinite, but when compared with other similar phrases will undoubtedly be found to denote a specific and definite period, well understood by Timothy and all the apostolic churches. It will be convenient to bring together into one view all the passages which refer to this momentous and critical epoch, which is the goal and terminus to which, by New Testament showing, all things were rapidly hastening.

Eschatological Table Or Conspectus Of Passages Relating ToThe Last Times.

The End of the Age in our their tou alword. Matt. xiii. 39. 'The harvest is the end of the age.' Matt. xiii. 40. 'So shall it be in the end of this age.' Matt. xiii. 49. 'So shall it be at the end of the age.' Matt. xxiv. 3. What shall be the sign of thy coming [p a r o u s i a] and of the end of the age?' Matt. xxviii. 20. 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.

Heb. ix. 26.'But now once in the end of the ages' [tvnaiwnwn]

The End $[\tau \partial \tau \epsilon \lambda \rho s, \tau \dot{a} \tau \epsilon \lambda \eta].$

Matt. x. 22. 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved?

Matt. xxiv. 6.-'But the end is not yet' (Mark xiii. 9; Luke xxi. 9).

Matt. xxiv. 13.--- 'But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved'.

Matt. xxiv. 14.---'Then shall the end come.' 1 Cor. i. 8.--- 'Who shall also confirm you unto the end? **1** Cor. x. 11.---'Upon whom the ends of the ages are come.' 1 Cor. xv. 24.--- 'Then cometh the end.' Heb. iii. 6.---'Firm unto the end.' Heb. iii. 14.---'Stedfast unto the end.' Heb. vi. 11.---'Diligence unto the end.' **1 Pet. ii. 7.---** 'The end of all things is at hand.' Rev. ii. 26.---'He that keepeth my works unto the end.' The Last Times, Days, etc. 1 Tim. iv. 1.---'In the *latter times* some shall apostatise **2 Tim. iii. 1.---**'In the *last days* perilous times shall come'. Heb. i. 2.---'In these last days [God] hath spoken to us'. James v. 3.---'Ye have heaped up treasure in *the last* days' 1 Peter i. 5.---'Salvation, ready to be revealed in the last times 1 Peter i. 20.---'Who was manifest in these last *times* for you. 2 Peter iii. 3.---'There shall come in *the last days* scoffers' 1 John ii. 18.---'It is the last time' [hour]. Jude, ver. 18.---'That there should be mockers in the last time'

Equivalent Phrases Referring To The Same Period

The Day

Matt. xxv. 13.---'Ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh. Luke xvii. 30.--- 'The *day* when the Son of man is revealed? Rom. ii. 16.---'In *the day* when God shall judge the secrets of men.' 1 Cor. iii. 13.---'The day shall declare it.' Heb. x. 25.---'Ye see *the day* approaching.'

That Day

Matt. vii. 22.---'Many shall say unto me in *that day*, Lord, Lord? Matt. xxiv. 36.---'But of *that day* and that hour knoweth no man.' Luke x. 12.---'It shall be more tolerable in *that day* for Sodom? Luke xxi. 34.---'And so *that day* come upon you unawares.

1 Thess. v. 4.--- 'That *that day* should overtake you as a thief. 2 Thess. ii. 3.--- 'That *day* shall not come except there come the apostasy. 2 Tim. i. 12.---'Which I have committed unto him against that day. 2 Tim. i. 18.--- 'That he may find mercy of the Lord in *that day*. 2 Tim. iv. 8.---'A crown . . . which the Lord . . . shall give me at that day.

The Day of the Lord

1 Cor. i. 8.---'That ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1 Cor. v. 5.--- 'That the spirit may be saved in *the* day of the Lord Jesus.' 2 Cor. i. 14.---'Ye are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.' Phil. ii. 16.---'That I may rejoice in the *day of* Christ.' 1 Thess. v. 2.---'The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night? *The Day of God.* 2 Peter iii. 12.---'Looking for and hasting unto the coming of *the day of God.*' *The Great Day.* Acts ii. 20.---'That great and notable day of the Lord.' Jude, ver. 6.---'The judgment of the great day.' Rev. vi. 17.---'The great day of his wrath is come.' Rev. xvi. 14.--- 'The battle of the great day.' The Day of Wrath Rom. ii. 5.---'Treasurest up wrath against the day of wrath? Rev. vi. 17.---'The great day of his wrath is come.' The Day of Judgment Matt. x. 15.---'It shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment' (Mark vi. 11). Matt. xi. 22.---'It shall be more tolerable . . . in the day of Judgment? Matt. xi. 24.---'It shall be more tolerable . . . in the day of judgment. Matt. xii. 36.--- 'They shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 2 Peter ii. 9.'To reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment. 2 Peter iii. 7.--- 'The day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.' 1 John iv. 17.--- 'That we may have boldness in the day of judgment.'

The Day of Redemption

Ephes. iv. 30.

Sealed unto the day of redemption.'

The Last Day

John vi. 39.--- 'That I should raise it up at the last day.' John vi. 40.---'I will raise him up at the last day.' John vi. 44.---'And I will raise him up at the last day.' John vi. 54.---'And I will raise him up at the last day.' John xi. 24.---'He shall rise again in the resurrection at *the last day*.

From the comparison of these passages it will appear,-

1. That they all refer to one and the same period a certain definite and specific time.

2. That they all either assume or affirm that the period in question is not far distant.

3. The limit beyond which it is not permissible to go in determining the period called 'the last times' is indicated in the New Testament scriptures, viz. the lifetime of the generation which rejected Christ.

4. This brings us to the period of the *destruction* of Jerusalem, as marking 'the close of the age,' 'the day of the Lord, 'the end.' That is to say, the coming of the Lord, or the Parousia.

Description Of The Apostasy

Having thus brought into one view the passages which speak of the period of the apostasy, it will be proper to follow a similar method with respect to the passages which describe the features and character of the apostasy itself. This fatal defection throws its dark shadow over the whole field of New Testament history, from our Lord's prophetic discourse on the Mount of Olives, and even earlier, to the Apocalypse of St. John. It is instructive to observe how, as the time of its development and manifestation approaches, the shadow becomes darker and darker, until it reaches its deepest gloom in the revelation of the Antichrist.

Eschatological Table or Conspectus Of Passages Relating To The Apostasy Of The The Last Times

1. The Apostasy, predicted by our Lord

of	False Prophets.	Matt. vii. 15.	'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.'
	Ditto	Matt. vii. 22. Matt. xxiv. 5	'Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, etc.

False Christs	Math. xxiv. 5	'Many will come in my name, and shall deceive many.'
	Matt. xxiv. 11.	'And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.'
	Matth. xxiv. 24	'For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders.'
General defection	Matt xxiv. 10.	'And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.'
	Matt xxiv. 12.	'And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.'

2 The Apostasy, predicted by St Paul

		r	1
False teachers	Acts xx 29,	'For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own	
		selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.]
The Apostacy	2 Thess.ii 3.	'That day shall not come, except there come first the apostasy.'	I
	2 Cor. xi. 14	'For such are false apostles,	
	xi. 14.	deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.	I
False Teachers	Gal. i 7.	'But there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.'	
False brethren Deceivers and Schismatics	Gal. ii. 4 Rom. xvi 17. Rom. xvi 18	⁶ Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the simple	I
False Teachers	Col. ii.8.	'Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, etc.	
Falde Teachers		'Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.'	
Judaising	Phil. iii 2.	'Beware of dogs; beware of evil workers; beware of the conci- sion.'	
Teachers. Enemies if the Cross	Phil. iii. 18.	'For many walk, of whom I have told you often that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.'	
Sensualists	iii. 19.	'Whose end is destruction: whose god is their belly.'	

False Teachers	1 Tim. i.3. i.4.	'That thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine; neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies.'
False Teachers	1 Tim. i.3. i. 4.	'That thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine; neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies.'
Judaisers	i. 6. i. 7.	'Some having swerved, have turned aside into vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law,' etc.
Apostates	1 Tim. i. 9.	'Some have put away (faith and a good conscience) concerning faith have made shipwreck.'
Ditto	iv. 1.	'Now the spirit speaketh ex- pressly that in the latter times
Liars and Hypocrits	iv.2.	some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of de- mons; speaking lies in hypoc- risy: having their conscience seared with a hot iron.'
False Teachers	iv. 3.	'Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,' etc.
Ditto	vi. 20.	'A voiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred con- cerning the faith.'
Ditto	2 Tim. ii.16.	'But shun profane and vain bablings: for they will increase
Ditto	ii. 17 ii. 18.	unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past al-
		ready; and overthrow the faith of some?
Immorality of the Apostasy	2 Tim. iii. 1. iii. 2.	'This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedi- ent to parents, unthankful, un-
	iii. 3. iii. 4.	holy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers
	iii. 5.	of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of
	iii. 6.	pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: . they creep into houses, and
		lead captive silly women laden with sins,' etc. 'Men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.'
False Teachers	2 Tim. iii 6.	'Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.'

		THE PAROUSIA IN THE	ACTS AND THE I	EPISTLES	11
False Teachers Ditto	2 Tim. iii. 3. iv. 3.	'For the time will come when they will not endure sound doc- trine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.'	Antichrist Apostates	1 John ii.18 -ii. 19	^c Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of
Judaising Teach- ers	Titus i. 10	'For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, spe- cially they of the circumcision.'			us,' etc.
Immoral	Titus i. 14. Titus i. 16.	'Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.'	Antichrist	-ii. 22	"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son"
immoral	1 Itus I. 16.	'They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.'	False Teachers	-ii. 26	'These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.'
			False Prophets	-iv.1	'Many false prophets are gone out into the world.'
3. The Apostasy , False Teachers	2 Peter ii. I	'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable	Antichrist	-iv 3	'Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world.
In monochiter of etc.	-ii. 10.	heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction?	Deceivers and Antichrist	2 John, ver. 7.	'For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an
Immorality of the Apostasy	-11. 10.	'They walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness,			antichrist.'

False Teachers	2 Peter ii. I	'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.'
Immorality of the Apostasy	-ii. 10. - ii.13. - ii. 14.	'They walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you: having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin,' etc.
Scoffers	- iii. 3.	'Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts'

т.	+. The Apostusy, predicted by 51. June					
False	Teacher	Jude	Passim. See 2 Peter ii.			

5. The Apostasy, predicted by St. John

THE PAROUSIA IN THE ACTS AND THE EPISTLES

Conclusions Respecting The Apostasy.

From a consideration and comparison of these passages it will appear,---

1 That they all refer to the same great defection from the faith, designated by St. Paul 'the apostasy.'

2 That this apostasy was to be very general and widespread.

3 That it was to be marked by an extreme depravity of morals, particularly by sins of the flesh.

4 That it was to be accompanied by pretensions to miraculous power.

5 That it was largely, if not chiefly, Jewish in its character.

6 That it rejected the incarnation and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ,---i.e. was the predicted Antichrist.

7 That it was to reach its full development in the 'last times,' and was to be the precursor of the Parousia. Having thus taken a general survey of the New Testament doctrine concerning the apostasy, it

THE PAROUSIA IN THE ACTS AND THE EPISTLES

PART II

only remains to notice some objections which may and heresies prevailed in 173

apostolic times? The answer is, The New Testament like manner, he goes on to observe:--itself furnishes the proof. The evils which are described by St. Paul as future, are represented by St. Peter and betrayed by the words that the coming of the Lord St. John as actually present. The characteristics of the apostasy as set forth by the one are precisely those which are described by the others. Asceticism and immorality the next verse.' are conspicuous in the prophetic delineations of the the historical descriptions by St. Peter and St. John.

times,' or 'the last times,' is not strictly defined, and may, for aught we know, be still future.

Paul to Timothy clearly imply that it was not a distant, but a present, or at all events an impending, evil of which he was speaking. It is manifest that the symptoms of the apostasy had already begun to show themselves, and the whole tenor of the apostle's exhortation implies that the evils specified would come under the notice of Timothy (1 Tim. vi. 20, 21).

considered themselves to be living in 'the last times.' We shall have occasion in the sequel to see this distinctly proved. Meanwhile it may be observed that the passages arranged under the heading 'the Last Times' in our Eschatological Table, all refer to the same great crisis. It how can we have any reliance on their other opinions? was 'the close of the age' [s u n t e l e i a t o u a i v n o z], of which our Lord so often spoke. The apostasy was the involved in an egregious delusion on a subject which predicted precursor of that end.

IN THE FIRST EPISTLE OF TIMOTHY

1 Tim. vi. 14.

[I give thee charge] 'that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall show, etc.

This implies that Timothy might expect to live until that event took place. The apostle does not say, 'Keep this commandment as long as you live;' nor, 'Keep it until death;' but 'until the appearing of Jesus Christ.' These expressions are by not means equivalent. The 'appearing' [e p i f a n e i a] is identical with the Parousia, an event which St. Paul and Timothy alike believed to all? be at hand.

Alford's note on this verse is eminently unsatisfactory. Alford's note on this verse is eminently

unsatisfactory. After quoting Bengel's remark 'that the possibly be made to the foregoing conclusions. 1. It faithful in the apostolic age were accustomed to look may be asked, What evidence have we that such errors forward to the day of Christ as approaching; whereas we are accustomed to look forward to the day of *death* in

> 'We may fairly say that whatever impression is would be in Timotheus's life-time, is chastened and corrected by the k a i r o i z i d i o i z [his own times] of

In other words, the erroneous opinion of one apostasy by St. Paul, and we find the same features in sentence is corrected by the cautious vagueness of the next! Is it possible to accept such a statement? Is 2. It may be objected that the period called 'the latter there anything in k a i r o i z i d i o i z to justify such a comment? Or is such an estimate of the apostle's language compatible with a belief in his inspiration? But, in the first place, the injunctions given by St. It was no 'impression' that the apostle 'betrayed,' but a conviction and an assurance founded on the express promises of Christ and the revelations of His Spirit.

No less exceptionable is the concluding refection:---

'From such passages as this we see that the apostolic age maintained that which ought to be the attitude of all ages,---constant expectation of the Lord's return.

But if this expectation was nothing more than a false Nothing can be more certain than that the apostles impression, is not their attitude rather a caution than an example? We now see (assuming that the Parousia never took place) that they cherished a vain hope, and lived in the belief of a delusion. And if they were mistaken in this, the most confident and cherished of their convictions, To regard the apostles and primitive Christians as all had a foremost place in their faith and hope, is to strike a fatal blow at the inspiration and authority of the New Testament. When St. Paul declared, again and again, 'The Lord is at hand,' he did not give utterance to his private opinion, but spoke with authority as an organ of the Holy Ghost. Dean Alford's observations may be best answered in the words of his own rejoinder to Professor Iowett:---

> 'Was the apostle or was he not writing in the power of a spirit higher than his own? Have we, in any sense, God speaking in the Bible, or have we not? If we have, then of all passages it is in these which treat so confidently of futurity that we must recognise His voice: if we have it not in these passages, then where are we to listen for it

> We find the same apologetic tone in Dr. Ellicott's remarks on this passage:---

'It may, perhaps, be admitted that the sacred writers

is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day; Strange that the plainest, strongest, most oft-repeated and not to me only, but to all who love his appearing. How evidently all these events,---his own departure, his crown, 'that day,' and the Lord's appearing, are anticipated as at hand! Shall we say that his anticipations were too sanguine? That the day has not yet come? That his crown is still 'laid up'? that Onesiphorus has not yet found mercy? The supposition is incredible.

have used language in reference to the Lord's return the crown of victory,---'I have fought the good fight; I which seems to show that the longings of hope had have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth almost become the convictions of belief. affirmations of his faith and hope by St. Paul should produce in the mind of a reader so faint an impression of his convictions as this. But there is not faltering in the declaration of the apostle; it is no peradventure that he utters; it is with a firm and confident tone that he raises the exulting cry, 'The Lord is at hand.' He does not express his own surmises, or hopes, or longings, but delivers the message with which he was charged, and, as The Apostasy Of The 'Last Days' Imminent a faithful witness for Christ, everywhere proclaims the 2 Tim. iii. 1-9.---'This know also, that in the last speedy coming of the Lord.

days perilous times shall come. For men shall be The Apostasy Already Manifesting Itself lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.---'O Timothy, keep that which blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-called; accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are which some professing have erred concerning the faith. good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures It is important to notice that from several intimations more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, in this epistle it appears that the defection from the faith but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. which was to characterise the latter days had already For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and set in. St. Paul warns Timothy against 'false teachers,' lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with with their 'fables and endless genealogies,'--- against divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to those 'who concerning the faith had made shipwreck;' the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres against others 'who doted about questions, and strifes withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of words,---men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

had begun in the camp.

truth.' These 'wolves in sheep's clothing' were evidently The 'last days' of this passage are evidently identical already devouring the flock. To place the apostasy with the 'latter times' of 1 Tim. iv. 1. This is so obvious therefore in a post-apostolic age is to overlook the as to need no proof. The attempt to make a distinction obvious teaching of the epistle. It was a present and not between the 'latter' times and the 'last' times, which a distant evil which the apostle deprecated: the plague Bengel seems to sanction, is therefore futile. It is scarcely necessary to add that 'the last days' were the apostle's own days---the time then present. He is The Parousia In The Second Epistle To Timothy speaking, not of the distant future, but of a time already 'That Day'---Viz. The Parousia---Anticipated. commencing; for it is plain that he draws the picture of the characters described from the life. Indications of the 2 Tim. i. 12.---'He is able to keep that which I have coming apostasy were already apparent,---'of this sort committed unto him against that day.' 2 Tim. i. 18.--are they, etc. (ver. 6). It is assumed that Timothy would 'The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of encounter those times, and those evil men from whom the Lord in that day.' 2 Tim. iv. 8.---'The crown of he is exhorted to turn away. The following note from righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, Conybeare and Howson comes very near the truth, shall give me at *that day*.' though it falls short of the whole truth:---

The allusion in all these passages is to 'the day of the 'This phrase (e s c a t a i z h m e r a i z , used without Lord;' *the* day *par excellence*; the day of His appearing; the article, as having become a familiar expression) the Parousia. generally denotes the termination of the Mosaic The whole tenor of these passages indicates that dispensation. (See Acts ii. 17; 1 Pet. i. 5, 20; Heb. i. 2.) St. Paul regarded 'that day' as now very near. In Thus the expression generally denotes (in the apostolic the anticipation of it he breaks forth into a burst of age) the time present; but here it points to a future

triumphant exultation, as if he were just about to receive

the present (see vers. 6, 8), and was in fact the end contained in the opening verses of chapter iii. describes of the apostolic age. (Compare 1 John ii. 18, 'It is the the general corruption of society outside the Christian last hour.') The *long duration* of this last period of the church, but it is too evident that the apostle is alluding world's development was not revealed to the apostles: to men who had once professed the faith of Christ. They they expected that their Lord's return would end it, in had 'a form of godliness;' they had 'made shipwreck of their own generation; and thus His words were fulfilled, faith,' they were truly 'apostates.' that none should foresee the time of His coming.

believes that the apostles spoke and wrote by the power warning which the apostle addresses to Timothy. Why of the Holy Ghost can admit; and, notwithstanding the should he speak with such impassioned earnestness if the almost unanimous opinion of their critics that they were certainly mistaken, we hold by the apostles rather centuries? It is absurd to say that St. Paul was writing for than by their critics.

Alford's comment on this passage is painfully selfcontradictory, and shows to what shifts learned men are reduced in order to save the credit of the apostles when they cannot believe their plain declarations. He says:---

of it (the coming of the Lord) as soon to appear, not however without many and sufficient hints, furnished by the Spirit, of an interval, and that no short one, first to elapse?

But how could and event be 'soon to appear' and yet a long period first to elapse? Or, are we to suppose that the Holy Spirit taught one thing while the apostles wrote and spoke quite another? If they said what they did respecting the nearness of the Parousia when they really had no knowledge and no revelation on the subject, they clearly exceeded their commission, and committed what the Word of God pronounces on of the most presumptuous sins,--- added to the words of the prophecy which they were commissioned to convey. We reject the explanation in toto. It is not only a nonnatural interpretation, but wholly inconsistent with any theory of inspiration of the word of God.

The passage before us is most important as delineating the character of 'the apostasy.' The dreaded apostle evidently describes it from actual observation. Phygellus and Hermogenes, who deserted the apostle; Hymenaeus and Philetus, with their profane and vain babbling; the fawning deceivers, who made proselytes of weak-minded women; the men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, who resisted the truth; these were the vanguard of the locust army of errorists and apostates which was coming up to overspread and devastate the fair face of early Christianity. Their appearance indicated that 'the last times' had arrived, and that the Parousia was at hand. We might at first

immediately at hand, which is, however, blended with suppose that the hideous catalogue of reprobates

That this 'falling away' from the truth had already This closing explanation is what no one who set in is evident from the reiterated exhortations and evil was not to make its appearance for twenty or forty the benefit of future ages. He was as truly a man living in his own age, and writing to a man of his own time concerning matters of present and personal interest to both, as any of us who now pour out our thoughts in a letter to an absent friend. There is an utter unreality in 'The apostle for the most part wrote and spoke any other view of the apostolic epistles. It is impossible to read them without feeling the heart-throbs that beat in every line; all is vivid, intense, alive,. It is not a distant danger, seen through the haze of centuries, but one that is instant and urgent: the enemy was at the gate, and the veteran warrior, about to sink on the field of conflict, cheers on the young soldier to fidelity, and resistance to the end.

Anticipations Of The Approaching End

2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.---'I adjure thee before God, and Jesus Christ, who is about to judge the living and the dead; and by his appearing and his kingdom, Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

We find associated together in this passage as contemporaneous events the Parousia, the judgment, and the kingdom of Christ. These are all connected and related in their nature and in the time of their occurrence. We find the same collocation of events in apparition had already begun to reveal itself, and the Matt. xxv. 31, 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all the nations, etc.

> The nearness of this consummation is distinctly affirmed. It is not, as in our Authorised Version, 'who shall judge,' but 'who is about to judge'. One statement like this might suffice to settle the question both as to the fact and the apostle's belief of the fact, that the time of the Parousia was at hand. But, instead of a single affirmation, we have the constant and uniform tenor of the whole New Testament doctrine on the subject. Those who say the apostles were in error on this point

must have 'a verifying faculty' to distinguish between legacies of the apostolic age. Its value as a key to the their inspired and their uninspired utterances. If St. Paul meaning of the Levitical economy, and as a contribution to Christian doctrine and living, is inestimable; and was inspired to write k r i n e i n , was he not equally inspired to write m ellontoz? whether we ascribe its authorship to Barnabas or This imminency of the Parousia explains the fervour Apollos, or any other fellow-labourer with St. Paul, we may unhesitatingly accept it, 'not as the word of man,

with which the apostle urges Timothy to put forth every effort in discharging the duties of his office: 'Preach but, as it is in truth, the word of God.' the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, We now enter still more deeply into the dark rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.' shadow of the predicted apostasy. It was to combat this These injunctions are sometimes employed to set formidable antagonist of the Gospel that this epistle was forth the normal intensity and urgency with which the written; and the Judaic character of the anti-Christian pastoral function should be discharged (and we do not movement is apparent from the line of argument which condemn the application); but it is plain that St. Paul is the author adopts. We find ourselves at once in 'the last not speaking of ordinary times and ordinary efforts. It days? is the agony of a tremendous crisis; the time is short; The Last Days Already Come Heb. i. 1, 2. 'God, who at sundry times and in divers it is now or never; victory or death. These are not the manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the common-place phrases about the diligent discharge of prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his duty, but the alarm of the sentinel who sees the enemy at the gates, and blows the trumpet to warn the city. Son?

The phrase 'in these last days,' or 'in the end of THE PAROUSIA IN THE EPISTLE TO TITUS these days,' shows that the writer regarded the time of Christ's incarnation and ministry as the closing period Anticipation Of The Parousia. of a dispensation or aeon. We fin a somewhat similar 'Titus ii. 13. expression in chap. ix. 26, 'Now, in the end of the ages' 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the revelation of where the reference is to the time of our Saviour's the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' incarnation and atoning sacrifice. And old era, call it We again find here, what we have long come to Mosaic, Judaic, or Old Testament, was now running out; recognise, the habitual attitude of the Christians of the many things that had seemed immovable and eternal apostolic age, the expectation of the Lord's coming. It were about to vanish away; and 'the end of the age,' or is inculcated as one of the primary Christian duties, 'the last times,' had arrived.

and ranks with sober, righteous, and godly living. This implies that the event was regarded as at hand, for how could a powerful motive to watchfulness be derived from a remote and unknown contingency lying in the distant new order, 'the aiwno mellwn '.

future? Or, how could it be the duty of Christians to be Much confusion has arisen from the indiscriminate 'looking' for that which was not to happen for hundreds use of the word 'world' as the translation of the different and thousands of years? The apostle evidently regards Greek words a i w n, k o z m o z, o i k o u m e n h, and g the present aeon, t o n n u n a i v n a , as drawing to a h. The unlearned reader who meets with the phrase 'the close, and exhorts Christians to live in the attitude of end of the world, inevitably thinks of the destruction of the material globe, whereas if he read 'conclusion expectancy of the Parousia, which was to introduce the of the age, or aeon,' he would as naturally think of the close of a certain period of time---which is its proper THE PAROUSIA IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS meaning. We have already had occasion to observe that It does not fall within the scope of this investigation a i w n is properly a designation of *time*, an *age*; and it to discuss the question of the authorship of the Epistle is doubtful whether it ever has any other signification to the Hebrews. Even if it do not come from the same in the New Testament. Its equivalent in Latin is *aevum*, pen which wrote the Epistle to the Romans, and few which is really the Greek a i w n in a Latin dress. The who are familiar with the style of St. Paul will affirm that proper word for the *earth*, or *world*, is k o s m o z, which it does, yet its spirit and teaching are essentially Pauline, is used to designate both the material and the moral and we may justly regard it as one of the most precious world. O i k o u m e n h is properly the *inhabited* world,

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The Aeons, Ages, Or World-Periods.

Heb. i. 2.

'By whom also he made the worlds' [aeons].

'the *habitable*,' and in the New Testament refers often to the Roman Empire, sometimes to so small a portion of evident comparison or contrast between the Mosaic it as *Palestine*. G h, though it sometimes signifies the economy and the new, or Christian, state. The former earth generally, in the gospels more frequently refers to the *land* of Israel. Much light is thrown upon many passages by a proper understanding of these words.

accustomed to make a division of time into two great coming aeon was that of the Messiah, or 'the kingdom of God.' The same division is recognised in the New dispensation. Testament, and we have already seen that, in the view of the writer of this epistle, the close of the present aeon was approaching. (See Stuart's Comm. on Heb. in loc.; have expected to find a i w n a . Had it been o i k o n Alford's Greek Testament; Wahl's Lexicon, *voc. a i w n*).

It may be said, however, that though the word does primarily signify an *age*, yet in this instance the sense of the passage obviously requires us to translate a i w n a z, worlds. It must be acknowledged that it seems uncouth to our ears to say, 'God made the ages by Jesus the world;' yet when we consider that the writer of in which we now use that expression, it may perhaps modify our opinion. We are very apt to credit the author with our astronomical ideas, and suppose that he is referring to the sun, moon, and stars as so many worlds. But we have no reason to believe that he had any such notion. The heavenly bodies were to him lights, but not worlds. With aeons, however, the author of this epistle, as a man of letters, must have been perfectly familiar. end.' What, then, did he mean by God making the aeons? These were the great eras, or epochs of time, which the Supreme Wisdom had ordained and arranged; worldperiods, as we may call them, which constituted acts in the great drama of Providence. There seems to be an observes, allusion to this ordering of the ages, or world-periods, in Acts xvii. 26: 'Having determined the times before appointed'; as also in Ephes. i. 10: 'The dispensation of the fullness of the times.' It is strongly in favour of this view that it is substantially that which is adopted by the Greek Fathers.

The World To Come, Or The New Order

Heb. ii. 5.

'For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak.'

This passage elucidates the subject still more. We have here one of the aeons---the world to come---i.e. not a material world, but a system or order of things

analogous to the Mosaic dispensation. There is an was placed under the administration of angels; it was 'the word spoken by angels;' it was given by 'the disposition of angels' (Acts vii. 53); it was ordained by It is certain that the Jews in our Saviour's time were angels in the hand of a mediator (Gal. iii. 19). But the new aeon, the kingdom of heaven, was administered by periods or aeons, the present aeon, and the coming. The one greater than the angels, the Son of God Himself; a proof of the superiority of the Christian over the Jewish

It is certainly somewhat singular that we should find the word o i k o u m e n h here, where we should o m i a n , as in Ephes. i. 10, it would have been more in accordance with our ideas of the true purport; but there is no warrant for supposing that the one word has been substituted for the other. That the allusion is to the system or order of things inaugurated by Christ there can be no doubt, and the phrase is equivalent to 'the Christ,' and very simple and natural to say, 'He made kingdom of heaven.' It may be added that it is said to be *coming*, m ello u s a , a word which implies *nearness*, this epistle had no conception of *worlds* in the sense like 'the coming wrath,' 'the coming glory,' 'the coming age?

The End, i.e.. Of The Age, Or Aeon.

Heb. iii. 6.'If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.' Heb. iii. 14. 'If we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.' Heb. vi. 11.'The full assurance of hope unto the

We have already had occasion to remark upon the significant phrase 'the end,' as it is used in the New Testament. It does not mean to the last, or to the end of life; but to the close of the aeon. Alford correctly

'The end thought of, is not the death of each individual, but the coming of the Lord, which is constantly called by this name.'

The Promise Of The Rest Of God

Heb. iv. 1-11.

'Let us therefore fear, since a promise still remaineth of entering into his rest, lest any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us good tidings have been brought as well as unto them, but the report which they heard did not profit them, because it met with no belief in those that heard it. For we that have believed are entering into the (promised) rest, even as he hath said, So I sware in my wrath, they shall not enter into my

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the principal part, of the promised rest of God. This he rest. (Although his works were finished ever since the foundation of the world. For he hath spoken in a certain proves by showing that long after the settlement of the place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest Israelites in Canaan, the Lord, by the mouth of David, on the seventh day from all his works. And in this place in Psalm xcv., virtually repeats the promise made to the again, They shall not enter into my rest.) Since, therefore, Israelites in the wilderness, and says to the people, 'Toit still remaineth that some must enter therein, and day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts? they who first received the glad tidings entered not in The repetition of the command implies the repetition because of disobedience, he again limiteth a certain day, of the promise, and also of the threatening; as if God were saying, 'Believe, and ye shall enter into my rest. saying in David, After so long a time, to-day; as it hath been said before, To-day, if ye hear his voice, harden Disbelieve, and ye shall not enter into my rest.' Hence it not your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest, then follows that there is a *rest* besides and beyond the rest God would not afterwards speak of another day. There of Canaan. still remaineth a rest [sabbath keeping] for the people Then follows the explanation of the rest referred of God. For he that is entered into his rest, hath himself to, viz. the 'rest of God,' that which He calls 'My rest.' also rested from his own works, as God did from his. Certainly that name was never given to the land of Canaan, nor can it be applied to any other than that 'rest' Let us therefore strive to enter into that rest, lest any of which we read in the account of the creation, when man fall after the same example of disobedience.

This is an exceedingly important and interesting God did rest from all 'his work which he had made' passage, not without its obscurities and difficulties, (Gen. ii. 2, 3). This was God's sabbath, the rest which which have occasioned much diversity of interpretation. He hallowed and called His own. It must be to this rest Some have found in it an argument for the perpetuity of therefore---the holy, sabbatic, heavenly repose---that the the Fourth Commandment, and the observance of the promise chiefly refers. Of that rest of God Canaan was first day of the week as the Christian sabbath. Others no doubt the type, for that was the rest of the Israelites after the perils and fatigues of the wilderness; but the have interpreted the whole argument in an ethical possession of Canaan was far from exhausting the full and subjective sense, as if the writer exhorted to the meaning of the promise, and therefore it still remained, attainment of a certain state of mind called *the rest of* and was kept in reserve for the people of God. 'There *faith:* a ceasing from doubt and from self-dependence, and obtaining perfect repose of mind by full trust in remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.' The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews evidently

God. Such interpretations, however, wholly miss the point of the argument, and are rather ingenious glosses regarded the 'rest of God' as a consummation not far than legitimate deductions. distant. He says of it, 'We that have believed are entering What is the drift of the argument? It is very into that rest.' This does not mean 'going to heaven evident that the object of the writer is to warn Hebrew at death, but the expectation of the speedily coming Christians against unbelief and disobedience by setting kingdom of God, the hope so strongly cherished by before them, on the one hand, the reward of obedience, the first Christians (Rom. viii. 18-25). To regard these and, on the other, the penalty of disobedience. There exhortations and appeals as the ordinary commonplaces was ready to his hand a signal example, memorable to of religious teaching, is to rob them of half their all Israelites, viz. the forfeiture of the land Canaan by significance. True, there is a sense in which they may their fathers in consequence of their unbelief. They had be applicable to all times, but they had a meaning and provoked the Lord to swear in His wrath, 'They shall a force at that particular juncture which it is difficult for us now to comprehend. The Christians of that epoch not enter into my rest. In the view of the writer there was a remarkable stood, as it were, on the border-line between the old correspondence between the situation of the Israelites and the new, between the aeon that was closing and that approaching the land of promise and the situation of which was opening. They believed that the day of the Christians expecting the fulfilment of their hope, the Lord was just at hand,---that Christ would soon return, promise of rest. To make this correspondence more and that they would enter along with Him into the clear he shows that the rest promised to ancient Israel, kingdom of heaven, the rest of God. Hence the duty of and that promised to the people of God now, were 'exhorting one another; and so much the more as they really one and the same thing. The entrance into the saw the day approaching;' of holding the beginning of land of Canaan was by no means the whole, nor even their confidence stedfast unto the end; of 'striving to

enter into that rest, lest any many should fall, or 'seem after the work of creation (chap. iv. 3-5). But Christ to come short of it.

chapter, shows the propriety of calling this promised rest a 'sabbatism,' or sabbatic rest. 'There remaineth therefore a sabbatism for the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath rested from his own works, as God did from his.' There is an ambiguity in this language both in the Greek and in the English. It may mean that all the faithful departed have ceased from the toils of earth, and now enjoy the repose and reward of heaven. This is the sense usually attached to the words. (See Stuart's Commentary on Hebrews, in loc.; Conybeare and Howson, etc.) It must be confessed, however, that the relevance of this language so interpreted, to the matter in hand, is not very apparent, and that the grammatical construction will hardly warrant such an explanation. The argument affirms, not he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. that Christians have entered into that rest, but just the contrary. The writer states, as Conybeare and Howson very properly show, 'that God's people have never yet enjoyed that perfect rest, therefore its enjoyment is still future.' Who, then, is 'he that entered in'? Evidently it is *Christ*, the Forerunner, who *entered* on our behalf within the veil; our great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens; the New Testament Joshua, the Captain of our salvation, who 'entered into his rest,' ceasing from His work of redemption, even as His Father did from His own work of creation. This shows the fitness of heaven being called a 'sabbatism,' a 'rest of God,' for there both the Father and the Son keep eternal sabbath. It may be added that this interpretation relieves us from the sense of incongruity which is felt in comparing a Christian's ceasing from his labours to God's ceasing from the work of creation; it is also perfectly relevant to the argument in the context.

Not only will the words bear this sense, but they will not bear any other, as Alford very well shows. (See Greek Testament, in loc.) We can now see the force of the argument as a whole. The writer shows the fatal consequences of unbelief and disobedience by the example of the ancient Israelites (chap. iii. 7-19). They had a great promise of entering into the rest of God, which they forfeited by their unbelief (chap. iii. 7-19). But that promise of rest is still offered, and my be still forfeited. It was offered to Israel again in the time and by the mouth of David; it was therefore not exhausted by the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan (chap. iv. 4-8). The promise, then had reference to the heavenly state, the rest of God Himself, when He kept sabbath

also keeps His sabbath, having ceased from the work The writer of this epistle, in verses 9 and 10 of this of redemption, as His Father did from that of creation (chap. iv. 10). There still remains therefore a sabbath, or heavenly rest for the people of God (chap. iv. 9). Let us, therefore, strive to enter into that rest of Christ and of God, warned against unbelief and disobedience by the example of ancient Israel (chap. iv. 11).

> We shall find in the sequel much light thrown upon this whole subject of entrance into the heavenly state, and the relation in which the saints stood to it both before and since the coming of Christ.

The End Of The Ages

Heb. ix. 26. 'For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world [k o s m o u]: but now once, in the end of the world [a i w n w n], hath

In this verse we have a striking instance of the confusion arising from the translation of the two different words kosmos and aion by the same word 'world'.

The expression s u n t e l e i a t w n a i w n w n has precisely the same meaning as s u n t e l e i a t o u a i w n o z, and refers to the Jewish age which was about to close. Moses Stuart renders the passage thus: 'But now, at the close of the [Jewish] dispensation, He has once for all made His appearance,' etc. This is another decisive proof that 'the end of the age' was regarded by the apostolic churches as at hand.

Expectation Of The Parousia

Heb. ix. 28. 'And unto them that look for him shall he appear a second time, without sin, unto salvation.

The attitude of expectation maintained by the Christians of the apostolic age is here incidentally shown. They waited in hope and confidence for the fulfillment of the promise of His coming. To suppose that they thus waited for an event which did not happen is to impute to them and to their teachers an amount of ignorance and error incompatible with respect of their beliefs on any other subject.

The Parousia Approaching

Heb. x. 25.---'Exhorting one another, and so much more as ye see the day approaching. 'The day' means, of course, 'the day of the Lord,' the time of His appearing,---the

Parousia. It was now at hand; they could see it approaching. Doubtless the indications of its 184

approach predicted by our Lord were apparent, and

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--'the coming One.' That coming was now at hand. The nearness of the time in the Greek than in English: 'Yet a very, very little while;' or, as Tregelles renders it, 'A little while, how little, how little!' The reduplication of the 'That day, in its great and final sense, is always near, thought in the close of the verse,---'will come, and will not tarry,' is also indicative of the certainty and speed of the approaching event. Moses Stuart's comment on this passage is,---

His disciples recognised them, remembering His words, 'When ye shall see these things come to pass, know that language to this effect is far more expressive of the it is nigh, even at the doors' (Mark xiii. 29). It is not fair to palter with these words in a non-natural or double sense, and say with Alford,--always ready to break forth upon the church; but these Hebrews lived actually close upon one of those great types and foretastes of it, the destruction of the Holy 'The Messiah will speedily come, and, by destroying City.

To the same effect is his note on Heb. ix. 26:---

'The first Christians universally spoke of the second coming of the Lord as close at hand, and indeed it ever was and is?

The Hebrew Christians lived close upon the actual The Parousia And The Old Testament Saints Parousia which our Lord predicted, and His church Heb. xi. 39, 40.---'And these all, having obtained a expected before the passing away of that generation. good report through faith, obtained not the promise: It is not true that the Parousia 'is always near, and God having provided some better thing for us, that they always ready to break forth upon the church,' any more without us should not be made perfect. than that the birth of Christ, His crucifixion, or His The argument which is here brought to a conclusion resurrection, is always ready to break forth. The Parousia is one of great importance, and deserves very careful was as distinctly a specific event, with its proper place in time, as the incarnation or the crucifixion; and it is to consideration. It will be found to lend a powerful indirect support to the views propounded in this investigation, evacuate the word of all meaning to make it a phantom which in fact afford the true key to its explanation. shape, appearing and disappearing, always coming Having in this eleventh chapter illustrated his main and never come, distant and near, past and future. We position,---that faith in God was the distinguishing believe that Christ in his prophetic discourse had a real characteristic of the worthies whose names adorn the event full in his view; an event with a place in history and chronology; an event the period of which He annals of the Old Testament, the writer draws attention to the fact that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were never Himself distinctly indicated,---not indeed the hour, nor actually put in possession of the inheritance which had the day, nor even the precise year, yet within limits well been promised them. They did not obtain the land of defined,---the period of the existing generation. Such was manifestly the belief of the writer of this epistle. Canaan; they never saw the earthly Jerusalem: 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises' (ver. To him the Parousia was a very definite event, and one the approach of which he could see; nor can any trace 13). He then goes on to state that these fathers of Israel were aware of a deeper significance in the promise of be detected in his language, or in the language of any God than a mere temporal and earthly inheritance. of the epistles, of a double sense, or of a partial and Abraham, while dwelling as a stranger and sojourner preliminary Parousia and a great and final one. The comment of Conybeare and Howson is far more in the land of promise, looked beyond to 'the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker satisfactory: "The day" of Christ's coming was seen approaching is God' (ver. 10). It is evident that this cannot refer to at this time by the threatening prelude of the great the earthly Jerusalem, and yet the language seems to point to some well-known city so described. But to what Jewish war, wherein He came to judge that nation? other city can the allusion be than to the city described The Parousia Imminent in the Apocalypse as 'having twelve foundations,' 'the Heb. x. 37.---'For yet a little while, and he that shall city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem? The come will come, and will not tarry. correspondence cannot be accidental, and affords more This statement looks in the same direction as the than a presumption that whoever wrote the Epistle to the preceding. The phrase, 'he that shall come' [o e r c o m Hebrews had read the description of the New Jerusalem e n o z] is the customary designation of the Messiah,in the Apocalypse. It is not a city, but the city; not which

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the Jewish power, put an end to the sufferings which your persecutors inflict upon you.'

This is only part of the truth; the Parousia brought much more than this to the people of God, if we are to believe the assurances of the inspired apostles of Christ.

hath foundations, but 'the foundations;' a particular and well-known city.

were strangers and pilgrims in the land, was a declaration of their faith in the existence of a 'better country,' for they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country,' not indeed any earthly country, but 'a better, lengthened period of delay interposed between us and that is, a *heavenly*' (vers. 14, 16). This faith in a future and heavenly inheritance, which they saw only 'afar off,' was true not only of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but of the whole company of the ancient believers (ver. 39). Not one of them received the fulfilment of that divine believers had not only no precedence in the enjoyment promise which their faith had embraced: *'these all, being* borne witness to through faith, received not the promise' to wait long, until the fullness of the time should come (ver. 39).

according to the author of this epistle, the Old Testament of the promised inheritance. saints had been kept waiting, and were waiting still, for the fulfilment of the great promise of God made *inheritance* of which so much is here spoken, and to to Abraham and his seed, and had not yet received the inheritance, nor entered into the better country, nor seen the God-built city with the foundations. How was to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (ver. 9); that which this? What could be the cause of the long delay? What obstacle stood in the way of their entrance upon the full enjoyment of the inheritance? The question has been anticipated and answered. 'The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, as was signified by the continued existence of the temple and its services (chap. ix. 8). Access into the place of sanctity and privilege was moved' (chap. xii. 28). It is, in fact, the true Canaan; the not permitted until the way had been opened by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the great High Priest, the Mediator of the new covenant; it could not give a perfect It is one thing of which the writer speaks all the way title to its subjects by which they might be admitted to enter on the possession of the inheritance (chap. ix. fourth chapter, where the discussion respecting the 9). Mere ritual could not remove the barriers which sin had created between God and man; and therefore is identical with the 'promised land,' and the 'promised there was not admission even for the faithful under the land' is identical with the 'promised inheritance;' and all old covenant into the full privileges of saintship and sonship. But this barrier was removed by the perfect inheritance, promise,---all mean one and the same sacrifice of the great High Priest. 'The Mediator of thing. The earthly Canaan was not the whole, was not the new covenant, by the offering of himself to God, redeemed the transgressions committed under the old covenant, or Mosaic economy, thus freeing the subjects of that covenant from their disabilities, and making it by the possession of the land under Joshua, was still competent for the chosen 'to receive the promise of the kept in reserve for the people of God. But now the eternal inheritance' (chap. ix. 11-15).

suppose that until the atoning sacrifice of the cross was offered, the blessedness of the Old Testament saints was incomplete. In this respect they were at a disadvantage

as compared with believers under the new covenant. The latter were at once put in possession of that for which But to return. The confession of the fathers that they the former had to wait a long time. The superiority of believers now, under the Christian dispensation, over believers under the former dispensation, is a strong point in the argument. We, says the writer, have no the promised inheritance,---we are near it; 'we are come unto it;' 'we are entering into it.' 'God hath provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect' (ver. 40). That is to say, the ancient of the promised inheritance over Christians, but had when, Christ having opened the way into the holiest of This is a fact worthy to be pondered. Up to that time, all, they might enter, *along with us*, into the possession

It is scarcely necessary to ask, What is this promised which the Old Testament saints looked forward in faith? Unquestionably it is that thing which God promised the patriarchs saw afar off (ver. 13); that which their illustrious successors believed, but never obtained (ver. 19). It is 'the promise of eternal inheritance' (chap. ix. 15); 'the hope set before us' (chap. vi. 18); 'the city which hath the foundations' (chap. xi. 10); 'a better, even a heavenly country' (chap. xi. 16); 'a kingdom which cannot be promised land; the 'rest of God;' 'the sabbath-keeping which remaineth for the people of God' (chap. iv.9). through. Let the reader carry his thoughts back to the promised rest first begins. Evidently that 'promised rest' these different designations---city, country, kingdom, the reality, but only the symbol of the inheritance which God gave by promise to Abraham and his seed. That promise, far from having been exhaustively fulfilled time was come when the inheritance was about to be The argument of the epistle, then, requires us to actually entered and enjoyed, and the believers of the old covenant, with those of the new, were to enter at once and together into the promised rest.

There is a remarkable correspondence between the

argument contained in this passage and the statements of St. Paul in his epistles to the Galatians and Romans, serving not only to throw additional light upon the whole subject, but also to prove how entirely *Pauline* is the argument in Hebrews. We select a few of the leading thoughts in Gal. iii. by way of illustration:---

Ver. 16.---'Now to Abraham and his seed were the God'. promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.'

Ver. 18.---'For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by 2). promise.

Ver. 19.---'Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made,' etc.

Ver. 22.---'Howbeit, the scripture shut up all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.'

Ver. 23.---'But before faith came, we were kept in ward, shut up under the law unto the faith which was afterward to be revealed.

seed, and heirs according to the promise.'

Now, making allowance for the difference in the object which St. Paul has in view in writing to the Galatians, it will be seen how remarkably his statements support those in the Epistle of Hebrews.

In both we find the same subject,---the *promised* inheritance.

In both it is admitted that the inheritance was not actually possessed and enjoyed by those to whom it to Abraham. was first promised.

was suspended until the coming of Christ.

In both it is shown that this event (the coming of expected this inheritance.

In both it is argued that faith is the condition of the heavenly state. inheriting the promise.

arrived when the actual possession of the inheritance is about to be realised. Very similar is the scope of the argument in the Epistle to the Romans:---

the heir of the world [land, k o s m o z = g h] was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through 40). the righteousness of faith.

be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all

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- also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.
- Rom. v. 1.---'Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of
- In these verses we find,---

The same *promised inheritance* (ver. 13).

The same condition of its possession, viz. faith (ver.

The suspension of the fulfilment of the promise during the period of the law (vers. 14, 16).

- The entrance of believers under the Christian dispensation into the state of privilege and heirship (chap. v. 2).
- The expectation of the full possession of the inheritance: 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God' (chap. v. 1). Taking all these passages together, we may deduce from them the following conclusions:---
- That the great object of faith and hope so constantly Ver. 29.---'And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's set forth in the Scriptures as the consummation of the happiness of believers both under the Old Testament and under the New, is one and the same; and, whether called by the name of 'the promised land,' 'the promised inheritance,' 'the kingdom of God,' 'the glory to be revealed, 'the rest of God,' the hope which is set before us,'---they all mean the same thing, and point to a heavenly, and not an earthly, reward.
 - That this was the true meaning of the promise made
- That the fulfilment of this promise could not take In both it is shown that the fulfilment of the promise place until the true 'seed' of Abraham appeared and the sacrifice of the cross was offered.
- That the Old Testament saints had to wait until then Christ) produced a change in the situation of those who before they could receive the promised inheritance,--that is, enter into the full possession and enjoyment of

 - That the New Testament saints had this advantage In both it is asserted that the time has at length over their predecessors,---that they had not to wait for the realisation of their hope.
 - That the Old Testament saints, and believers under the New Testament, were to enter at the same period Rom. iv. 13.---'For the promise that he should be into the possession of the inheritance; not 'they without us, nor 'we without them,' but simultaneously (Heb. xi.
- It is evident, however, that the writer of the Epistle Ver. 16.---'For this cause it was of faith that it might to the Hebrews did not consider that as yet either the Old Testament or the New Testament saints had actually the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that entered upon the possession of the inheritance. The very

to the Hebrew believers is to warn them against the ceremonial, local, and temporary to be merged in the danger of forfeiting the inheritance by apostasy, and to encourage them to stedfastness and perseverance, that they might receive the promise. 'Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it' (Heb. iv. 1); 'Ye have need of patience that ye may receive the promise' (Heb. x. 36). It was not theirs as yet, then, in actual possession; but the whole tenor of the argument implies that it was very near, so near that it might almost be semblance of vigour; but the hour was at hand when said to be within reach. 'We which believe *are entering* into the rest' (Heb. iv. 3); 'Yet a very, very little while, and he that is coming shall come, and shall not tarry' (chap. x. 37). This clearly indicates the period of the expected entrance on the inheritance: it is the Parousia; 'the coming of the Lord;' the long looked-for day; the the believers in Christ, would together 'enter into rest,' fullness of the time, when the saints of the old covenant and 'inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the and those of the new should enter simultaneously into the possession of the promised inheritance; the land of rest; the city with the foundations; the better country, according to some expositors, on the verge of the great that is, the heavenly; the kingdom which cannot be moved; 'the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, ready to be revealed in the last time.

whom the promise was made; 'if the sacrifice of Calvary has been offered; if the great High Priest has rent the not a question of years, but of months or days. veil and removed the barrier; if the way into the holiest has thus been opened up,---does it not follow that the be proper to advert to the opinions of some of the most possession of the inheritance would be immediately bestowed upon the Old Testament believers, and that they would at once, along with the risen and triumphant pronounces Heb. xi. 40 'an exceedingly difficult verse, Redeemer, enter into the promised rest?

adopted, who fix the resurrection of Christ as the period of advancement and glory for the Old Testament for such a reward was proffered also to the ancient saints. But it is clear that the apostolic doctrine fixes that saints. period at the Parousia, and that for the reason given in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. x. 12, 13). Though the of the whole passage, which refers e p a g g e l i a n great High Priest had offered His one sacrifice for sin; though He had sate down on the right hand of God; yet His triumph had not fully come. He was 'henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.' To the same effect is the statement of St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 22. The consummation is reached by successive steps; first, the resurrection of Christ; afterwards, they that are Christ's at His coming; then 'then end.' The edifice was not crowned until the Parousia, when the Son of man came in His kingdom, and His enemies were put under His feet. That was the consummation, the end, when

purpose and aim of all his exhortations and appeals the Messianic delegated government was to cease; the spiritual, universal, and everlasting; when God was to be revealed as the Father not of a nation, but of man; when all sectional and national distinctions were to be abolished, and 'God to be All in all.'

> Meantime, when this epistle was written, the Mosaic system seemed to be unimpaired; 'the outer tabernacle' was still standing; Judaism, though a hollow trunk, out of which the heart had utterly decayed, still had a the whole economy was to be swept away. A deluge of wrath was about to burst on the land, and overwhelm the city, the temple, and the nation; the judgment of the impenitent and the apostate people would then take place, and the Old Testament saints, along with foundation of the world.

When we remember that this epistle was written, Jewish war which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem; or, according to others, after its actual outbreak, we may conceive what an intense expectancy such an But it may be objected, If the seed has come 'to approaching crisis must have produced in Christian hearts. The long looked-for consummation was now

> Before quitting this very interesting passage it may eminent expositors regarding it.

Professor Stuart wholly misses his way. He about the meaning of which there have been a multitude This is the view which many theologians have of conjectures;' and expresses his opinion that 'the better thing' reserved for Christians is not a reward in heaven;

> 'I must therefore,' he adds, 'adopt another exegesis [the promise] to the promised blessing of the Messiah. I construe the whole passage, then, in this manner:---The ancient worthies persevered in their faith, although the Messiah was known to them only by promise. We are under greater obligations than they to persevere; for God has fulfilled His promise respecting the Messiah, and thus placed us in a condition better adapted to perseverance than theirs. So much is our condition preferable to theirs that we may even say, without the blessing which we enjoy their happiness could not be completed. In other words, the coming of the Messiah

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was essential to the consummation of their happiness in that he rejoiced to see His day. glory, *i.e.* was necessary to their t e l e i o s i z .

It is curious to find very similar opinions expressed It will be seen that Stuart entirely mistakes the by Dr. Owen, in his treatise on Hebrews (vol. v. p. 311):meaning of the writer. The e p a g g e l i a is not the --Messiah, but the *inheritance*, the promise of entering 'I think that the fathers who died under the Old Testament had a nearer admission into the presence of into the rest. He fails also to apprehend the bearing of the subject on the time then present, and that the whole God upon the ascension of Christ than they had enjoyed force of the argument lies in the fact that the moment before. They were in heaven before the sanctuary of was at hand when the great promise of God was to be God, but were not admitted within the veil, into the fulfilled. most holy place, where all the counsels of God are Dr. Alford apprehends the argument much more displayed and represented.'

clearly, yet fails to grasp the precise sense of the whole. Much that is true is here blended with something How nearly he approaches the true solution of the erroneous. All these opinions agree in the conclusion difficulty may be seen from the following note:--that the redemptive work of Christ had a powerful 'The writer implies, as indeed chap. x. 14 seems to influence on the state of the Old Testament believers; testify, that the advent and work of Christ have changed but none of them apprehend the fact, so legibly written the state of the Old Testament fathers and saints into on the face of this epistle, that until the external fabric greater and more perfect bliss, an inference which is of Judaism had been swept away, and Christ had come forced on us by many other places in Scripture. So that in His kingdom, the way to the promised inheritance their perfection was dependent on our perfection: their was not open either to the Old or the New Testament and our perfection were all brought in at the same time, believers, and that the Parousia was the appointed time when Christ "by one offering perfected for ever them for both to enter together into the possession of the 'rest that are sanctified." So that the result with regard to of God.

them is, that their spirits, from the time when Christ The Great Consummation Near descended into Hades and ascended up into heaven, Contrast between the Situation of the Hebrew enjoy heavenly blessedness, and are waiting, with all who Christians and that of the Israelites at Sinai. have followed their glorified High Priest within the veil, Heb. xii. 18-24. for the resurrection of their bodies, the regeneration, For ye are not come unto the mount that might be

the renovation of all things.' touched, and that burned with fire. . . . But ye are come This explanation, though in some respects not far unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the from the truth, is inconsistent with the statements in heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of the epistle, for it supposes the Old Testament saints angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstto be still waiting for their complete felicity, and it born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge reduces even the New Testament believers to the same of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and condition of *waiting* for a consummation still future. to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the What becomes, then, of the k r e i t t o n t i, the 'some blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than better thing, which God (according to the writer) had that of Abel. provided for Christians? The advantage of which he We have in this passage a powerful exhortation to makes so much wholly disappears. And if the Parousia stedfastness in the faith, enforced by a vivid parallel, or never took place, the New Testament believers have no advantage whatever over the ancient saints.

rather contrast, between the situation of their Hebrew ancestors as they stood quaking before Mount Sinai Dr. Tholuck has the following remarks on the state of and the position occupied by themselves standing, as the departed saints previous to the advent of Christ:--it were, in full view of Mount Sion and all the glories 'The Old Testament saints were gathered with the of the promised inheritance. There are, indeed, in fathers, and perhaps partly translated into a higher this representation both a parallel and a contrast. The sphere of life; but as complete salvation is only to be resemblance lies in the nearness of the object---the attained through union with Christ, the indwelling meeting with God. Like the Israelites at Mount Sinai, Spirit of whom shall also quicken our newly glorified the Hebrew Christians had *drawn near* [p r o s e l h l u bodies, so the fathers gathered to God had to wait for q a t e] to the Mount Sion; like their fathers, they were the advent of Christ, as He said of Abraham himself,

was a striking contrast in their circumstances. At Mount the knowledge of that book by the Hebrews Christians. Sinai all was terrible and awful; at Mount Sion all was inviting and attractive. And this was the prospect now full in their view. A few more steps and they would be Hebrews, and consequently before the destruction in the midst of these scenes of glory and joy, safe in the promised land. There can be no question respecting the when we enter upon the consideration of the Book of identity of the scene here described: it is a near view of the 'inheritance,' 'the rest of God,' so constantly set forth in this epistle as the ultimatum of the believer,--once beheld, afar off, by patriarchs, prophets, and saints of olden time, but now visible to all and within a few days' march,---'the city with the foundations,' the 'better country, that is the heavenly.

Here an interesting question presents itself. From what source did the writer draw this glowing description of the heavenly inheritance? It is of course easy to say, which spake by the prophets. But the author of the epistle evidently writes as if the Hebrew Christians knew, and were familiar with, the things of which he speaks. The picture of Mount Sinai and its attendant circumstances is evidently derived from the book of Exodus; and if we find the materials for the picture of Mount Sion ready to our hand in any particular book of the New Testament, if is not unfair to presume that the description is borrowed from thence. Now we actually find every and when the reader compares every separate feature of our God is a consuming fire.' the scene depicted in the epistle with its counterpart in the Apocalypse, it will be easy for him to judge whether the correspondence can be undesigned or not, and which is the original picture:---

Mount SionRev.xiv.1
The city of the living God Rev iii.12;xxi.10
The heavenly JerusalemRev. iii. 12, xxi. 10
Their innumerable company of angelsRev.
v.11;vii.11
The general assembly and church of the first
born, etcRev iii. 12; vii. 4; xiv. 1-4
Gog judge of all Rev. xx. 11, 12
The spirits of just men made perfect Rev. xiv. 5
Jesus the mediator of the new covenant Rev. v. 6-9
The blood of sprinkling Rev. v. 9

Looking at the exact correspondence between the representations in the epistle and those in the Apocalypse, it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that the writer of this epistle had the descriptions of the

come face to face with God. But in other respects there Apocalypse in his mind; and his language presupposes This conclusion involves the inference that the Apocalypse was written before the Epistle to the of Jerusalem. The subject will come before us again Revelation; meantime, let it suffice to observe that both in this epistle and in the Apocalypse the events spoken of are regarded as so near as to be described as actually present; in the epistle the church militant is viewed as already come to the inheritance, and in the Apocalypse the things which are shortly to come to pass are viewed as accomplished facts.

The Nearness And Finality Of The Consummation

Heb. xii. 25-29.---'See that ye refuse not him that It is an original and independent utterance of the Spirit speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may element of this description in the Book of Revelation; serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for

> The parallel, or rather contrast, between the situation of the ancient Israelites drawing near to God at Mount Sinai and that of the Hebrew Christians expecting the Parousia is here further carried out, with the view of urging the latter to endurance and perseverance. If it was perilous to disregard the words spoken from Mount Sinai---the voice of God by the lips of Moses; how much more perilous to turn away from Him who speaks from heaven---the voice of God by His Son? That voice at Sinai shook the earth (Exod. Xix. 18; Ps. lxviii. 8); but a more terrible convulsion was at hand, by which, not only earth, but also heaven, were to be finally and fore ever removed.

> But what is this impending and final 'shaking and removing of earth and heaven'? According to Alford,---

> 'It is clearly wrong to understand, with some interpreters, by this shaking the mere breaking down of Judaism before the Gospel, or of anything else which shall be fulfilled *during* the Christian economy, short of its glorious end and accomplishment.

At the same time he admits that---

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'The period which shall elapse [before this shaking the tribulation of those days [the horrors of the siege takes place] shall be but one, not admitting of being of Jerusalem] shall the sun be darkened, and the moon broken into many; and that one but short.' shall not give her light, and the powers of the *heavens* But if so, surely the catastrophe must have been an shall be shaken' (Matt. xxiv. 29). Both passages refer to immediate one; for, on the supposition that it belongs to the same catastrophe and employ very similar figures; the distant future, the *interval* must necessarily be very besides which we have the authority of our Lord for long, and divisible into many periods, as years, decades, fixing the event and the period of which He speaks centuries, and even millenniums. within the limits of the generation then in existence; Moses Stuart's comment is far more to the point:--that is to say, the references can only be to the judgment 'That the passage has respect to the changes which of the Jewish nation and the abrogation of the Mosaic economy at the Parousia.

would be introduced by the coming of the Messiah, and the new dispensation which He would commence, is That great event was to clear the way for a new evident from Haggai ii. 7-9. Such figurative language is and higher order of things. A kingdom which cannot frequent in the Scriptures, and denotes great changes be moved was to supersede the material and mutable which are to take place. So the apostle explains it here, institutions which were imperfect in their nature and in the very next verse. (Comp. Isa. xiii. 13; Haggai ii. temporary in their duration; the material would give 21, 22; Joel iii. 16; Matt. xxiv. 29-37.)' The key to the place to the spiritual; the temporary to the eternal; interpretation of this passage is to be found in the and the earthly to the heavenly. This was by far the prophecy of Haggai. On comparing the prophetic greatest revolution the world had ever witnessed. It symbols in that book it will be seen that 'shaking heaven far transcended in importance and grandeur even the and earth' is evidently emblematic of, and synonymous giving of the law from Mount Sinai; and as that was with, 'overthrowing thrones, destroy kingdoms,' and accompanied by fearful signs and wonders, physical similar social and political revolutions (Haggai ii. 21, convulsions, and portentous phenomena, it was fitting 22). Such tropes and metaphors are the very elements of that similar, and still more awful, prodigies should prophetic description, and it would be absurd to insist attend its abrogation and the opening of a new era. That upon the literal fulfilment of such figures. Prodigies such portents did actually precede the destruction of Jerusalem we have no difficulty in believing, first, on and convulsions in the natural world are constantly the ground of analogy; secondly, from the testimony of used to express great social or moral revolutions. Let Josephus; and, above all, on the authority of our Lord's those who find it difficult to believe that the abrogation of the Mosaic dispensation could be shadowed forth prophetic discourse. But it is not so much to any new era here upon the magnificence of the language employed by prophets earth as to the glorious rest and reward of the people of God in the heavenly state, that the author of the epistle

in language of such awful sublimity consider the and psalmists in describing its inauguration. (See Ps. lxviii. 7, 8, 16, 17; cxiv. 1-8; Habak. iii. 1-6). directs the hope of the Hebrew Christians. Into that What, then, is the great catastrophe symbolically eternal kingdom the faithful servants of Christ believed represented as the shaking of the earth and heavens? they were just about to enter, and no consideration was No doubt it is the overthrow and abolition of the more calculated to strengthen the weak and confirm the wavering. 'Since therefore we are receiving a Mosaic dispensation, or old covenant; the destruction of the Jewish church and state, together with all the kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us be filled with institutions and ordinances connected therewith. There thankfulness, whereby we may offer acceptable worship were 'heavenly things' belonging to that dispensation: unto God with reverent fear: for our God is a consuming the laws, and statutes, and ordinances, which were fire? divine in their origin, and might be properly called the **Expectation Of The Parousia** 'spiritualia' of Judaism---these were the heavens, which Heb. xiii. 14.---'For here have we no continuing city, were to be shaken and removed. There were also 'earthly but we seek for that which is coming. things:' the literal Jerusalem, the material temple, the Alford well says:--land of Canaan- these were the earth, which was in like manner to be shaken and removed. The symbols 'This verse comes with a solemn tone on the reader, are, in fact, equivalent to those employed by our Lord considering how short a time the m e n o u s a p o l i z [abiding city] did actually remain, and how soon the when predicting the doom of Israel. 'Immediately after

destruction of Jerusalem put an end to the Jewish polity, which was supposed to be so enduring.

omnia!' The commentator sees clearly in this instance the relation of the writer's language to the actual circumstances of the Hebrews. This principle would have been a safe guide in other instances in which he from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts' seems to us to have entirely missed the point of the argument. The Christians to whom the epistle was written were come to the closing scene of the Jewish polity; the final catastrophe was just at hand. They heard which Alford give of the historical significance of this the call, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her plagues.' Jerusalem, the holy city, with her sacred temple, her towers and palaces, her walls and bulwarks, was no longer 'a continuing city;' it was on the eve of being 'shaken and removed.' But the Hebrew city of the living God; an enduring and heavenly home, drawing very near, and 'coming down,' as it were 'from heaven.' This was the coming city [t h n m e l l o u s a n = the city *soon* to come] to which the writer alludes, and which he believed they were just about to receive. (Heb. xxi. 28.)

THE PAROUSIA IN THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

There is a special interest attached to this epistle inasmuch as it manifestly belongs to the 'last days,' the closing period of the dispensation. It is a voice to the scattered Israel of God from within the doomed city whose catastrophe was now at hand. It is the last testimony of a faithful witness to the nation both within and without the bounds of Palestine. Though addressed to believing Hebrews, it contains evidences of the degeneracy in the Christian church and the extreme his conviction that 'the last days' and 'the end' were all corruption of the nation. Iniquity abounds, and the love but come. of many has waxed cold. But James of Jerusalem, like one of the old prophets of Israel, bears his testimony for truth and righteousness with unfaltering fidelity, till he wins the crown of martyrdom. The direct allusions *coming of the Lord*), etc.' to the Parousia in this epistle are few in number, but distinct and decisive in character; and it is plain that the whole epistle is written under the deep impression of the approaching consummation.

The Last Days Come

Jas. v. 1, 3.---'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming Ye laid up treasure in the last days.

This bold denunciation of the powerful oppressors and robbers of the poor in the last days of the Jewish

State recalls to our minds the warnings of the prophet Malachi: 'I will come near to you to judgment, and I This is unexceptionable, and we may say, 'O si sic will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless; and them that turn aside the stranger (Mal. iii. 5). That judgment was now drawing nigh, and 'the judge was at the door.'

> Nothing can be more frank than the recognition combination, and its express reference to the times of the apostle. Accounting for the absence of any direct exhortation to penitence in this denunciation, he says,-

'That such does not here appear is owing chiefly to saint could see through his tears another Jerusalem, the the close proximity of judgment which the writer has before him.' Again he observes, "'Howl" [ololuxein] is a word in the Old Testament confined to the prophets, and used, as here, with reference to the near approach of God's judgments.' Again: 'These miseries are not to be thought of as the natural and determined end of all worldly riches, but are the judgments connected with the coming of the Lord: *cf.* ver. 8,---"the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." It may be that this prospect was as yet intimately bound up with the approaching destruction of the Jewish city and polity, for it must be remembered that they are Jews who are here addressed.

> The only drawback to this explanation is the unfortunate 'may be' in the last sentence. How could a peradventure be thought of in a case so plain? Our concern is with what was in the mind of the apostle, and surely no words can convey a stronger testimony to

> In his note on ver. 3, Alford gives the apostle's meaning with perfect accuracy:---

> 'The last days (i.e. in these, the last days before the

It is interesting to find Dr. Manton, a theologian who lived in days when rigorous exegesis was not much practised and Scripture exposition was whatever Scripture might be made to mean, has with great perspicacity discerned the historical significance of this and other allusions of St. James to the Parousia. For example, on the clause, 'The rust of them shall eat your flesh as it were fire,' Monton says,---

'Possibly there may be here some latent allusion to the manner of Jerusalem's ruin, in which many thousands perished by fire.' Again, on the clause, 'Ye

heaped treasure together for the last days, he remarks: reproach of His death was rolled away. (2) The approach 'There is no cogent reason why we should take this of His general judgment ended the persecution; in a metaphorical sense, especially since, with good and when the godly were provided for at Pella, the leave from the context, scope of the apostle, and unbelievers perished by the Roman sword, etc. the state of those times, the literal may be retained. I On ver. 9, 'Behold, the judge standeth before the door,' Manton entirely discards the double sense, and should, therefore, simply understand the words as an intimation of their approaching judgments; and so the gives the following unexceptionable explanation:---'He had said before, "The coming of the Lord apostle seemeth to me to tax their vanity in hoarding and heaping up wealth when those scattering and fatal draweth nigh;" now he addeth that "he is at the door," days to the Jewish commonwealth were even ready to a phrase that doth not only imply the sureness, but the overtake them? suddenness, of judgment. See Matt. xxiv. 33: "Know that Nearness Of The Parousia it is near, even at the door;" so that this phrase intendeth Jas. v. 7.---'Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the also the speediness of the Jewish ruin.

It is easy to see that the pardonable anxiety to find a present didactic and edifying use in all Scripture Jas. v. 9.---'Behold, the judge standeth before the lies at the foundation of much of the exposition of such divines as Manton, and inclines them to adopt Three distinct utterances, short, sharp, startling, all alternative meanings and accommodations, which a strict exegesis cannot admit. But the language of the apostle in this instance stands in need of no elucidation, Manton's comment on these passages, though he is it speaks for itself. It shows the attitude of expectation and hope in which the apostolic churches waited for the manifestation of their returning Lord. A persecuted 'What is mean there? (Jas. v. 7.) Any particular coming church had need of patience under the wrongs inflicted by their oppressors. Their cry was, 'O Lord, how long?' They were comforted by the assurance that the day of deliverance was at hand; 'the judge,' the avenger of their wrongs was already 'at the door;' 'Yet a very, very little while, and he who is coming shall come, and shall not tarry.' How is it possible to reconcile this confident expectation of almost immediate deliverance with a consummation still future after eighteen centuries have passed away? There are but two alternatives possible: either St. James and his fellow-apostles were grossly deceived in their expectation of the Parousia, or that event did come to pass, according to their expectation He then goes on to give an alternative meaning, and the Lord's prediction, at the close of the aeon, or Jewish age. If we adopt the latter alternative, the only On the eighth verse, 'For the coming of the Lord one compatible with Christian faith, we must accept the inference that the Parousia was the glorious appearing of 'Either, first, to them by a particular judgment; for the Lord Jesus Christ to abolish the Mosaic dispensation, execute judgment on the guilty nation, and receive His

coming of the Lord.' Jas. v. 8.---'The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.' door.' significant of the imminent arrival of 'the day of the Lord.' haunted by the phantom of the double sense, is, on the whole, excellent:--of Christ, or His solemn coming to general judgment? I answer, Both may be intended; the primitive Christians thought both would fall out together. 1. It may be meant of Christ's particular coming to judge these wicked men. This epistle was written about thirty years after Christ's death, and there was but a little time between that and Jerusalem's last, so that *unto the coming of the* Lord is until the overwhelming of Jerusalem, which is also elsewhere expressed by coming, if we may believe Chrysostom and Oecumenius on John xxi. 22: "If I will that he tarry till I come," that is, say they, come to Jerusalem's destruction. according to the usage of double-sense expositors. draweth nigh,' Manton observes:--there were but a few years, and then all was lost; and

probably that may be it which the apostles mean when faithful people into His heavenly kingdom and glory. they speak so often of the nearness of Christ's coming. THE PAROUSIA IN THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER But you will say, How could this be propounded as an argument of patience to the godly Hebrews that Christ It is evident that this epistle, like that of St. James, would come and destroy the temple and city? I answer, belongs to the period called 'the last times.' Like his (1) The time of Christ's solemn judiciary process against fellow-witness and brother-apostle James, St. Peter the Jews was the time when He did acquit Himself with addresses his exhortations to Hebrew Christians of the honour upon His adversaries, and the scandal and dispersion; for this is the only natural interpretation

of the title give to them in the first verse. The contents sufficiently evince that the epistle was written in a time taught that they were living in the last times, and this of suffering for the sake of Christ. The disciples were must be reconcilable with fact, if their credit as faithful 'in heaviness through manifold temptations;' but a far severer time of trial was approaching, and for this they are exhorted to prepare: 'Beloved, think it not strange last times, in the closing period of the Jewish aeon or age. concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you' (1 Pet. iv. 12). They are comforted, moreover, with the prospect of final and speedy deliverance.

the actual circumstances of the time when, and of the persons to whom, it was written. Whatever may be its uses and lessons for other times and persons, its primary and special bearing upon the Jews of the dispersion in the apostolic age must not be lost sight of.

Salvation Ready To Be Revealed In The Last Time

1 Pet. i. 5.---'You, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed I the last time?

Every word in this opening address is full of meaning, and implies the near approach of a great and decisive crisis. In ver. 4 we have a very distinct allusion to the 'inheritance,' which is the theme of so large a portion of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that is to say, the true Canaan, 'the rest remaining for the people of God.' In reserved in heaven,' and represents the entering upon it by believers as now very near. Salvation is 'ready to be revealed.' What this 'salvation' means is very evident; breaking out, if it had not already begun. it is not the personal glorification of individual souls at death, but a great and collective deliverance, in which the people of God generally are to participate: such a Red Sea. In the same way St. Paul uses the same word with reference to this same approaching consummation: 'Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed' (Rom. xiii. 11).

This great general deliverance was not a distant event, it was now 'ready to be revealed,' on the very eve of being made manifest. As Alford remarks, the word e t o i m h n [ready] is stronger than m e l l o u s a n. To understand this as referring to individual believers boon, the grace, is on its way,---it is *being brought* unto entering into heaven one by one at the hour of death, or as an admission into a heavenly state which has not yet e n h n [being brought] signifies 'the near impending been granted, is utterly repugnant to the plain sense of of the event spoken of; *q.d.* which is even now bearing the words.

The salvation is ready to be revealed in 'the last *time*, that is to say, *'now*,' the time then present. We have already had occasion to notice that the apostles call have been mockery to tell suffering and persecuted men

their own time 'the last time.' They believed and they and authorised witnesses for Christ is to be maintained. They were justified in their belief: they were living in the In the twentieth verse of this chapter we find the same designation given to the time of Christ's incarnation: 'Who was manifested in these last times [at the last of the times] for you.' To say that the apostle regards the It is necessary to read this epistle in the light of whole period from the beginning of the New Testament dispensation till Christ's coming in glory, in some future and possibly still distant age, as one short time called the last days, is a most unnatural and forced interpretation. The apostle is evidently speaking of a period of *crisis*, and to make a crisis extend over thousands of years is to do violence not only to the grammatical sense of words but to the nature of things.

At the risk of repetition we may here observe, that, according to New Testament usage, we are to conceive of the period between the incarnation of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem as the close of an epoch or aeon. It was in the end of the age [e p i s u n t e l i a t w n a i w n w n = close upon the end of the ages] that 'Christ appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself' (Heb. ix. 26). This whole period of about seventy years very similar language St. Peter styles it 'the inheritance is regarded as 'the last time;' but it is natural that the phrase should have a sharper accentuation when the Jewish war, the beginning of the end, was on the eve of

The Approaching Revelation Of Jesus Christ

1 Pet. i. 7.--- 'That the trial of your faith . . . may salvation as God wrought for Israel on the shores of the be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

> 1 Pet. i. 13.---'Hope conclusively for the grace which is being brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

> Everything in the apostle's exhortation conveys the idea of eager expectancy and preparation. The salvation is ready to be revealed; the tried and persecuted believers are to 'gird up the loins of their mind;' the expected them. Alford properly remarks that the word f e r o m down on you.' Does not this plainly prove that St. Peter understood, and wished his readers to understand, that this apocalypse of Jesus Christ was just at hand? It would

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to get ready to receive a salvation which was not due for hundreds and thousands of years.

The Relation Of The Redemption Of Christ To The Antediluvian World

1 Pet. iii. 18-20.---'For Christ also hath once suffered the body is all that is meant by His descending into the for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to lower parts of the earth. God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in The more important question remains,---What the Spirit: in which he also went and preached unto the was the object of our Lord's descent into Hades? It spirits in prison; which were once disobedient, when can hardly be doubted that it was a gracious one. The the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, apostle says, 'He preached to the spirits in prison,'---and while the ark was preparing? etc. what could He preach but glad tidings? This fact gives The common interpretation of this difficult passage a new and larger significance to the terms of our Lord's

given by the majority of Protestant expositors is, that commission: 'He hat sent me to proclaim liberty to the Christ, in effect, preached to the antediluvians by His captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are Holy Spirit through the ministry of Noah. This no bound' (Isa. lxi. 1). The hypothesis of Bishop Horsley doubt asserts a truth, and has besides the advantage and others that those spirits in prison were in fact of keeping within the lines of well-known historical saints, or at least penitents, awaiting the period of their facts, and avoiding what seems dark and doubtful full salvation, scarcely requires refutation. If any thing is speculation. Nevertheless, as a question of grammar, clear on the face of the question, it is that they were the this interpretation is wholly untenable. First, it is spirits of those who had perished for their disobedience, reasonable to expect a chronological sequence in the and in their disobedience. As Bishop Ellicott remarks, a various parts of the apostle's statement, describing p e i q h s a s i n means, not 'who were disobedient,' but what Christ did after 'being put to death in the flesh.' 'inasmuch as they were disobedient.' What would be more harsh and abrupt than the sudden But it may be said, Why should the disobedient transition from the narrative of what Christ did and antediluvians have been selected as the objects of a suffered in the flesh to what He had done, in a sense, gracious mission? Were there no other lost souls in some thousands of years before, in the days of Noah? Hades, and why should these find grace beyond others? Further, the rendering 'being quickened by the Spirit,' Bishop Horsley owns this to be a difficulty, and the and 'by which also,' implying that the Holy Spirit was greatest by which his interpretation is embarrassed. the agent by whom Christ was made alive, and by whom Alford finds a reason, if we rightly apprehend him, in the He preached, etc., is clearly wrong. It ought to be, 'Being manner of their death. 'The reason of mentioning here put to death in [his] flesh, but made alive in [his] spirit,these sinners above other sinners, appears to be their --the *flesh* being His body, and the *Spirit* His soul. Then connection with the type of baptism which follows;' but the apostle adds, 'in which also,' viz. in his soul, or human surely this is to ascribe an efficacy to that institution spirit. Further, as Ellicott has pointed out, p o r e u q e i z beyond the boldest theories of baptismal regeneration. [having gone] 'suggests a literal and local descent.'

We venture to suggest that the true reason lies in the There seems no escape therefore, according to the nature of that great judicial act which took place at the true and natural sense of words, from the interpretationdeluge. That was the close of an age or aeon, and ended --that our Lord, after His death on the cross, went in in a catastrophe, as the aeon then in progress was just His disembodied state into Hades, the place of departed about to terminate. The two cases were analogous. As spirits, and there made proclamation [preached] to the the deluge was the close and consummation of a former spirits in prison, viz. the antediluvians, who in the days of aeon, or world- period, so the destruction of Jerusalem Noah disbelieved the prophet's warnings and perished in and the abrogation of the Jewish economy were about the flood. This, which is the most ancient interpretation, to close the existing world-period or aeon. What more is now generally conceded by the most eminent critics. natural on the eve of such a catastrophe as the apostle It is that which is embodied in the Apostle's Creed; it anticipated, than to advert to the catastrophe of a former has the sanction of Luther and Calvin; and it seems to aeon? What more pertinent than to note the fact that the be supported by other passages in Scripture which are 'coming salvation' had a retrospective effect upon those in harmony with this explanation. In St. Peter's sermon bygone ages? It is not difficult to see the connection of on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 27-31) there is a distinct the ideas in the apostle's train of thought. The deluge

allusion to the soul of Christ having been in Hades; also in Ephes. iv. 9,---'Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?' It is difficult to suppose that the burial of

that then was,' perished in the baptismal waters of the manifested Himself to the unbelieving dead.' 'We must flood; the 'world which now is'---the Mosaic order, the Jewish polity and people---was about to be submerged in a baptism of fire (Mal. iv. 1; Matt. iii. 11, 12; 1 Cor. iii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 7-10). Was it not appropriate to show that the redemptive work of Christ joined, and indeed past as well as forward to the future?

which confessedly overhand the subject, we are led to to its imprisoned subjects. the conclusion that the apostle in this passage does plainly teach that our blessed Lord, after His death upon the cross, descended as a disembodied spirit into Hades, the place of departed spirits, and there proclaimed the glad tidings of His accomplished redemption to the multitudes of the lost who perished at the catastrophe or final judgment of the former aeon; and though we have His work of redemption, preach salvation, in fact, to in the present passage no express affirmation that those who heard the announcement made by our Saviour were in consequence delivered from their prison-house, and introduced into 'the glorious liberty of the sons of God,' yet it seems not incredible, it is even presumable, that this emancipation was both the object and result unimaginable by us,---we cannot say. of Christ's interposition. We have already referred to Ephes. iv. 9 as lending support to this view. 'Now that he State,' by the Rev. J. Stratten, the following observations ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?' Bishop Hersley shows that the phrase 'the lower parts of the earth' in the proper and customary designation of Hades. In the same passage the apostle speaks of the triumphant ascension of Christ in these words: 'When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' Does not the teaching of St. Peter with reference to 'the spirits in prison' throw light on this 'leading of captivity the apostle, or seeks to misinterpret him.' captive?' Does it not suggest that the returning Saviour, having fought the fight and won the victory, enjoyed also the triumph---that He brought back with Him to heaven a great multitude whom He had rescued from captivity; the spirits in prison to whom He carried the glad tidings of redemption achieved; and who, being brought out of their prison-house, accompanied the returning conqueror to His Father's house, at once the ransomed by His blood and the trophies of His power?

Before quitting this subject it may be well to quote watch unto prayer.' some opinions of Biblical critics in reference to it.

candid and scholarly manner, says,---

'The plain and literal sense of the words in this

was the s u n t e l e i a t o u a i w n o z of Noah's time; verse (19), viewed in connection with the following another s u n t e l e i a was just at hand. The 'old world, one, compels us to adopt the opinion that Christ admit that the discourse here is of a proclamation of *the* Gospel among those who had died in unbelief, but we know not whether it found an entrance into many or few.' 'The expression e n f u l a k h (which the Syriac renders by Sheol; the fathers use it as synonymous with covered, both these aeons, and looked backward on the Hades) shows that the discourse can only be respecting unbelievers.' 'He who lay under death, entered into the Notwithstanding, then, the mystery and obscurity empire of the dead as a conqueror, proclaiming freedom

Dean Alford's opinion is very decided:---

'From all, then, that has been said, it will be gathered that, with the great majority of commentators, ancient and modern, I understand these words to say that our Lord, in His disembodied state, did go to the place of detention of departed spirits, and did there announce the disembodied spirits of those who refused to obey the voice of God when the judgment of the flood was hanging over them. Why these rather than others are mentioned---whether merely as a sample of like gracious work on others, or for some special reason

In an interesting discourse on 'The Intermediate occur:---

'If this passage mean no more than that the Holy Spirit assisted Noah in preaching to the antediluvians, it is a most obscure, entangled, and unaccountable manner of expressing a most clear and simple principle. Would any of us employ this language, or any at all like it, to express that sentiment? I think not, and it seems to be only the refuge of a mind that does not understand

We may here, in passing, notice that such a deliverance from Hades serves vividly to illustrate the saying of St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 26: 'The last enemy, death, shall be destroyed.

Nearness Of Judgment And Of The End Of All Things.

1 Pet. iv. 5, 7.--- Who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.... But the end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore sober, and

In these passages we find again, what we have Steiger, who treats the whole passage in a most so often found before, the clear apprehension of the judgment and of the end as nigh at hand.

In ver. 5 the apostle intimates that God was about to

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sit in judgment upon the living and the 203 for this epistle seems to have been written a very short dead. This cannot possibly refer to that particular while before these events took place, not improbably act of judgment which is, as we believe, always near to after the commencement of the "wars and rumours every man, in the same sense as death and eternity are of wars" of which our Lord spake. This view will not always near. It is obviously a solemn, public, general appear strange to any one who has carefully weighed adjudication, in which the living and the dead were the terms in which our Lord had predicted these together to answer for themselves before the tribunal events, and the close connection which the fulfilment of God. This approach of judgment follows course from of these predictions had with the interests and duties the approach of the Parousia, which is so distinctly of Christians, whether in Judea or in Gentile countries. 'It is quite plain that in our Lord's predictions the world," are used in reference to the entire dissolution of the Jewish economy. The events of that period were very minutely foretold, and our Lord distinctly stated

intimated in chap. i. 5. All that has been stated in regard to that passage applies with equal force to this; e t o i expressions "the end," and probably "the end of the m w z e c o n t i = having it in readiness to judge, is a stronger expression than m ellon t i, and can by no means refer to any but an almost immediate event. No less decisive is the statement in ver. 7, 'The end that the existing generation should not pass away till all things respecting "this end" should be fulfilled. This of all things is *at hand*.' Whatever that end may mean was to be a season of suffering to all; of trial, severe it is certain that the apostle conceives of it as near, for he urges it as a motive to vigilance and prayer. To trial, to the followers of Christ; of dreadful judgment comprehend the full force of the exhortation we must on His Jewish opposers, and of glorious triumph to His place ourselves in the situation of these apostolic religion. To this period there are repeated references to the apostolical epistles. "Knowing the time," says the Christians. As year after year lessened the distance to the passing away of the generation that saw and rejected Apostle Paul, "that now it is high time to awake out the Son of man, the anticipation of the arrival of the of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we great predicted consummation must have become more believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand." "Be and more vivid in the minds of Christian believers. patient," says the Apostle James; "stablish your hearts: What their conceptions were as to the nature and extent for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "The Judge standeth before the door." Our Lord's predictions must of that consummation; whether they imagined that it involved the dissolution of the whole frame and fabric have been very familiar to the minds of Christians at of the material world or not, it is not for us to determine. the time this was written. They must have been looking What we have to do with is not the private opinions of forward with mingled awe and joy, fear and hope, to the apostles, but their public utterances. But that the their accomplishment: "looking for the things which consummation designated by our Lord 'the end,' and were coming upon the earth;" and it was peculiarly 'the end of the age,' was rapidly approaching, is not an natural for Peter to refer to these events, and to refer open question, but a point of faith involving the truth to them in words similar to those used by our Lord, as of all His claims. There can be no doubt that in a Judaic he was one of the disciples who, sitting with his Lord in or religious sense, that is, so far as the national polity full view of the city and temple, heard these predictions and ecclesiastical system of Judaism were concerned, uttered. 'the end of all things was at hand.' All that lay beneath 'The Christians inhabiting Judea had a peculiar the eye of our Lord as He sate on the brow of Olivet was interest in these predictions and their fulfilment. swiftly hurrying to destruction. This is the key to the But all Christians had a deep interest in them. The meaning of St. Peter in this passage, and furnishes the Christians of the regions in which those to whom

Peter wrote resided were chiefly converted Jews. As We quote with entire satisfaction and approval the Christians they had cause to rejoice in the prospect of the accomplishment of the predictions, as greatly confirming the truth of Christianity and removing some 'After some deliberation I have been led to adopt the of the greatest obstructions in the way of its progress, such as persecutions by the Jews, and the confounding of Christianity with Judaism on the part of the Gentiles, who were accustomed to view its professors as a Jewish sect. But while they rejoice, they cause to "rejoice with

only tenable and scriptural explanation. observations of a judicious expositor on the passage now before us:--opinion of those who hold that "the end of all things" here is the entire and final end of the Jewish economy in the destruction of the city and the temple of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the holy people. That was at hand;

trembling," as their Lord had plainly intimated that No. 1, adverts to this difficulty in a real correspondence it was to be a season of severe trial to His friends, as falling into the hands of a third party. well as of fearful vengeance against His enemies. "The end of all things," which was at hand, seems to be the same thing as the judgment of the quick and the dead, which the Lord was ready to enter on- --the judgment, the time for which was come, which was to begin with Lord : 'Arm yourselves with the same resolution,' *i.e.* righteous should scarcely be saved, and the ungodly and wicked should be fearfully punished.

was well fitted to operate as a motive to sobriety and vigilance unto prayer. These were just the tempers and exercises peculiarly called for in such circumstances, and they were just the dispositions and employments required by our Lord when He speaks of those days of trial and wrath: "Take heed to yourselves," says our Lord, "lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come on you unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all who dwell on the earth. Watch, opening of the apostle's argument, as leading up to the therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are about to come to believe that the apostle had not these very words in his mind when he wrote the passage now before us.'---Expository Discourses on 1 Peter, by Dr. John Brown, Edinburgh, vol. ii. pp. 292-294.

The Good Tidings Announced To The Dead

1 Pet. iv. 6.---'For, for this cause was the gospel preached to the dead also, that they might be judged in the spirit.

Perhaps the passage above cited can scarcely be said to fall within the scope of this discussion, as it spirit'? does not seem to have any direct bearing upon the time of the Parousia; and its extreme difficulty might be a good reason for avoiding its examination altogether. Nevertheless, as it manifestly belongs to the eschatology of the New Testament, and as we have no right to look upon it as hopelessly insoluble, it seems better not to pass it by in silence.

class of difficult passages which, though obscure to us, were intelligible and easy to the original readers of the epistles. (See 1 Cor. xi. 10; xv. 29.) A passing allusion might bring up a whole train of thought in their minds, so that they easily comprehended what hopelessly embarrasses us. Paley, in his Horae Paulinae, chap. x.

The general scope of the argument is sufficiently plain. The apostle begins the chapter by calling upon the suffering and persecuted disciples to imitate the example of their once suffering but now victorious the house of God, the unbelieving Jews, in which the suffer as He did, even unto death, if need be. In the next verses he alludes to their former godless and sensual life, and the offence which the change to the 'The contemplation of such events as just at hand purity of a Christian behaviour gave to their heathen neighbours (vers. 2, 3, 4). This silent but living protest against the immorality of heathenism appears to have been one cause of the general antipathy to the Gospel which found vent in slanderous imputations against the unoffending Christians,---'Speaking evil of you'. But these calumniators and persecutors would soon be called to account by Him who was about to judge both the living and the dead (ver. 5).

> It will be found very important to bear in mind this statement in ver. 6.

Let us now look at that statement. 'For, for this cause to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." It is difficult was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

It may be truly said that there are here as many difficulties as there are words. When, where, and by whom was the Gospel preached to the dead? Who were the dead to whom the Gospel was preached? Why was it preached to them? How could the dead be judged according to men in the flesh? How could they according to men in the flesh, but live according to God live according to God in the spirit? And how did the preaching of the Gospel to the dead bring about this result,---'that they should live according to God in the

> It would answer no good purpose to pass in review the multitude of explanations of this obscure passage proposed by different commentators. Let is suffice to look at one or two of the most plausible.

To the question, Who were the dead to whom the Gospel is said to have been preached? some think it a sufficient answer to reply, They are those, now dead, who There can be little doubt that the present is one of a were alive in the flesh when the Gospel was preached unto them. This would be an easy solution if it were permissible so to construe the words of the apostle; but it is a fatal objection to this explanation that it makes the apostle state a very simple and obvious fact in an unaccountably obscure and ambiguous way. The words themselves reject such an explanation. Alford does not

speak too strongly when he says,--opening verses of the chapter. It would be quite proper 'If kai nekroiz eulogelisch may mean "the gospel to say of such, that though (unjustly) condemned by was preached to some during their lifetime who are man they would be vindicated by God. It is also proper now dead," exegesis has no longer any fixed rule, and to say of such (especially, if martyrs for the faith) that Scripture may be made to prove anything. they had 'suffered in the flesh'---had been put to death Others suppose that by the 'dead' in ver. 6 are to by human judgment, but were made alive in spirit, or as to their spirits, and this according to God, or by the

be understood the *spiritually* dead; but to this there are two insurmountable objections: first, this does not divine judgment. But there still remains the formidable discriminate a particular class, for all men are spiritually difficulty presented by the words 'the gospel was dead when the Gospel is first preached to them; and, preached to them that are dead.' We have no account in secondly, it gives to the word nekroi [the dead] in ver. 6 the New Testament of any such preaching to Christian a different meaning from the same word in ver. 5---'the martyrs after their death. But are we necessarily obliged living and the dead.' According to this interpretation, to give this sense to the word eulogelisch? It is here, we the word 'dead' is used in a literal sense in ver. 5, and in believe, that the key to the true explication of this passage an ethical sense in ver. 6. But, as Alford justly says,--will be found; and it is the wrong interpretation of this 'All interpretations must be false which do not give word that has misled commentators. Though it is very nekroiz in ver. 6 the same meaning as nekrouz in ver. 5, commonly used in the technical sense of preaching the *i.e.* that of *dead men*, literally and simply so called; men Gospel, this is by no means its invariable use in the New

who have died, and are in their graves.'

Testament. It is employed to signify the announcement But probably the most common opinion is that the of any good news, and not exclusively the glad tidings of the Gospel. Thus in Heb. iv. 2, improperly rendered in apostle here alludes again to the preaching of Christ to the spirits in prison referred to in chap. iii. 19, 20; and at our Authorized Version 'to us was the gospel preached, first this seems the most natural explanation. That was, as well as unto them,' there is no allusion to the preaching no doubt, a preaching of the Gospel to the dead, and of the Gospel in the technical sense of the phrase, but also to a particular class of the dead, the antediluvians simply to the fact that 'to us as well as to the ancient who formerly were disobedient in the days of Noah, and Israelites good news have been brought, the good news in both cases being the promise of entering into God's who were overtaken by the judgment of God.

But when we come to examine more closely the rest. So in a still more general sense the word is used to denote any pleasing intelligence, as in 1 Thess. iii. 6: statement of the apostle we find that this application of his words will by no means suit the persons designated 'When Timotheus brought us good tidings of your faith,' 'the spirits in prison.' How could the antediluvians etc. So also in Rev. x. 7: 'As he hath declared [euhggelisen be said to be 'judged according to men in the flesh'? = made a comforting declaration] to his servants the They perished by the visitation of God, and not by the prophets.' (See also Gal. iii. 8). judgment or act of man; and it appears evident that the But the question still recurs, Where have we in succeeding clause---'that they might live according to the New Testament any allusion to such good news, God in the spirit'--- implies the reversal of the human pleasing intelligence, or comforting declarations, condemnation which had been passed upon the dead their death? The apostle seems to speak of some fact while still in the body.

made to any Christian confessors or martyrs after None of the ordinary explanations, therefore, seems familiarly known to the persons to whom he wrote, to meet the requirements of the case. Those requirements and which he had only to allude to in order that they are, to find a class of the dead to whom the Gospel was should at once recognise his meaning. Now, we actually preached after their death; who were condemned to have a historical representation in the New Testament death when in the flesh by the judgment of men, but in which we find all these circumstances present. We who are destined to live in the spirit, according to the have a scene depicted in which Christian martyrs, who judgment of God, and this is consequence of the Gospel had been condemned and put to death in the flesh being preached to them after death. by the judgment of man, appeal to the justice of God

We are at once led to conclude that this particular against their persecutors, and a comforting declaration is brought to them, after their death, giving them the class, judged or condemned by human judgment, must refer to *persecuted disciples of Christ*. It is to such and of assurance of speedy vindication and of a glorious such that the apostle is speaking, as is evident from the heavenly recompense.

THE PAROUSIA INTHE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

We allude of course to the striking representation given in the Apocalypse of the martyred souls under the alter, appealing to God for the vindication of their cause against their persecutors and murderers---'them Rev. 9-11:---

'And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the alter the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on between the statement of the apostle as thus interpreted them that dwell on the earth [the land]? And a white robe was given to every one of them; and it was said unto them [erreqh = euhggelisqh] that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

the case. Here we find the nekroi, the Christian dead; they were judged or condemned in the flesh, by man's judgment, or 'according to men;' they had been put to death 'for the word of God, and for the testimony which to this end a comforting declaration was brought even to they held.' We find a comforting declaration made to them in their disembodied state, and we have the lacuna in the epistle filled up in the apocalyptic vision, their spirit enjoy eternal life, according to the righteous for we are informed what led to this euaggelion being *judgment of God.*' brought to them; they are assured that in a little while their cause should be vindicated, according to their prayer; meanwhile 'a white robe,' the symbol of purity and victory, 'is given unto every one of them,' which is of many eminent English commentators that they surely equivalent to their being justified by the divine judgment.

whole; the apostle's statement is not only elucidated by the Apocalypse on the one hand, but by the gospel on the other. Most commentators have noticed the obvious relation between the scene of the martyrs' souls under the alter in the apocalyptic vision and the remarkable parable of our Lord in Luke xviii.; but, so far as we have observed, none of them have seized the true analogy between the parable and the vision. In the seventh and eighth verses of that chapter we find the moral of the parable, 'And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he the vision are, in fact, counterparts of each other, and both serve to explain the passage in this epistle of St. Peter. As in the Apocalypse, so in the parable, we find

all the elements of the statement in the epistle. We have Christian disciples suffering unjustly; condemned in the flesh by man's judgment; appealing to God to judge their cause; we have the assurance of their speedy vindication that dwell in the land'---and which is thus described in by God, and we find in the gospel an additional feature which brings it into more perfect correspondence with the statement in the epistle; for it is evidently suggested that this vindication is to take place at the Parousia,---'when the Son of man cometh.'

Lastly, we may point out the intimate connection and the argument which he is carrying on. It was appropriate to assure persecuted believers that their cause was safe in the hands of God; that, even if called to suffer unto blood and unto death by the unjust sentence of men, God would vindicate them speedily, for He was about to summon their persecutors before His tribunal. This seems exactly to meet all the requirements of This was the lesson of the parable of the importunate widow, and perhaps still more of the vision of the martyrs' souls under the altar, to which the language of the apostle seems more particularly to allude,---'For the dead, that though they had been condemned in the flesh by the unjust judgment of men, yet they should in

This interpretation assumes that the Apocalypse was written and widely circulated before the destruction of Jerusalem. It is a reflection upon the critical acumen should have leaned so long upon the broken reed of tradition in regard to the date of the Apocalypse. The But this correspondence, striking as it is, is not the internal evidence of that book ought to have prevented the possibility of their being misled by the authority of Irenaeus. But we must reserve any further remarks on this subject until we come to the consideration of the Apocalypse.

The Fiery Trial And The Coming Glory

1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.---'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery ordeal which is taking place for a trial to you, as though some strange thing were happening unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

These words clearly indicate that Christians find faith on the earth [in the land]?' The parable and everywhere were at this time passing through a severe sifting and testing---'a fiery ordeal.' And not merely a fiery trial, but the trial, long predicted and expected, viz. the great tribulation which was to precede the Parousia.

THE PAROUSIA INTHE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

'Begin at my sanctuary.' The apostle sees this vision as about to be fulfilled in reality. The judgment must begin a question whether by 'the house of God' the apostle The predicted tribulation had evidently set in; they intends the temple of Jerusalem, as the prophecy in Ezekiel would suggest, or the spiritual house of God, the Christian church. It may be that both ideas were present to his mind, as well they might, for both were being verified at the moment. The persecution of the church of Christ had already begun, as the epistle testifies, and the circle of blood and fire was narrowing around the doomed city and temple of Jerusalem.

The apostles warned the disciples that the 'must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God' (Acts xiv. 22). They had themselves been taught this by the at the House of God, and the time is come. It may be Lord Himself, especially in His prophetic discourse. were actually passing through the fire. It is impossible here not to be reminded of the words of St. Paul,---'It shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is' (1 Cor. iii. 13). It is highly probable that the fierce persecution under Nero was raging at this juncture, and we have good authority for believing that it extended beyond Rome to the provinces It is perfectly clear that all this is spoken with

of the Empire. Another indication of time is found in ver. 13,--- reference to a particular and impending event, a 'That when his glory shall be revealed.' The Parousia is catastrophe which was on the eve of taking place; always represented as bringing relief from persecution, and there is not other explanation possible than that and recompense to the suffering people of God. We have which lies visible and palpable on the page of history, already seen that the glory was 'ready to be revealed,' the judgment of the guilty covenant nation, with the and we shall find the same assurance repeated in chap. destruction of the house of God and the dissolution of the Jewish economy. v. 1.

The Time Of Judgment Arrived

1 Pet. iv. 17-19.---'For the time is come when the 'There seems here a reference to a particular judgment or trial, that the primitive Christians had reason to expect. When we consider that this epistle was written within a short time of the commencement of that awful scene of judgment which terminated in the destruction of the ecclesiastical and civil polity of the Jews, and which our Lord had so minutely predicted, we can scarcely doubt of the reference of the apostle's It is worthy of remark how different the tone of St. expression. After having specified wars and rumours of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, as symptoms of "the beginning of sorrows," our Lord adds, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." "They shall deliver you up to councils and to synagogues, and shall be beaten," etc. (Matt. xxiv.

judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.' Peter in speaking of the day of the Lord is from St. Paul's in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. That day of which St. Paul speaks as not yet present, and as not possible until the apostasy first appeared, is declared by St. Peter to be come. The catastrophe was now imminent. 'God was ready to judge the quick and the dead;' 'the time was come for judgment to begin.' The significance 9-13, 22). of these words will be apparent if we consider that this 'This is the judgment which, though to fall most epistle was written close upon the outbreak of the Jewish heavily on the Holy Land, was plainly to extend to war, if not after its actual commencement.

wherever Jews and Christians were to be found, "for That this is 'the judgment which must begin at the where the carcase was, there were the eagles to be house of God' there can scarcely be a doubt. There is gathered together;" which was to begin at the house of a manifest allusion in the language of the apostle to God, and which was to be so severe that "the righteous the vision seen by the prophet Ezekiel (chap. ix.). The should scarcely," i.e. not without difficulty, "be saved." prophet sees a band of armed men commissioned to go They only who stood the trial should be saved, and through the city (Jerusalem), and to slay all, whether many would not stand the trial. All the truly righteous old or young, who had not the seal of God upon their should be saved; but many who seemed to be righteous foreheads. The ministers of vengeance are commanded would not endure to the end, and so should not be to begin the work of judgment at the house of God,--saved, etc. Some have supposed the reference to be

The following remarks of Dr. John Brown well express the sense of this passage:---

and destruction of Jerusalem.---Dr. John Brown on 1 Peter, vol. ii. p. 357.

The Glory About To Be Revealed

1 Pet. v. 1.---'The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the about to be revealed."

manifested, ye shall receive the unfading crown of glory.

Everything in this chapter is indicative of the *nearness* of the consummation. This is the motive to every duty, to fidelity, to humility, to vigilance, to endurance. The glory is *soon* to be revealed; the unfading crown is to be received by the faithful undershepherds when the chief Shepherd is manifested; the sufferings of the persecuted church are to continue only 'a little while' (ver. 10). All is suggestive of a great and happy consummation which of an expected crown of glory as a motive to present faithfulness if it were contingent on an uncertain and possibly far distant event? Yet if the chief Shepherd has not yet been manifested, the crown of glory has not yet been received. It is quite clear that to the apostle's view the revelation of the glory, the manifestation of the chief Shepherd, the reception of the unfading crown, the end of suffering, were all in the immediate future. If he was not of a distant, but of an impending, catastrophe. The mistaken in this, is he trustworthy in anything?

On this passage (ver. 11) Alford observes:---

'It would not be clear from this passage alone 5),---'This they willingly are ignorant of, etc. whether St. Peter regarded the coming of the Lord as likely to occur in the life of these his readers or not; but as interpreted by the analogy of his other expressions on the same subject, it would appear that he did.

Doubtless he did; and so did St. Paul, and St. James, and St. John, and all the apostolic church; and they believed it on the highest authority, the word of their divine Master and Lord.

THE PAROUSIA IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

It is no part of our plan to discuss the difficult and still unsettled questions respecting the genuineness and authenticity of the Second Epistle of Peter and the unsolved problem of the second chapter. We might perhaps, in view of the difficulties which it presents in its eschatological teaching, decline to accept its authority, but we accept it as it stands, honestly believing that it righteousness. bears indubitable internal evidence of apostolic origin.

to the Neronian persecution, which by a few years It appears to have been written at no great interval after preceded the calamities connected with the Jewish wars the first epistle, and very shortly before the death of the apostle (chap. i. 14). Alford gives the date conjecturally, A.D. 68.

Scoffers In 'The Last Days.'

2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.---'Knowing this first, that there shall sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? 1 Pet. v. 4.---'And when the chief Shepherd is For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

The *scoffers* referred to in this passage are no doubt the same persons whose character is described in the preceding chapter. Disbelief of God's promises and threatenings, and especially of His coming judgment, is the characteristic of these evil men of 'the last times.' We are reminded by this description of these unbelievers, of our Lord's prediction with reference to the same period,---'Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he is on the very eve of arriving. Would the apostle speak find faith in the land?' (Luke xviii. 8.) It is worthy of notice also that the apostle, in replying to their argument derived from the stability of the creation, refers to the catastrophe of the deluge as an illustration of the power of God to destroy the wicked: the very same illustration employed by our Lord in referring to the state of things at the Parousia (Matt. xxiv. 37-39.)

> It must not be forgotten that St. Peter is speaking, 'last days' were the days then present (1 Pet. i. 5, 20), and the scoffers are spoken of as actually existing (chap. iii.

Eschatology Of St. Peter

2 Pet. iii. 7, 10-12.---'But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth

The imagery here employed by the apostle naturally

THE PAROUSIA IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

2 Pet. iii. 8, 9.---'But, beloved, be not ignorant of this suggests the idea of the total dissolution by fire of the whole substance and fabric of the material creation, one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand not the earth only but the system to which it belongs; years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is and this no doubt is the popular notion of the final not slack concerning his promise, as some men count consummation which is expected to terminate the slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing present order of things. A little reflection, however, that any should perish, but that all should come to and a better acquaintance with the symbolic language repentance? of prophecy, will be sufficient to modify such a Few passages have suffered more from misconstruction than this, which has been made to conclusion, and to lead to an interpretation more in accordance with the analogy of similar descriptions speak a language inconsistent with its obvious intention, in the prophetic writings. First, it is evident on the and even incompatible with a strict regard to veracity. face of the question that this universal conflagration, There is probably an allusion here to the words of the as it may be called, was regarded by the apostle as psalmist, in which he contrasts the brevity of human life on the eve of taking place,---'The end of all things is with the eternity of the divine existence,---'A thousand at hand' (1 Pet. iv. 7). The consummation was so near years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past' (Ps. xc. 4). It is a grand and impressive thought, and quite in that it is described as an event to be 'looked for, and unison with the sentiment of the apostle,---'One day is hastened unto' (ver. 12.) It follows, therefore, that it could not be the literal destruction or dissolution of with the Lord as a thousand years.' But surely it would be the height of absurdity to regard this sublime poetic the globe and the created universe concerning which the spirit of prophecy here speaks. But that there was image as a calculus for the divine measurement of at the moment when this epistle was written an awful time, or as giving us a warrant for wholly disregarding and almost immediate catastrophe impending; that the definitions of time in the predictions and promises of long-predicted 'day of the Lord' was actually at hand; God. Yet it is not unusual to quote these words as an argument or excuse for the total disregard of the element of time in the prophetic writings. Even in cases where a certain time is specified in the prediction, or where such limitations as 'shortly,' or 'speedily,' or 'at hand' are expressed, the passage before us is appealed to in justification of an arbitrary treatment of such notes of time, so that soon may mean late, and near may mean *distant*, and *short* may mean *long*, and *vice* versa. When it is pointed out that certain predictions must, according to their own terms, be fulfilled within a limited time, the reply is, 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' Thus we find an eminent critic committing himself to such a statement as the following: 'The apostles for the most part wrote and spoke of [the Parousia] as soon to appear, not, however, without many and sufficient hints of an Secondly, we must interpret these symbols according interval, and that no short one, first to elapse.' Another, alluding to St. Paul's prediction in 2 Thess. ii., remarks that 'it tells us that while the coming of the Lord was then near, it was also remote.' These are specimens of what passes for exegesis in not a few commentators of high repute.

that the day did come, both speedily and suddenly; that it came 'as a thief in the night;' that a fiery deluge of wrath and judgment overwhelmed the guilty land and nation of Israel, destroying and dissolving its earthly things and its heavenly things, that is to say, its temporal and spiritual institutions,---is a fact indelibly imprinted on the page of history. The time for the fulfilment of these predictions was now come, and when the apostle wrote it was to declare that it was the 'last time,' and the very taunts of the scoffers were verifying the fact. We are therefore brought to the inevitable conclusion that it was the final catastrophe of Judea and Jerusalem, predicted by our Lord in His prophecy on the Mount of Olives and so frequently referred to by the apostles, to which St. Peter alludes in the symbolic imagery which seems to imply the dissolution of the material universe. to the analogy of Scripture. The language of prophecy is the language of poetry, and is not to be taken in a strictly literal sense. Happily there is no lack of parallel descriptions in the ancient prophets, and there is scarcely a figure here used by St. Peter of which we may not find examples in the Old Testament, and thus be furnished with a key to the meaning of like symbols in It is surely unnecessary to repudiate in the strongest manner such a non-natural method of interpreting the the New.

The Certainty Of The Approaching Consummation

language of Scripture. It is worse than ungrammatical and unreasonable, it is immoral. It is to suggest that

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God has two weights and two measures in His dealings to tell 'what manner of time the Spirit of Christ in the prophets may signify. It seems to imply that a day may not mean a day, nor a thousand years a thousand years, but that either may be the other. If this were so, there could be no interpretation of prophecy possible; it would be deprived of all precision, and even of all credibility; for it is manifest that if there could be such ambiguity and uncertainty in respect to time, there might be no a thief' [in the night]. less ambiguity and uncertainty in respect to everything else.

The Scriptures themselves, however, give no countenance to such a method of interpretation. Faithfulness is one of the attributes most frequently divine *faithfulness* is that which the apostle in this very passage affirms. To taunt of the scoffers who impugn the faithfulness of God, and ask, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' he answers, 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness;' there is no fickleness nor forgetfulness in Him; the lapse of time does not invalidate His word; His promise stands sure whether for the near or the distant, for to- day or to-morrow, or a thousand years to come. To Him on day and a thousand years are alike: that is to say, the promise which falls due in a day will be performed punctually, and the promise which falls due in a thousand years will be performed with equal punctuality. Length of time makes no difference to Him. He will not falsify the promise which has only a day to run, nor forget the promise which has reference to a thousand years hence. Long or short, a day or an age, does not affect His faithfulness. 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise;' He 'keepeth truth for ever.' But the apostle does not say that when the Lord promises a thing for to-day He may not fulfill His promise for a thousand years: that would be slackness; that would be a breach of promise. He does not say that because God is infinite and everlasting, therefore He reckons with a different arithmetic from ours, or speaks to us in a double sense, or uses two different weights and measures in His dealings with mankind. The very reverse is the truth. As Hengstenberg justly observes: 'He who speaks to men must speak according to human conceptions, or else state that he has not done so.'

It is evident that the object of the apostle in this passage is to give his readers the strongest assurance that the impending catastrophe of the last days was on the

very eve of fulfillment. The veracity and faithfulness of with men, and that in His mode of reckoning there is an God were the guarantees for the punctual performance ambiguity and variableness which makes it impossible of the promise. To have intimated that time was a variable quantity in the promise of God would have been to stultify his argument and neutralise his own teaching, which was, that 'the Lord is not slack concerning his promise.

Suddenness Of The Parousia

2 Pet. iii. 10.---'But the day of the Lord will come as

This statement fixes with precision the event to which the apostle refers as 'the day of the Lord.' It is familiar to us from the frequent allusions made to it in other parts of the New Testament. Our Lord had declared, 'In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. ascribed to the 'covenant- keeping God,' and the He had cautioned His disciples to watch, saying, 'If the goodman of the house had know in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched;' implying that His own coming would be stealthy and unexpected as a thief in the night (Matt. xxiv. 43). St. Paul had said to the Thessalonians, 'Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night' (1 Thess. v. 2). And again, St. John, in the Apocalypse, had written, 'Behold, I come as a thief' (Rev. xvi. 15). Since, then the allusions in these passages undoubtedly refer to the impending catastrophe of Judea and Jerusalem, we conclude that this also is the event referred to in the passage before us.

Attitude Of The Primitive Christians In Relation To The Parousia

2 Pet. iii. 12.---'Looking for and hasting into the coming of the day of God.'

That 'the day of God,' 'the day of Christ,' and 'the day of the Lord, are synonymous expressions, having reference to the selfsame event, is too obvious to require proof. Here we find again what we have so often found before---the attitude of expectancy and that sense of the imminent nearness of the Parousia which are so characteristic of the apostolic age. It is incredible that all this was based on a mere delusion, and that the whole Christian church, with the apostles, and the divine Founder of Christianity Himself, were all involved in one common error. Words have no meaning if a statement like this may refer to some event still future, and perchance distant, which cannot be 'looked for' because it is not within view, nor 'hasted unto,' because it is indefinitely remote.

The New Heavens And New Earth.

THE PAROUSIA IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

2 Pet. iii. 13.---'Nevertheless we, according to his of God; the consequent trial of the faith and patience promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein of the saints; their appeal to the judgment of God for redress; and the exhortation to diligence: 'Men ought dwelleth righteousness.'

always to pray, and not to faint' (Luke xviii. 1-8). The catastrophe about to take place was to be succeeded by a new creation. The death-pangs of the old Allusion Of St. Peter To St. Paul's Teaching Concerning are the birth-throes of the new. The old Jerusalem was The Parousia to give place to the new Jerusalem; the kingdom of this 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.---'Even as our beloved brother Paul world to the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath It may be a question whether by the new heavens and written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in a new earth the apostle means a new order of things them of these things; in which are some things hard here among men or a holy and perfect heavenly state? to be understood, which they that are unlearned and It may also be asked, To what promise does the apostle unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto refer when he says, 'According to his promise'? Alford their own destruction. suggests Isa. lxv. 17, 'For, behold, I create new heavens This allusion to the epistles of St. Paul suggests and a new earth, etc., and this may be correct. But we several important inferences. are rather disposed to think that the apostle has in It proves the existence and general circulation of his mind 'the new heaven and the new earth' of the many epistles written by St. Paul. Apocalypse, where we find righteousness set forth as It recognizes their inspiration and co-ordinate the distinguishing characteristic of the new aeon. The authority with the scriptures of the Old Testament. new Jerusalem is the *holy* city, into which 'there shall in It adverts to the fact that St. Paul, in all his epistles, no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever speaks of the coming of the Lord. worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. It is no more It specifies one epistle in particular in which distinct improbable that St. Peter should refer to the writings of allusion is made to the subject. the Apostle John than to those of the Apostle Paul.

It acknowledges certain difficulties connected The Nearness Of The Parousia A Motive To Diligence. with the eschatology of the New Testament, and the 2 Pet. iii. 14.---'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things be diligent that ye may be found of perversion of the apostolic teaching by some ignorant and fickle-minded persons. We may consider briefly him in peace, without spot, and blameless. one or two questions,---This exhortation clearly indicates the expectation

To which epistle of St. Paul is reference here made as specially bearing upon the subject of the Parousia? (Ver. 15.) We are disposed to concur with Dr. Alford in the opinion that the reference is to the Epistles to the Thessalonians. The only difficulty lies in the statement Believers Not To Be Discouraged On Account Of The 'hath written unto *you*,' for there is no reason to think that St. Peter addressed this epistle to the Thessalonians. But perhaps the expression means no more than that 2 Pet. iii. 15.---'And account that the long-suffering all the epistles of St. Paul were the common property of the church at large; otherwise the Epistles to the The apparent long delay of the anxiously looked-Thessalonians answer well to this description of their contents by St. Peter. We find in them allusions to the coming of the Lord; to the suddenness of His coming; to the nearness of His coming; to the deliverance and rest which His coming would bring to the suffering disciples of Christ; and to the duty of diligence and vigilance in

of the Parousia as at hand. Its nearness is a motive to diligence, preparedness to meet the Lord. It is not *death* that is here anticipated, but to be found by the Lord watching, 'with their loins girt, and their lamps burning.' Seeming Delay Of The Parousia. of our Lord is salvation. for coming of the Lord must have been disquieting to persecuted Christians longing for the expected hour of relief and redress. Their cry went up to heaven, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true?' Yet this very delay had a gracious aspect; it was 'long-suffering,' makroqumia; not 'slackness,' but 'unwillingness that any should perish.'

the prospect of the event. Exactly in accordance with this is our Lord's parable of What are the 'things hard to be understood,' the importunate widow, which has relation to this very either in the epistles or in the matters now under case. There were have the same delay in the execution consideration? It has often been pointed out that the of judgment through the long-suffering [makroqumia] proper antecedent to which in the second clause of

the sixteenth verse is not 'epistles,' but 'things;' en oiz agreeing, not with epistoluz, but with toutwn. Now, however, it appears, since Tischendorf's discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus, that the reading of the three most ancient MSS. is aiz and not oiz, making epistles had occasion to remark how the New Testament writers the proper antecedent to 'which.' It does not, however, greatly affect the sense which of the two readings we may adopt. It is quite clear that the difficulties alluded to by St. Peter were in those portions of St. Paul's epistles which treated of the Parousia. We know how much the subject was misapprehended by the Thessalonians themselves; and we have abundant experience since then to prove how much the whole eschatology of the New Testament has been 'hard to be understood,' and visible creation. Notably this is the case in the Second has been 'wrested' by many even to this day. It is no Epistle of St. Peter; and the same might also be said of marvel, then, that much difficulty should have been felt by the primitive Christians as to the true interpretation of many of the prophetic declarations respecting the passage now before us: 'the world passeth away'. To coming of the Lord, the close of the age, the changing of the living, the resurrection of the dead, the end of all things, etc. That *some* should distort and pervert vii. 31, with reference to the same event [paragei gar to the apostolic teaching on such subjects was only too probable, and we know as a matter of fact that they did. It was needful, therefore, to exhort believers to beware of being 'led away with the error of the wicked.

THE PAROUSIA IN THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

Commentators are much divided on the questions, When, where, by whom, and to whom, this epistle was written. There is no evidence on the subject except that which may be found in the epistle itself, and this gives ample scope for difference in opinion. Lange, who doubts the authenticity of the epistle, says that it 'has quite the air of having been composed before the destruction of Jerusalem;' and Lücke, who maintains its authenticity, is also of the opinion 'that it may gave been written *shortly* antichrist cometh, even now are there many antichrists; before that event.' We think any candid mind will be satisfied, after a careful study of the internal evidence, and, secondly, that it was written on the very eve of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is impossible to overlook the fact, which everywhere meets us in the epistle, that the writer believes himself on the verge of a solemn embodied as a person,---'the antichrist.' crisis, for the arrival of which he urges his readers to be prepared. This is in harmony with all the apostolic epistles, and proves incontestably that their authors all alike shared in the belief of the near approach of the great consummation.

The World Passing Away: The Last Hour Come

1 John ii. 17, 18.---'And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. . . . Little children, it is the last time' [hour].

We have frequently in the course of this investigation speak of 'the end' as fast approaching. We have also seen what that expression refers to. Not to the close of human history, nor the final dissolution of the material creation; but the close of the Jewish aeon or dispensation, and the abolition and removal of the order of things instituted and ordained by divine wisdom under that economy. This great consummation is often spoken of in language which might seem to imply the total destruction of the our Lord's prophetic language in Matt. xxiv. 24.

We find the same symbolic form of speech in the the apprehension of the apostle it was already 'passing away;' the very expression used by St. Paul in 1 Cor. schma tou kosmou toutou] 'the fashion of this world is passing away.

The impression of the Apostle John of the nearness of 'the end' seems, if possible, more vivid than of the other apostles. Perhaps when he wrote he stood still nearer to the crisis than they. In this view it is worthy of notice that there is a marked gradation in the language of the different epistles. The last times become the last days, and now the last days become the last hour [escath wra esti]. The period of expectation and delay was now over, and the decisive moment was at hand.

The Antichrist Come, A Proof Of Its Being The Last Hour

1 John ii. 18.---'And as ye have heard that [the] whereby we know it is the last hour' [wra].

In this passage for the first time 'the dreaded name' first, that the epistle is a genuine production of St. John; of antichrist rises before us. This fact of itself is sufficient to prove the comparatively late date of the epistle. That which appears in the epistles of St. Paul as a shadowy abstraction has now taken a concrete shape, and appears

> It is certainly remarkable, considering the place which this name has filled in theological and ecclesiastical literature, how very small a space it occupies in the New Testament. Except in the epistles of St. John, the name antichrist never occurs in the apostolic writings. But though the *name* is absent, the *thing* is not unknown. St. John evidently speaks of 'the antichrist' as an idea

familiar to his readers,---a power whose coming was appearing. They are the bitter enemies of the Gospel; anticipated, and whose presence was an indication they are apostates from the faith; they belong to the last that 'the last hour' had come. 'Ye have heard that the days. These are marks of identity too numerous and antichrist cometh; even now are there many antichrists; striking to be accidental; and we are therefore justified whereby we know that it is the last hour. in concluding that the antichrist of St. John is identical

We expect, then, to find traces of this expectationwith the apostasy predicted by St. Paul and St. Peter. Antichrist Not A Person, But A Principle --predictions of the coming antichrist---in other parts 1 John ii. 18.---'Even now are there many antichrists.' of the New Testament. And we are not disappointed. In the opinion of some commentators the name It is natural to look, in the first place, to our Lord's 'the antichrist' is supposed to designate a particular eschatological discourse on the Mount of Olives for some intimation of this coming danger and the time of individual, the incarnation and embodiment of enmity to the Lord Jesus Christ; and as no such person has its appearance. We find notices in that discourse of 'false hitherto appeared in history, they have concluded that christs and false prophets' (Matt. xxiv. 5, 11, 24), and we his manifestation is still future, but that the personal are ready to conclude that these must mean the same evil power designated by St. John the antichrist. The antichrist may be expected immediately before the 'end of the world.' This seems to have been the opinion of Dr. resemblance of the name favours this supposition; and Alford, who says:- -the period of their appearance,--- on the eve of the final 'According to this view we still look for the man of catastrophe, seems to increase the probability almost to sin, in the fulness of the prophetic sense, to appear, and certainty. that immediately before the coming of the Lord. There is, however, a formidable objection to this

There is here, however, a strange confounding of conclusion, viz. that the false christs and false prophets things which are entirely different,---'the man of sin' alluded to by our Lord seem to be mere Jewish impostors, trading on the credulity of their ignorant dupes, or and 'the apostasy;' the former undoubtedly a person, as we have already seen; the latter a principle, or fanatical enthusiasts, the spawn of that hot-bed of *heresy*, manifesting itself in a multitude of persons. It is religious and political frenzy which Jerusalem became in impossible, with this declaration of St. John before us,here last days. We find the actual men vividly portrayed --'Even now are there *many* antichrists,'---to regard the in the passages of Josephus, and we cannot recognise in antichrist as a single individual. It is true that in every them the features of the antichrist as drawn by St. John. individual who held the antichristian error, antichrist They were the product of Judaism in its corruption, might be said to be personified; but this is a very and not of Christianity. But the antichrist of St. John is different thing from saying that the error is incarnate manifestly of Christian origin. This is certain from the and embodied in one particular persona as its head and testimony of the apostle himself: 'They went out from representative. The expression 'many antichrists' proves us, but they were not of us, etc. (ver. 19). This proves that the name is not the exclusive designation of any that the antichristian opponents of the Gospel must individual. at some time have made a profession of Christianity, and afterwards have become apostates from the faith. But the most common and popular interpretation is that which makes the name antichrist refer to the It cannot indeed be said to be impossible that the false Papacy. From the time of the Reformation this has been christs and false prophets of the last days of Jerusalem the favourite hypothesis of Protestant commentators; could have been apostates from Christianity; but there nor is it difficult to understand why it should have been is no evidence to show this either in the prophecy of our so. There is a strong family likeness among all systems Lord or in the history of the time. of superstition and corrupt religion; and no doubt much On the other hand, in the apostolic notices of the of the Papal system may be designated antichristian; but it is a very different thing to say that the antichrist of St. John is intended to describe the pope or the Papal system. Alford decidedly rejects this hypothesis:---

predicted apostasy this feature of its origin is distinctly marked. We have already seen how St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. John all agree in their description of 'the falling away' of the last days. (See Conspectus of passages 'It cannot be disguised,' he remarks, in treating of relating to the Apostasy, p. 251). Nor can there be any reasonable doubt that the *apostates* of the two former this very point, 'that in several important particulars the prophetic requirements are very far from being fulfilled. apostles are identical with the *antichrist* of the last. They I will only mention two,---one subjective, the other are alike in character, in origin, and in the time of their

THE PAROUSIA IN THE EPISTLE OF JOHN

objective. In the characteristic of 2 Thess. ii. 4 ("who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God," etc.) the pope does not, and never did, fulfil the prophecy. Allowing all the striking coincidences with the latter part of the verse which have been so abundantly adduced, it never can be shown that he fulfils the former part---nay, so far is he from it, that the abject adoration of and submission to legomenoi qeoi and sebasmata person, but a principle, or heresy, manifesting itself in (all that is called God and that is worshipped) has ever been one of his most notable peculiarities. The second objection, of an external and historical character, is even more decisive. If the Papacy be antichrist, then has the manifestation been made, and endured now for nearly 1500 years, and yet that day of the Lord is not come Son of God. which, by the terms of our prophecy, such manifestation is immediately to precede.

But the language of the apostle himself is decisive against such an application of the name antichrist. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how such an interpretation could have taken root in the face of his own express declarations. The antichrist of St. John is not a *person*, nor a *succession* of persons, but a *doctrine*, or heresy, clearly noted and described. More than this, it is declared to be *already existing and manifested* in the apostle's own days: 'Even NOW are there many antichrists;' 'this is that *spirit of antichrist*, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already *is it in the world*' (1 John vi. 18; iv. 3). This ought to be decisive for all who bow to the authority of the Word of God. The hypothesis of an antichrist embodied in an individual still to come has not basis in Scripture; it is a fiction of the imagination, and not a doctrine of the Word of God.

Marks Of The Antichrist

1 John ii. 19.---'They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us?

1 John ii. 22.---'Who is a [the] liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is [the] antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son?

1 John iv. 1.---'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1 John iv. 3.---'Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come: and even now already is it in the world.

2 John, ver. 7.---'Many deceivers are entered into the

world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is [the] deceiver and [the] antichrist.

Here we may be said to have a full-length portrait of the antichrist, or, as we should rather say, the antichristian heresy or apostasy. From this description it distinctly appears,---

1. That the antichrist was not an individual, or a many individuals.

That the antichrist or antichrists were apostates from the faith of Christ (ver. 19).

That their characteristic error consisted in the denial of the Messiahship, the divinity, and incarnation of the

That the antichristian apostates described by St. John may possibly be the same as those denominated by our Lord 'false christs and false prophets' (Matt. xxiv. 5, 11, 24), but certainly answer to those alluded to by St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Jude.

All the allusions to the antichristian apostasy connect its appearance with the 'Parousia,' and with 'the last days' or close of the aeon or Jewish dispensation. That is to say, it is regarded as near, and almost already present. Doubtless, if we possessed fuller historical information concerning that period we should be better able to verify the predictions and allusions which we find in the New Testament; but we have quite enough of evidence to justify the conclusion that all came to pass according to the Scriptures. Whether the false prophets spoken of by Josephus as infesting the last agonies of the Jewish commonwealth are identical with the false prophets of our Lord's prediction and the antichrist of St. John, it is not easy to determine. But the testimony of the apostle himself is decisive on the question of the antichrist. Here he is at the same time both prophet and historian, for he records the fact that 'even now are there many antichrists;' 'many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Anticipation Of The Parousia

1 John ii. 28.---'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' 1 John iii. 2.---'We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' 1 John iv. 7.---'That we may have boldness in the day of judgment.' In these exhortations and counsels St. John is in perfect accord with the other apostles, whose constant admonitions to the Christian churches of their time urged the habitual expectation of the Parousia, and therefore fidelity and constancy in the midst of danger and suffering. The language of St. John proves,---

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That the apostolic Christians were exhorted to live beginning, the middle, and the end of the Book. It is in the constant expectation of the coming of the Lord. the first thing in Matthew, the last in Revelation. The That this event was regarded by them as the time of Gospel itself is called 'the gospel of the kingdom;' the the revelation of Christ in His glory, and the beatification disciples are the 'heirs of the kingdom;' the great object of his faithful disciples. of hope and expectation is 'the coming of the kingdom.' That the Parousia was also the period of 'the day of It is from this that Christ Himself derives His title of

judgment.

THE PAROUSIA IN THE EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE

Into the questions which relate to the genuineness the New Testament. and authenticity of this epistle it does not devolve upon But while thus pervading in the New Testament, us to enter. We have to consider it only in relation to the idea of the kingdom of God is not peculiar to it; it the Parousia. Internal evidence shows that it belongs belongs no less to the Old. We find traces of it in all the to 'the last days.' The faith and love of the early church prophets from Isaiah to Malachi; it is the theme of some had declined, and error, division, and corruption had of the loftiest psalms of David; it underlies the annals of come in like a flood, so that it became necessary for the ancient Israel; its roots run back to the earliest period of apostle to exhort the brethren 'earnestly to contend for Jewish national existence; it is, in fact the raison detre of the faith which was once delivered to the saints? that people; for, to embody and develop this conception As in 2 Peter ii., so we have in this brief epistle a of the kingdom of God, Israel was constituted and kept photograph of the heresiarchs denominated by St. in being as a distinct nationality.

John 'the antichrist' and by St. Paul 'the apostasy.' The

Going back to the primordial germ of the Jewish people we find the earliest intimation of the purpose They were apostates from the faith (ver. 4). of God to 'form a people for himself' in the original Their error consists in the denial of God and of promise made to their great progenitor, Abraham: 'I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, Theyaremarkedbythefollowingcharacteristics:--- It and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed' (Gen. xii. 2, 3). This promise was soon after solemnly renewed in the covenant made by God with Abraham: 'In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates' (Gen. xv. 18). This covenant relation between God and the seed of Abraham is renewed and more fully developed in the declaration subsequently made to Abraham: 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and **APPENDIX TO PART II** I will be their God' (Gen. xvii. 7, 8). As a token and seal of this covenant the rite of circumcision was imposed upon Abraham and his posterity, by which every male There is no phrase of more frequent occurrence in of that race was marked and signed as a subject of the God of Abraham (Gen. xvii. 9-14).

resemblance cannot be mistaken. Christ. is quite evident that this description, which tallies so closely with that of 2 Peter ii. must have been derived from the same common source. But the mournful fact stands forth plain and palpable, that a fearful degeneracy and corruption of morals had infected the social life of 'the last days.' It is most suggestive to compare the moral state of the chosen people in this closing period of their national history with that described in the words of the last of the Old Testament prophets. The nation was now in that very condition which is there declared to be ripe for judgment. The second Elijah had failed to turn the people to righteousness, and now the Lord, the Messenger of the covenant, was about to come suddenly to His temple; the great and dreadful day of the Lord was at hand; and God was about to smite the land with the curse. (Mal. iv. 5, 6.) Note A The Kingdom of Heaven, or of God. the New Testament than 'the kingdom of heaven,' or 'the

kingdom of God.' We meet with it everywhere---in the More than four centuries after this adoption of the

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'King.' The kingdom of God, then, is the Ungodliness, Sensuality, Denial of God and of Christ, Animalism, Lawlessness and Insubordination, Hypocrisy, Murmuring, Boasting, Scoffing, Schismatical separation, Destitution of the Holy Spirit. very kernel of children of Abraham as the covenant people of God, we of the ceremonial apparatus of worship set up in the find them in a state of vassalage in Egypt, groaning under wilderness: 'Jehovah caused a royal tent to be erected the cruel bondage to which they were subjected. We are in the centre of the encampment (where the pavilions told that God 'heard their groaning, and remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. He raised up a champion in the person of Moses, and instructed him to say to the children of Israel, 'I am the innermost of which was the royal throne, supported Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians; . . . and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, etc. (Exod. vi. 6, 7). After the miraculous redemption from Egypt, the table was spread with bread and wine, as the royal table; covenant relation between Jehovah and the children of Israel was publicly and solemnly ratified at Mount Sinai. Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, ... Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all priests, and an holy nation' (Exod. xix. 3-6).

It is at this period that we may regard the Theocratic kingdom as formally inaugurated. A horde of liberated slaves were constituted a nation; they received a divine law for their government, and the complete frame the civil regulations, even the most minute, were so of their civil and ecclesiastical polity was organised and constructed by divine authority. Every step of the process by which a childless old man grew into a nation reveals a divine purpose and a divine plan. Never was any nationality so formed; none ever existed for such a purpose; none ever bore such a relationship to God; none ever possessed such a miraculous history; none of the true God.' was ever exalted to such glorious privilege; none ever fell by such a tremendous doom.

knowledge of the living and true God in the earth. For this purpose the nation was constituted, and brought into a unique relation to the Most High, such as not His subjects; while all the institutions and laws which were imposed upon them had reference to God, not only as the Creator of all things, but as the Sovereign of the nation. To express and carry out this idea of

of all kings and chiefs were usually erected), and to be fitted up with all the splendour of royalty, as a moveable palace. It was divided into three apartments, in the by golden cherubs; and the footstool of the throne, a gilded ark containing the tables of the law, the Magna Charta of church and state. In the anteroom a gilded and precious incense was burned. The exterior room or court might be considered the royal culinary apartment, We read that 'in the third month, when the children of and there music was performed, like the music at the festive tables of Eastern monarchs. God made choice of the Levites for His courtiers, state officers, and palace guards; and of Aaron for the chief officer of the court and first minister of state. For the maintenance of these officers He assigned one of the tithes which the Hebrews were to pay as rent for the use of the land. Finally, He required all the Hebrew males of a suitable age to repair to His palace every year, on the three great annual festivals, with presents, to render homage to the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of their King; and as these days of renewing their homage were to be celebrated with festivity and joy, the second tithe was expended in providing the entertainments necessary for those occasions. In short, every religious duty was made a matter of political obligation; and all founded upon the relation of the people to God, and so interwoven with their religious duties, that the Hebrew could not separate his God and his King, and in every law was reminded equally of both. Consequently the nation, so long as it had a national existence, could not entirely lose the knowledge, or discontinue the worship,

Such was the government instituted by Jehovah among the children of Israel---a true Theocracy; the There can be no doubt that the nation of Israel was only real Theocracy that ever existed upon earth. Its designated to be the depositary and conservator of the intense and exclusive national character deserves particular notice. It was the distinctive privilege of the children of Abraham, and of them alone: 'The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto other people ever sustained. To secure this purpose himself, above all people that are upon the face of the the Lord Himself became their King, and they became earth' (Deut. vii. 6). 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth' (Amos iii. 2). 'He hath not dealt so with any nation' (Ps. cxlvii. 20). The Most High was the Lord of the whole earth, but He was the King of Israel in an altogether peculiar sense. He was their covenanted the kingship of God over Israel is the manifest object Ruler; they were His covenanted people. They came

151 under the most sacred and solemn obligations to be to whom the Most High was to give the heathen for His loyal subjects to their invisible Sovereign, to worship inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His Him alone, and to be faithful to His law (Deut. xxvi. 16possession. From this period the *mediatorial* character 18). As the reward of obedience they had the promise of the Theocracy begins to be more clearly indicated:-of unbounded prosperity and national greatness; they -there is a distinction made between the Lord and His were to be 'high above all nations in praise and in name Anointed, between the Father and the Son. We meet and in honour' (Deut. xxvi. 19); while, on the other with the titles Messiah, Son of God, Son of David, hand, the penalties of disloyalty and unfaithfulness King of Zion, given to One to whom the kingdom were correspondingly dreadful; the curse of the broken belongs, and who is destined to triumph and to reign. covenant would overtake them in a signal and terrible The psalms called Messianic, especially the 72nd and retribution, to which there should be no parallel in the 110th, are sufficient to prove that in the time of David history of mankind, past or to come. (Deut. xxviii.) there were clear prophetic announcements of a coming It is only reasonable to presume that this marvellous King, whose rule was to be beneficent and glorious; in experiment of a Theocratic government must have had whom all nations were to be blessed; who was to unite for its object something worthy of its divine author. in Himself the twofold offices of Priest and King; who is That object was moral, rather than material; the glory declared to be David's Lord; and is represented as sitting of God and the good of men, rather than the political at the right hand of God 'until his enemies be made his or temporal advancement of a tribe or nation. It was footstool.'

Henceforth through all the prophecies of the Old Testament we find the character and person of earth, which otherwise might have been wholly lost; the Theocratic King more and more fully delineated, though in the description are blended together diverse and apparently inconsistent elements. Sometimes the coming King and His kingdom are depicted in the most from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch to grow out of It is instructive to trace the growth and progressive his roots, and under the conduct of this scion of the house of David all evil is to disappear and all goodness to triumph. The wolf is to dwell with the lamb and the nor destroy in all God's holy mountain, for the earth The people on whom this unequalled privilege was shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea' (Isa. xi. 1-9). The loftiest names of honour and dignity are ascribed to the coming Prince; He is the 'Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there is to be no end.' He is to sit upon the throne of David, and to govern his

no doubt, in the first place, an expedient to keep alive the knowledge and worship of the One true God in the and, secondly, notwithstanding its intense and exclusive spirit of nationalism, the Theocratic system carried in its bosom the germ of a universal religion, and thus was a great and important stage in the education of the attractive and glowing colours,---'a Rod is to spring human race. development of the Theocratic idea in the history of the Jewish people, and to observe how, as it loses its political significance, it becomes more and more moral leopard to lie down with the kid: 'They shall not hurt and spiritual in its character. conferred showed themselves unworthy of it. Their fickleness and faithlessness neutralised at every step the favour of their invisible Sovereign. Their demand for a king, 'that they might be like all the nations,' was a virtual rejection of their heavenly Ruler. (1 Sam. viii. 7, 19, 20.) Nevertheless their request was granted, provision for such a contingency having been made in kingdom with judgment and with justice for ever (Isa. the original framing of the Theocracy. The human king ix. 6, 7).

was regarding as the viceroy of the divine King, and thus But side by side with these brilliant prospects lie he became a type of the real, though unseen, Sovereign dark and gloomy scenes of sorrow and suffering, of to whom he, as well as the nation, owed allegiance. judgment and wrath. The coming King is spoken of as

It is at this point that we note the appearance of a a 'root out of a dry ground;' as 'despised and rejected;' new phase in the Theocratic system. If we regard David as 'a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;' as as the author of the second Psalm, it was as early as 'wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our his time that a prophetic announcement was made iniquities;' 'brought like a lamb to the slaughter;' 'dumb like a sheep in the hand of the shearers;' 'cut off out concerning a King, the Lord's Anointed, the Son of God, against whom the kings of the earth were to set of the land of the living' (Isa. liii.). He is described as themselves and the rulers to take counsel together, but coming to Jerusalem 'lowly' and riding upon an ass, and

upon a colt the foal of an ass' (Zech. ix. 9); Messiah is to be cut off, but not for Himself (Dan. ix. 26); and among the latest prophetic utterances are some of the most ominous and sombre of all. The Lord, the Messenger of King did not fail to announce His presence and His the covenant, the expected King, is to come: 'But who may abide the day of his coming? That day shall burn as a furnace; it is the great and dreadful day of the Lord' (Mal. iii. 1, 2; iv. 1, 5).

King and the kingdom: 'The King of glory' was also 'the history of the chosen people for number and splendour, Man of sorrows;' 'the acceptable year of the Lord' was also 'the day of vengeance of our God.'

for the expectation that the invisible Theocratic King would one day be revealed, and would dwell with men upon the earth; that He would come, in the nation, and to rally His people around His throne. The opening chapters of St. Luke's gospel indicate the views entertained by pious Israelites respecting the coming kingdom of the Messiah. It was understood by them to have a special relation to Israel. 'He shall be great,' said the angel of the annunciation, 'and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the house of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.' 'Rabbi!' exclaimed the guileless Nathanael, as the God suddenly flashed upon him through the disguise of the young Galilean peasant, 'thou are the Son of God, thou are the King of Israel!' (John i. 44) It is no less certain that His coming was then believed to be near, and it was eagerly expected by such holy men as Simeon, who 'waited for the consolation of Israel, and to whom it had been revealed that he should not 'see death before he had seen the Lord's anointed' (Luke ii. 25, 26). There was indeed a wide-spread belief, not only in Judea, but throughout the Roman Empire, that a great prince or monarch was about to appear in the earth, who was to inaugurate a new epoch. Of this expectation we have evidence in the Annals of Tacitus and the Pollio of Virgil. Doubtless the cherished hope of Israel had diffused itself, in a more or less vague and distorted form, throughout the neighbouring lands.

But when, in the fullness of time, the Theocratic King appeared in the midst of the covenant nation, it was not in the form which they had expected and desired. He did not fulfil their hopes of political power and national preeminence. The kingdom of God which He proclaimed was something very different from that of which they had dreamed. Righteousness and truth, purity and

goodness, were only empty names to men who coveted the honours and pleasures of this world. Nevertheless, though rejected by the nation at large, the Theocratic claims. He was preceded by a herald, the predicted Elias, John the Baptist, whom the people were constrained to acknowledge as a true prophet of God. The second Elijah announced the kingdom of God as at hand, and called This seeming paradox is explained in the New upon the nation to repent and receive their King. Next, Testament. There actually was this twofold aspect of the His own miraculous works, unexampled even in the gave conclusive evidence of His divine mission; added to which the transcendent excellence of His doctrine, Ancient prophecy had given abundant reason and the unsullied purity of His life, silenced, if they did not shame, the enmity of the ungodly. For more than three years this appeal to the heart and conscience of the nation was incessantly presented in every variety of interests of the Theocracy, to set up His kingdom in the method, but without success; until at length the chief men in the Jewish church and state, bitterly hostile to His pretensions, impeached Him before the Roman governor on the charge of making Himself a King. By their persistent and malignant clamour they procured His condemnation. He was delivered up to be crucified, and the title upon His cross bore this inscription,---

'This Is The King Of The Jews.'

This tragic event marks the final breach between the covenant nation and the Theocratic King. The covenant had often been broken before, but now it was publicly repudiated and torn in pieces. It might have been thought that the Theocracy would now be at an end; and virtually it was; but its formal dissolution was suspended for a brief space, in order that the twofold consummation of the kingdom, involving the salvation of the faithful and the destruction of the unbelieving, might be brought about at the appointed time. This twofold aspect of the Theocratic kingdom is visible in every part of its history. It was at once a success and a failure---a victory and a defeat; it brought salvation to some and destruction to others. This twofold character had been distinctly set forth in ancient prophecy, as in the remarkable oracle of Isaiah xlix. The Messiah complains, 'I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought and in vain, etc. The divine answer is, 'Thus saith the Lord, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth?

To take only one other example: we find in the Book We find these events uniformly associated together of Malachi this twofold aspect of the coming kingdom, in the New Testament,---the coming of the King, the for while 'the day that cometh' is to 'burn as a furnace,' resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the righteous and to 'consume the wicked as stubble,' 'unto you that and the wicked, the consummation of the kingdom, the fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with end of the age. Thus St. Paul, in 2 Tim. iv. 5, says, 'I charge healing in his wings' (Mal. iv. 1, 2). Notwithstanding, thee therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, the rejection of the King, and the forfeiture of who is about to judge the living and the dead at his the kingdom by the mass of the people, there was yet to appearing and His kingdom.' The coming, the judgment, be a glorious consummation of the Theocracy, bringing the kingdom, are all coincident and contemporaneous, honour and happiness to all who owned the authority of and not only so, but also nigh at hand; for the apostle the Messiah and proved dutiful and loyal to their King. says, 'Who is about to judge; . . . who shall soon judge' Have we any data by which to ascertain the period [mellontoz krinein].

It is perfectly clear, then, according to the New of this consummation? At what time may the kingdom Testament, that the consummation, or winding up, of be said to have fully come? Not at the *incarnation*, for the proclamation of Jesus ever was, 'The kingdom of the Theocratic kingdom took place at the period of the destruction of Jerusalem and the judgment of Israel. The God is *at hand*.' Not at the *crucifixion*, for the petition Theocracy had served its purpose; the experiment had of the dying thief was, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.' Not at the *resurrection*, for after been tried whether or not the covenant nation would the Lord had risen the disciples were looking for the prove loyal to their King. It had failed; Israel had rejected restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Not at the ascension, her King; and it only remained that the penalties of the nor on the day of *Pentecost*, for long after these events violated covenant should be enforced. We see the result in the ruin of the temple, the destruction of the city, we are told, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that Christ, 'after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, the effacement of the nation, and the abrogation of the sate down on the right hand of God: from henceforth law of Moses, accompanied with scenes of horror and suffering without a parallel in the history of the world. *expecting* till his enemies be made his footstool' (Heb. x. That great catastrophe, therefore, marks the conclusion 12, 13). The consummation of the kingdom, therefore, of the Theocratic kingdom. It had been from the is not coincident with the ascension, nor with the day of beginning of a strictly national character---it was the Pentecost. It is true that the Theocratic King was seated on the throne, 'on the right hand of the Majesty on high,' divine Kingship over Israel. It necessarily terminated, but He had not yet 'taken his great power.' His enemies therefore, with the termination of the national existence were not yet put down, and the full development and of Israel, when the outward and visible symbols of the divine Presence and Sovereignty passed away; when the consummation of His kingdom could not be said to have arrived until by a solemn and public judicial act house of God, the city of God, and the people of God the Messiah had vindicated the laws of His kingdom and were effaced from existence by one desolating and final crushed beneath His feet His apostate and rebellious catastrophe. This enables us to understand the language of St. Paul subjects.

when, speaking of the coming of Christ, he represents There is one point of time constantly indicated in the New Testament as the consummation of the that event as marking 'the end' [to teloz = h sunteleia tou kingdom of God. Our Lord declared that there were aiwnoz], 'when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, some among His disciples who should live to see Him even the Father' (1 Cor. xv. 24). This has caused much coming in His kingdom. This coming of the King is of perplexity to many theologians and commentators, course synonymous with the coming of the kingdom, who have seemed to regard it as derogatory to the and limits the occurrence of the event to the then divinity of the Son of God that He should resign His existing generation. That is to say, the consummation of mediatorial functions and His kingly character, and the kingdom synchronises with the judgment of Israel sink, as it were, into the position of a private person, and the destruction of Jerusalem, all being parts of one becoming a subject instead of a sovereign. But the great catastrophe. It was at that period that the Son of embarrassment has arisen from overlooking the nature man was to come in the glory of His Father, and to sit of the kingdom which the Son had administered, and upon the throne of His glory; to render a reward to His which He at length surrenders. It was the Messianic servants and retribution to His enemies (Matt. xxv. 31). kingdom: the kingdom over Israel: that peculiar and

unique government exercised over the covenant nation, God for so many ages. That relation was now dissolved, for the nation had been judged, the temple destroyed, Why should the Theocratic kingdom be continued any longer? There was nothing to administer. There was no longer a covenant nation, the covenant was broken, What more natural and proper, therefore, than at such a juncture for the Mediator to resign His mediatorial functions, and to deliver up the insignia of government into the hands from which He received them? Ages before that period the Father had invested the Son with seemed to continue, in force, the distinction between the viceregal functions of the Theocracy. It had been proclaimed, 'I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion: I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee' (Ps. ii. 6, 7). The purposes for which the Son had assumed the administration of the Theocratic government had been effected. The covenant was dissolved, its violation avenged, the enemies of Christ and of God were destroyed; the true and faithful servants were rewarded, and the Theocracy came to an end. This was surely the bringeth salvation to all men was now made manifest' fitting moment for the Mediator to resign His charge into the hands of the Father, that is to say, 'to deliver up the kingdom?

dignity of the Son. On the contrary, 'He is the Mediator of a better covenant.' The termination of the Theocratic kingdom was the inauguration of a new order, on a wider scale, and of a more enduring nature. This is family,--the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews: 'the throne of the Son of God is for ever and ever' (Heb. i. 8). The priesthood of the Son of God 'abideth continually' (chap. viii. 3); Christ 'hath now obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant' (chap. viii. 6). The Theocracy, as it bore within it the germ of a universal religion. What Israel lost was gained by the world. Whilst the Theocracy subsisted there was a favoured nation, and the Gentiles, the kingdom, holding a position of inferiority, and, like dogs, permitted as a matter of grace to eat the crumbs that fell from the master's table. The first coming of Christ did not wholly do away with this state of things; even the Gospel of the grace of God flowed at first in the old narrow channel. St. Paul recognises the fact that 'Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision,' and

our Lord Himself declared, 'I am not sent but to the lost and administered by the mediatorship of the Son of sheep of the house of Israel.' For years after the apostles had received their commission they did not understand it was sending them to the Gentiles; nor did they at and all the symbols of the divine Sovereignty removed. first regard heathen converts as admissible into the church, except as Jewish proselytes. It is true that after the conversion of Cornelius the centurion the apostles became convinced of the larger limits of the Gospel, and and Israel had ceased to exist as a distinct nationality. St. Paul everywhere proclaimed the breaking down of the barriers between the Jew and the Gentile; but it is easy to see that so long as the Theocratic nation existed, and the temple, with its priesthood and sacrifices and ritual, remained, and the Mosaic law continued, or Jew and Gentile could not be obliterated. But the barrier was effectually broken down when law, temple, city, and nation were swept away together, and the Theocracy was visibly brought to a final consummation.

That event was, so to speak, the formal and public declaration that God was no longer the God of the Jews only, but that He was now the common Father of all men; that there was no longer a favoured nation and a peculiar people, but that the grace of God 'which (Titus ii. 11); that the local and limited had expanded into the ecumenical and universal, and that in Christ Jesus 'all are one' (Gal. iii. 29). This is what St. Paul declares to But there is in all this nothing derogatory to the be the meaning of the surrender of the kingdom by the Son of God into the hands of the Father: thenceforth the exclusive relations of God to a single nation ceases, and He becomes the common Father of the whole human

'THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL' (1 Cor. xv. 28).

Note B On the 'Babylon' of 1 Peter 5:13

'The church in Babylon [she in Babylon] elected together (with you) saluteth you; and Marcus my son.'

It is not easy to convey in so many words in English we have seen, was limited, exclusive, and national; yet the precise force of the original. Its extreme brevity causes obscurity. Literally it reads thus: 'She in Babylon, co-elect, saluteth you; and Marcus my son.'

The common interpretation of the pronoun she that is to say all the world minus the Jews, were outside refers it to 'the church in Babylon;' though many eminent commentators---Bengel, Mill, Wahl, Alford, and others---understand it as referring to an individual, presumably the *wife* of the apostle. 'It is hardly probable,' remarks Alford, 'that there should be joined together in the same message of salutation an *abstraction*, spoken of thus enigmatically, and a man (Marcus my son), by name.' The weight of authority inclines to the side of

church, the weight of grammar to the side of wife. history is totally silent on the subject, and the tradition, But the more important question relates to the unquestionably very ancient, of St. Peter's episcopate identity of the place here called Babylon. It is natural there, and of his martyrdom under Nero, is embarrassed at first sight to conclude that it can be no other than with so much that is certainly fabulous, that we are the well-known and ancient metropolis of Chaldea, justified in setting the whole aside as a legend or myth. or such remnant of it as existed in the apostle's days. There is an *a priori* argument against the probability of We are ready to think it highly probable that St. Peter, St. Peter's visit to Rome, which, in the absence of any in his apostolic journeyings rivalled the apostle to the evidence to the contrary, we hold to be insurmountable. Gentiles, and went everywhere preaching the Gospel to St. Peter was the apostle of the *circumcision*; his mission the Jews, as St. Paul did to the Gentiles. was to the Jews, his own nation; we cannot conceive There appear, however, to be formidable objections it possible that he should quit his appointed sphere to this view, natural and simple as it seems. Not to of labour and 'enter into another man's line of things,' mention the improbability that St. Peter in his old age, and 'build upon another man's foundation.' St. Paul and accompanied by his wife (if we accept the opinion was in Rome in the days of Nero, and nothing can be that she is referred to in the salutation), should be found more improbable that that St. Peter, the apostle of the in a region so remote from Judea, there is the important circumcision, in extreme old age, and 'knowing that shortly he must put off his earthly tabernacle,' should consideration that Babylon was not at that time the abode of a Jewish population. Josephus states that so undertake a voyage to Rome without any special call, long before as the reign of Caligula (A.D. 37-41) the Jews and without leaving any trace of so remarkable an event

had been expelled from Babylonia, and that a general in the history of the Acts of the Apostles. massacre had taken place, by which they had been But if Rome be not the symbolical Babylon referred almost exterminated. This statement of Josephus, it is to, and if the literal Babylon be inadmissible, what other true, refers rather to the whole region called Babylonia place can be suggested with any show of probability? Is than to the city of Babylon, and that for the sufficient there no other city which might not as fitly be called the mystical Babylon as Rome? No other which has not reason that in the time of Josephus Babylon was as much an uninhabited place as it is now. Rosenmüller, similar symbolical names attached to it, both in the Old in his Biblical Geography, affirms that in the time of Testament and in the New? It seems unaccountable Strabo (that is, in the reign of Augustus) Babylon was that the very city with which the life and acts of St. so deserted that he applies to that city what an ancient Peter are more associated than any other should have poet had said of Megalopolis in Arcadia, viz. that it was been entirely ignored in this discussion. Why might 'one vast wilderness.' Basnage, also, in his History of the not the city which is called Sodom and Gomorrah be Jews, says, 'Babylon was declining in the days of Strabo, just as reasonably styled Babylon? Now Jerusalem has and Pliny represents it in the reign of Vespasian as one these mystic names affixed to it in the Scriptures, and vast unbroken solitude? no city had a better claim to the character which they Other cities have been suggested as the Babylon imply. Jerusalem also seems undoubtedly to have been referred to in the epistle: a fort so called in Egypt, the fixed residence of the apostle; Jerusalem, therefore, mentioned by Strabo; Ctesiphon on the Tigris; Seleucia, is the place from which we might expect to find him the new city which drained ancient Babylon of its writing and dating his epistles to the churches.

inhabitants: but these are mere conjectures, unsupported Whatever the city may be which the apostle styles by a particle of evidence. Babylon, it must have been the settled abode of the person

The improbability that the ancient capital of or the church associated with himself and Marcus in the Chaldaea should be the place referred to may account salutation. This is proved by the form of the expressions in great measure for the general consent which from h en babulwni, which, as Steiger shows, signifies 'a fixed the earliest times has attached a symbolical or spiritual abode by which one may be designated.' If we decide that interpretation to the name Babylon. If the question were the reference is to a person, it will follow that Babylon to be decided by the authority of great names, Rome was the place where she was domiciled, her settled place would no doubt be declared to be the mystic Babylon of abode, and this, in the case of Peter's wife, could only so designated by the apostle. But this involves the vexed be Jerusalem. The apostolic history, so far as it can be question whether St. Peter ever visited Rome, into the gleaned from the documentary evidence in the New discussion of which we cannot here enter. The gospel Testament, distinctly shows that St. Peter was habitually

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fallacy to suppose that all the apostles were evangelists Jerusalem? It certainly seems most natural to suppose like St. Paul, travelling through foreign countries and that if the judgment begins at the sanctuary, and also preaching the Gospel to all nations. Professor Burton has shown that 'it was not until fourteen years after our Lord's ascension that St. Paul traveled for the first time, and preached the Gospel to the Gentiles. Nor is there is to commence, and it appears highly probable that the any evidence that during this period the other apostles passed the confines of Judea. But what we contend for is, that St. Peter's habitual or settled abode was in Jerusalem. This will appear from a variety of circumstantial proofs.

When the Jerusalem church was scattered abroad after the persecution which arose at the time of Stephen's martyrdom, St. Peter and the rest of the apostles it was not past, but the beginning of the end was already remained in Jerusalem. (Acts viii. 1.)

apprehended and imprisoned him. (Acts xii. 3.)

When St. Paul, three years after his conversion, goes up to Jerusalem, his errand is 'to see Peter;' and he adds, 'I abode with him fifteen days' (Gal. i. 18). This implies that St. Peter's place of abode was Jerusalem.

again visits that city in company with Barnabas and (Gal. ii. 1-9). (A.D.50---Conybeare and Howson.)

It is worthy of notice that it was the presence in Antioch of certain persons who came from Jerusalem that so intimidated St. Peter as to lead him to practise an equivocal line of conduct, and to incur the censure of St. Paul. (Gal. ii. 11.) Why should the presence of Jerusalem Jews intimidate St. Peter? Presumably because, on his return to Jerusalem, he would be called to account by them: thus implying that Jerusalem was his usual Mount of Olives. residence.

If we suppose, which is most probable, that Marcus, named in this salutation, is John Mark, sister's son to Barnabas, we know that he also abode in Jerusalem. (Acts xii. 12.)

is known to us as a prominent member of the church of Jerusalem: 'a chief man among the brethren' (Acts xv. 22-32). We thus find all the persons named in the concluding portion of the epistle habitual residents in Jerusalem. Lastly, we infer from an incidental expression in chap. iv. 17 that St. Peter was in Jerusalem when he wrote this epistle. He speaks of judgment having begun at the 'house of God;' that is, as we have may be called hieroglyphic pictures representing seen, the sanctuary, the temple; and he adds, 'if it first begin at *us*, etc. Now, would he have expressed himself so if at the time of his writing he had been in Rome, or

resident in Jerusalem. It is nothing else than a popular in Babylon on the Euphrates, or in any other city than at us, both the place and the persons must be together. The vision of Ezekiel, which gives the prototype of the scene of judgment, fixes the locality where the slaughter coming doom of the city and temple was in the mind of the apostle, as well as the afflictions which were to befall the disciples of Christ. Wiesinger remarks: 'It is hardly possible that the destruction of Jerusalem was past when these words were written; if that had been so, it would hardly have been said, o kairoz tou arxasqai.' No; present; the judgment seems to have commenced, as the St. Peter was in Jerusalem when Herod Agrippa I. Lord said it would, with the disciples; and this was the sure prelude to the wrath which was coming upon the ungodly 'to the uttermost.'

But it may be objected, If St. Peter meant Jerusalem, why did he not say so without any ambiguity? There may have been, and doubtless were, prudential reasons Fourteen years after this visit to Jerusalem, St. Paul for this reserve at the time of St. Peter's writing, even as there were when St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians. Titus; and on this occasion, also, we find St. Peter there But, probably, there was no such ambiguity to his readers as there is to us. What if Jerusalem were already known and recognised among Christian believers as the mystical Babylon? Assuming, as we have a right to do, that the Apocalypse was already familiarly known to the apostolic churches, we consider it in the highest degree probable that they identified the 'great city' whose fall is depicted in that book, 'Babylon the great,' as the same whose fall is depicted in our Lord's prophecy on the

This, however, belongs to another question, the discussion of which will come in its proper place,---the identity of the Babylon of the Apocalypse. Let it suffice for the present to have made out a probable case, on wholly independent grounds, for the Babylon of St. Silvanus, or Silas, the writer or bearer of this epistle, Peter's first epistle being no other than Jerusalem.

Note C. On the Symbolism of Prophecy, with special reference to the Predictions of the Parousia.

The slightest attention to the language of the Old Testament prophecy must convince any sober-minded man that it is not to be understood according to the letter. First of all, the utterances of the prophets are poetry; and, secondly, they are Oriental poetry. They historical events in highly metaphorical imagery. It is inevitable, therefore, that hyperbole, or that which to us appears such, should enter largely into the descriptions

of the prophets. To the cold prosaic imagination of the earth removed out its place. All this imagery, it will be West, the glowing and vivid style of the prophets of observed, which if literally fulfilled would involve the the East may seem turgid and extravagant; but there is wreck of the whole material creation, is employed to set always a substratum of reality underlying the figures and forth the destruction of Babylon by the Medes. symbols, which, the more they are studied, commend Again, in Isaiah xxiv. we have a prediction of themselves the more to the judgment of the reader. judgments about to come upon the land of Israel; and Social and political revolutions, moral and spiritual among other representations of the woes which are changes, are shadowed forth by physical convulsions impending we find the following: 'The windows from and catastrophes; and if these natural phenomena affect on high are open; the foundations of the earth do shake. the imagination more powerfully still, they are not The earth is utterly broken down; the earth is clean inappropriate figures when the real importance of the dissolved; the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, events which they represent is apprehended. The earth and shall be removed like a cottage; it shall fall, and convulsed with earthquakes, burning mountains cast not rise again,' etc. All this is symbolical of the civil into the sea, the stars falling like leaves, the heavens and social convulsion about to take place in the land of on fire, the sun clothed in sackcloth, the moon turned Israel. to blood, are images of appalling grandeur, but they In Isaiah xxxiv. the prophet denounces judgments are not necessarily unsuitable representations of great on the enemies of Israel, particularly on Edom, or civil commotions,---the overturning of thrones and Idumea. The imagery which he employs of the most sublime and awful description: 'The mountains shall be dynasties, the desolations of war, the abolition of ancient systems, and great moral and spiritual revolutions. melted with the blood of the slain. All the host of heaven In prophecy, as in poetry, the material is regarded as shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall the type of the spiritual, the passions and emotions of fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a humanity find expression in corresponding signs and falling fig from the fig-tree.' 'The streams thereof shall be symptoms in the inanimate creation. Does the prophet turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, come with glad tidings? He calls upon the mountains and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall and the hills to break forth into song, and the trees not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up fore ever; from generation to generation it shall of the forest to clap their hands. Is his message one of lamentation and woe? The heavens are draped in be waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. It is not necessary to ask, Have these predictions mourning, and the sun is darkened in his going down. No one, however anxious to keep by the bare letter of been fulfilled? We know they have been; and the the word, would think of insisting that such metaphors accomplishment of them stands in history as a perpetual should be literally interpreted, or must have a literal monument of the truth of Revelation. Babylon, Edom, fulfilment. The utmost that we are entitled to require is, Tyre, the oppressors or enemies of the people of that there should be such historical events specified as God, have been made to drink the cup of the Lord's may worthily correspond with such phenomena; great indignation. The Lord has let none of the words of His moral and social movements capable of producing such servants the prophets fall to the ground. But no one emotions as these physical phenomena seem to imply. will pretend to say that the symbols and figures which It may be useful to select some of the most depicted their overthrow were literally verified. These remarkable of these prophetic symbols as found in emblems are the drapery of the picture, and are used simply to heighten the effect and to give vividness and the Old Testament, that we may note the occasions on which they were employed, and discover the sense in grandeur to the scene.

In like manner the prophet Ezekiel uses imagery of

which they are to be understood. In Isaiah xiii. we have a very remarkable prediction a very similar kind in predicting the calamities which of the destruction of ancient Babylon. It is conceived in were coming upon Egypt: 'And when I shall put them the highest style of poetry. The Lord of hosts mustereth out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof the host of the battle; the tumultuous rush of the nations dark. I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon is heard; the day of the Lord is proclaimed to be at hand; shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven the stars of the heaven and the constellations withhold will I make dark over them, and set darkness upon the their light; the sun is darkened in his going forth; the land, saith the Lord God' (Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8). moon ceases to shine; the heavens are shaken, and the Similarly the prophets Micah, Nahum, Joel, and

the Most High in the affairs of nations as accompanied bishops and rulers of the people of God, when the sun by stupendous natural phenomena: 'Behold, the Lord is Christ. Setting of the sun, moon, and stars; darkening cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth, and the stars,---for the ceasing of a kingdom. mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft as wax before the fire, and as the waters remarks of a judicious expositor---Dr. John Brown of that are poured down a steep place' (Micah i. 3, 4).

'The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He literally, is the dissolution of the present system of the rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence: yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. His fury is poured knows that the dissolution of the Mosaic economy and out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him' (Nahum i. 3-6).

is self-evident, that in prophetic language the most sublime and terrible natural phenomena are employed to represent national and social convulsions and revolutions. Imagery, which if literally verified would make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall involve the total dissolution of the fabric of the globe and the destruction of the material universe, really may mean no more than the downfall of a dynasty, the commencement of the other is spoken of as "the last capture of a city, or the overthrow of a nation.

Newton on this subject, which are substantially just, though perhaps carried somewhat too far in supposing ii. 6; Heb. xiv. 26, 27.)' an equivalent in fact for every figure employed in the prophecy:---

the analogy between the world natural and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic. Accordingly, the imagery of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the other prophets world natural, consisting of heaven and earth, signifies helps us to understand the imagery of St. Matthew, St. the whole world politic, consisting of thrones and people, or so much of it as is considered in prophecy; and the world is not necessary to fulfilment of Old Testament things in that world signify analogous things in this. For the heavens and the things therein signify thrones and dignities, and those who enjoy them: and the earth, with the things thereon, the inferior people; and the lowest unmeaning. It is not necessary to allegorise them, parts of the earth, called Hades or Hell, the lowest or most miserable part of them. Great earthquakes, and creating of a new heaven and new earth, and the passing same time, a true propriety and an underlying reality of an old one; or the beginning and end of a world, for in the symbols of prophecy. The moral and spiritual the rise and ruin of a body politic signified thereby. The sun, for the whole species and race of kings, in the changes which they typify, could not be adequately set kingdoms of the world politic; the moon, for the body forth by language less majestic and sublime. There is of the common people considered as the king's wife; reason for believing that an inadequate apprehension of

Habakkuk describe the presence and interposition of the stars, for subordinate princes and great men; or for the sun, turning the moon into blood, and falling of the

> We will only quote in addition the excellent Edinburgh:---

"Heaven and earth passing away," understood universe; and the period when that is to take place is called "the end of the world." But a person at all familiar with the phraseology of the Old Testament scriptures the establishment of the Christian, is often spoken of as the removing of the old earth and heavens, and the These examples may suffice to show, what indeed creation of a new earth and new heavens. For example, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will your seed and your name remain" (Isa. lxv. 17; lxvi. 22). The period of the close of the one dispensation and the days," and "the end of the world," and is described as The following are the views expressed by Sir Isaac such a shaking of the earth and heavens as should lead to the removal of the things which were shaken. (Hagg.

It appears, then, that if Scripture be the best interpreter of Scripture, we have in the Old Testament 'The figurative language of the prophets is taken from a key to the interpretation of the prophecies in the New. The same symbolism is found in both, and the Peter, and St. John. As the dissolution of the material prophecy, neither is it necessary to the accomplishment of the predictions of the New Testament. But though symbols are metaphorical expressions, they are not and find a corresponding equivalent for every trope; it is sufficient to regard the imagery as employed to the shaking of heaven and earth, are put for the shaking heighten the sublimity of the prediction and to clothe of kingdoms, so as to distract and overthrow them; the it with impressiveness and grandeur. There are, at the facts which they represent, the social and ecumenical

the real grandeur and significance of such events as the and earth of it. I shall only insist on one instance to destruction of Jerusalem and the abrogation of the Jewish this purpose among many that may be produced: Isa. economy lies at the root of that system of interpretation li. 15, 16. The time when the work here mentioned, of which maintains that nothing answering to the symbols planting the heavens and laying the foundation of the of New Testament prophecy has ever taken place. Hence earth, was performed by God was when He divided the uncritical and unscriptural figments of double the sea (ver. 15) and gave the law (ver. 16), and said to senses, and double, triple, and multiple fulfilments of Zion, Thou art my people; that is, when He took the prophecy. That physical disturbances in nature and children of Israel out of Egypt, and formed them in the extraordinary phenomena in the heavens and in the wilderness into a church and state; then He planted the earth may have accompanied the expiring throes of heavens and laid the foundation of the earth: that is, the Jewish dispensation we are not prepared to deny. It brought forth order, and government, and beauty from seems to us highly probable that such things were. But the confusion wherein before they were. This is the the literal fulfilment of the symbols is not essential to planting of the heavens and laying the foundation of the the verification of the prophecy, which is abundantly earth in the world. And since it is that when mention is made of the destruction of a state and government, it is proved to be true by the recorded facts of history. in that language which seems to set forth the end of the

Note D. Dr Owen on "the Heaven and Earth (2 Peter. iii

world. So Isa. xxxiv. 4, which is yet but the destruction .7) of the state of Edom. The like also is affirmed of the The apostle makes a distribution of the world into Roman Empire (Rev. vi. 14), which the Jews constantly heaven and earth, and saith they were destroyed with affirm to be intended by Edom in the prophets. And water, and perished. We know that neither the fabric in our Saviour Christ's prediction of the destruction nor substance of the one or other was destroyed, but of Jerusalem (Matt. xxiv.) He sets it out by expressions only men that liveth on the earth; and the apostle tells of the same importance. It is evident, then, that in the us (ver. 7) of the heaven and earth that were then, and prophetical idiom and manner of speech, by heavens and earth, the civil and religious state and combination were destroyed by water, distinct from the heavens and *the earth that were now, and were to be consumed by fire;* of men in the world, and the men of them, were often understood. So were the heavens and earth that world and yet as to the visible fabric of heaven and earth they were the same both before the flood and in the apostle's which then was destroyed by the flood. ' 4. On this foundation I affirm that the heavens coming of the Lord, the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, mentioned in the destruction of that last and final judgment of the world, but to that utter '1. It is certain that what the apostle intends by the desolation and destruction that was to be made of the Judaical church and state; for which I shall offer these two reasons, of many that might be insisted on from the

time, and continue so to this day; when yet it is certain that the heavens and earth, whereof he spake, were to be and earth here intended in this prophecy of Peter, the destroyed and consumed by fire in that generation. We must, then, for the clearing of our foundation a little, consider what the apostle intends by the heavens and heaven and earth, do all of them relate, not to the the earth in these two places. world, with its heaven, and earth (vers. 5, 6), which was destroyed; the same, or some-what of that kind, he intends by the heavens and the earth that were to text:be consumed and destroyed by fire (ver. 7); otherwise '(1.) Because whatever is here mentioned was to have there would be no coherence in the apostle's discourse, its peculiar influence on the men of that generation. nor any kind of argument, but a mere fallacy of words. He speaks of that wherein both the profane scoffers

⁶ 2. It is certain that by the flood, the world, or the and those scoffed at were concerned, and that as *Jews*, fabric of heaven and earth, was not destroyed, but some of them believing, others opposing, the faith. Now only the inhabitants of the world; and therefore the there was no particular concernment of that generation, destruction intimated to succeed by fire is not of the nor in that sin, nor in that scoffing, as to the day of substance of the heavens and the earth, which shall not judgment in general; but there was a peculiar relief for be consumed until the last day, but of person or men the one and a peculiar dread for the other at hand, in the destruction of the Jewish nation ; and, besides, an living in the world.

'3. Then we must consider in what sense men living ample testimony both to the one and the other of the in the world are said to be the world, and the heavens power and dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ, which

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was the thing in question between them.

(2.) Peter tells them, that after the destruction and judgment that he speaks of (vers. 7-13), "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, etc. They had this expectation. But what is that promise? Where may we find it? Why, we have it in the very words and letter, Isa. lxv. 17. Now, when shall this be that God shall create these new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness? Saith Peter, "It shall be after the coming of the Lord, after that judgment and destruction of ungodly men, who obey not the gospel, that I foretell." But now it is evident from this place of Isaiah, with chap. lxvi. 21, 22, that this is a prophecy of Gospel times only; and that the planting of these new heavens is nothing faith. It mingles with all their practical exhortations. If but the creation of Gospel ordinances to endure for they were wrong here, I cannot myself see where they ever. The same thing is so expressed Heb. xii. 26-28.

This being the design of the place, I shall not insist longer on the context, but briefly open the words proposed, and fix upon the truth continued in them.

First, There is the foundation of the apostle's inference and exhortation, seeing that all these things, however precious they seem, or what value soever any put upon them, shall be dissolved, that is, destroyed; and that in that dreadful and fearful manner before mentioned, in a day of judgment, wrath, and vengeance, by fire and forcing our interpretations upon them, we shall, I think, sword; let others mock at the threats of Christ's coming: He will come- He will not tarry; and then the heavens and earth that God Himself planted, -the sun, moon, old world of worship and worshippers, that stand out in their obstinacy against the Lord Christ, shall be sensibly dissolved and destroyed: this we know shall be the end of these things, and that shortly.

things in government or nations, but it is subject to a dissolution, and may receive it, and that in a way of judgment. If any might plead exemption, that, on one, that the history of the world is divided into certain many accounts, of which the apostle was discoursing in prophetical terms (for it was not yet time to speak it broad distinction between ancient and modern history openly to all) might interpose for its share.'*

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Note E. The Rev. F. D. Maurice on 'the Last Time' (1 John ii. 18)

'How could St. John say that his time was the last time? Has not the world lasted nearly one thousand many years more?

but St. Paul, and all the apostles, laboured under the to begin when the barbarous tribes settled themselves

APPENDIX TO PART II

delusion that the end of all things was approaching in their day. People say so who are not in general disposed to undervalue their authority; some adopt the opinion practically, though they may not express it in words, who hold that the writers of the Bible were never permitted to make a mistake in the most trifling point. I do not say that; it would not shake my faith in them to find that they had erred in names or points of chronology. But if I supposed they had been misled themselves, and had misled their disciples, on so capital a subject as this of Christ's coming to judgment, and of the latter days, I should be greatly perplexed. For it is a subject to which they are constantly referring. It is a part of their deepest can have been right.

'I have found their language on this subject of the greatest possible use to me in explaining the method of the Bible; the course of God's government over nations and over individuals; the life of the world before the time of the apostles, during their time, and in all the centuries since. If we will do them the justice which we owe to every writer, inspired or uninspired,--- if we will allow them to interpret themselves, instead of understand a little more of their work, and of ours. If we take their words simply and literally respecting the judgment and the end which they were expecting and stars of the Judaical polity and church, -the whole in their day, we shall know what position they were occupying with respect to their forefathers and to us. And in place of a very vague, powerless, and artificial conception of the judgment which we are to look for, we shall learn what our needs are by theirs; how God will There is no outward constitution nor frame of fulfil all His words to us by the way in which He fulfilled His words to them.

'It is not a new notion, but a very old and common great periods. In our days the conviction that there is a has been forcing itself more and more upon thoughtful * Dr. Owen's Sermon on 2 Peter iii. 11. Works, folio, men. M. Guizot dwells especially upon the unity and universality of modern history, as contrasted with the division of ancient history into a set of nations which had scarcely any common sympathies. The question is, where to find the boundary between these two periods. About these, students have made many guesses; most of eight hundred years since he left it? May it not last yet them have been plausible and suggestive of truths; some very confusing; none, I think, satisfactory. One of the 'You will be told by many that not only St. John, most popular,---that which supposes modern history

in Europe, would be quite fatal to M. Guizot's doctrine. not discourage such an assurance. If we hold it strongly, For that settlement, although it was a most important it may be a great instrument of raising us out of our and indispensable event to modern civilisation, was the selfishness. I am only afraid lest we should lose it, as temporary breaking up of a unity which had existed we certainly shall if we contract the habit of regarding before. It was like the re-appearance of that separation the Bible as a book of puzzles and conundrums, and of of tribes and races, which he supposes to have been the looking restlessly for certain outward events to happen especial characteristic of the former world. at certain dates that we have fixed upon as those which

'Now, may we expect any light upon this subject in the prophets and apostles have set down. The cure for the Bible? I do not think it would fulfil its pretensions if such follies, which are very serious indeed, lies not in we might not. It professes to set forth the ways of God the neglect of prophecy, but in more earnest meditation to nations and to mankind. We might be well content upon it; remembering that prophecy is not a set of that it should tell us very little about physical laws; loose predictions, like the sayings of the fortune-teller, we might be content that it should be silent about the but an unfolding of Him whose going forth are from everlasting; who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and courses of the planets and law of gravitation. God may have other ways of making *these* secrets known to His for ever; whose acts in one generation are determined creatures. But that which concerns the moral order of by the same laws as His acts in another. the world and the spiritual progress of human beings 'If I should ever speak to you of the Apocalypse of falls directly within the province of the Bible. No one St. John I shall have to enter much more at large on this could be satisfied with it if it was dumb respecting subject. But so much I have said to introduce the remark these. And accordingly all who suppose it is dumb here, that the Bible treats the downfall of the Jewish polity as however much importance they may attach to what they the winding-up of a great period in human history and call its religious character,---however much they may as the commencement of another great period. John the suppose their highest interests to depend upon a belief Baptist announces the presence of One "whose fan is in its oracles, are obliged to treat it as a very disjointed in his hand; and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and fragmentary volume. They afford the best excuse for gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the those who say that it is not a whole book, as we have chaff with unquenchable fire." The evangelists say, that by these words he denoted that Jesus of Nazareth, who thought it, but a collection of the sayings and opinions of certain authors, in different ages, not very consistent afterwards went down into the waters of Jordan, and as with each other. On the other hand, there has been the He came out of it was declared to be the Son of God, strongest conviction in the minds of ordinary readers, and on whom the Spirit descended in a bodily shape. as well as of students, that the book does tell us how the 'We are wont to separate Jesus the Saviour from Jesus ages past, and the ages to come, are concerned in the the King and the Judge. They do not. They tell us from unveiling of God's mysteries,---what part one country the first that He came preaching a kingdom of heaven. and another has played in His great drama,---to what They tell us of His doing acts of judgment as well as point all the lines in His providence are converging. The acts of deliverance. They report the tremendous words immense interest which has been taken in prophecy,which He spoke to Pharisees and Scribes, as well as the Gospel which He preached to publicans and sinners. --an interest not destroyed, nor even weakened, by And before the end of His ministry, when His disciples the numerous disappointments which men's theories about it have had to encounter, is a proof how deep and were asking Him about the buildings of the temple, widely-spread this conviction is. Divines endeavour in He spoke plainly of a judgment which He, the Son of vain to recall simple and earnest readers from the study man, should execute before that generation was over. of the prophecies by urging that they have not leisure for And to make it clear that He meant us to understand such a pursuit, and that they ought to busy themselves Him strictly and literally, He added,---"Heaven and with what is more practical. If their consciences tell earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." them that there is some ground for they warning, they This discourse, which is carefully reported to us by St. yet feel as if they could not heed it altogether. They are Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke, does not stand aloof sure that they have an interest in the destinies of their from the rest of His discourses and parables, nor from the rest of His deeds. They all contain the same warning. race, as well as in their own individual destiny. They cannot separate the one from the other; they must They are gracious and merciful,---far more gracious believe that there is light somewhere about both. I dare and merciful than we have even supposed them to be;

they are witnesses that those who did not like that Being captivity was the great time of the awakening of national just because this was His character,---who sought for life of Europe,---the time in which the Greek republics another being like themselves, that is, for an ungracious flourished,---the time in which the Roman Republic and unmerciful being---would have their houses left to commenced its grand career. them desolate.

Lord's ascension, to preach His Gospel and baptize in His name, their first duty was to announce that that Jesus whom the rulers of Jerusalem had crucified was both Lord and Christ; their second was to preach remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit in His name; their third was to foretell the coming of a great and terrible day of the Lord, and to say to all who hear, "Save yourself from kind, and of unusual strength. When they were most this untoward generation." It was the language which St. Peter used on the day of Pentecost,; it was adopted with such variations as befitted the circumstances of the hearers by all who were entrusted with the Gospel message. It was no doubt peculiarly applicable to the Jews. They had been made the stewards of God's gifts to the world. They had wasted their Master's goods, and were to be no longer stewards. But we do not find Jews dreamed of another kind of kingdom, with another the apostles confining their language to the Jews. St. Paul, speaking at Athens,---speaking in words specially appropriate to a cultivated, philosophical, heathen city,---declares that God "has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world by that Man whom he hath ordained," and points to the resurrection from the dead as determining who that Man is. Why was this? Because exclusive form of nationality, with all that is cruellest, apostles believed that the rejection of the Jewish people most destructive of moral and personal life in the worst was the manifestation of the Son of Man; a witness to all nations who their King was; a call to all nations to cast away their idols and confess Him. The Gospel was to explain the meaning of the great crisis which was about to occur; to tell the Gentiles as well as the Jews what it would imply; to announce it as nothing less than the commencement of a new era in the world's history, when the crucified Man would claim an universal empire, and would contend with the Roman Caesar as well as with all other tyrants of the earth who should set up their to the spiritual world, and to man's relations with it. claims against His.

'This Scriptural view of the ordering of times and seasons entirely harmonizes with that conclusion at must abide. which M. Guizot has arrived by an observation of facts. Our Lord's birth nearly coincided with the establishment of the Roman Empire in the person of Augustus Caesar. That empire aspired to crush the nations and to establish a great world supremacy. The Jewish nation had been the witness against all such experiments in the old world. It had fallen under the Babylonian tyranny,

they are witnesses of a gracious and merciful Being; but but it had risen again. And the time which followed its

'The Jewish nation had been overcome by the armies 'When, therefore, the apostles went forth after our of the Roman Republic; still it retained the ancient signs of its nationality, its law, its priesthood, its temple. These looked ridiculous and insignificant to the Roman emperors, even to the Roman governors who ruled the little province of Judea, or the larger province of Syria, in which it was often reckoned. But they found the Jews very troublesome. Their nationality was of a peculiar degraded they could not part with it. They would stir up endless rebellions, in the hope of recovering what they had lost, and of establishing the universal kingdom which they believed was intended for them, and not for Rome. the preaching of our Lord declared to them that there was such an universal kingdom,---that He, the Son of David, had come to set it up on the earth. The kind of king. They wanted a Jewish kingdom, which should trample upon the nations, just as the Roman Empire was trampling upon them; they wanted a Jewish king who should be in all essentials like the Roman Caesar. It was a dark, horrible, hateful conception; it combined all that is narrowest in the most degraded form of imperialism. It gathered up into itself all that was worst in the history of the past. It was a shadowing forth of what should be worst in the coming time. The apostles announced that the accursed ambition of the Jews would be utterly disappointed. They said that a new age was at hand---the universal age, the age of the Son of man, which would be preceded by a great crisis that would shake not earth only, but also heaven: not that only which belonged to time, but also all that belonged They said that this shaking would be that it might be seen what there was which could not be shaken---which

> 'I have tried thus to show you what St. John mean by the last time, if he spoke the same language as our Lord spoke, and as the other apostles spoke. I cannot tell what physical changes he or they may have looked for. Physical phenomena are noticed at that time,--famines, plagues, earthquakes. Whether they, or any of them, supposed that these indicated more alteration

in the surface or the substance of the earth than they cannot pass it by. The book holds us, whether we will did indicate, I cannot tell; these are not the points upon or no, and insists upon being heard. After all, it must which I look for information if they gave it. That they have a meaning, and we are bound to do our best to understand that meaning. Wonderful book! that, after did not anticipate the passing away of the *earth*,---*what* we call the destruction of the earth,---is clear from ages of misinterpretation and perversion, has still this, that the new kingdom they spoke of was to be a the power to command the attention and fascinate kingdom on earth as well as a kingdom of heaven. But the interest of every reader. It refuses to be made the their belief that such a kingdom had been set up, and laughing-stock of imposture and folly; it cannot be degraded even by the ignorance and presumption of would make its power felt as soon as the old nation was scattered, has, I think, been abundantly verified by fact. fanatics and soothsayers; it can never be other than the I do not see how we can understand modern history Word of God, and is therefore to be held in reverence properly till we accept that belief. by us.

1. The Epistles of St. John, by F.D. Maurice, M.A., But is it intelligible? The answer to this is, Was it written to be understood? Was a book sent by an apostle to the churches in Asia Minor, with a benediction on PART III its readers, a mere unintelligible jargon, an inexplicable enigma, to them? That can hardly be true. Yet if the book were meant to unveil the secrets of distant times, 'The book of Revelation will probably never now must it not of necessity have been unintelligible to its first readers---and not only unintelligible, but even irrelevant and useless. If it spake, as some would have us believe, of Huns and Goths and Saracens, of mediaeval emperors and popes, of the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution, what possible interest or meaning could it have for the Christian churches of Ephesus, and Smyrna, and Philadelphia, and Laodicea? Especially when we consider the actual circumstances of those early Christians,---many of them enduring cruel sufferings and grievous persecutions, and all of them eagerly looking for an approaching hour of deliverance which was now close at hand,---what purpose could it have answered to send them a document which they were urged to read and ponder, which was yet mainly occupied with historical events so distant as to be beyond the range of their sympathies, and so obscure that even at this day the shrewdest critics are We come now to the consideration of the most hardly agreed on any one point? Is it conceivable that an apostle would mock the sufferings and persecuted Christians of his time with dark parables about distant ages? If this book were really intended to minister faith and comfort to the very persons to whom it was sent, it must unquestionably deal with matters in which they were practically and personally interested. And does not this very obvious consideration suggest the true key to the Apocalypse? Must if not of necessity refer to matters of contemporary history? The only tenable, the only reasonable, hypothesis is that it was intended to be understood by its original readers; but this is as much as to say that it must be occupied with the events and

Lect. ix. THE PAROUSIA IN THE APOCALYPSE admit of a wholly luminous exposition, in consequence of the histories we have of the times to which it refers not corresponding to the magnified scale of its prophecies. But the direction in which it is most wise to seek for a solution of its enigmas is from that standing-point which considers that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, to encourage those whose hearts were then failing them for fear of those things which were then speedily coming upon the earth; that is, taken up primarily and principally with events with which its first readers only were immediately interested; that it displays a series of pictures doubtfully chronological, and perchance partly contemporaneous, of events all shortly to come to pass.'---Catholic Thoughts on the Bible and Theology, chap. xxxv. p. 361. Interpretation Of The Apocalypse difficult and obscure part of divine Revelation, and we may well pause on the threshold of a region so shrouded in mystery and darkness. The conspicuous failures of the wise and learned men who have too confidently professed to decipher the mystic scroll of the apocalyptic Seer warn us against presumption. We might even feel justified in declining altogether a task which has baffled so many of the ablest and best interpreters of the Word of God. But, on the other hand, do we honour the book by refusing to open it, and pronouncing it hopelessly obscure? Are we justified in so treating any portion of the Revelation which God has given us? Is the book to be virtually handed over to diviners and charlatans, transactions of their own day, and these comprised to be the sport of their fantastic speculations? No; we

APPENDIX TO PART II

PART III THE PAROUSIA

within a comparatively brief space of time.

Limitation Of Time In The Apocalypse

express statements of the book. If there be one thing which more than any other is explicitly and repeatedly affirmed in the Apocalypse it is the *nearness* of the events which it predicts. This is stated, and reiterated again and again, in the beginning, the middle, and the end. We are warned that 'the time is *at hand*;' 'These things must shortly come to pass, 'Behold, I come quickly;' 'Surely I come quickly.' Yet, in the face of these express and Amen.' oft-repeated declarations, most interpreters have felt at liberty to ignore the limitations of time altogether, to 'Behold, I am coming quickly' [Idou, ercomai], and to roam at will over ages and centuries, regarding the book as a syllabus of church history, an almanac Apocalypse; it is the thesis or text of the whole. To those of politico- ecclesiastical events for all Christendom to the end of time. This has been a fatal and inexcusable of time in such a declaration as 'Behold, he is coming,' blunder. To neglect the obvious and clear definition of the time so constantly thrust on the attention of the reader by the book itself is to stumble on the very be convincing; but to every candid judgment it will be threshold. Accordingly this inattention has vitiated by far the greatest number of apocalyptic interpretations. is the apostolic watch word, 'Maran-atha!' 'the Lord is It may truly be said that the key has all the while hung coming' (1 Cor. xvi. 22). There is a distinct allusion also by the door, plainly visible to every one who had eves to the words of our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 30, 'All the tribes to see; yet men have tried to pick the lock, or force the door, or climb up some other way, rather than avail themselves of so simple and ready a way of admission as to use the key made and provided for them.

As this is a point of highest importance, and indispensable to the right interpretation of the Apocalypse, it is proper to bring forward the proof that the events depicted in the book are comprehended are about to happen after these' [a mellei genesqai meta within a very brief period of time.

The opening sentence, containing what may be nearness of the events to which it relates:---

Chap. i. 1.

'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants what things must shortly come to pass.'

And in case it might be supposed that this limitation does not extend to the whole prophecy, but may refer only to the introductory, or some other, portion, the same statement recurs, in the same words, at the conclusion of the book. (See chap. xxii. 6.)

Chap. i. 3.

'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

The reader will not fail to notice the significant resemblance between this note of time and the watchword of the early Christians. To say o kairoz egguz This is not a mere conjecture, it is certified by the (the time is at hand) was indeed the same thing in effect as to say o kusioz egguz (the Lord is at hand), Phil. iv. 5. No words could more distinctly affirm the nearness of the events contained in the prophecy.

Chap.i. 7.

'Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of him. Even so,

'Behold, he is coming' [Idou, ercetai], corresponds in Rev. xxii. 7. This may be called the keynote of the who can persuade themselves that there is no indication or that it is so indefinite that it may apply equally to a year, a century, or a millennium, this passage may not decisive proof that the event referred to is imminent. It of the land shall mourn,' etc., plainly showing that both passages refer to the same period and the same event.

Chap. i. 19.

'Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.' The last clause does not adequately express the sense of the original; it should be 'the things which tauta]. Chap.. iii. 10.---'I will keep thee from the hour of temptation [trial], which shall come [is about to called the *title* of the book, is of itself decisive of the *come*] upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.' Indicative of the near approach of a season of violent persecution, shortly before the breaking out of which the Apocalypse must have been written.

Chap. iii. 11.

'Behold, I come quickly.'

This warning not is repeated again and again throughout the Apocalypse. Its meaning is too evident to require explanation.

Chap. xvi. 15.

'Behold, I come as a thief.'

This figure is already known to us in connection with the Parousia. St. Peter declared 'the day of the Lord will come as a thief' [in the night] (2 Pet. iii. 10). St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, 'Yourselves know

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE 165 seems to us overwhelming on the side of its early date. That the Apocalypse contemplates the Parousia as imminent is surely an incontrovertible proposition. with the judgment of the guilty city and nation is no Chap.. xxi. 5, 6. less undeniable. Those who cannot find the Parousia, 'And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make the destruction of Jerusalem, the judgment of Israel, and the end of the age [sunteleia tou aionos] in the These expressions are evidently indicative of events Apocalypse, as in all the rest of the New Testament, and find them also as impending events, must be blind indeed. What other tremendous crisis was approaching at that period to which the Apocalypse could refer? Or Chap., xxii, 10. what event could be more worthy to be described in the 'And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the sublime and awful imagery of the Apocalypse than the final catastrophe of the Jewish dispensation, and the This is only the repetition in another form of the

perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief that the weight of authority, such as it is, inclines to in the night' (1 Thess. v. 2). And both these passages the side of the late date: that is, that it was written after look back to our Lord's own words Matt. xxiv. 42-44, in the destruction of Jerusalem; but the internal evidence which He inculcated watchfulness by the parable of 'the thief coming in the night.' Here, again, the time and the event referred to are the same in all the passages, and were declared by our Lord to lie within the limits of the That the Parousia is always represented as coincident generation then existing. all things new. . . . And he saith unto me, It is done.' hastening rapidly to their accomplishment; there was to be no long interval between the prophecy and its fulfilment. prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

unparalleled woes by which it was accompanied? declaration in the preceding statement. How can it be 1. That the Apocalypse was written before the possible to attach a non-natural sense to language so destruction of Jerusalem will follow as a matter of course express and decisive? if it can be shown that that event forms in great measure Chap. xxii. 6. the subject of its predictions. This, we believe, can be 'And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and done so as to satisfy any reasonable mind. We appeal true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his to chap. i. 7: 'Behold he cometh with clouds; and every angel to shew unto his servants the things which must eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and shortly be done.' all the tribes of the land shall wail because of him.' 'The This passage, which repeats the declaration made at tribes of the land' can only mean the people of Israel, as the commencement of the prophecy (chap. i. 1), covers is proved by the original prophecy in Zech. xii. 10-14, the whole field of the Apocalypse, and conclusively and still more by the language of our Saviour in Matt. establishes the fact that it alludes to events which were xxiv. 30. There cannot be the shadow of a doubt that almost immediately to take place. the 'coming' referred to is the Parousia, the precursor CHAP. xxii. 7.---'Behold, I come quickly.' of judgment, terrible to those 'who pierced him,' and Chap. xxii. 12.---'Behold, I come quickly.' always declared by our Lord to lie within the limits of Chap. xxii. 20. 'Surely I come quickly.' the existing generation.

This threefold reiteration of the speedy coming of 2. After the fullest consideration of the remarkable the Lord, which is the theme of the whole prophecy, expression th kuriakh hmera [the Lord's day], in Rev. i. distinctly shows that that event was authoritatively 10, we are satisfied that it cannot refer to the first day declared to be at hand. of the week, but that those interpreters are right who Thus we have an accumulation of evidence of understand it to refer to the period called elsewhere the most direct and positive kind that the whole of 'the day of the Lord.' There is no example in the New the Apocalypse was to be fulfilled within a very brief Testament of the first day of the week [Sunday] being period. This is its own testimony, and to this limitation called 'the Lord's day,' or 'the day of the Lord;' but the we are absolutely shut up, if the book is to be permitted latter phrase is appropriated and restricted by usage to to speak for itself. the great judicial period which is constantly represented in Scripture as associated with the Parousia. There is Date Of The Apocalypse no difference whatever between h hmera kuriakh and If the foregoing conclusions are well founded, they h hmera tou kuriou. Nothing could be more violent virtually decide the much-debated questions respecting than to refer to one phrase to one period or day, and the date of the Apocalypse. Perhaps it may be admitted the other to a totally different one. There is no evidence

that the phrase, 'the day of the Lord,' had a fixed and definite meaning in the apostolic churches. (See 1 Cor. i. 8, v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14; 2 Thess. ii. 2, v. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 10.) Notwithstanding Alford's objection on the score of grammar, we hold that there is nothing ungrammatical in the construction which regards th kuriakh hmera as 'the (great) day of the Lord.' On the contrary, we prefer the construction, on the score of the grammar, 'I was in spirit in the day of the Lord.' That is to say, the Parousia is the stand-point of the Seer in the Apocalypse: a fact which is amply borne out by the contents.

3. In Rev. iii. 10 we are informed that a season of severe trial was then imminent, viz. a bitter persecution of those who bore the Christian name, extending over the whole world [oikoumenh---or the Roman Empire]. Now the first general persecution of Christians was that which took place under Nero, A.D. 64. We infer that this was the persecution then impending, and therefore that the Apocalypse was written prior to that date.

4. That the book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem appears from the fact that the city and temple are spoken of as still in existence. (See chap. xi. 1, 2, 8.) It is scarcely probable that if Jerusalem had been a heap of ruins the apostle would have received a command to measure the temple; should represent the Holy City as about to be trodden down by the Gentiles; or that he should see the witnesses lie unburied in its streets.

5. But, in truth, the Apocalypse itself is the great argument for its having been written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. To suppose its prophetical character, and make it bear the same relation to the great consummation called in the New Testament 'the end of the age' that the Iliad bears to the siege of Troy. It may be safely affirmed that on this hypothesis it is incapable of interpretation: it must continue to be what is has so long been, the material for arbitrary and fanciful speculation; ever changing with the changing aspect of the political and ecclesiastical world. But we venture to think that if the views advocated in this volume are correct, the interpretation of the Apocalypse becomes possible, and that such interpretation will carry with it its own evidence, commending itself by its consistency and fitness to every fair and candid judgment. A true interpretation speaks for itself; and as the right key fits the lock, and so demonstrates its adaptation, so a true interpretation will prove its correctness by satisfactorily showing the correspondence between the historical fact and the prophetical symbol:

The True Significance Of The Apocalypse

We are now better prepared to grapple with the question, What is the real meaning of the Apocalypse? The fact that, by its own showing, the action of the book must necessarily be comprehended within a very short space of time, and the knowledge (approximately) of the date of its composition, are important aids to a correct apprehension of its object and scope. To regard it as a revelation of the distant future, when it expressly declares that it treats of things which must shortly come to pass; and to look for its fulfilment in mediaeval or modern history, when it affirms that the time is at hand, is to ignore its plainest teaching, and to ensure misconception and failure. We are absolutely shut up by the book itself to the contemporary history of the period, and that, too, within very narrow limits.

And here we find an explanation of what must have struck most thoughtful readers of the evangelic history as extremely singular, namely, the total absence in the Fourth Gospel of that which occupies so conspicuous a place in the Synoptical Gospels,---the great prophecy of our Lord on the Mount of Olives. The silence of St. John in his gospel is the more remarkable that he was one of the four favoured disciples who listened to that discourse; yet, in his gospel we find no trace of it whatever. How is this to be accounted for? It may be said that the full reports of that prophecy by the other evangelists rendered any allusion to it by St. John unnecessary; yet, remembering the intense interest of the subject to every Jewish heart, and its bearing upon the apostolic churches generally, it does seem unaccountable that no notice should be taken of so important a prediction by the only one of its original auditors who left a record of the discourses of Christ. But the difficulty is explained if it should be found that the Apocalypse is nothing else than a transfigured form of the prophecy on the Mount of Olives. And this we believe to be the fact. The Apocalypse contains our Lord's great prophecy expanded, allegorised, and, if we may so say, dramatised. The same facts and events which are predicted in the Gospels are shown in the Revelation, only clothed in a more figurative and symbolical dress. They pass before us like scenes exhibited by the magic lantern, magnified and illuminated, but not on that account the less real and truthful. In this view the Apocalypse becomes the supplement to the gospel, and gives completeness to the record of the evangelist.

This may at first sight appear a gratuitous and fanciful hypothesis, but the more it is considered the

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE 167 forming a chaos of heterogeneous ages, nations, and 'The close connection between our Lord's prophetic incidents. In reality there is no literary composition more regular in its structure, more methodical in its arrangement, more artistic in its design. No Greek tragedy is composed with greater art or more strict attention to dramatic laws. It is no exaggeration to say with the learned Henry More, 'There never was any book penned with that artifice as this of the Apocalypse, as if every word were weighed in a balance before it was set down.' Yet the plan of its construction is simple, and almost self-evident. The number seven governs it throughout. The most unobservant reader cannot fail to notice four of its great divisions which are distinguished by this mystic number,---the seven churches, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials. As every division has certain marked characteristics by which its beginning and ending are distinctly indicated, it is not difficult to draw the lines between the several divisions. Even a slight comparison of the two documents, the In addition to the four already specified we find other three visions, viz. the vision of the sun-clad woman, the vision of the great harlot, and the vision of the bride. These complete the mystic number seven, and form the clear and well-defined arrangement into which the contents of the Apocalypse naturally fall. It would be difficult indeed to invent any other. There are also a preface, or prologue, at the commencement of the book, and an epilogue, at the conclusion; so that the whole arrangement stands as follows:---

more probable it will be found. We cordially subscribe intelligible plan, ranging through time and space, and to the following words of Dr. Alford:--discourse on the Mount of Olives, and the line of apocalyptic prophecy, cannot fail to have struck every student of Scripture. If it be suggested that such connection may be merely apparent, and we subject it to the test of more accurate examination, our first impression will, I think, become continually stronger that the two (being revelations from the same Lord concerning things to come, and those things being, as it seems to me, bound by the fourfold epcou, which introduces the seals, to the same reference to Christ's coming) must, corresponding as they do in order and significance, answer to one another in detail; and thus the discourse in Matt. xxiv. becomes, as Mr. Isaac Williams has truly named it, *"the anchor of apocalyptic"* interpretation;" and, I may add, the touchstone of apocalyptic systems. prophecy and the Apocalypse, will suffice to show the correspondence between them. The *dramatis personae*, if we may so call them,---the symbols which enter into the composition of both,---are the same. What do we find in our Lord's prophecy? First and chiefly the Parousia; then wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes; false prophets and deceivers; signs and wonders; the darkening of the sun and moon; the stars falling from

heaven; angels and trumpets, eagles and carcases, great tribulation and woe; convulsions of nature; the treading down of Jerusalem; the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven; the gathering of the elect; the reward of the faithful; the judgment of the wicked. A are not these precisely the elements which compose t Apocalypse? This cannot be accidental resemblance, it is coincidence, it is identity. What difference there is the treatment of the subject arises from the difference the method of the revelation. The prophecy is address to the ear, and the Apocalypse to the eye: the one is discourse delivered in broad day, amid the realities of actual life,---the other is a vision, beheld in a state of ecstasy, clothed in gorgeous imagery, with an air of unreality as in objects seen in a dream; requiring it to be translated back into the language of everyday life before it can be intelligible as actual fact.

Structure And Plan Of The Apocalypse

As commonly interpreted nothing can be more loose and unconnected than the arrangement of the Apocalypse. It seems an intricate maze, without any

Prologue Chapter i. 1-8

the	1. Vision of the Seven Churches	Chap. i. ii. iii.
nd	2. Vision of the Seven Seals	Chap. iv. v. vi. vii.
the	3. Vision of the Seven Trumpets	Chap. viii. ix. x. x
, s in	4. Vision of the Sun-clad Woman	Chap. xii. xiii. xiv.
e in	5. Vision of the Seven Vials	Chap. xv. xvi.
sed	6. Vision of the Great Harlot	Chap. xvii. xviii. xix. xx.
is a s of	7. Vision of the Bride	Chap. xxi. xxii. 1-5

Epilogue Chapter xxii. 8-21

Such is the natural self-arrangement of the book, so far as its great leading divisions are concerned; there are also several subordinate divisions, or episodes as they may be called, which fall under one or other of the great divisions. We shall find that in the different visions there is a common structural resemblance, and that, more particularly, each division concludes with a

finale, or catastrophe, representing an act of judgment seven spirits, seven lamps, seven horns, seven eyes, or a scene of victory and triumph.

so far as its structure is concerned, remains to be these instances, though it would be rash to affirm that in noticed. It is that the several visions may be described as only varied representations of the same facts or events; re-arrangements and new combinations of the same constituent elements. This is obviously the case with two of the great divisions, viz. the vision of the seven trumpets and that of the seven vials. These are almost counterparts of each other; and though the resemblance been seven times seven; but doubtless these seven stand between the other visions is not so marked, yet it will be found that they are all *different aspects of the same* great event. If we may venture to use such an illustration He said to all. It will be found of no small importance we should say that the visions are not *telescopic*, looking to the correct interpretation of the Apocalypse to bear at the distant; but kaleidoscopic,---every turn of the in mind the symbolic character which belongs to the instrument producing a new combination of images, exquisitely beautiful and gorgeous, while the elements which compose the picture remain substantially the same. As Pharoah's dream was one, though seen under two different forms, so the visions of the Apocalypse are Apocalypse is essentially one with the prophecy on the one, though presented in seven different aspects. The reason of the repetition is probably in both cases the same. 'For that the dream was doubled unto Pharoah twic, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass"(Gen. xli. 32). In like manner the events foreshadowed in the Apocalypse are declared by their sevenfold repetition to be sure and near.

The Number Seven In The Apocalypse

Every reader of the Apocalypse must be struck by the manner in which certain numerals are employed, not so much in an arithmetical sense as in a symbolical. The numbers three, four, seven, ten, and twelve, the half of seven, and the square of twelve, are used in this Lord's prediction in Matt. xxiv. 30:--significant manner. Of all those mystic numbers, as they may be called, *seven* is the dominant one, which we find continually recurring from beginning to end of the book. That it is invariably used in a symbolical, and never in a literal and arithmetical, sense we will not venture to assert, but that it is frequently, if not generally, so employed must be apparent to every thoughtful reader. It was the number of dignity among the Jews, the symbol of totality or perfection, and signifies *all* of the species, or the highest kind of the species, to which it refers. It is not necessary where this number occurs to require the full tale of units to be made up; it simply means completeness or excellence. Thus we have seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials,

seven stars, seven mountains, seven kings. It would But the most remarkable feature in the Apocalypse, be absurd to require the exact arithmetical value in all every one of them the number is symbolical. Still, even in the instance which at first seems the most manifestly literal, viz. the seven churches which are particularly enumerated, it is possible that there may be an underlying symbolism. It can scarcely be supposed that there were only seven churches in all Asia Minor; there may have as representatives of the whole number, not in Asia only, but everywhere else. What the Spirit said to them numbers most frequently employed in it.

The Theme Of The Apocalypse

We have already endeavoured to show that the Mount of Olives; that is to say, the subject of both is the same great catastrophe, viz. the Parousia, and the events accompanying it. The Apocalypse announces its great theme in the opening sentence of the book, after the preface or prologue. That opening sentence is the seventh verse of the first chapter:---

'Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

This is the thesis of the whole discourse; the first prophetic utterance in the book, and also the last; the key to the whole revelation.

It will be seen that these words are the echo of our

'Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the land mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

There is no possibility of mistaking the reference in these words; there is no ambiguity or uncertainty as to whose coming or what coming is intended. The time and the *manner* of the coming are plainly indicated: it is *near:* 'Behold, he is coming.' It is in *glory:* 'He is coming with clouds.' The two predictions are in fact identical. The time of its fulfilment was now drawing nigh, for the standpoint of the Seer was in 'the day of the Lord.' That which our Saviour declared to be within the limits of the generation then existing was now, at the close of some

thirty or forty years, on the very eve of accomplishment. interest. The shortness of the time made it the pressing The knell of doom was just about to sound: 'Behold, he concern of every man to give heed to the prophetic is coming. warnings. (Rev. 1:3)

Not less clearly indicated is the *scene* of the coming catastrophe. It is the land of Israel. This is plain from the THE FIRST VISION express statement of both passages, in the Apocalypse The Messages To The Seven Churches. and in the gospel: 'All the tribes of the land' [pasai ai fulai thz ghz]. The loose way in which this phrase is Rev Chap. i. 10-20; ii. iii. sometimes taken as referring to all the nations of the Notwithstanding what has been said respecting the globe cannot be sufficiently reprobated. The original imagery and symbolism of the Apocalypse, it is not source of the expression (Zech. xii. 12), 'the families of to be forgotten that underlying these symbols there is the land,' shows that the land of Israel, and *especially the* everywhere a substratum of fact and reality. We have city of Jerusalem are intended; and a similar limitation only to read the messages to the seven churches to is required in the citations both in the gospel and in discover that we are in a region of actual fact and intense the Apocalypse. The allusion to the crucifixion strongly reality. There is such individuality of character in the confirms this conclusion --- 'they also who pierced graphic delineations of the spiritual state of the several him.' The crucifiers of the Lord of glory are specially churches, that we cannot doubt that they are accurate 'particularised among the mass that see with dread the and truthful portraits of the Christian communities tokens of an approaching avenger. which they describe. There is indeed a strange It is proper to state at the outset that it is not our commingling of figure and fact; but there is no difficulty intention to enter into minute details of apocalyptic in discriminating between the one and the other; or, exposition, which would demand a seperated volume. rather, they so admirably blend and harmonise that each Here we can only give an outline-sketchof the several lends vividness and force to the other. The explanation, visions, leaving the details to be filled in at another also, of the symbols (ver. 20) converts them into real time, or by other hands. It will be enough if we can put existences,---'The seven stars are the angels of the seven the reader in possession of the master key, by means of churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest which he may be able to find his way into all the arcans are the seven churches.'

of prophecy. We therfore pass lightly over everything It is scarcely necessary to say that there is not the slightest foundation for the preposterous theory which represents these delineations of the spiritual condition

in th book which does not imperatively deand our consideration, keeping in view the specific object of our enquiry. of the seven churches as typical of successive states or phases of the Christian church in so many future ages **THE PROLOGUE** of time. Such a hypothesis is incompatible with the express limitations of time laid down in the context, as Chap. i. 1-10. well as inconsistent with the distinctive individuality of It is evident that the first vision strictly commences with the tenth verse, in which the Seer is entranced the several churches addressed. Everything shows that it is of the present, and the immediate future, that the and the 'word of the Lord' comes to him. The portion Apocalypse treats. The first readers of these epistles previous to this is introductory, authenticating the must have felt that they came expressly to them, and not divine origin and authority of the Revelation; (Rev. to other people, in other times. It is, no doubt, true that 1:1) expressly affirming the impending fulfilment of its these epistles describe types of character which may be contents; (Rev. 1:1-3) addressing the book to 'the seven churches' of proconsular Asia; (Rev. 1:4) and stating the repeated, and are repeated continually, in successive circumstances in which the Seer was placed when the generations; but this does not alter the fact that they had a direct and personal application to the churches visions of the Lord were seen by him. (Rev. 1:9) We have specified, which they can never have to any other. already directed the reader's attention to the seventh Let us endeavour, then, to place ourselves in the verse, as enunciating the theme of the whole book. It situation of those primitive churches in Ephesus, and is the coming of the Lord; His coming speedily [Idou Smyrna, and Pergamos, and Thyatira, and Sardis, and ercetai]; His coming in glory; His coming to the tribes Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Let us call up the prominent of the land; His coming to judgment. Everything in this features and actors of the time, and consider the hopes preface indicates reality, urgency, personal and present

and fears, the dangers and difficulties, which occupied and agitated their minds. Is it not obvious that these things must necessarily constitute the elements which go to the composition of the whole book? If not, it is not easy to see what special interest or concern it could have for its original readers, whose blessedness it was pronounced to be to read, or hear, and keep its words. To Ephesus it is said, 'I will come unto thee quickly' What, then, do we find in those early days? Suffering and persecuted Christians; malignant and blaspheming Jews; stern Roman magistrates; a brutal and capricious tyrant on the Imperial throne; among themselves false teachers, apostates from the faith; wide-spread (chap. iii. 3); to Philadelphia, 'Behold, I come quickly' degeneracy and defection. In addition to all this we find a general expectation of a great crisis at hand; the and knock' (chap. iii. 20). It is impossible to conceive conviction that at length the time was come for which all Christians had been taught to wait and hope; the hour of deliverance for the persecuted faithful; the day no more to them than they do to us; that they refer of retribution and judgment for the enemy and the to a consummation which has never yet taken place. oppressor. The watchword was passed from man to man, from church to church,---'Maranatha! The Lord is at hand. Behold, he is coming. He will not tarry? We short, epigrammatic utterances all is intensely urgent, know certainly that this thought burned in the hearts of pressing, vehement, as if not a moment were to be lost, the first Christians, for they had been taught to cherish it by the instructions of the apostles and by the promise of the Master. Their hope was not the hope of Christians consummation, which might come in some distant now,---to live on the earth as long as possible, and to die period of time, which after eighteen hundred years is at a good old age, and then go to heaven, there to await a still in the future? Why resort to such an unnatural and full and final glorification in some distant period. Their hope was not to die at all, but to live to welcome their returning Lord, to be clothed upon with their heavenly investiture; to be caught up into the clouds to meet the flourished? We therefore conclude that the period of Lord in the air; and so to be for ever with the Lord.

Such unquestionably were the circumstances, expectations, and attitude of the Christian people who received these messages from the coming deliverer by His servant John. It will be obvious how exactly the contents of these epistles correspond with the circumstances of the churches. There is a striking common resemblance in the structure of the epistles, as if cast in the same mould or formed on the same plan. They are all naturally divisible into seven parts:---

- The superscription.
- 2 The style or title of the writer.
- 3 A judicial declaration of the state or character of the church addressed.
- 4 An expression of commendation or of censure.
- An exhortation to penitence, or to perseverance. 5
- A special promise to 'him that overcometh.' 6
- 7 A proclamation to all to hear what the Spirit said to each.

PART III THE PAROUSIA

The chief point, however, which concerns us in these epistles to the churches is that we find in each of them a distinct allusion to a great and imminent crisis, when reward or punishment is to be meted out to each according to his work. No one can fail to be struck with the indications that an expected catastrophe is at hand. (chap. ii. 5); to Smyrna, 'Thou shalt have tribulation ten days' (chap. ii. 10); to Pergamos, 'I will come unto thee quickly' (chap. ii. 16); to Thyatira, 'Hold fast till I come' (chap. ii. 25); to Sardis, 'I will come on thee as a thief' (chap. iii. 2); to Laodicea, 'Behold, I stand at the door, that these urgent warnings had no special meaning to those to whom they were addressed; that they meant This would be to deprive the words of all significance. What can be more evident than that in these sharp, and negligence or delay might be fatal? But how could such passionate urgency be consistent with a far-off unsatisfactory explanation when we know that there was a predicted and expected consummation which was to take place in the days when these churches recompense and retribution referred to in all these epistles to the churches was the approaching 'day of the Lord'---the Parousia, which the Saviour declared would take place before the passing away of the generation which witnessed His miracles and rejected His message. THE SECOND VISION

The Seven Seals

Chaps. Iv. V. Vi. Vii. Viii. 1.

Introduction to the vision, chaps. iv. v. The real difficulties of apocalyptic exposition now begin. We seem to pass into a different region, where all is visionary and symbolical. The prophet is summoned by the trumpet- voice, which had previously spoken to him, to ascend into heaven, there to be shown 'the

things which must take place hereafter' [after these] (chap. iv. 1).

There is a manifest reference in these words to the direction given to the Seer in chap. i. 19, 'Write the

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE

things which thou sawest and what they signify, and the Gibbon to wander through the ages in search of events things which are about to happen after these.' It is these to correspond with these symbols. But this is just what the seven churches of Asia had no power to do. Would last which the prophet is now to have revealed to him; the phrase, 'the things which must happen after these', it not have been a mockery to invite them to study and being evidently synonymous with 'the things which are comprehend such visions, which even with the aid of about to happen, the latter expression clearly indicating Gibbon are not luminous to us? Surely, the interpreters that the time of their fulfilment is close at hand. who propound such solutions must have closed their We must pass by the magnificent description of eyes against the express teachings of the book itself. We are precluded by the terms of the prophecy from all such the heavenly majesty, in which we are reminded of the sublime visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, and come to the vague excursions into general history; we are shut up to the *near*, the *imminent*, the *immediate*; to things which scene in which the prophet beholds, 'in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book, or roll, written within must *shortly* come to pass; to events which intensely and without, and sealed with seven seals.' A strong angel concern the original readers of the Apocalypse: 'for *the* proclaims with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open time is at hand.' With this light in our hand all becomes the book, and to loose the seals thereof?' When none is clear. We have only to place ourselves in the time and circumstances of those primitive churches, and these found equal to the task, and the Seer is overwhelmed with visionary symbols shape themselves into historical grief because the mystic roll must remain unopened, he is comforted by the announcement made to him by one facts before our eyes. The Seer stands on the verge of of the elders, that 'the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root the long-predicted, long-expected crisis, for the coming of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose of which in their own day the Saviour had before His the seven seals thereof. Accordingly, amid the adoring departure prepared His disciples. As the prophecy worship of the heavenly host, and of the whole created which He delivered on the Mount of Olives commences universe, the Lion-Lamb advances to the throne, takes with wars and rumours of wars, and goes on the speak the book from the right hand of Him that sat thereon, of 'Jerusalem compassed about with armies,' and 'the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, and proceeds to break in succession the seals by which till it culminates in the seeming wreck of universal it is fastened. Nothing can be more vivid and dramatic than the nature, and 'the coming of the Son of man in the clouds scenes which are successively exhibited as the Lamb of heaven,' so the prophecy in the Apocalypse proceeds

opens the seals. The four cherubs that guard the throne, in the same method. one after another announce the breaking of the first four Here, then, the vision is representative of the seals, with a loud cry of 'Come!' And as each is opened approaching destruction of Jerusalem and judgment the Seer beholds a visionary figure pass across the field of the guilty land. It is 'the last time;' and the beloved of view, emblematic of the contents of that portion of disciple, who hear the prophecy on the Mount, now the scroll which is unrolled. It will be observed that sees its fulfilment in vision. His heart is filled with one there is a manifest gradation in the character of these thought, his eye with one scene. The storm of vengeance emblematic representations, which rise in intensity and is gathering over his own land; his own nation --- the city and temple of God. The armies are mustering for

terror from the first to the last. the conflict; and, as seal after seal is broken, he beholds What, then, do these symbols represent? It needs only a glance to see their general nature and character. the successive waves of that tremendous deluge of Everywhere it is WAR, and the concomitants of war,wrath which was about to overwhelm the devoted land --blood, famine, and death, all leading up to and of Israel. This we believe to be the significance of the terminating in one dread and final catastrophe, in which symbolic vision of the seven seals. It is only another the elements of nature seem to be dissolved in universal form of the selfsame catastrophe foretold by our Saviour ruin --- 'the great day of wrath' (chap. vi.). to His disciples; but now the hour is come; the close

Of what events does the prophet speak? Some of the aeon is at hand, and the ministers of the divine would have us believe that this is a compendium of wrath are let loose upon the guilty nation. universal history; that we have here the conquests of **Opening Of The First Seal** Imperial Rome for three hundred years, down to the Chap. vi. 1, 2---'And I saw when the Lamb opened establishment of Christianity as the religion of the one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living Empire by Constantine. We are sent to the volumes of

went forth conquering, and to conquer.

It will be seen that we regard this vision as emblematic of the Jewish war, which was introductory to the great final event of the Parousia. Upon the opening of the taken from *the land* [ek thz ghz]. Stuart has accurately first seal we behold the first act in the tragic drama. It is announced by one of the four mystic beings, represented as guarding the throne of God, exclaiming, with a voice of thunder, 'Come!' and behold, an armed warrior, seated on a white horse, and holding in his hand a bow, passes across the field of vision. A crown is bestowed upon the warrior, who goes forth conquering, and to conquer.

This is a most vivid representation of the first scene in the tragic drama of the Jewish war which commenced in the reign of Nero, A.D. 66, under the conduct of Vespasian. In the first scene we see the Roman invader advancing to the combat. As yet the war has not actually begun; the warrior rides upon a *white* horse; he holds in his had a bow, a weapon used at a distance. It is fanciful to see in the *crown* given to the horseman a presage that the diadem was to be placed on the head of Vespasian, or is it only the token of victory? However this may be, the whole imagery, as Alford observes, speaks of victory,---'He went forth conquering and to conquer.'

Opening Of The Second Seal

Chap. vi. 3, 4

'And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given unto him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth [land], and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

now commenced; the white horse is succeeded by the red---the colour of blood. The bow gives place to the sword. It is a great sword, for the carnage is to be terrible. Peace flies from the land: all is strife and bloodshed. It is a *civil* as well as a *foreign* war,---'they kill one another.' dough half-baked from the fire, they tore it in pieces.'

All this fitly represents the historical fact. The Jewish war, under Vespasian, commenced at the furthest distance from Jerusalem in Galilee, and gradually drew nearer and nearer to the doomed city. The Romans were not the only agents in the work of slaughter that depopulated the land; hostile factions among the Jews themselves turned their arms against one another, so that it might be said that 'every man's hand was

creatures saying, as [with] a voice of thunder, Come. against his brother.' The exchange of the bow for the And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on sword indicates that the combatants had now closed, him had a bow; and a crown was given to him: and he and fought hand to hand: it is another act in the same tragedy.

> It is worthy of notice that the language of the fourth verse not obscurely indicates the scene of war. Peace is interpreted this circumstance: 'Here, not the whole earth, but the land of Palestine is especially denoted.

The Opening Of The Third Seal

Chap. vi. 5, 6

'And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, A measure of wheat for a denarius, and three measures of barley for a denarius; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine?

This symbol also is not difficult of interpretation. It signifies the deepening horrors of the war. Famine follows on the heels of war and slaughter. Food is now scarce in Judea, especially in the beleaguered cities, and most of all in Jerusalem, after its investment by Titus. Wheat and barley are at famine prices, for the daily wage of a labouring man (a denarius) suffices to buy only a single measure of wheat (a choenix, or less than a quart), and three times that quantity of inferior grain. This is significant of terrible privation among the crowded masses in the besieged city.

Turning from prophecy to history the pages of Josephus furnish us with a fearful commentary on this passage. He is speaking of the scarcity of food in Jerusalem during the period of the siege:---

'Many privately exchanged all they were worth for a single measure of wheat, if they were rich; of barley, This symbol also speaks for itself. Hostilities have if they were poor. Then, shutting themselves up in the most retired recesses of their houses, some, from extremity of hunger, would eat the grain unprepared; others would cook it according as necessity and fear dictated. A table was nowhere spread, but snatching the

> But what means injunction, 'See thou hurt not the oil and the wine'? This has greatly perplexed commentators, for such a command seems not to accord with the prevalence of famine. If we are not mistaken, Josephus will enable us to reconcile this apparent incongruity.

> After stating that John of Gischala, one of the partisan leaders who tyrannised over the miserable people in the last days of Jerusalem, seized and confiscated the

'All egress being now intercepted, every hope of safety to the Jews was utterly cut off; and famine, with distended jaws, was devouring the people by houses and families. The roofs were filled with women and babes 'Accordingly, drawing the sacred wine and oil, which in the last stage; the streets with old men already dead. Children and youths, swollen up, huddled together like spectres in the market-places, and fell down wherever the pangs of death seized them. To inter their relations they who were themselves affected had not strength; and those still in health and vigour were deterred by the multitude of the dead and by the uncertainty that hung over themselves. For many expired while burying others, and many repaired to the cemeteries ere the fatal

sacred vessels of the temple, Josephus goes on to relate another act of sacrilege committed by the same chief, which seems to have aroused the deepest indignation and horror in the mind of the historian:--the priests kept for pouring on the burnt-offerings, and which was deposited in the inner temple, he distributed them among his adherents, who consumed without horror more than a hin in anointing themselves and drinking. And here I cannot refrain from expressing what my feelings suggest. I am of opinion that had the Romans deferred the punishment of these wretches, either the earth would have opened and swallowed up the city, or it would have been swept away by a deluge, hour arrived. or have shared the thunderbolt of the land of Sodom. 'Amidst these calamities there was neither For it produced a generation far more ungodly than lamentation nor wailing: famine overpowered the those who were thus visited; for through the desperate affections. With dry eyes and gaping mouths the madness of these men the whole nation was involved in slowly-dying gazed on those who had gone to their rest before them. Profound silence reigned through the their ruin.

This serves to explain the use of the word adikhshz city, and a night pregnant with death, and the brigands [deal unjustly with] in this injunction: 'See thou deal more dreadful still than these. For, bursting open the not unjustly with the oil and the wine.' Mr. Elliott, in houses, as they would a sepulchre, they plundered the opposition to Dean Alford, contends for the sense 'do dead, and, dragging off the coverings from the bodies, not commit injustice in respect to the oil, etc. Rinck, as departed with laughter. They even tried the points of quoted by Alford, renders it 'waste not,' etc. The incident their swords in the carcases, and to prove the temper related by Josephus shows how the word adikhshz suits of their blades would run them through some of those who were stretched still breathing on the ground; every variety of rendering. The act of John was adikia in the sense of wanton waste. others, who implored them to lend them their hand and sword, they abandoned disdainfully to the famine. **Opening Of The Fourth Seal** They all expired with their eyes intently fixed on the Chap. vi. 7, 8.---'And when he had opened the fourth temple, averting them from the insurgents whom they seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, left alive. These at first, finding the stench of the bodies Come. And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his insupportable, ordered that they should be buried at the name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with public expense; but afterwards, when unequal to the him. And power was given unto them over the fourth task, they threw them from the walls into the ravines part of the earth [land], to kill with sword, and with below.

'But why need I enter into any partial details of

famine, and with death, and by the beasts of the earth. The scene here is evidently the same, only with all the their calamities, when Mannoeus, the son of Lazarus, horrors and miseries of the war intensified. The ghastly who at this period took refuge with Titus, declared, that spectres of Death and Hades now follow in the train of from the fourteenth of the month Xanthicus, the day famine and war. The 'four sore judgments of God,' which on which the Romans encamped before the walls, until Ezekiel saw commissioned to destroy the land of Israel, the new moon of Panemus, there were carried through 'the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and that one gate, which had been entrusted to him, a the pestilence,' are again let loose upon the land, and hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty by them the fourth part of its population is doomed to corpses. This multitude was all of the poorer class; nor perish. Never was there such a glut of mortality as in had he undertaken the charge himself, but having been the war which terminated in the siege and capture of entrusted with the distribution of the public fund, he Jerusalem. The best commentary on this passage is to was obliged to keep count. The remainder were buried be found in the records of Josephus, as the following by their relations. The interment, however, consisted description will show:--merely in bringing them forth and casting them out of

they brought word that full six hundred thousand of the between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto humbler classes had been thrown out through the gates. Of the others it was impossible to ascertain the number. They stated, moreover, that when they had no longer strength to carry out the poor they piled the carcases in enmity: 'Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, the largest houses and shut them up: and that a measure of wheat had been sold for a talent; and that still later, when it was no longer possible to gather herbs, the city being walled round, some were reduced to such distress that they searched the sewers and the stale ordure of cattle, and ate the refuse; and what they would formerly 31-39). have turned away from with disgust then became food.---Traill's Josephus, Jewish War, bk. v. chap. xii. § 3; chap. xiii. § 7.

Opening Of The Fifth Seal.

Chap. vi. 9-11

'And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth [land]? And a white robe was given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

This passage may be regarded as a crucial test of any interpretation of the Apocalypse. It may be truly said that anything more unsatisfactory, uncertain, and conjectural than the explanation given by those interpreters who find in the Apocalypse a syllabus of ecclesiastical history can scarcely be imagined. But if our guiding principle be correct, it will lead us to such an interpretation as will demonstrate by its self-evidence that it is the true one.

The scene now changes from the battle-field, and the scenes of carnage and blood in the besieged and famished city, to the temple of God. But it is still Jerusalem. The Christian martyrs whom Jerusalem had slain are represented as crying aloud from under the altar, and appealing to the justice of God no longer to delay the vindication of their cause, and the avenging of their blood 'on them that dwell in the land.' This is a new and important scene in the tragic drama, but one that is in perfect keeping with the teaching of the New Testament. Our Lord forewarned the Jews that 'upon them should come all the righteous blood shed upon

the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the 'After him many of the higher ranks escaped; and blood of Zacharias son of Barachaias, whom ye slew you, All these things shall come upon this generation' (Matt. xxiii. 35, 36). In like manner He forewarned His disciples that some of them would fall victims to Jewish and shall kill you' (Matt. xxiv. 9). All this was to precede 'the end' (Matt. xxiv. 13). Our Lord also declared that Jerusalem was deepest in the guilt of shedding innocent blood: she was the murderess of the prophets; and upon her the most signal punishment was to fall (Matt. xxiii.

> Here, then, we have the chief elements of the scene before us. But this is not all. It is impossible not to be struck with the marked resemblance between the vision of the fifth seal and our Lord's parable of the unjust judge (Luke xviii. 1-8): 'And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith in the land?' This is more than resemblance: it is identity. In both we find the same complainants,---the elect of God; they appeal to Him for redress; in both we find the response to the appeal, 'He will avenge them speedily;' in both we find the scene of their sufferings laid in the same place---'in the land'-*--i.e.* the land of Judea. The vision and the parable also mutually supplement one another. The vision tells us the cause of the cry for vengeance, and who the appellants are, viz. the martyred disciples of Jesus who have sealed their testimony with their blood. The parable suggests the time when the retribution would arrive,---'when the Son of man cometh;' and likewise the mournful fact that when the Parousia took place it would find Israel still impenitent and still unbelieving.

> The vision of the fifth seal likewise elucidates an obscure passage which has hitherto baffled all attempts to solve its meaning. In 1 Peter iv. 6 we find the following statement: 'For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.' Referring the reader back to the remarks made upon this passage at page 307, etc., it will suffice here to recapitulate the conclusion there reached. The statement really is, 'For, for this cause a comforting message was brought even to the dead, that they, though condemned in the flesh by man's judgment, should live in the spirit by the judgment of God. This evidently points to the vindication of those

who had by the unrighteous judgment of men suffered on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the death for the truth of God; it declares that they had been great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to comforted after death by the tidings that they should, stand?' by the divine judgment, enjoy eternal life. There is We now come to the last act of this awful tragedy: no allusion anywhere to be found in Scripture to any the catastrophe which closes the second vision. It may such transaction, except in the passage before us,---the excite surprise that the catastrophe occurs under the vision of the fifth seal. This, however, precisely meets all sixth seal, and not under the seventh, as we might the requirements of the case. Here we find 'the dead,'--have expected. But the seventh seal is made the link of the Christian martyrs, who had died for the faith; they connection between the second and the third visions, had been condemned in the flesh by the unrighteous and is most artistically employed to introduce the next judgment of man. It is manifestly implied that they had series of seven, viz. the vision of the seven trumpets. We appealed to the righteous judgment of God. In response may here observe that each of the visions culminates to their appeal 'a comforting message' [euaggelion] had in a catastrophe, or signal act of divine judgment, been communicated to them; they are told to rest a bringing destruction on the wicked, and salvation to *little while* until their brethren and fellow-servants who the righteous. are to be killed like them shall join them; while 'white No one can fail to observe that nearly every feature robes,' the tokens of innocence and emblems of victory, in this awful scene occurs in our Lord's prophecy are given to them. We think it must be obvious that this on the Mount of Olives with reference to the coming scene under the fifth seal exactly corresponds with the judgments on the city and nation of Israel. There is, allusion of St. Peter and the parable of our Lord. It is therefore, no room for a moment's uncertainty as to the important also to observe the place which this scene meaning of the vision of the sixth seal; but the more occupies in the tragic drama. It is after the outbreak, but closely that every symbol is studied, the more distinctly before the conclusion, of the Jewish war; it precedes by will be seen its relation to the great catastrophe. This is the 'dies irae'---the hmera kuriakh---'the great and a little while the final catastrophe of the sixth seal. It is the impatient cry of the martyred saints, 'How long, O terrible day of the Lord' predicted by Malachi, by John Lord, how long?' It calls for just retribution on those the Baptist, by St. Paul, by St. Peter, and, above all, by who had shed their blood; and it distinctly specifies who our Lord in His apocalyptic discourse on the Mount of they are by describing them as 'them that dwell in *the* Olives. It is the expected consummation for which the *land.*' And all this is immediately antecedent to the final apostolic church was watching and waiting,---the day catastrophe under the next seal, which depicts the wrath of the judgment for the guilty nation, and, as we shall of God coming upon the guilty land 'to the uttermost.' presently see, the day of redemption and reward for the Here, then, we have a body of evidence so varied, so people of God. minute, and so cumulative that we may venture to call It will be proper, first, to note the correspondence between the symbols in the vision and those in our it demonstration. Lord's prophetic discourse:---

Opening Of The Sixth Seal

Chap. vi. 12-17.---'And I beheld when he opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; 'And lo, there was a great earthquake.' 'And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair.' and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell 'And the moon became as blood.' unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely 'And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth.' 'And the figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together. heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; 'And the kings, etc., hid themselves, . . . and said to the and every mountain and island were moved out of their mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us, etc. places. And the kings of the earth [land], and the great The Prophecy On Olivet men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and 'And there shall be earthquakes in divers places' the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free (Luke xxi. 11; Matt. xxiv. 7). 'Immediately after the man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened. the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, 'And the moon shall not give her light.' And the Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth

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The Sixth Seal

stars shall fall from heaven.'

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mountains, Fall on us: and to the hills, Cover us' (Luke xxiii. 30).

satisfy every reasonable mind that they both refer to one and the same event. What that event is our Lord's words decisively determine: 'Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled' address to the women who followed our Lord in the way to Calvary, yet even there the limitation of the time refuge after the capture of the city:--is clearly indicated: 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children;' implying that the calamities which He predicted would come in the lifetime of themselves and their children. The same nearness of the time is marked by the phrase, 'Behold, the days are coming' (Luke xxiii. 29).

explanation that the destruction of Jerusalem, awful as it was, appears inadequate as the antitype of the imagery of the sixth seal. The object applies equally to our the application of the signs. Indeed it applies to all prophecy: for prophecy is poetry, and Oriental poetry also, in which gorgeous symbolical imagery is the thus related by the Jewish historian:--vesture of thought. Besides, the objection is based upon an inadequate estimate of the real significance and occupied the upper town; but when the Roman army importance of the destruction of Jerusalem. That event is not simply a tragical historical incident; it is not to be looked at as in the same category with the siege of Troy friends, and some stonecutters with the iron tools or the destruction of Tyre or of Carthage. It was a grand required by them in their trade, and with provisions providential epoch; the close of an aeon; the winding sufficient for many days, he let himself down with all up of a great period in the divine government of the his party into one of the secret caverns, and advanced world. The material catastrophe was but the outward and visible sign of a mighty crisis in the realm of the Here, being met by firm ground, they mined it, in hope unseen and the spiritual.

historical facts underlying these symbols are sufficiently real and tangible. The consternation and terror here advance slowly and with difficulty, and the provisions, depicted as seizing on 'the kings of the land, the great though husbanded, were on the point of failing. men,' etc., are in perfect accord with the scenes in the last days of Jerusalem as described by Josephus. Premising that by 'the kings of the land' [basileiz thz himself in white tunics, and buttoning a purple cloak ghz] are meant the rulers of Judea, as we shall be able over them, rose up out of the earth at the very spot to show, we find the prophetic description wonderfully correspondent with the historical facts. First, the scene beholders were seized with amazement, and stood in the vision is evidently laid in a country abounding fixed to the spot; but afterwards, approaching nearer,

in rocky caverns and hiding-places, which, it is well 'And the powers of the heavens shall be shaken' known, are characteristic of Judea. The limestone hills (Matt. xxiv. 29). 'Then shall they begin to say to the of that country are literally honeycombed with caverns, which have been the dens of robbers and the shelter of fugitives from time immemorial. Ewald acknowledges The comparison of these parallel passages must 'that there is here a special reference to the peculiarities of Palestine as to its rocks and caves, which afford places of shelter for fugitives.' (Quoted by Stuart, Apocalypse, in loc.) These two notes, the land, and its geological character, fix the *locale* of the scene. Secondly, it is a fact (Matt. xxiv. 34). The only passage which does not come attested by Josephus that the last hiding-places of the within the discourse on the Mount of Olives is the infatuated citizens of Jerusalem were the rocky caverns and the subterranean passages into which they fled for

'The last hope,' says Josephus, 'that buoyed up the tyrants and their brigand bands lay in the subterranean excavations, in which, should they take refuge, they expected that no search would be made for them, and purposed, after the final overthrow of the city, when the Romans should have withdrawn, to come forth No doubt it will appear an objection to this and seek safety in flight. But this was after all a mere dream, for they were unable to hide themselves from the observation either of God, or of the Romans?

Still more striking, if possible, is the fact mentioned Lord's prophecy where His own authority determines by Josephus, that Simon, one of the chiefs of the rebellion, secreted himself after the capture of the city in one of these subterranean hiding-places. The incident is

'This Simon, during the siege of Jerusalem, had had entered within the walls and was laying the whole city waste, accompanied by the most faithful of his through it as far as the ancient excavations permitted. of being able to proceed farther, and, emerging in a At the same time it is to be observed that the place of safety, thus effect their escape. But the result of the operations proved the hope fallacious. The miners

> 'Thereupon Simon, thinking that he might pass a cheat upon the Romans by the effect of terror, dressed where the temple formerly stood. At first indeed, the

they demanded who he was. This Simon refused to tell enemies of Christ and the blessedness conferred upon them, but directed them to call the general; on which His servants. they ran quickly to Terentius Rufus, who had been left Now, under the sixth seal, where the catastrophe of in command of the army. He accordingly came, and the vision is placed, we have already seen the first part after hearing from Simon the whole truth, he kept him described, viz. the judgment of the enemies of God; but in irons, and acquainted Caesar with the particulars of the other part, the deliverance of the people of God, is his capture His ascent out of the ground, however, represented in the chapter before us. The progress of led at that period to the discovery, in other caverns, of judgment is even arrested until the safety of the servants a vast multitude of the other insurgents. On the return of Christ is secured. of Caesar to the maritime Caesarea, Simon was brought What, then, is the meaning of this episode? to him in chains, and he ordered him to be kept for the In the predictions relating to the 'end of the age' triumph which he was preparing to celebrate in Rome.' we invariably find a promise of safety and blessedness

Episode Of The Sealing Of The Servants Of God to the disciples of Christ, coupled with declarations of Chap. vii. 1-17.---'After this, I saw four angels coming wrath upon their enemies. To give two or three standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the examples out of many: in our Lord's prophecy on the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow Mount of Olives, of which the Apocalypse is the echo on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw and expansion, He warns His disciples to make their another angel ascending from the east, having the seal escape from Judea when they saw 'Jerusalem compassed of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the about with armies' four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and (Luke xxi. 20), 'and the abomination of desolation the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor standing in the holy place' (Matt. xxiv. 15). He assures the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God on them that 'there should not an hair of their head perish;' their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which that when the signs of His coming began to appear, then were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty they should look up, and lift up their heads, because and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of their redemption was drawing nigh (Luke xxi. 18-28).

Israel, etc. That the Son of man would send His angels with a great In the very crisis of the catastrophe the action is sound of a trumpet, and would 'gather together His suddenly suspended until the safety of the servants elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the of God is assured. The four destroying angels who are other' (Matt. xxiv. 31). That in the great judgment day, commissioned to let loose the elements of wrath upon which was to follow the destruction of Jerusalem, the wicked should 'go away into everlasting punishment, the guilty land are commanded to stay the execution of the sentence until 'the servants of our God have been but the righteous into everlasting life' (Matt. xxv. 46). sealed on their foreheads.' Accordingly an angel, having In harmony with these declarations we find the 'the seal of the living God,' sets marks upon the faithful, apostles teaching the churches that when 'the day of the nationality and number of whom are distinctly the Lord' came, 'sudden destruction would overtake declared,---'an hundred and forty and four thousand the enemies of God, while Christians would obtain from every tribe of the children of Israel.' In addition salvation' (1 Thess. v. 2, 3, 9); that when the Lord Jesus to these, an innumerable multitude, 'of all nations, and was 'revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in kindreds, and people, and tongues,' are seen standing flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not before the throne, clothed with white robes and with God, His faithful people would enter into 'rest,' and palms of victory in their hands, ascribing praise and would 'be counted worthy of the kingdom of God' (2 glory to God amid the felicity and splendours of heaven. Thess. i. 5-9).

This representation is generally regarded as an It is this deliverance and salvation promised to the disciples of Christ which is symbolically shadowed forth in the episode to the sixth seal. The imagery by which it is described is evidently taken from the scene beheld in vision by the prophet Ezekiel (chap. ix.), where 'the It will be seen that in every catastrophe in this book men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations of Jerusalem,' have 'a mark set upon their foreheads,'

episode, or digression from the main action of the piece. No doubt it is so; but at the same time it is essential to the completeness of the catastrophe, and in fact an integral part of it. of visions,---and every vision ends in a catastrophe,--there are two parts, viz. the judgment inflicted upon the which was to ensure their safety when the executioners

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of divine justice went forth to slay the inhabitants of the the great consummation, and the assuring of the safety city.

of judgment alike in the prophecy of Ezekiel and in the Apocalypse; and the allusion by St. Peter to this very transaction in Ezekiel's vision, as about to be repeated in the Jerusalem of his own day, is very significant. (1 Pet. iv. 17.)

the words of our Lord: 'The Son of man shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other' (Matt. xxiv. 31). This episode is the are irrevocably committed to the assertion of the fact. representation of the accomplishment of that promise. While wrath to the uttermost is being poured upon the divisions, of 'the people of God' who are specified land; while the tribes of the land are mourning; while the enemies of God are fleeing to hide in the dens and caves; in that dread hour the angel's trumpet convokes the faithful remnant of the people of God, 'that they may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. The time was now full come; for all this, it must be remembered, was to be witnessed by the apostles themselves, or at least by nationalities; that is to say, not Israelites but Gentiles. This some of them; for our Lord's own generation was not to pass till all these things were fulfilled.

Christians of the apostolic age that they should escape the general doom, and enter into the possession of immortality by the instantaneous change which should reassured the Christians of Thessalonica by telling them that they which were alive, and remained unto Lord's coming. He declares to them, by the word of the and the abrogation of the Jewish economy. Accordingly Lord, that 'the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and, first, the dead in Christ shall rise; then we, the living, who remain behind, shall be caught up all together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.

iv. 15-17). He alludes again to this same confident expectation in 2 Thess. ii. 1, where he says, 'Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus *Christ*, and by *our gathering together* unto him, etc. This peculiar expression, 'our gathering together', would be Matt. xxiv. 31 and in Rev. vii. The same period, the same transaction, are referred to in our Lord's prophecy, in St. Paul's epistle, and in the episode before us. Here is

of the people of God when destruction overtakes the It is worthy of remark that Jerusalem is the scene impenitent and unbelieving. All this belongs to the great crisis at the end of the aeon,---that is, at the close of the Jewish dispensation. The finger of the Lord has defined the limits beyond which we may not go in determining the period of this transaction: 'Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these But the fullest light is thrown upon this episode by things are fulfilled. Whatever our opinion may be as to the extent or the manner of the fulfillment of the prediction, uttered alike by our Lord, by St. Paul, and by St. John, of one thing can be no doubt,---the Scriptures

It will be remarked that there are two classes, or in this episode. The first class belongs to a particular nation,---'the hundred and forty and four thousand out of every tribe of the children of Israel.' These must of necessity represent the Jewish Christian church of the apostolic period. But in addition to these there is a multitude which no man could number, belonging to all class, therefore, must of necessity represent the Gentile church of the apostolic period; the 'uncircumcision,' Accordingly it was the cherished hope of the who were admitted into the privileges of the covenant people, called to be 'fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel, along with the Jewish believers. This representation come over them at the appearing of the Lord. St. Paul implies that the danger and deliverance symbolised by the sealing of the servants of God were not confined to Judea and Jerusalem. The religion of Jesus of Nazareth the coming of the Lord, should not take precedence was a proscribed and persecuted faith over the whole of those who had departed in the faith previous to the Roman Empire before the outbreak of the Jewish war the redeemed in the vision, the 'white-robed multitude,' are said to come out of great tribulation: an expression which gives us a clue to the determination of the *time* and the persons here referred to. Our Lord, when predicting the season of unparalleled affliction that was to precede the catastrophe of Jerusalem and Juda, And so shall we ever be with the Lord' (1 Thess. says, 'Then shall be great tribulation [qliyiz megalh], such as was not since the beginning of the world, etc. (Matt. xxiv. 21). Now in the statement in the episode, 'These are they that came out of *great tribulation*,' there is an unquestionable allusion to our Lord's words. The proper rendering, as Alford points out, is,- -- 'These are scarcely intelligible but for the light thrown upon it in they that came out of *the great tribulation*, the definite article being most emphatic, and *the tribulation* plainly in allusion to the prediction in Matt. xxiv. 21.

We are thus brought, by the guidance of the word

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of God itself, to one and the same conclusion; and it synchronism. We think the whole vision of the trumpets is impossible not to be impressed by the concurrence forms part of the catastrophe under the sixth seal. The First Four Trumpets of so many different lines of argument leading to one Chap., viii, 7-12. result. We are justified, therefore, in concluding that the 'The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and episode of the sealing of the servants of God represents fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the the safety and deliverance of the faithful in the fearful earth' [land], etc. time of judgment which, at the Parousia, overtook the The vision opens with a proem, or introduction, guilty city and land of Israel.

THE THIRD VISION

The Seven Trumpets

Chaps. Viii. Ix. X. Xi.

We have now reached the close of the second vision, and it might be supposed that the catastrophe by which it was concluded is so complete and exhaustive that there could be no room for any further development. But it is not so. And here we have again to call attention to one of the leading features in the structure of the Apocalypse. It is not a continuous and progressive sequence of events, but a continually recurring representation of substantially the same tragic history in fresh forms and new phases. Dr. Wordsworth, almost alone among

To return to the vision. After an awful pause on the the interpreters of this book, has comprehended this opening of the seventh seal, significant of the solemn characteristic of its structure. At the same time every and mournful character of the events which are about to new vision enlarges the sphere of our observation take place, seven angels, or rather the seven angels who and heightens the interest by the introduction of new stand before God, receive seven trumpets, which they incidents and actors. are commissioned successively to sound. Before they Opening of the seventh seal. begin, however, an angel presents to God the prayers of the saints, along with the smoke of much incense from Rev Chap., viii, 1. a golden censer, at the golden altar which was before 'And when he had opened the seventh seal, there the throne. This is usually regarded as symbolical of was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.' the acceptableness of Christian worship through the The seventh seal, strictly speaking, belongs to the intercession and advocacy of the Mediator. But observe former vision; but it will be observed that the catastrophe the effects of the prayers. The angel takes the censer of that vision occurs under the sixth seal, and that the which had perfumed the prayers of the saints, fills it seventh becomes simply the connecting link between with fire from the altar, and hurls it upon the land: and the second vision and the third,---between the seals and immediately voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an the trumpets. This no doubt intimates the close relation earthquake follow. Strange answers to prayer. But if we subsisting between them. We cannot conceive of the regard these prayers of the saints as the appeals of the events denoted by the seven trumpets as subsequent in suffering and persecuted people of God, whom we have point of time to the events represented as taking place seen represented in the former visions as crying aloud, at the opening of the sixth seal, for that would involve 'How long, O Lord, how long?' all becomes clear. The inextricable confusion and incongruity. It appears the Lord will avenge the blood of His servants; His wrath is most reasonable supposition that we have here, in the kindled; swift retribution is at hand. The censer which vision of the seven trumpets, a fresh unfolding of the censed the prayers becomes the vehicle of judgment, desolating judgments which were about to overwhelm and is cast upon the land, filled with the fury of the the doomed land of Judea. Dr. Wordsworth observes: Lord,---the fire from the altar before the throne.

'The seven trumpets do not differ in time from the Now, the seven angels prepared to sound, and seven seals, but rather synchronise with them.' We each blast is the signal for an act of judgment. It will doubt whether this is the correct way of stating the

according to the usual structure of the apocalyptic visions. The standpoint of the Seer is still heaven, though the scene on which the main action of the piece is take to place is the earth, or rather the land. It cannot be too carefully borne in mind that it is Israel,---Judea, Jerusalem,---on which the prophet is gazing. To roam over the breadth of the whole earth, and to bring into the question all time and all nations, is not only to bewilder the reader in a labyrinth of perplexities, but wholly to miss the point and purport of the book. 'The Doom of Israel; or, the Last Days of Jerusalem,' would be no unsuitable title for the Apocalypse. The action of the piece, also, is comprised within a very brief space of time,---for these things were 'shortly to come to pass.'

be observed that the first four trumpets, like the first four seals, differ from the remaining three. They have a of the text is *eagle*, not *angel*. 'I heard an eagle flying certain indefiniteness, and the symbols, though sublime through the midst of heaven.' This is the symbol of and terrible, do not seem susceptible of a particular historical verification. Probably they correspond with representation in Hosea viii. 1: 'Set the trumpet to thy those phenomenal perturbations of nature to which our Lord alludes in His prophecy on the Mount of Olives as preceding the Parousia: 'There shall be signs in the In the Apocalypse the eagle comes on the same mission, sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth [land] distress of nations, with perplexity: the sea and the waves roaring' (Luke xxi. 25). These are the whom the predicted woes are to fall,---'the inhabiters of very objects affected by the first four trumpets, viz. the earth, the sea, the sun, the moon, the stars. Without endeavouring, then, to find a specific explanation of these portents, it is enough to regard them as the outward and visible signs of the divine displeasure manifested towards the impenitent and unbelieving; symptoms that the natural world was agitated and convulsed on account of the wickedness of the time; emblems of the general dislocation and disorganisation of society which preceded and portended the final catastrophe of shall be great distress in the land' [epi thzghz], being the Jewish people.

The last three trumpets, however, are of a very different character from the first four. They are indeed symbolical, like the others, but the symbols are less indefinite and seem more capable of a historical interpretation. The judgments under the first four trumpets are marked by what we may call an *artificial* character; they affect the *third part* of every thing,---the third part of the trees, the third part of the grass, the third part of the sea, the third part of the fish, the third part of the ships, the third part of the rivers, the third part of sun, the third part of the moon, the third part of the stars, the third part of the day, the third part of the night. It would be preposterous to require a historical verification of such symbols. But the remaining trumpets appear to enter more into the domain of reality and of history; and accordingly we shall find great light thrown upon them by the Scriptures and by the contemporaneous history. That a special importance is attached to these last trumpets is evident from the fact that they are introduced by a note of warning:---

Chap. viii. 13.

'And I beheld, and heard an eagle flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the land by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound?

requires some observations.

First, the reader will perceive that the true reading war and rapine. There is a striking parallel to this mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant. announcing woe, war, and judgment.

Secondly, the reader will observe the persons on the land.' As in chap. vi. 10, so here, *gh* must be taken in a restricted sense, as referring to the land of Israel. The rendering of *gh* by *earth*, instead of *land*, and of *aiwn* by world, instead of age, have been most fruitful sources of mistake and confusion in the interpretation of the New Testament. With singular inconsistency our translators have rendered gh sometimes earth, sometimes land, in almost consecutive verses, greatly obscuring the sense. Thus in Luke xxi. 23, they render gh by land: 'there compelled to restrict the meaning by the next clause,---'And wrath upon this people.' But in the next verse but one, where the very same phrase recurs,---'distress epi thz ghz,'---they render it 'upon the earth.' In the passage now before us the woes are to be understood as denounced, not upon the inhabitants of the globe, but of the land, that is, of Judea.

The Fifth Trumpet

Chap.. ix. 1-12.

'And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fallen from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the pit of the abyss. And he opened the pit of the abyss; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit . . . And unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power . . . And they have a king over them which is the angel of the abyss, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, and in the Greek tongue he hath his name Apollyon. One woe is past; behold there come two woes more after this.'

On this symbolical representation Alford well observes,---'There is an endless Babel of allegorical and historical interpretation of these locusts from the pit; 'but while clearing the ground of the heap of romantic speculation by which it has been encumbered, he This introductory note to the three woe-trumpets abstains from putting anything better in its place.

Without assuming to have more insight than other

expositors, we cannot but feel that the principle of and obduracy, to be given over to the unrestrained interpretation on which we proceed, and which is so dominion of evil. The exorcised demon was at the last obviously laid down by the Apocalypse itself, gives a to return reinforced by a legion. great advantage in the search and discovery of the true We have abundant evidence in the pages of Josephus meaning. With our attention fixed on a single spot of of the truth of this representation. Again and again he earth, and absolutely shut up to a very brief space of time, declares that the nation had become utterly corrupt and it is comparatively easy to read the symbols, and still debased. 'No generation,' says he, 'ever existed more more satisfactory to mark their perfect correspondence prolific in crime? with facts.

'I am of opinion,' he says again, 'that had the Romans Whatever obscurity there may be in this deferred the punishment of these wretches, either the extraordinary representation, it seems quite clear that earth would have opened, and swallowed up the city, it cannot refer to any human army. On the contrary or it would have been swept away by a deluge, or have everything points to what is infernal and demoniac. shared the thunderbolts of the land of Sodom. For it Considering the origin, the nature, and the leader of produced a race far more ungodly than those who were this mysterious host, it is impossible to regard it in thus visited.'---Josephus, bk. v. chap. xiii. any other light than as a symbol of the irruption of a Let us now look at the symbols of the fifth trumpet baleful demon power. It is exactly as it is represented to in the light of these observations. There can be no be, the host of hell swarming out upon the curse-stricken question as to the identity of the 'star fallen from land of Israel. We have before us a hideous picture of heaven, to whom the key of the abyss is given.' It can a historic reality, the utterly demoralised and, so to only refer to Satan, whom our Lord beheld 'as lightning speak, demon-possessed condition of the Jewish nation fall from heaven' (Luke x. 18); 'How art thou fallen from towards the tragic close of its eventful history. Have heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!' (Isa. xiv. 12.) we any ground for believing that the last generation The cloud of locusts issuing from the pit of the abyssof the Jewish people was really worse than any of its --locusts commissioned not to destroy vegetation, but to torment men---points not obscurely to malignant predecessors? Is it reasonable to suppose that this degeneracy had any connection with Satanic influence? spirits, the emissaries of Satan. The place from which To both these questions we answer, Yes. We have a very they proceed, the abyss, is distinctly spoken of in the remarkable declaration of our Lord on these two points, gospels as the abode of the demons. The legion cast which, we venture to affirm, gives the key to the true out of the demoniac of Gadara besought our Lord 'that interpretation of the symbols before us. In the twelfth he would not command them to go out into the abyss' chapter of St. Matthew He compares the nation, or (Luke viii. 31). The locusts in the vision are represented rather the generation then existing, to a demoniac out as inflicting grievous torments on the bodies of men; of whom an unclean spirit had been expelled. There had and this is in accordance with the statements of the New been a temporary moral reformation wrought in the Testament respecting the physical effect of demoniac nation by the preaching of the second Elias, and by our possession---'grievously vexed with a devil' (Matt. Lord's own labours. But the old inveterate unbelief and xv. 22). It need cause no difficulty that unclean spirits impenitence soon returned, and returned in sevenfold should be symbolised by locusts, seeing they are also compared to frogs, Rev. xvi. 13. As to the extraordinary force:---'When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he appearance of the locusts, and their power limited to walketh through dry places seeking rest, and findeth five months' duration, the best critics seem agreed none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house from that these features are borrowed from the habits and whence I came out; and when he is come he findeth it appearance of the natural locust, whose ravages, it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh is said, are confined to five months of the year, and with himself seven other spirits more wicked than whose appearance in some degree resembles horses. himself, and then enter in and dwell there: and the last (See Alford, Stuart, De Wette, Ewald, etc.) It is enough, state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it however, to regard such minutiae rather as poetical be unto this wicked generation' (Matt. xii. 43-45). imagery than symbolical traits. Finally, their king, The closing sentence is full of significance. The 'the angel of the abyss,' whose name is Abaddon, and guilty and rebellious nation, which had rejected and Apollyon, the Destroyer, can be no other than 'the ruler crucified its King, was, in its last stage of impenitence of the darkness of this world;' 'the prince of the power

of the air;' 'the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience? The malignant and infernal dominion of Satan over the doomed nation was now established. Yet his time was short, for 'the prince of this world' was soon to be 'cast out.' Meanwhile his emissaries had no power to injure the true servants of God, 'but only those men which had not the seal of God in their foreheads.

Such is the invasion of this infernal host; all hell, as it were, let loose upon the devoted land, turning followed Titus to the siege and capture of Jerusalem was Jerusalem into a pandemonium, a habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. (Rev. xviii. 2).

The Sixth Trumpet

Chap. ix. 13-21.

'And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound on the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which had been prepared for the hour, and day, and month, and year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen was two myriads of myriads: and I heard the number of them,' etc.

The sixth trumpet is introduced by the announcement,---'The first woe is past, behold, there are coming two woes still after these things;'---indicating coming' [ercetai].

There is a certain resemblance between the vision here depicted and the preceding. Both refer to a great and multitudinous host let loose to punish men; in both the host is unlike any actual beings in rerum natura, and yet both seem in some points to come within the region of reality, and to be susceptible, in part at least, of a historical verification. The first incident which follows the sounding of the sixth trumpet is the command to 'loose the four angels which are bound on the great river Euphrates.' Of this passage Alford says: 'The whole imagery here has been a crux interpretum as to who these angels are, and what is indicated by the locality here described.' It is in these crucial instances, which defy the dexterity of the most cunning hand to pick the lock, that we prove the power of our master-key. Let us fix first upon that which seems most literal in the vision,---'the great river Euphrates.' That, at least, can scarcely be symbolical. There are said to be four angels bound, not *in* the river, but *at*, or *on*, the river. The loosing of these four angels sets free a vast horde of armed horsemen, with the strange and unnatural

PART III THE PAROUSIA

characteristics described in the vision. What is the real and *actual* that we may gather out of this highly wrought imagery? How is it that these horsemen come from the region of the Euphrates? How is it that four angels are bound on that river? Now it will be remembered that the locust invasion came from *the abyss* of hell; this invading army comes from the Euphrates. This fact serves to unriddle the mystery. The invading army that actually drawn in very great measure from the region of the Euphrates. That river formed the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire, and we know as a matter of fact that it was kept by four legions, which were regularly stationed there. These *four legions* we conceive to be symbolised by the four angels bound at, or on, the river. The 'loosing of the angels' is equivalent to the mobilising of the legions, and we cannot but think the symbol as poetical, as it is historically truthful. But, it will be said, Roman legions did not consist of cavalry. True; but we know that along with the legionaries from the Euphrates there came to the Jewish war auxiliary forces drawn from the very same region. Antiochus of Commagene, who, as Tacitus tells us, was the richest of all the kings who submitted to the authority of Rome, sent a contingent to the war. His dominions were on the Euphrates. Sohemus, also, another powerful king, whose territories were in the same region, sent a force that their arrival is near: they are on the way---'they are to co-operate with the Roman army under Titus. Now the troops of these Oriental kings were, like their Parthian neighbours, mostly cavalry; and it is altogether consistent with the nature of allegorical or symbolical representation that in such a book as the Apocalypse these fierce foreign hordes of barbarian horsemen should assume the appearance presented in the vision. They are multitudinous, monstrous, fire-breathing, deadly; and so, no doubt, they seemed to the wretched 'inhabiters of the land' which they were commissioned to destroy. The invasion may be fitly described in the analogous language of the prophet Isaiah: 'The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land' (Isa. xiii. 4. 5).

> It is in favour of this interpretation that there is a manifest congruity in the invasion of the devoted land, first by a malignant demon-host, and then by a mighty earthly army. Each fact is vouched for by decisive historical evidence. Strip the vision of its drapery, and there is a solid kernel of substantial fact. The dramatic unities of time, place, and action are also preserved, and

we are gradually conducted nearer and nearer to the of the 'ministering spirits' that do the bidding of the catastrophe under the seventh trumpet. But this is to Most High. But a fuller consideration precludes this anticipate. supposition. The attributes with which this angel is invested so closely resemble those ascribed to our Lord An objection may be taken to this explanation of the vision of the sixth trumpet, on account of the in the first chapter, that the majority of interpreters Euphratean hordes being commissioned to destroy agree in the opinion that it is no other than the Saviour *idolaters*. Undoubtedly, the gross idolatry described in Himself who is here intended. The glory-cloud with the twentieth verse was not the national sin of Israel which he is clothed is a customary symbol of the divine at that period, though it had been in former ages. But presence; the 'rainbow about his head' corresponding there is too much reason for believing that very many with the rainbow round about the throne (chap. iv. 3); Jews did conform to heathenish practices both in the 'his face as it were the sun;' 'his feet as pillars of fire;' days of Herod the Great and his descendents. We think, his 'voice as when a lion-roareth;' all these so exactly however, that in the sequel it will be satisfactorily proved resemble the description in chap. i. 10-16 that it is that in the Apocalypse the sin of idolatry is imputed to scarcely possible to come to any other conclusion than those who, though not guilty of the literal worship of that this is a manifestation of the Lord Himself.

idols, were the obstinate and impenitent enemies of 2. But here is a further remarkable correspondence Christ. (See exposition of chap. xvii.) between the appearance and action of this 'might

Finally, the true rendering of ver. 15 removes angel' and St. Paul's description of the archangel in 1 an obscurity which has been the occasion of much Thess. iv. 16: 'For the Lord himself shall descend from perplexity and misconception. The four angels bound heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, at the Euphrates, and loosed by the angel of the sixth and with the trump of God.' There is certainly here a trumpet, are declared to have been prepared,---not very singular coincidence. 1. The glorious angel of the for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, but Apocalypse seems undoubtedly to be 'the Lord himself'. for *the* hour, and day, and month, and year: that is to 2. Both are said to 'descend from heaven.' 3. In each case say, destined by the will of God for a special work, at he is represented as descending with a 'shout'. 4. In each a particular juncture; and at the appointed time they case it is the voice of 'the archangel.' 5. In each case the appearance of the angel, or Saviour, is associated with were let loose to fulfil their providential mission. 'The third part of men' does not mean that the third part of a *trumpet*. 6. The *time* also of this appearing appears to the human race, but the third part of 'inhabitants of the be the same: in the Apocalypse it is on the eve of the land' (chap. viii. 13), on whom the woes are about to fall sounding of the last trumpet, when 'the mystery of God shall be finished;' while in the epistle it is on the eve Episode of the Angel and the Open Book. of the 'great consummation,' or 'the day of the Lord' (1 I. We might have expected that now the seventh Thess. v. 2).

trumpet would have sounded; but as in the vision of 3. It may be objected that the title 'angel' or even 'archangel,' is incompatible with the supreme dignity of the Son of God. But there can be no question that the name angel is given in the Old Testament to the Messiah, Isa. lxiii. 9; Mal. iii. 1. The name archangel is Chap. x. 1-11. equivalent to 'prince of the angels,' the very phrase by 'And I saw another mighty angel come down from which the Syriac version renders the word in 1 Thess. iv. 16; in fact it would be more reasonable to object to the title 'archangel' being given to any other than a divine person. It is in harmony with other names confessedly belonging to Christ, as Arch, Arcwn, Archgoz, Arciereuz, Arcipoimhn, so that there is a strong presumption that the title Arcaggeloz also belongs to Christ.

the seven seals, so here, the action is interrupted for the introduction of episodes which afford space for fresh matter which does not come strictly into the main current of the narrative. heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices, etc.

4. Hengstenberg maintains, and with much 1. It is natural that we should be disposed at first probability, that there is only *one* archangel, and that he to regard this mighty angel, who appears as the is possessed of a divine nature. This archangel is named interlocutor in this and the following episode, as one 'Michael' in St. Jude, ver. 9; but in the Book of Daniel

Michael is expressly identified with the Messiah (Dan. xii. 1). Therefore archangel is a proper title of Christ.

5. It deserves notice that St. Paul speaks, not of the announcement to his servants the prophets.' voice of *an* archangel, but of *the* archangel, as if he were referring to that which was well known and familiar to is just about to sound, will bring the great predicted the persons to whom he was writing. But where in the archangel and the trump of God'? Nowhere except in this very passage in the Apocalypse. We infer that the Apocalypse was known to the Thessalonians, and that that has been advanced respecting the correspondence St. Paul alluded to this very description.

6. Again, in the Epistles to the Thessalonians the iv. 16. voice of the archangel is represented as awakening the dead out of their graves? The voice of the Son of God. 'The hour is coming in the which they that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth' (John voice of the Son of God. It will be observed, also, that the sounding of the seventh trumpet is said to be 'the comforting announcement was made to the dead). time of the dead, that they should be judged' (Rev. xi. 18).

7. Lastly, that the mighty angel of Rev. x. 1 is a divine person, and no other than the Lord Jesus Christ, seems decisively proved by chap. xi. 3: 'I will give power to my two witnesses, etc., where the speaker is evidently which is referred to by St. Peter. The angel in the vision a divine person, yet the same 'mighty angel' whom the swears--prophet beheld descend from heaven.

the Apocalypse is identical with 'the archangel' of 1 Thessalonians, and is no other than 'the Lord himself.'

II. We come next to consider the utterance of the mighty angel.

At first we might suppose that what the angel uttered was kept a secret. We are told that at his shout seven thunders uttered their voices; but when the Seer was proceeding to write their purport he was forbidden uttered, and write them not' (ver. 5).

angel did and said. Standing with his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, he lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever that there shall be no more time or respite. That is etc., which follows. to say, 'The end is come; the long-suffering of God can longer respite will be given.'

from what follows, ver. 7:---

when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is accomplished, according to his comforting

In other words, the seventh and last trumpet, which consummation. This intimate connection between the Scriptures do we find any allusion to 'the voice of the appearing of the archangel and the sounding of the seventh trumpet (which ushers in the consummation) is most suggestive, and gives strong confirmation to all of the scene before us with the description in 1 Thess.

But this seventh verse supplies also a singular and sleeping saints. But whose voice is that which calls the most satisfactory confirmation of the views which have been already expressed with regard to what is erroneously called 'the preaching of the gospel to the dead' (1 Pet. iv. 6). The reader will remember that in the v. 25-29). The voice of the archangel, therefore, is the passage referred to the expression employed is 'nekroiz euhggelisqh' (literally, it was evangelised to the dead, i.e.

> In the passage now before us (chap. x. 7) we discover the original source of this peculiar expression 'evangelised' [enhggelisen], and on more minute consideration we find an allusion, clear and distinct, to the very same communication made to the dead

'that there shall be no longer delay or respite . . . but We therefore conclude that the 'mighty angel' of in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is completed, as he evangelised his servants the prophets.

> In other words, 'as he declared by a comforting announcement to his servants the prophets.' Here the question presents itself, When was this comforting announcement made? Alford correctly answers this question. In his note upon this verse he says---

'that time should no longer be, i.e. should no more so to do: 'Seal up those things which the seven thunders intervene; in allusion to the answer given to the cry of the souls of the martyrs, chap. vi. 11. This whole series of The prophet, however, goes on to record what the trumpet judgments has been an answer to the prayers of the saints, and now the vengeance is about to receive its entire fulfilment: the appointed delay is at an end. That this is the meaning is shown by the all en taiz hmeraiz

Next, to whom was this comforting announcement no longer wit; the day of grace is about to close; and no made? The answer is, 'to his servants the prophets.' This clearly refers to those who, in chap. vi. 9, are represented That this is the meaning of the declaration is evident as 'the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they bore.' For what is the 'But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, function of a prophet? Is it not to declare the word of the

Lord, and to bear testimony for the truth? In chap. vi. woe' (Ezek. ii. 10). We infer, therefore, that in both the they are described as 'having been slain,' the fate which contents were *bitter*, for St. John, like Ezekiel, was the Jesus predicted for His servants. 'Wherefore, behold, I messenger of coming woe to Israel, and this very vision send unto you *prophets*: and some of them ye shall kill belongs to the woe-trumpets which sounded the signal and crucify' (Matt. xxiii. 34). Jerusalem was notoriously of judgment. the murderess of the prophets. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, The Measurement of the Temple. thou that killest the prophets' (Matt. xxiii. 37). 'It cannot Chap.. xi. 1, 2.---'And there was given to me a reed be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem' (Luke xiii. 32). like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and It was the blood of these martyrs that was to be required measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them of 'that generation,' and now the time was come.

Lastly, observe the period indicated in this temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto comforting announcement. It is 'in the days of the voice the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under of the seventh angel that the mystery of God shall be finished.' Turn to chap. xi. 18, which describes the result foot forty and two months.' of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and what do If anything were wanting to prove that in these apocalyptic visions we are dealing with contemporary we find? It is declared there, 'Thy wrath is come, and history, with facts and things extant in the days of St. the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that John, it would be supplied by the passage before us. Here thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets." we have distinct and decisive evidence with respect to How perfectly this coincides with the statements in 1 *time* and *place*. The vision speaks of *the city* and *temple* Pet. iv. 6, as well as in Rev. vi. 9-11, and how obviously of Jerusalem; the literal city and the literal temple. they refer to the same period and the same event, hardly They were therefore in existence when the Apocalypse needs to be pointed out. It raises probability to certainty, and demonstrates the truth of the explanation already was written, for the vision before us predicts their given, by a subtle and recondite correspondence which destruction. will bear the most minute and critical inspection. What can be more forced and unnatural, what more

uncritical and groundless than to interpret a statement III. The open book in the hand of the angel (chap. like this as symbolical of the Protestant Reformation x. 8-11). The mighty angel is represented as holding in his hand a little book open. Of its contents we are not and the Church of Rome? Such interpretations are informed, but we are greatly assisted in the interpretation indeed a humiliating proof of the extravagance and credulity of some good men; but they do incalculable of the symbol by the manifest correspondence between the scene in the Apocalypse and that described in Ezekiel mischief by setting an example of rash handling of the Word of God, and passing off the fantastic speculations ii. iii. In fact, they seem counterparts of one another. The of men for the true sayings of God. We have no right roll in Ezekiel corresponds with 'the little book.' In the whatever to suppose that anything more or anything prophecy it is 'the Lord' who holds in His hand the roll, else is intended here than the literal city of Jerusalem and gives it to the prophet; an additional confirmation of the argument that it is *the Lord* who in the Apocalypse and the literal temple of God. The interlocutor in this vision is still the same holds the little book in His hand. In both the prophecy 'mighty angel' whose identity with 'the archangel,' and the Apocalypse the roll or book is *open*. In both, the 'the Lord himself,' we have endeavoured to establish. roll or book is *eaten* by the prophets; in both it is in the The Seer receives a measuring rod or staff, and is mouth 'as honey for sweetness.' The Apocalypse alone commanded to measure the temple of God, the altar, states that it was afterwards *bitter* to the taste; but we and the worshippers. We naturally revert to the scene in may infer that the same characteristic equally applies Ezekiel xl., where the prophet sees an angel with a line to Ezekiel's roll. All these remarkable correspondences of flax and a measuring reed taking the dimensions of sufficiently prove that the scene in the prophecy of the temple that was about to be built. But it is plain that Ezekiel is the prototype of the vision in the Apocalypse. in this apocalyptic vision it is not construction that is But the chief point to be noticed is the *character of the* intended by the symbol, but demolition and destruction. contents of the little book, and this we are enabled to determine by its parallel in the prophecy. The roll which It is important always to keep in mind that the whole action of the Apocalypse is hastening on to a Ezekiel saw 'was written within and without; and there great catastrophe, now not far off. Israel and Jerusalem was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE

that worship therein. But the court which is without the

are never for a moment out of sight. Two woe-trumpets have already sounded the doom of the apostate nation, and the final consummation only waits the blast of the third. The archangel has already declared that 'no more time shall be given,' and the Seer has tasted the bitterness of the 'libel,'---the little book which contains the indictment and punishment of that wicked generation.

In such circumstances nothing but coming destruction can be the theme. That the measuringrod or line is employed in Scripture as an emblem of destruction is indisputable, more frequently indeed is assigned,---'for it is given unto the Gentiles.' The than of construction. A few instances must suffice. In Lamentations ii. 7, 8, we find a passage which might well be the interpretation of this apocalyptic vision: 'The Lord hath cast off his altar; he hath abhorred his sanctuary; he hath given up into the hands of the enemy the walls of her palaces. The Lord hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion: *he hath stretched out a line*; he Gentiles being given to the Gentiles. It is evident also hath not withdrawn his hand from destroying.' Again, in the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the destruction of Babylon (chap. xxxiv. 11) we read, 'The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; and *he shall stretch out upon* under foot forty and two months.' The reason, therefore, *it the line of confusion*, and the stones of emptiness.' The for the exemption of the outer court from measurement prophet Amos also uses the same emblem (Amos vii. 6-9): 'Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood it was therefore '*cast out*,' rejected, as being no longer by a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest hands, and even under the feet, of the Gentiles. thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people history of the last days of Jerusalem? For that is the Israel: I will not again pass by them any more: and the *high places of Isaac shall be desolate*, and the *sanctuaries* of Israel shall be laid waste, etc. Another very suggestive passage occurs in 2 Kings xxi. 12, 13: 'Behold, I am breaking out of the Jewish war, the temple became the bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it both his ears shall tingle. And *I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the* plummet of the house of Ahab.' (See also Psalm lx. 6; Isaiah xxviii. 17.)

symbol of the destruction of *places*, but, what is more singular, of *persons* also. There is a curious passage in 2 Samuel viii. 2 illustrative of this fact: And David 'smote Moab, and *measured them with a line*, *casting them* down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive.' There is some obscurity in the passage, but the meaning appears to be that the captives being ordered to lie down, a certain portion was measured off, equal to two-thirds of the whole, who were appointed to death, while the remaining third was spared. This explains, what would the high priests, were foully murdered, a crime to which

otherwise be almost unintelligible, why in the vision the worshippers are measured as well as the temple and the altar. We think it is plain, then, that the command to measure 'the temple, the altar, and them that worship therein' is significant of the impending destruction which was about to overwhelm the most sacred places of Judaism and the unhappy people themselves.

It will be remarked that one portion of the temple precincts, 'the court which is without the temple,' is excepted from the measurement: and for this a reason passage reads thus: 'The court which is without the temple cast out, and measure it not, etc. There is some obscurity in this statement. We know that there was a portion of the temple precincts called 'the court of the Gentiles;' but that can hardly be the place alluded to here, for it would be strange to speak of the court of the that this abandonment of the outer court to the Gentiles is referred to as something sacrilegious, being coupled with the statement, 'And the holy city shall they tread may probably be that the place was *already desecrated*; a holy place; it was profane and unclean, being in the

Is there anything answering to these facts in the true problem which we have to solve. Here the Jewish historian throws a vivid light upon the whole scene described in the vision. Josephus tells us how, on the citadel and fortress of the insurgents; how the different factions struggled for the possession of this vantage ground; and how John, on of the rebel chiefs, held the temple with his crew of brigands called the Zealots, while Simon, another and rival leader, occupied the city. He But not only is the measuring line or rod used as a tells us also how the Idumean force, which may properly be regarded as belonging to the Gentiles, effected an entrance into the city under cover of night, during the distraction caused by a terrific storm, and were admitted by the Zealots, their confederates, within the sacred precincts of the temple. It would appear that all through the period of the siege the city and temple courts were in the possession of these wild and lawless men of Edom, who carried rapine and bloodshed wherever they came. It was by them, and on this occasion, that Ananus and Joshua, tow of the most eminent and venerable among

Josephus ascribes the subsequent capture of Jerusalem and the temple by the hordes of Zealots and Edomites, and the overthrow of the Jewish commonwealth. (See we conclude that our Lord, in His prediction, alludes to Traill's Josephus, bk. iv. chap. v. sec. 2.) the same historical fact.

Have we not here all the conditions of the problem But if so, what are we to understand by 'the times fully satisfied? The violent and sacrilegious invasion of the Gentiles' in our Saviour's prediction? It has of the temple by the Zealots and Idumeans, and the been generally supposed that this expression refers to masterful occupation of the city by these banditti, who some mystic period of unknown duration, extending, trode it down under their feet during the period of the it may be, over centuries and aeons, and still rolling siege, seems to us precisely to meet the requirements on its uncompleted course. But if this non-natural of the description. Surely it will not be said that interpretation of words is to be applied to Scripture, the Idumeans were not Gentiles? It is important to it is difficult to see what use there is in specifying any observe that this phrase the Gentiles, or the nations, so periods of time at all. Surely, it is much more respectful frequently occurring in the New Testament, generally to the Word of God to understand its language as refers to the immediate neighbours of the Jews, many having some definite meaning. What, then, if 'forty and of them dwelling with them, or beside them, in the land two months' should really mean forty-two months, and nothing more? The times of the Gentiles can only mean of Palestine. Samaria was an eqnoz: so was Idumea, the time during which Jerusalem is in their occupation. so was Batanaea, so was Galilee, so were the Tyrians and Sidonians; and the phrase 'all the nations,' or 'all That time is distinctly specified in the Apocalypse as the Gentiles,' is often employed in this limited sense forty- two months. Now this is a period repeatedly as referring to the Palestinian nationalities. When our spoken of in this book under different designations. It Lord sent forth the twelve on their first missionary tour, is the 'thousand two hundred and sixty days' of the next and charged them not to go into the way of the Gentiles, verse, and the 'time, times and half a time' of chap. xii. nor to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but to go 14, that is to say, three years and a half. Now it is evident rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, He did that such a space of time in the history of nations would be an insignificant point; but for a tumultuous and not mean by the Gentiles the Greeks and the Romans, lawless rabble to domineer over a great city for such a the Egyptians and the Persians, but the home-Gentiles, period would be something portentous and terrible. The as we may call them, whom the disciples could find without overpassing the limits of Palestine. We are in occupation of such a city by an armed mob is not likely to continue over ages and centuries: it is an abnormal danger sometimes of being misled by the application of our modern geographical and ethnological ideas to state of things which must speedily terminate. Now this the thought and speech of our Lord's time. The ideas is exactly what happened in the last days of Jerusalem. of the Jews were rather provincial than ecumenical: During the three years and an half which represent their world was Palestine, and to them 'the nations,' or with sufficient accuracy the duration of the Jewish war, 'the Gentiles,' often meant no more than their nearest Jerusalem was actually in the hands and under the feet neighbours, dwelling on the borders, and sometimes of a horde of ruffians, whom their own countryman within the borders, of their own land. describes as 'slaves, and the very dregs of society, the The passage which we are now considering throws spurious and polluted spawn of the nation.' The last fatal struggle may be said to have begun when Vespasian was light also upon our Lord's prediction in Luke xxi. 24: 'And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until sent by Nero, at the head of sixty thousand men, to put the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled. Our Lord, down the rebellion. This was early in the year A.D. 67, and in August A.D.70 the city and the temple were a it is to be observed, is here speaking of the siege and

capture of Jerusalem, the very theme of the apocalyptic heap of smoking ashes. vision. It cannot be questioned that our Lord's reference It is scarcely possible to conceive a more complete and to Jerusalem being trodden down by the Gentiles is striking correspondence between prophecy and history identical in meaning with the language in the vision,than this, which needs no dexterous manipulation and --'The holy city shall they [the Gentiles] tread under no non-natural interpretation, but the simple noting of foot.' Both passages must refer to the same act and the facts registered in the annals of the time. The following observations of Professor Moses same time: whatever is meant by the one is meant by the other. Since, then, the allusion in the Apocalypse is Stuart on this passage are most important:--to the violent and sacrilegious occupation of Jerusalem "Forty and two months." After all the investigation

that the writer refers to a literal and definite period, although not so exact that a single day, or even a few days, of variation from it would interfere with the object he has in view. It is certain that the invasion of the Romans lasted just about the length of the period named, until Jerusalem most difficult problems contained in Scripture, and was taken. And although the city was not besieged so long, yet the metropolis in this case, as in innumerable others in both Testaments, appears to stand for the country of Judea. During the invasion of Judea by the they mythical or historical persons? Are they symbols *Romans the faithful testimony of the persecuted witnesses* for Christianity is continued, while at last they are slain. The patience of God in deferring so long the destruction of the persecutors is displayed by this, and especially His of the most curious chapters in the history of Biblical mercy in continuing to warn and reprove them. This is interpretation. So complete is the bewilderment, and so a natural, simple, and easy method of interpretation, to say the least, and one which, although it is not difficult to raise objections against it, I feel constrained to adopt.

Episode of the Two Witnesses.

Chap. xi. 3-13

'And I will give [power] unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the earth. And if any man willeth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man willeth to hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over the waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth [land] with every plague, as often as they will. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the abyss shall make war against them, and overcome them, and kill them. And their dead body shall lie in the [broad] street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt upon the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saving unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same

which I have been able to make I feel compelled to believe hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

> We now enter upon the investigation of one of the one which has exercised, we may even say baffled, the research and ingenuity of critics and commentators up to the present hour. Who are the two witnesses? Are or actual realities? Do they represent principles or individuals? The conjectures, for they are nothing more, which have been propounded on this subject form one unsatisfactory the explanation, that many consider the problem insoluble, or conclude that the witnesses have never yet appeared, but belong to the unknown future.

> It is one of the tests of a true theory of interpretation that it should be a good working hypothesis. When the right key to the Apocalypse is found it will open every lock. If this prophetic vision be, as we believe it to be, the reproduction and expansion of the prophecy on the Mount of Olives; and if we are to look for the *dramatis* personae who appear in its scenes within the limits of the period to which that prophecy extends, then the area of investigation becomes very restricted, and the probabilities of discovery proportionately increased. In the inquiry respecting the identity of the two witnesses we are shut up almost to a point of time. Some of the data are precise enough. It will be seen that the period of their prophesying is antecedent to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, that is, just previous to the catastrophe of Jerusalem. The scene of their prophesying also is not obscurely indicated: it is 'the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.' Nothwithstanding Alford's objections, which appear to have really no weight, there can be no reasonable doubt that Jerusalem is the place intended, according to the general consent of almost all commentators and the obvious requirements of the passage. The question then is, What two persons living in the last days of the Jewish commonwealth and in the city of Jerusalem, can be found to answer the description of the two witnesses as given in the vision? That description is so marked and minute that their identification ought not to be difficult. There are seven lending characteristics:-

- 1 They are witnesses of Christ.
- 2 They are two in number.
- 3 They are endowed with miraculous powers.

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE

4 They are symbolically represented by the two olive combined with that of Elias. And, undoubtedly, it is trees and two candlesticks seen in the vision of in these two directions that we must look for the two Zechariah. witnesses, or lines of witnesses. The one impersonates (Zech. iv.) the law, the other the prophets. The one reminds us of 5 They prophesy in sackcloth, *i.e.* their message is the prophet whom God should raise up like unto Moses; one of woe. the other of Elias the prophet, who should come before the great and terrible day of the Lord.

- 6 They die a violent death in the city, and their dead bodies are treated with ignominy.

7 After three days and a half they rise from the dead, and are taken up to heaven.

Before proceeding further in the inquiry it may for the two witnesses of Christ who testified for their be well to notice the following remarks of Dr. Alford Lord and sealed their testimony with their blood, in on the subject, with which we cordially agree:--- 'The Jerusalem, in the last days of the Jewish polity, and we two witnesses, etc. No solution has ever been given of have no hesitation in naming St. James and St. Peter as this portion of the prophecy. Either the two witnesses are the persons indicated. literal,---two individual men,---or they are symbolical,--1. St. James *-two individuals taken as the concentration of principles* and characteristics, and this either in themselves, or We know as a matter of fact and of history that as representing men who embodied those principles in the last days of Jerusalem there lived in that city a and characteristics. . . . The article toiz seems as if the Christian teacher eminent for his sanctity, a faithful two witnesses were well known, and distinct in their witness of Christ, endowed with the gifts of prophecy *individuality. The dusin is essential to the prophecy, and* and miracles, who prophesied in sackcloth, and who *is not to be explained away. No interpretation can be right* sealed his testimony with his blood, being murdered which does not, either in individuals, or in characteristic in the streets of Jerusalem towards the closing days of lines of testimony, retain and bring out this dualism.' On the Jewish commonwealth. This was 'James, a servant of the statement 'clothed in sackcloth' (in token of need God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ.' of repentance and of approaching judgment), Alford Let us see how this name fulfils the requirements

of the problem. It is impossible to conceive a more says:---'Certainly this portion of the prophetic description adequate representation of the old prophets and the law strongly favours the individual interpretation. For, first, of Moses than the Apostle James. That he was a faithful it is hard to conceive how whole bodies of men and witness of Christ in Jerusalem is unquestionable. His churches could be thus described; and, secondly, the habitual, if not his fixed, residence was there: his relation to the church of Jerusalem makes this all but certain. No principal symbolical interpreters have left out, or passed very slightly, this important particular. One does not man of that day had a better title to be called an Elijah. see how bodies of men who lived like other men (their No silken courtier, no prophesier of smooth things, but being the victims of persecution in another matter) can ascetic in his habits, stern and bold in his denunciation be said to have prophesied *clothed in sackcloth*.' of sin,---a man whose knees were callous, like those of a camel, with much prayer; whose unflinching integrity Again, on the fifth verse:--and primitive sanctity won for him even in that wicked 'This whole description is most difficult to apply on the allegorical interpretation; as it that which follows, city the appellation of the Just: was not this the manner and, as might have been expected, the allegorists halt and of man to 'torment them that dwelt in the land,' and to are perplexed exceedingly. The double announcement answer to the description of a witness of Christ? We can still hear the echo of those stern rebukes which galled here seems to stamp the literal sense, and the ei tiz and dei autun apoktanghnai are decisive against any mere the proud and covetous men who 'oppressed the hireling national application of the words. Individuality could in his wages,' and which predicted the swiftly-coming not be more strongly indicated.' wrath which was now so near,---'Go to, ye rich men, Again, on the miraculous powers ascribed to the weep and howl for your miseries which are coming on. Ye heaped up treasures in the last days.' Who can with witnesses:--greater probability be named as one of the two prophet

'All this points out the spirit and power of Moses,

Entirely concurring in these observations, which state the problem fairly, and conclusively set aside any allegorical interpretation as incompatible with the plain requirements of the case, we now proceed to search

PART III THE PAROUSIA

witnesses of the last days than James of Jerusalem, 'the Lord's brother'?

martyrdom of this witness there may be some doubt, but of the fact itself, and of its having taken place in the city of Jerusalem, there can be none. Thus far, at all events, St. James, in the manner of his life and of his death, answers with remarkable fitness to the description of the witnesses given in the Apocalypse.

The following observations by Dr. Schaff place in a striking light the life and work of St. James of Jerusalem, original founding of the church of Jerusalem on the day and are eminently appropriate to the subject under of Pentecost. discussion:---

any could win over the ancient covenant people it was he. It pleased God to set so high an example of the Old Testament piety in its purest form among the Jews, to make conversion to the Gospel, even at the eleventh hour, as easy as possible for them. But when they would not listen to the voice of this last messenger of peace, then was the measure of the divine patience exhausted, and the fearful and long- threatened judgment broke (Acts viii. 25). forth. And thus was the mission of James fulfilled. He was not to outlive the destruction of the Holy City and the temple. According to Hegesippus, he was martyred he returned from Caesarea to Jerusalem (Acts xi. 2). in the year before that event, viz. A.D. 69.

2. St. Peter

But who is the other witness? Here we seem to be left wholly in the dark. Stuart indeed suggests that we may regard the number *two* as merely symbolical; but this seems an unwarrantable supposition. Besides, as residing in that city. the Old Testament prototypes of the witnesses, 'the two anointed ones' of Zechariah's vision, were two persons, Zerubabbel and Joshua, it is only congruous that the witnesses of the Apocalypse should be two persons. Undoubtedly the second witness, like the first, must be sought among the apostles. They were preeminently Christ's witnesses, and possessed in the highest degree the miraculous endowments ascribed to the witnesses in the Apocalypse.

Now, what other apostle besides St. James had a dwelt statedly in that city; lived up to the eve of the dissolution of the Jewish polity; died a martyr's death; and suffered in Jerusalem? It may seem to some a wild conjecture to suggest the name of St. Peter, as we venture to do; but it is by no means a random guess, in favour of the suggestion.

If it should appear that the habitual or fixed residence of St. Peter was in Jerusalem; that there was an intimate, Concerning the exact time and manner of the if not an official, connection between him and the church of that city; and that St. Peter was in Jerusalem on the eve of the Jewish revolt: all these circumstances would lend great probability to the supposition that St. Peter was the other witness associated with St. James.

> What, then, are the facts of the case as shown in the New Testament?

> We find St. Peter the most prominent person at the

We find St. Peter summoned before the Sanhedrin 'There was a necessity for the ministry of James. If as the representative of the Christians in Jerusalem (Acts iv. 8; v.29).

> When the church of Jerusalem was dispersed after the death of Stephen, St. Peter, with the other apostles, continued in Jerusalem (Acts viii. 1).

> St. Peter was delegated, along with St. John, to visit the Samaritans converted by the preaching of Philip. After fulfilling their mission they returned to Jerusalem

> When St. Peter was called by a divine revelation to Caesarea to preach the Gospel to Cornelius we find that

> It was in Jerusalem that St. Peter was apprehended and imprisoned by Herod Agrippa I. after the martyrdom of St. James 'the brother of John' (Acts xii. 3).

> On St. Paul's conversion we are told that 'he did not go up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before him' (Gal i. 17): which implies that there were apostles

> Three years after his conversion St. Paul goes up to Jerusalem. For what purpose? 'To see Peter;' and he adds,---'I abode with him fifteen days,' implying that St. Peter's stated abode was in Jerusalem. On this occasion St. Paul saw only one other apostle, viz. 'James, the Lord's brother' (Gal. i. 18, 19).

> Fourteen years afterwards St. Paul again visits Jerusalem. Whom does he find there? 'James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars' (Gal. Ii. 1, 9).

When Paul and Barnabas were deputed by the recognised connection with the church of Jerusalem; church of Antioch to go to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders respecting the imposition of the Jewish ritual upon the Gentile converts, what apostles did they find in Jerusalem on that occasion? St. Peter and St. James. (Acts xv. 2, 7, 13.)

We find St. Peter and St. James taking a leading part and we solicit a candid consideration of the arguments in the discussion of the question referred to them by the church of Antioch; no other apostles being named as

lived up to the verge of the Jewish revolt and war is That St. Peter and St. James had an official and evident from his epistles. That he died a martyr's death we know from our Lord's prediction; and in his case we may well say that the proverb would hold good, 'It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.' As we read his epistles, and view them as the testimony of one of the two apostolic witnesses of Christ in the doomed city, a new emphasis is imparted to his mysterious Judas and Silas, having delivered the epistle to the utterance which anticipates his own and his country's fate, 'The time is come when judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at *us!*' How appalling We infer that St. Peter was associated with St. James the description of the evil times and evil men, as he saw them in the last days, with his own eyes, in Jerusalem! While the last chapter might be the final testimony of the prophet- witness to the guilty land and city; the last warning-cry before the fiery storm of vengeance burst: 'The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the St. Peter (in 1 Peter v. 13) sends a salutation from night, etc. (2 Pet. iii. 10). Let us now see how far the requirements of the apocalyptic description are met by this identification of the two witnesses as St. James If it shall appear (as we hope to show) that the and St. Peter. They are two in number: 'Individual as Alford truly says they must be. They are more than this,---they are fellow-servants and brethren in Christ, associated in the same work, the same church, the same city. The dualism, which Alford says is essential to the A comparison of the epistles of St. James and St. right interpretation, is perfect. Still more than this,---'The one impersonates the law, the other the prophets.' Who could be a better representative of the law than St. James? though he does not the less impersonate the prophets. St. James indeed strongly reminds us of Elias, who might have been his model; the stern ascetic, whose mighty achievements in prayer he commemorates in of the Jewish Christian church, reminds us of Moses, prophets were to Israel, St. James and St. Peter were to their own generation, and especially to Jerusalem, Finally, it may be affirmed that, whether these the chief scene of their life and labours. The period of their prophecy is also remarkable; it is for the space of a thousand two hundred and threescore days, or three years and a half, representing the duration of the Jewish the two candlesticks seen in the vision of Zechariah: unction of the Spirit has been poured, the feeders and lights of the Christian church, as Zerubbabel and

present. (Acts xv. 6-22.) recognised connection with the church of Jerusalem is presumable from the terms of the letter addressed to the Gentile churches in Antioch, etc. The document is styled 'the decrees of the apostles and elders which are in Jerusalem, implying their fixed abode there. (See Steiger on 1 Peter v. 31.) church of Antioch, returned to Jerusalem, 'unto the apostles' (Acts xv.33). in the church of Jerusalem from the fact that St. Peter, when miraculously brought out of prison, sent a special message to St. James and the brethren,---'Go, shew these things unto James, and to the brethren' (Acts xii. 17). 'his son Marcus'. If this means John surnamed Mark, as is most probable, we know that his home was in Jerusalem, where his mother had a house. (Acts xii. 12.) Babylon of 1 Peter v. 13 is really Jerusalem, it will be a men, well known, and distinct in their individuality, decisive proof that St. Peter's habitual place of residence was in that city. The complete evidence, however, of the identity of Babylon with Jerusalem must be reserved until we come to the consideration of Rev. xvi. xvii. Peter shows that both are addressed to the same class of persons, viz. Jewish believers of the dispersion. (James i. 1; 1 Peter i. 1.) It is very suggestive, in connection with this inquiry, to find these two apostles dwelling in the same city, officially connected with the same church, associated in the same work, addressing the believing Jews in foreign lands, and bearing witness to the his epistle. St. Peter also, who may be called the founder same great truths in advanced age, almost at the close of their life, and on the eve of that great catastrophe the founder of the ancient Jewish church. What the old which buried the city, the temple, and the nation in one common ruin. probabilities amount to demonstration or not, no man could be named more answerable to the character of a witness for Christ in the last days of Jerusalem than St. Peter. Of course, we reject as unhistorical and incredible war. They prophecy in sackcloth: that is, their message the lying legends of tradition which assign to him a is of coming judgment; the denunciation of the wrath bishopric and a martyrdom in Rome. The imposture of God. They are likened to the two olive- trees and has received only too respectful treatment at the hands of critics and commentators. It is more than time that that is, they are 'the two anointed ones' on whom the it should be relegated to the limbo of fable, with other pious frauds of the same character. That St. Peter's stated abode was in Jerusalem is, we think, proved. That he Joshua were the feeders and lights of Israel in their

day. They are endowed with miraculous powers, a characteristic which must not be explained away, and which will apply only to apostolic witnesses. They are to seal their testimony with their blood, and thus far we find St. James and St. Peter perfectly fulfil the cometh up from the abyss shall make war upon them, conditions of the problem. We are sure that they were and shall overcome them, and kill them? This is the first both martyrs of Christ, and that too in the last days of mention made of a being that occupies a large space the Jewish commonwealth. As regards the place where in the subsequent part of the Book of Revelation---St. James's blood was shed we have credible historical evidence that it was in Jerusalem. But here the light fails us, and henceforth we are compelled to grope and feel to say respecting this portentous being in the sequel, our way. Of the death of St. Peter we possess no record; but the very silence is suggestive. That the two chief fact that, whatever the symbol may mean, it points to persons in the church of Jerusalem should fall victims a powerful and deadly antagonist to Christ and His to a suspicious government, or to popular fury, at the people; and that to the agency of this monster the death moment when revolution was on the point of breaking of the two witnesses is ascribed. out, or had already broken out, is only too probable; that with what actually occurred in many instances during that fearful period of lawless barbarity which preceded can go no farther. They martyred witnesses are raised again to life after three days and a half; they stand up on their feet, to the consternation of their enemies God of heaven. and murderers; they ascend to heaven in a cloud, in view of those who exulted over their dead bodies. If we are asked, Did this miracle take place with respect in Josephus an account of an incident which occurred to the martyred witnesses of Christ, St. James and St. no evidence one way or another. We only know that scale of tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands, there is no difficulty in supposing that it might take of Josephus is as follows:--place in the case of two individuals. If the ascension of Christ Himself is a credible fact, it is not easy to see blew with tempestuous violence, and the rain fell in why the ascension of His two witnesses may not also be the facts are before us, and must be left to make their own impression on the mind of the reader. It does not seem possible to resolve the whole into allegory. Where we have found so much already of substantial fact and credible history, it seems inconsistent and unreasonable to sublimate the conclusion into mere metaphor and symbol. We therefore quit the subject with this one Apocalypse suit the known history of St. James and St. Peter, and no one can allege that the remainder may not be equally appropriate.

There remains, however, one circumstance to which we have not adverted, viz. the enemy by whom the witnesses are slain. We read in ver. 7, 'And when they shall have finished their testimony, the wild beast that 'the wild beast from the abyss.' Here he is introduced proleptically, that is by anticipation. We shall have much and only now allude to the subject in order to note the

The ascension of the martyred witnesses to heaven their dead bodies should lie unburied is in accordance is immediately followed by an act of judgment inflicted on the guilty city in which their blood was shed:---

Chap. xi. 13.---'And in the same hour there was a the fall of Jerusalem: but though we can go thus far we great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and there were slain in the earthquake seven thousand men, and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the

It is difficult to see how this can be regarded as merely symbolical. It is a remarkable fact that we find during the Jewish war which in many respects bears Peter? we can only answer, We do not know. There is a striking resemblance to the events described in this passage. On that fatal occasion, when the Idumean it was a distinct promise of Christ that at His coming force was treacherously admitted into the city by the the living saints should be caught up to meet the Lord Zealots, a fearful earthquake took place, and in the in the air. If such a thing might take place on the large same night a great massacre of the inhabitants of the city was perpetrated by these brigands. The statement

'During the night a terrific storm arose; the wind torrents; the lightnings flashed without intermission, a literal fact. But we do not dogmatise on the subject: accompanied by fearful peals of thunder, and the quaking earth resounded with mighty bellowings. The universe, convulsed to its very base, appeared fraught with the destruction of mankind, and it was easy to conjecture that these were portents of no trivial calamity.

Taking advantage of the panic caused by the earthquake, the Idumeans, who were in league with the Zealots, who occupied the temple, succeeded in effecting observation: Four-fifths at least of the description in the an entrance into the city, when a fearful massacre ensued. 'The outer court of the temple,' says Josephus, 'was inundated with blood, and the day dawned upon eight thousand five hundred dead.

We do not quote this as the fulfilment of the scene can miss it.

in the vision, although it may be so; but to show how As for the symbols in the seventh trumpet-vision they are exceedingly clear, and almost self-evident. much the symbols resemble actual historical facts. So ends the vision of the sixth seal with these Observe, it is 'the last trumpet' which now sounds, and the events which follow are such as we might expect at so great a consummation.

impressive words, 'The second woe is past; behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

The Seventh Trumpet

Catastrophe of the Trumpet Vision

Chap. xi. 15-19.---'And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world is become our Lord's and his the coming of the kingdom is most distinctly marked Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the throughout the New Testament; it is always associated four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their with the 'end of the age,' or close of Jewish dispensation, thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, the resurrection, and the judgment. The seventh saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast [and art to come]; because thou hast taken thy great power, and hast reigned. And the the proclamation that the kingdom of God has come. nations were angry, and thine anger came, and the time Messiah reigns; 'He hath put all enemies under his feet.' of the dead to be judged, and to give their reward to thy We may here remark the singular consistency and servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them harmony between representations so unconnected and that fear thy name, both small and great; and to destroy widely dissimilar as they may appear, as the teachings of the destroyers of the earth [land]. And the temple of St. Paul and the visions of the Apocalypse. In the fifteenth God was opened in heaven, and the ark of his covenant chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul, was seen in his temple: and there were lightnings, and speaking of this very period, 'the end,' and the sounding voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and a great of 'the last trumpet,' intimates that it is the time when hail.

the kingdom of God shall come, and when Christ shall We now reach the last of the trumpet visions, 'deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father.' This appears to be the very transaction represented in the scene before us. Messiah has overcome; He has put down all rule, and all authority, and all power, *i.e.* the hostile and malignant Jewish antagonism which has been the bitter enemy of His cause. But He has conquered the kingdom that His Father may be supreme. Accordingly the chorus of elders before the throne celebrate the 'All this,' he says, 'forms strong ground for inference resumption of the kingdom by the Father, saying, 'We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, because thou hast taken thy great might, and hast reigned.' This is a coincidence so subtle, and, if we may so say, undesigned, as to give the force of demonstration to the views which have been propounded.

and, as in every other instance, we find that the vision culminates in a catastrophe---an act of judgment inflicted on the enemies of God; and, on the other hand, the triumph and felicity of His people. We have great pleasure in quoting here the remarks of Dean Alford, who correctly apprehends the plan and structure of the successive visions:--that the three series of visions---the seals, trumpets, and vials---are not continuous, but resumptive; not indeed going over the same ground with one another, either of time or of occurrence, but each evolving something which was not in the former, and putting the course of God's Providence in a different light. It is true that the The next result of the last trumpet is the declaration seals involve the trumpets, the trumpets the vials; but it that the time of *the judgment of the dead* is come, bringing is not in mere temporal succession: the involution and recompense to the people of God and retribution to His inclusion are far deeper, etc. enemies (ver. 18).

This is an important admission, and had the learned We have here condensed into a few brief sentences critic carried the same principle of *resumption* into all the essence of the eschatology of the New Testament. The the visions, it would have given tenfold value to his wrath that so often was declared to be coming is now come. apocalyptic exposition. The principle itself is so legibly It is the time of judgment for the dead: which supposes stamped upon the book that the marvel is how any one their resurrection; it is the time for the vindication of

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE

The first result is the proclamation of the kingdom of God. This is the grand finale towards which, in one form or another all the action of every vision tends. It is the theme of all prophecy; the *terminus ad quem* of the gospels, the epistles, and the Apocalypse. The period of trumpet is the signal that 'the end' is come, and that 'the mystery of God' is finished; it is therefore the time for Rev. vi. 9, and for the rewarding of all the faithful, both enemies of Christ, the destroyers of the land. In fact, the whole catastrophe represents a time and an act of judgment, and the scene of that judgment is the guilty termination of the Jewish economy.

remarkable correspondence with the second Psalm. 'The however, in not being so expressly characterised by nations were angry' is an allusion to 'Why do the nations rage?' They are represented as in revolt against the King of Zion, and are exhorted to make their submission, lest He be angry, and they perish in His wrath. In the These are,---1. The woman clothed with the sun; 2. vision His wrath is come, and the destroyers of the land perish in that wrath. How accurately all this represents the judgment on the guilty rulers and people of Israel it would be superfluous to point out. The scene is definitely call this vision, therefore, *the vision of the seven mystic* localised by the expression thn ghn---that is to say, 'the *figures*. It occupies the next three chapters---chaps. xii. land of Israel.

19) seems susceptible of a satisfactory explanation. At the very moment of the doom of Jerusalem, when city and temple perish together,---when all the ceremonial the temple of God in heaven is opened, and the ark of His covenant is seen in the temple. That is as much as to say, the local and temporary passes, but is succeeded is superseded by the spiritual and the true. We have in this representation a fine comment on the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.' But no sooner is the 'first tabernacle' swept away than the temple in heaven is opened, and even the sacred ark of the covenant, the shrine of the divine Presence and Glory, is revealed to the eyes of men. Access into the holiest of all is no longer forbidden, and 'we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus?

So, amidst portentous manifestations of wrath and judgment on the wicked,---'lightnings, and thunders, and earthquake, and hail, the recognised concomitants in the Old Testament of the divine presence and power,---the vision of the seven trumpets closes.

THE FOURTH VISION

The Seven Mystic Figures

Chaps. xii. xiii. xiv.

The catastrophe of the trumpet vision lands us in

the martyrs of Christ, whose expostulation was heard in the very same crisis as the catastrophe of the seven seals. They are both different representations of the same great small and great; and it is the time of retribution for the event. But there is still room for fresh representations; and the next vision ushers in a completely different set of symbols, though belonging to the same period and relating to the same events. Its place, between the seven land of Israel, and the time is 'the end of the age,' the trumpets and the seven vials, enables us very distinctly to define its limits; and it closes, like the other visions, The verse which we have just considered is in with a very marked catastrophe. It differs from them, the number seven, though it is not difficult to see that it really consists of that number of principal figures or characters, all of them being symbolical representations. The great red dragon; 3. The man-child; 4. The beast from the sea; 5. The beast from the land; 6. The Lamb on Mount Sion; 7. The Son of man on the cloud. We xiii. xiv. It is of the utmost consequence for the correct The symbolical representation in the last verse (ver. interpretation of these apocalyptic visions that we keep stedfastly in mind the limits of the area to which we are restricted by the terms of the Book. It is only a point in historical time and geographical space,---the and ritual of the earthly and transitory are swept away, consummation of the Jewish age. The theatre of action, and the greater number of dramatis personae, must always be sought at the central spot, where is the focus of the interest,---Jerusalem and Judea. It is rarely that we by the heavenly and eternal; the earthly and figurative have to travel beyond this region, although occasionally remoter elements are introduced, when they have a special relation to the principal theme.

1. The Woman clothed with the Sun.

Chap. xii. 1, 2.---'And there appeared a great wonder [sign] in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

Chap. xii. 5.---'And she brought forth a man child, who shall rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne?

It is not surprising that this representation of the woman who brings forth a man child destined to rule all the nations, who is caught up to God and to His throne, etc., should at the first view suggest the Virgin Mother and her Son, who was no sooner born than He was persecuted by the murderous jealousy of Herod, 'who sought the young child to destroy him;' and who ascended to the throne of God. Nevertheless, such an interpretation at once breaks down, being wholly

identity of this symbol. The dragon is 'that old serpent, incompatible with the subsequent representations in the vision. There is nothing in the history of Mary called the Devil, and Satan,'---the ancient and inveterate corresponding to the persecution of the woman by foe of God and of His people. He is represented as the dragon; to her flight into the wilderness after the possessing vast authority and power; 'having seven ascension of her Son; to the flood of water cast out by heads and ten horns, and seven diadems upon his the serpent to destroy her; and to the war made upon heads;' for he is 'the god of this world,' 'the prince of 'the remnant of her seed.' the power of the air;' 'the accuser of the brethren;' 'the There is another objection which is fatal to this deceiver of the whole world.' This malignant enemy of the cause of Christ stands ready to devour the child of Apocalypse itself expressly draws around its scene and which the woman is about to be delivered.

interpretation. It is outside the bounds which the time of action. It is not among the things 'which must 3. The Man Child. shortly come to pass.' If we were taken back to look at symbolical representations of the birth of Christ, we Chap. xii. 5.---'And she brought forth a man child, who shall soon rule all the nations with a rod of iron: should not be upon apocalyptic ground. To leave this ground is to travel out of the record, to forsake the and her child was caught up to God and to his throne? Alford affirms that 'the man child is the Lord terra firma of historical fact, and to launch out upon a shoreless sea of conjecture, without a compass or a Jesus Christ, and none other.' He further says that 'the exigencies of this passage require that the birth should guiding star.

be understood literally and historically of that birth We have no difficulty, therefore, in accepting the of which all Christians know.' And yet he holds that common opinion that the woman clothed with the sun the mother is 'the church;' that 'the Blessed Virgin is representative of the Christian church. But his alone cannot possibly be intended.' These two suppositions is too vague a statement. It is the *persecuted* church, the apostolic church, the church of Judea, that is here are incompatible, and mutually destructive. It seems indeed natural at first sight to assume that Christ must symbolised. That is to say, it is the Hebrew-Christian be intended, but further consideration will show that it church in the closing days of the Jewish age. cannot be so. The church is never said to be the mother The emblems with which the woman is adorned of Christ, nor Christ to be the Son of the church. The will not seem incongruous or extravagant when we church is the bride, the wife, the body, the house of remember the lofty language in which the prophet Isaiah addresses Israel: 'Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and Christ, but never the mother. Christ is the King, the the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, etc. (Isa. lx.) Head, the Husband of the church, but never the Son or Child. He is the Son of God, and the Son of man; That the apostolic church should be resplendent as the but never the Son of the church. There would be an sun, that the moon should be beneath her feet, is only in keeping with all that is spoken in the New Testament of incongruity and impropriety in such a figure from which the sense of fitness revolts.

the dignity and glory of the bride of Christ.

We believe the key to this symbol is to be found in But that which identifies the woman in the vision the sixty-sixth chapter of Isaiah, which is the original as the Hebrew-Christian church is the crown of twelve source from which the figures are derived. Jerusalem is stars upon her head. That this is emblematic of the twelve there represented as a woman in travail, who is delivered tribes of the children of Israel seems beyond question; of a man child (vers. 7, 8): 'Before she travailed, she and it therefore fixes the reference of the vision to the brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered church of Judea. of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath 2. The Great Red Dragon. seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as Chap. xii. 3, 4.---'And there appeared another wonder in heaven: and behold a great red dragon, soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.' having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems It is impossible to believe that the resemblance between upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the these passages is merely casual; and we are therefore stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the greatly assisted in the interpretation of the vision by dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be the analogous representations in the prophecy. As the delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.' man child, or the children of Zion, in the prophecy, There is no possibility of doubt respecting the signify the faithful in the land, or in Jerusalem, so

the man child born of the persecuted woman in the face of the dragon, and preserved in safety there during Apocalypse denotes the faithful disciples of Christ in Judea, or even in Jerusalem itself. This explanation there is; and we shall endeavour to present the veritable harmonises the seeming incongruities of the passage, and gives an intelligible and reasonable sense to the representation. whole representation. The Hebrew- Christian church is personified as the persecuted parent of a persecuted when they saw certain specified signs of the approaching offspring; she gives birth to a man child, but a man child that is also a nation, according to the words of the compassed about with armies,' and 'the abomination prophet. This man child is destined 'to rule the nations with a rod of iron, and is caught up unto God, and to his throne.' These are statements which seem to many only applicable to the Son of God Himself; but they are in truth affirmed in the Apocalypse to be the privilege and reward of every faithful disciple: 'To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron' (chap. ii. 26, 27); 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my is presumable that the Christian population, who had *throne*'(chap. iii. 21). It is therefore not unwarrantable to apply these expressions, lofty as they are, to the faithful disciples of Christ.

provision for the persecuted mother is made by God.

wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, and threescore days.'

This anticipatory of the fuller statement in vers. 13-16, where we are told that 'to the woman were given the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for serpent?

woman is preserved furnishes a clue to the interpretation same space of time during which Jerusalem is trodden under foot by the Gentiles, and during which the two witnesses utter their prophecy. That is to say, these different designations of time,---forty- two months, a thousand two hundred and threescore days, and a time, and times, and half-a- time, are all equivalent to being contemporaneous events. Is there then, it may be the fugitive Christians,---which, however, does them of the man child, fleeing into the wilderness from the of the earth or the land.

a space of time equal to three years and a half? We think facts which, as we believe, answer to the symbolic

Our Lord distinctly forewarned His disciples that catastrophe, especially when they saw 'Jerusalem of desolation standing in the holy place,' they should, without loss of time, escape from the doomed city, and 'flee to the mountains.' So hasty was to be their flight that they were even to disregard their property, and only care for personal preservation (Matt. xxiv. 15-18). We have the testimony of Josephus also that many of the Jews at the commencement of hostilities with Rome abandoned Jerusalem as they would a sinking ship. It been so expressly warned of what was coming, would quit the city; and there appears to be no reason to question the fact that as a body they did retire, and The safety of her offspring being thus secured, sought refuge in Peraea, beyond the Jordan, a district which we are informed by Josephus is generally desert, Chap. xii. 6.---'And the woman fled into the and might therefore be properly styled 'the wilderness.'

This, then, is how the symbols shape themselves that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred into history. The church of Jerusalem, the *mother church* as it may well be called, and the fruitful mother of a multitude of spiritual children, is subjected to severe and grievous persecution, stirred up by Satan, the malignant adversary of Christ and of His people. Whether the man child caught up to God and to His throne symbolises a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the the martyred sons of the church referred to in ver. 11, who, 'though condemned by men in the flesh, were This allusion to the period of time during which the justified and crowned by God with life eternal in their spirit' (1 Peter iv. 6), we will not decide, though we of this part of the vision. It will be seen that it is the think it probable. The mother church, however, though deprived of her first-born, is still persecuted by the dragon. Never was the persecution hotter than when the period of the Jewish revolt arrived and the army of Rome appeared before the gates of Jerusalem. Warned of God, the church of Jerusalem abandoned the city, and fled as on eagle's wings into the wilderness beyond three years and a half, which is known to have been the the Jordan, where a safe retreat was found during the duration of the Jewish war. It is reasonable to conclude, period of the war and the siege. Baffled in his attempt to therefore, that these different events coincide with the crush the cause of Christ in Jerusalem, the dragon vents period of the Jewish war, and cover the same duration, his rage by discharging a flood of malignant wrath after asked, any historical fact corresponding to the symbols no harm,---and then turns to molest and persecute 'the in the vision, namely, the persecuted woman, the mother remnant of the woman's seed,' or disciples in other parts

If it be said that there is an incongruity in formula in such cases, 'And I saw, and behold', but related representing the persecuted Christians of the church of more in the manner of a historian. Nor are we informed Jerusalem by the double figure of the woman and the of the particular time or occasion of the conflict being man child, one of whom is caught up into heaven, while fought. Indeed, the whole transaction is mysterious, the other flies for refuge to the wilderness, we answer, and outside the range of earthly things; the scene of it is that it is an incongruity inseparable from the use of 'in heaven;' the combatants are spiritual beings,---'the such symbols. Zion and her children in the prophecy principalities and powers in heavenly places;' although of Isaiah are virtually identical; and the same is true of it is reasonable to suppose that the event has an intimate bearing upon the history of the apocalyptic period which the woman and the man child. We speak of England and her people when we really mean the same thing is the subject of the vision. It is evidently introduced to by both expressions; and it would be an over-fastidious explain the intense hostility of the dragon against the criticism that would object to such language, which, if church of Christ; and this circumstance seems to imply not logically correct, adds greatly to the dramatic and that the casting out of Satan here referred to took place poetical effect of the description. shortly before the outbreak of persecution against the Christians. It is important to remember that 'Michael' Alford, although he feels quite perplexed about the is in all probability to be identified with the Son of God. interpretation of the vision as a whole, gives his opinion The reader is referred to the satisfactory proof of this in favour of our explanation of a very important part of the symbols. His words are,--identity adduced by Hengstenberg.

'I own than, considering the analogies and the We are not to conceive of this conflict as one of language used, I am much more disposed to interpret physical force, like Milton's battles in 'Paradise Lost,' but the persecution of the woman by the dragon of the rather as a moral and spiritual victory gained by truth various persecutions by Jews which followed the over error, by light over darkness, by the Gospel over sin ascension, and her flight into the wilderness of the and unbelief. Probably there is an intimate connection gradual withdrawal of the church and her agency from between the casting out of Satan here referred to and Jerusalem and Judea, finally consummated by the flight the words of our Lord to His disciples when they to the mountain on the approaching siege, commanded brought back the report of their successful mission as by our Lord Himself. evangelists,--- 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Strange that, having found one historical fact that heaven' (Luke x. 18); and, again, 'Now is the judgment so well corresponded with the symbol, the critic did of this world, now shall the prince of this world be not seek in the same quarter for more, which would cast out' (John xii. 31); and, again, 'For this purpose no doubt have resulted in a luminous exposition of the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the whole; but he is led away by the *ignis fatuus* of a the works of the devil' (1 John iii. 8). Translating the syllabus of universal church history in the Apocalypse, symbols into common language, they appear to signify unaccountably ignoring the express statements of the that the progress of Christianity in the land aroused the book itself with reference to the very restricted period hostility of Satan and his emissaries, and led to more

within which its visions must be fulfilled. active persecution of the disciples of Christ.

We come next to the conflict between the dragon The victory Michael and his angels is celebrated by a and the champion who appears in defence of the triumphant proclamation in heaven, which does come persecuted woman:--within the purview of the vision.

Chap. xii. 7-9.---'And there was war in heaven: 'And I heard a great voice in heaven saying, Now Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser neither was their place found any more in heaven. And of our brethren is cast out, which accused them before the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called our God day and night. And they overcame him by the the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast and they loved not their lives unto the death. out with him?

In all this we have the expression of the general It does not appear that this transaction,---the conflict truth that, in the long and deadly conflict with Jewish between Michael and the dragon,--- was represented enmity, intensified by satanic malice, Christ fought to the Seer in vision. It is not introduced by the usual

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE

Chap. xii. 10, 11.

PART III THE PAROUSIA

their adversaries. How distinctly St. Paul recognised the presence and activity of an infernal power in the plays so important a part in the sequel. malignant hostility which opposed the Gospel may be seen in his remarkable words, 'We wrestle not with flesh to be estaqh [he stood], namely, the dragon. This is and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places' (Ephes. vi. 12). Divested of its symbolical imagery, the vision shows that the efforts of Satan to crush the truth of God were foiled and defeated, and only led to the more signal and portentous monster is beheld coming up out of the decisive triumph of the kingdom of Christ.

Satan, baulked of his prey and knowing that 'he hath but a little while, for the consummation is now very near, departs, as we have seen, to make war with the remnant of the woman's seed, 'who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus' (ver. 17).

4. The First Wild Beast

Chap. xiii. 1-10.

'And he stood upon the sand of the sea. And I saw a wild beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as it were the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world [land] wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon because he gave the power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

We now enter upon an investigation full of interest, but also full of difficulty; though that difficulty is greatly mitigated by the known limits of the area within which

for His persecuted disciples and foiled the attacks of we are restricted, and where we must look for the personage now introduced upon the scene, and who

> The true reading of the first verse is now admitted not unimportant. The dragon, foiled in his attempt to destroy the woman and her seed, stations himself on the sands of the sea, looking out for a potent auxiliary enlisted in his service.

> Nor is he long in making his appearance. A sea,---he is designated ghrion [a wild beast], already named by anticipation in chap. xi. 7. The description of this monster is very minute, so that his identification ought to be easy. Let us note the particulars of the description:---

1 The beast comes from the sea.

2 He has seven heads, and ten horns, with ten diadems upon his horns.

3 He bears names of blasphemy upon his heads.

4 He unites the characteristics of all the beasts seen by Daniel (chap. vii.).

- 5 He is invested by the dragon with his delegated power.
- 6 One of his heads is mortally wounded; but the deadly would is healed.
- 7 He receives the homage of the whole world.
- 8 Divine honours are paid to him.
- 9 He blasphemes God, and wars against the saints.
- 10 The duration of his power is limited to forty-two months.

11 His number is 'the number of a man,' and is declared to be 'six hundred threescore and six.' (In chap. xvii. other particulars are added, which complete the description of the beast, although it must be confessed they do not tend to make the discovery of his identity easier.)

12 He was, and is not, and shall again come (chap. xvii. 8).

13 He ascends out of the abyss, and goes into perdition (chap. xvii. 8).

14 He is a king: one of seven, and yet the eighth (chap. xvii. 11).

It would be strange if such a number of marked and peculiar characteristics could be applicable to more than one individual, or if such an individual could be so obscure as not to be immediately recognised. He must be sought among the greatest of the earth; he must be the foremost of his day, the observed of all observers; he must fill the highest throne and rule the mightiest

this tallies with the character of Nero. We might, at first, be disposed to think, with Bossuet, that the visionary beast signifies 'the Roman Empire, or more properly Rome herself, the mistress of the world,--- Rome pagan, Let us now see how the particulars of the description and the persecutor of the saints.' But as we proceed we are satisfied that it is not an abstraction, but a real 1 None will dispute his claim to the title 'wild beast.' person, that is here described, or, at least, the Imperial power embodied in the most ferocious and brutal of its representatives, the Emperor Nero. Every point of the description identifies the criminal. It was this execrable tyrant who first let loose the hell-hounds of persecution 2 By his rising out of the sea is probably meant on the unoffending Christians of Rome. More like a wild beast than a man, he glutted his blood thirsty propensities with the murder of his brother, his mother, and his wife. The incendiary of his own capital, he falsely imputed 3 The seven heads and ten crowned horns of the his crime to the innocent Christians, whom he put to death in vast numbers and with unheard-of barbarities. Wielding the mightiest power on earth, he used it for 4 The names of blasphemy inscribed upon his the indulgence of the basest vices, and made himself the slave of the most brutal passions. He arrogated to himself the prerogatives of deity, and claimed and received the worship due to God. His inordinate vanity made him 5 The union of the characteristics of the four greedy of admiration; it led him to perform as an actor on the stage, to drive as a charioteer in the circus, to contend in the Olympic games. 'The world wondered after the beast.' We are told that he received no less than 6 The possession of the delegated power of the eighteen hundred crowns for his victories. Dio Cassius relates that he entered Rome in triumph, and was 7 One of his heads being wounded to death hailed with acclamations by the senate and people, who offered him the most abject adulation. He was greeted with shouts of 'Victories Olympic! Victories Pythian! 8 As a matter of course, it would be true of the Thou August! Thou August! Nero the Hercules! Nero the Apollo! Sacred Voice! Eternal One!'

empire. His period, too, is fixed: it is in the last days of half.) Postponing for the moment the consideration the Jewish polity, close upon the final catastrophe. The of the next and crucial question,---'the number of the mystery stands revealed even by its own self-solution. beast,' we may here pause to observe how precisely all This portentous wild beast, this potentate of the world, this plenipotentiary of Satan, can be no other than the master of the world, the Emperor of Rome, 'the man of sin,'---NERO agree with the character of Nero. If ever man deserved that name it was the brutal monster that disgraced humanity by his infamous cruelties and crimes. St. Paul gives him a similar designation: 'I was delivered out of the mouth of the *lion*' (2 Tim. iv. 17). that the beast is a *foreign* power. We are to regard him from a Jewish point of view; and in Judea Nero would of course be a trans marine sovereign. beast are the symbols of his plenary power and universal dominion. heads signify the assumption of the prerogatives of deity. beasts in Daniel's vision indicates that the dominion of the beast embraces the kingdoms represented in that vision. dragon implies the subserviency of the beast to the interests of Satan. He is the dragon's legate. implies the violent end of the individual symbolised by the beast.

Roman emperor that he received the homage of the

Much more obscure is the apparently paradoxical statement respecting the deadly wound of the beast 9 History tells us that Nero was the first of the which was nevertheless healed. Of course, if it was healed it was not deadly; and if it was deadly it could 10 The duration of that first and bitter persecution not really be healed. To require a literal fulfilment of an impossibility would manifestly be unreasonable, yet the explanation ought to reconcile the seeming explanation of the paradox has been given. Nero died a violent death,---died by a wound from a sword, inflicted either by his own hand or by that of an assassin. It is needless to say that the wound was mortal; but there was undoubtedly a very general belief at the time that

whole world, and idolatrous worship would be paid to him. emperors who persecuted Christians. accords with the period of forty and two months, or three years and a half, mentioned in the vision. (If we adopt the reading of the Codex Sinaiticus, 'it was contradiction. Now, it is a curious fact that a plausible given unto him to do what he will for forty and two months, it would evidently imply that his cruel policy of persecution would be limited to that period. Now, as a matter of fact, the persecution by Nero began in November A.D.64, and ended with his death in June A.D.68, that is as nearly as possible three years and a he did not die, but was somewhere in concealment, and

Tacitus alludes to the popular belief (History, chap. ii. of Jewish blood. It is probable that most of them would 8), as does also Suetonius (Nero, chap. lvii.). There is at once, and instinctively, pronounce the dreaded name. nothing improbable in the supposition that such a note If so they would feel at a loss, for the Greek letters *N* e r of identity, embodying the general belief, might be wnKaisar would not make up the numbers required. employed as it is in the vision; at all events, no other explanation supplies so reasonable and satisfactory a would have lain upon the surface, patent and palpable solution of the problem.

The Number of the Beast.

We now come to the question which has exercised the ingenuity of critics and commentators almost since the day it was first propounded, and which even yet can hardly be said to be solved, viz. the name or number of Hebrew-Christian friends both in Asia Minor and Judea. the beast. Without wasting time on the various answers that have been given, it may suffice to make one or two preliminary remarks on the conditions of the problem.

It is evident that the writer considered that he was giving sufficient data for the identification of the person intended. It is also presumable that he meant not to puzzle, but to enlighten, his readers.

It is equally evident that the explanation does not lie on the surface. It requires wisdom to understand his words: it is only the man 'who hath understanding' that is competent to solve the problem.

It is plain that what he intends to convey to his readers is the name of the person symbolised by the letters which form his name, when added together, amount to a certain numerical value.

not a beast, nor an evil spirit, nor an abstraction, but a person, a living *man*.

characters, c e z, or in numerical value six hundred threescore and six.

arrived at the conclusion that by the apocalyptic beast is intended the reigning emperor, Nero. It is his name, therefore, that ought to fulfill, not indeed obviously, nor without some research, yet satisfactorily and conclusively, all the conditions of the problem. That emperor's name would be written in three ways, according as it was expressed in one or other of the three languages, the Latin, the Greek, or the Hebrew: in Latin, Nero Caesar; in Greek, Nerwn Kaisar; in Hebrew, through. rsq nwrn.

St. John was not writing to Romans, nor in the Latin tongue, so that the first form may be at once set aside. He was writing, however, in Greek, and to readers well of St. Paul. We have already seen the proof that 'the

would ere long reappear, and recover his former power. acquainted with Greek, though most of them probably

But if this had been all that was necessary, the name to the dullest apprehension. It would have required neither wisdom nor understanding to read the riddle. The reader must try another method. St. John was a Hebrew, and though he wrote in Greek characters, his thoughts were Hebrew, and the Hebrew form of the Imperial name and title was familiar to him and to his It might not unnaturally occur to the reflecting reader to calculate the value of the letters which expressed the emperor's name in Hebrew. And the secret would stand disclosed:---

N = 50	Q = 100	
R = 200	S = 60	
W = 6	R = 200	
N = 50		
306	360	= 666

Here, then, is a number which expresses a name; the name of a *man*, of *the* man who, of all then living, best deserved to be called a wild beast: the head of the beast. His name expresses a certain number; or, the Empire, the master of the world; claiming to be a god, receiving divine honours, persecuting the saints of the Most High; in short, answering in every particular to The name or number is that of a *man,---i.e.* it is the description in the apocalyptic vision. If it should be asked, Why should the prophet wrap up his meaning in enigmas? Why should he not expressly name the The number which expresses the name is, in Greek individual he means? First, the Apocalypse is a book of symbols: everything in it is expressed in imagery, which requires translation into ordinary language. But, We have already, on entirely independent grounds, secondly, it would not have been safe to speak more plainly. To have openly stated the name of the tyrant, after describing and designating him in the manner employed in the Apocalypse, would have been rash and imprudent in the extreme. Like St. Paul when describing 'the man of sin,' St. John veils his meaning under a disguise, which the heathen Greek or Roman would probably fail to penetrate, but which the instructed Christian of Judea or Asia Minor would readily see

It is a strong confirmation of the accuracy of this interpretation that we have another enigmatical description of the very same personage from the hand

man of sin' delineated in 1 Thess. ii. is no other than characteristics it becomes at once perfectly clear that we must seek the antitype to this symbolic figure in a Nero, and the comparison of the two portraitures shows how striking is their resemblance to one another and to man kindred character with the monster Nero himself. the original. This correspondence cannot be a curious He is evidently the *alter ego* of the emperor, though his coincidence merely; it can only be accounted for by the proportions are drawn on a smaller scale. supposition that both apostles had the same individual 9 His rising out of the land, while the first beast rises out of the sea, denotes that the second beast is a in view.

5. The Second Wild Beast

Chap. xiii. 11-17.---'And I saw another wild beast coming up out of the earth [land]; and he had two 10 His having two horns like a lamb, while the first horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he beast has ten, denotes that his sphere of government is exerciseth all the power of the first beast in his presence, small, and his power limited, compared with the other. and causeth the land and them which dwell therein to 10 That he speaks as a dragon, or serpent, denotes worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. his crafty and deceitful character. And he worketh great wonders, so that he even maketh 11 His being clothed with the authority of the first fire to come down from heaven to the earth in the sight beast indicates that he is the official representative and of men, and he deceiveth them that dwell in the land by delegate of Nero in Judea. At this point the individual is revealed to us. He can be no other than the Roman procurator or governor of Judea under Nero, and the particular governor must be sought at or near the outbreak of the Jewish war; and here the history of the time throws a flood of light upon the inquiry. There are two names which may vie with each other for the bad pre-eminence of the original of this picture of the second beast,---Albinus and Gessius Florus. Each was a monster of tyranny and cruelty, but the latter outdid the former. Before Gessius Florus came into office the Jews counted Albinus the worst governor who had ever ground them by his If our conclusions respecting the identity of the first oppression. After Gessius Florus came they thought Albinus almost a virtuous man in comparison. Florus was a miscreant worthy to stand by the side of Nero: a fit servant of such a master. The reader will find in the pages of Josephus the story of the enormous and incredible profligacy, fraud, treachery, and tyranny of this last and worst of all the governors who represented the Imperial authority in Judea, and will see how the historian traces to the misrule of this infamous man the ruin that fell upon the nation. It was his intolerable and 1 The second beast rises up from the land. Draconic oppression that goaded the unhappy Jews into 2 He has only two horns, and they are like a lamb's. rebellion, and was the proximate cause of the war which 3 He speaks like a dragon. ended in the utter overthrow of Jerusalem and her 4 He is clothed with the delegated authority of the people. Josephus, indeed, has not preserved all the facts, first beast. which, if we had them, would no doubt vividly illustrate 5 He compels men to pay homage, or worship, to all the particulars in the apocalyptic portraiture of the second beast. But we scarcely need them. Force, fraud, the beast. 6 He pretends to exercise miraculous powers. cruelty, imposture, tyranny, are attributes which too 7 He rules with tyrannical force and cruelty. certainly might be predicated of such a procurator as 8 He excludes from civil rights all who refuse Florus. Perhaps the traits most difficult to verify are

means of those miracles which he had power to work in that the image of the beast should even speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be slain. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or on their forehead; and that the name of the beast, or the number of his name. who is intended by the second beast. It will be observed that in many respects there is a strong resemblance is supreme and the other subordinate; but there are also points of difference. It will be proper, however, in this case also, to bring into one view the various particular characteristics which assist to identify the individual

the presence of the beast; saying to them that dwell in the land, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life [breath] to the image of the beast, no men might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or beast are correct, it ought not to be difficult to discover between them: they are of the same nature, though one intended:--abject submission to the beast. Looking at these those which relate to the compulsory enforcement of

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE

domestic or home authority, ruling in Judea; while the other is a *foreign* power.

PART III THE PAROUSIA

miraculous pretensions. Yet even here all we know is in 'the woman and the remnant of her seed'. Their time, favour of the description being true to the letter. Dean however, is short; the hour of retribution is at hand; and Milman observes:---

emperor;' and he adds: 'The test by which the martyrs were tried was to adore the emperor, to offer incense before his statue, and to invoke the gods.' (See Review of Newman's Development of Christian Doctrine.)

Dean Alford's remarks are also deserving of notice:---

substantiates to us in their literal fulfillment. The image of Caesar was everywhere that which men were made interpreter; it speaks for itself. There is a striking to worship: it was before this that the Christian martyrs were brought to the test, and put to death if they refused the act of adoration . . .

'If it be said, as an objection to this, that it is not an image of the emperor, but of the best itself, which is spoken of, the answer is very simple,---that as the Seer himself, in chap. xvii. 11, does not hesitate to identify one of the "seven kings" with the beast itself, so we may fairly assume that the image of the beast, for the time being, would be the image of the reigning emperor.

To the same effect are the following observations of Dean Howson, which are the more striking as being written without any reference to the passage before us:---

'The image of the emperor was at that time [under the Empire] the object of religious reverence: he was a deity on earth ('Das aequa potestas'---Juv. iv. 71), and the worship paid to him was a real worship. It is a striking thought that in those times (setting aside effete forms of religion) the only two genuine worships in the civilised world were the worship of a Tiberius or a Nero, on the one hand, and the worship of *Christ* on the other.

We are now in a position to ask the verdict of every candid and judicial mind on the question of identity which has been argued, as well as the complete congruity and correspondence in all points between the symbols in the vision and the historical personages whom, in our opinion, they represent. The time, the place, the scene, the circumstances, and the *dramatis personae* are all in full accord with the requirements of the Apocalypse. It is the eve of the great catastrophe, the final ruin of the Judaic polity. The predicted persecution of the people of God, which was to usher in the end, has broken out. A terrible triumvirate of evil is in league against Christ and His cause. The dragon, the beast from the sea, and the beast from the land,---Satan, the Emperor, and

homage to the emperor's statue and the assumption of the Roman procurator, are in active hostility against the very next scene discovers the champion and avenger 'The image of the beast is clearly the statue of the of the faithful, and shows the security and blessedness of His people.

6. The Lamb on Mount Sion

Chap. xiv. 1-13.---'And I saw, and behold, the Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name 'The Seer is now describing facts which history of his Father, written in their foreheads,' etc.

This portion of the vision scarcely needs an contrast between the wild beast that rules as vicegerent of the dragon and the Lamb that governs in His Father's name. There can be no doubt that the hundred and forty and four thousand, having the name of Christ and the Father inscribed on their foreheads, are identical with the hundred and forty and four thousand out of all the tribes of the children of Israel, who have the seal of God on their foreheads, who are alluded to in chap. vii. They are the elect Hebrew-Christian church of Judea, possibly of Jerusalem, and are represented as standing with the Lamb on the Mount Sion, redeemed, triumphant, glorified; no longer exposed to danger and death, but gathered into the fold of the Great Shepherd. Of course the representation is proleptic---an anticipation of what was now imminent; in fact, a repetition of the glorious scene described in chap. vii. 9-17. Is it possible to believe that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews had not this vision in his thoughts when he wrote that noble passage, "Ye are come unto mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," etc.? The points of resemblance are so marked and so numerous that it cannot possibly be accidental. The scene is the same,---Mount Sion; the *dramatis personae* are the same,---'the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, corresponding with the hundred and forty and four thousand who bear the seal of God. In the epistle they are called 'the church of the *first-born*;' the vision explains the title,---they are 'the first- fruits unto God and to the Lamb;' the first converts to the faith of Christ in the land of Judea. In the epistle they are designated 'the spirits of just men made perfect;' in the vision they are 'virgins undefiled, in whose mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God.' Both in the vision and the epistle we find 'the innumerable company of angels' and 'the Lamb,' by whom redemption was achieved. In short,

it is placed beyond all reasonable doubt that since the follow them.' author of the Apocalypse cannot be supposed to have All this is clearly indicative of the near approach of drawn his description from the epistle, the writer of the the final catastrophe. There is one expression, however, epistle must have derived his ideas and imagery from in the last quotation which calls for explanation, viz. the the Apocalypse. announcement respecting the blessedness of the dead Events are now hastening rapidly towards the who die in the Lord from henceforth. This 'henceforth' consummation. The Seer beholds three angels fly in is the emphatic word in the sentence, and must have an succession across the field of vision, each bearing important significance. It is not simply that the dead a prophetic announcement of the approaching in Christ are safe or happy, but that, from and after a catastrophe. The first, who is charged with the certain specified period, a peculiar blessedness belongs proclamation of the everlasting Gospel, in the first to all those who thenceforth die in the Lord.

It is not unreasonable in itself, and it appears, moreover, to be the distinct teaching of Holy Scripture, that the great consummation which closed the Jewish age had an important bearing upon the condition of all who subsequently to that period, 'die in the Lord.' We have seen (Remarks on Heb. xi. 40) that previously to the redemptive work of Christ the state of the pious dead was not perfect. They had to await the accomplishment of that great event which constituted the foundation of their everlasting felicity. The saints of the old dispensation 'obtained not the promise.' They died in A second angel swiftly follows, and proclaims the faith, but did not possess the inheritance. 'God provided something better for *us*, that they without us should not the Hebrews on the verge of the great consummation. The plain meaning of this is that the Parousia marked the introduction of a new epoch in the condition of the departed saints and the prospects of all who after that epoch commenced should die in the Lord. 'Blessed are such' from henceforth. That is to say, they should not have to wait, as their predecessors had, the arrival of A third messenger succeeds, who denounces, the period when the promise should be fulfilled. They should enter at once into 'the rest which remaineth for the people of God.' The way into the holy place has now Chap. xiv. 9-11.---'If any man worship the beast and been made manifest; there is immediate rest and reward for the faithful departed; 'they rest from their labours;

instance to them that dwell in the land, and next to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, crises with a loud voice, 'Fear God, and give glory to him; because the hour of his judgment is come' (ver. 7). There is a manifest allusion here to the fact predicted by our Lord that, before the coming of 'the end,' the Gospel of the kingdom would first be preached in all the world 'for a witness to all the nations' (Matt. xxiv. 14). This symbol, therefore, indicates the near approach of the catastrophe of Jerusalem,---the arrival of the hour of Israel's judgment. fall of Babylon, as if it had already taken place, saying, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, which made the be made perfect.' So wrote the author of the Epistle to all the nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' This is plainly another declaration of the same impending catastrophe, only more distinctly indicating the doom of the guilty city---the great criminal about to be brought to judgment. We shall presently have occasion to discuss the identity of the great city here and elsewhere designated as Babylon. in awful language, the wrath of God upon all idol worshippers:---

his image, or receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of for their works do follow them.' God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup This important passage would be totally inexplicable of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire but for the light thrown upon it by Heb. iv. 1-11; xi. 9, and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in 10, 13, 39, 40. the presence of the Lamb, etc. 7. The Son of Man on the Cloud.

In striking contrast to this is the message which a heavenly voice brings to the faithful disciples of Christ who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?

Chap. xiv. 13.---'And I heard a voice from heaven saving unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that in thy sickle and reap: because the time to reap is come; they may rest from their labours; and their works do

Chap. xiv. 14-20.---'And I saw, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 304

was reaped.

in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over the fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the necessary to point out the peculiar fitness of the imagery sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the land; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel cast his sickle on the land, and gathered the vine of the land, and cast it into the The vintage is now come, for 'her grapes are fully ripe;' great wine-press of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood came out of the wine- press, even to the bits of the horses, for a but cuts down the vine itself, and casts it altogether into thousand six hundred furlongs.'

figures of which this fourth vision consists, and to the outside the city, as the sin-offering was burned outside *denoument*, where we may expect to find the catastrophe the camp, and as the criminal was executed outside the of the whole. Nor are we disappointed; for nothing can be more distinctly marked than the catastrophe under this symbol, the interpretation being so self-evident river in flood, rising to the horse-bridles, and reaching a that it can hardly be misunderstood.

The scene opens with the apparition of 'one like unto the Son of man seated on a white cloud,' wearing historic truth. It was a people that was thus 'trampled' in his hand. The weapon which he holds is the emblem of the transaction which is about to take place. It is the time of harvest, for 'the harvest of the land is ripe; and the land was reaped.

the original draught of the picture in our Lord's parable of the wheat and the tares. 'In the time of harvest [the end of the age, sunteleia tou aiwnoz], I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them barn' (Matt. xiii. 30).

The parable of the tares and the wheat is also followed in the vision in the separation of this final judicial transaction into two parts---the wheat harvest and the vintage, except only in the transposition of the order of the events. The harvest corresponds with the reaping of the wheat and its safe gathering into the barn; in the other words, it is the fulfilment of the prediction, 'The Son of man shall send his angels, and they shall gather together his elect from the four place before the passing away of that generation. The destruction of the tares corresponds with the 'vintage of the land.' It will be observed that the vintage is wholly which amply attest the reality and truth of the prophecy.

because the harvest of the land is ripe. And he that sat of a destructive character. As the 'harvest of the land' on the cloud cast his sickle on the land; and the land denotes the salvation of the faithful people of God, so the 'vintage of the land' denotes the destruction of His 'And another angel came out of the temple which is enemies. It is worthy of remark that while the Son of man is represented as the reaper, the angel in the vision is the agent in the cutting down of the vine. It is scarcely employed in the latter impressive scene. 'The vine of the land' is Israel, according to the well-known emblem in Psalm lxxx. 8, 'Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt,' etc. that is to say, the nation is ripe for judgment. The angel commissioned to destroy does not gather the clusters, the 'great wine-press of the wrath of God.' The wine-We now come to the seventh and last of the mystic press is trodden; and this is represented as taking place gate, being accursed (Heb. xiii. 11-13). Blood comes out of the wine-press, and in such torrents that it is like a distance of 'a thousand and six hundred furlongs.'

This is terrible in symbol, yet almost literal in its a golden crown on his head and holding a sharp sickle in the fury of divine wrath. Where was there ever such a sea of blood as was shed in the exterminating war of Vespasian and of Titus? The carnage, as related by Josephus, exceeds all that is recorded in the sanguinary he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle on the land; and annals of warfare. Jerusalem, and her children within her, were trodden in the great wine-press of the wrath There can be no misunderstanding this act. We have of God. Then were fulfilled the words of the prophet Jeremiah, 'The Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a wine-press' (Lam. i. 15). There is fact as well as figure in the ghastly scene which represents the invading cavalry as swimming in blood in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my up to the horses' bits; and there is probably an allusion to the geographical extent of Palestine in the 'thousand and six hundred furlongs,' so that we may regard the symbolical description as equivalent to the statement that from one end to the other the land was deluged with blood.

In all this the prophecy and the history fit each other like lock and key; and if we had not the testimony of an eyewitness, who certainly could have no interest in exaggerating the ruin of his people or defaming their character, it would scarcely be possible to believe that winds' (Matt. xxiv. 31-34), an event which was to take these symbols were not overcharged. But no one can read that tragic story without recognising there the transactions which are here written in symbol, and

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE

Such is the distinctly marked catastrophe of the vision of the seven mystic figures. Like the othcatastrophes it is an act of judgment, presenting the gre consummation in a different aspect. If any doubt shou still be felt as to the principle which underlies our who system of interpretation, viz. that the Apocalypse is sevenfold representation of the same great providenti drama, it must be dispelled by the next series of visior which conclusively demonstrates this feature of the book.

THE FIFTH VISION

The Seven Vials

Chaps. xv. xvi.

Chap. xv. 1.

'And I saw another sign in heaven, great an marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is completed the wrath of God, etc.

This cannot be mere casual coincidence: it is This vision opens, like the first, second, and third, identity, and it suggests the inquiry, For what reason with a prologue or preamble. The scene is laid in heaven, is the vision thus repeated? It cannot be merely for the where the Seer beholds seven angels, charged with the sake of symmetry, to complete the sevenfold plan of infliction of seven plagues, which are called *the last*, the construction, for the marvellous affluence of the as being the completion of the divine wrath upon the book makes the suggestion of poverty of invention, or guilty nation. The imagery in this introductory scene is repetition for the sake of filling up, utterly preposterous. conceived in a style of the loftiest sublimity. The seven More probable is the explanation that the vision of the ministers of vengeance receive from on of the living vials is introduced not only to reaffirm the judgments creatures or cherubim, seven golden vials full of the about to come upon the land, but especially to prepare wrath of God, and are commissioned to begin at once the way for the bringing in of the great criminal, the the execution of their mission, which is, to pour out hour of whose judgment is come. The last of the their vials on the land. seven vials represents Babylon the great as coming in It will at once be seen that there is a marked remembrance before God; yet in the catastrophe of the vision her judgment is suspended, because it is to form the material of a separate vision, viz. the sixth.

correspondence between the vision of the seven vials and that of the seven trumpets. The vials, indeed, are simply a repetition and abridgment of the trumpets, It will now be proper to pass in brief review the followed the same order and taking substantially the successive vials of the seven angels. same form. There are, it is true, additional circumstances The first four vials (chap. xvi. 2-9), like the first four introduced into the vision of the seven vials, but still the trumpets, affect the natural world,--- the earth or land, resemblance between the two visions is so striking as to the sea, the rivers, the sun. These are all smitten with force the conviction on the mind that they both refer to the same historical events.

The subjoined parallel will show the correspondence between the two visions more distinctly:---

he	THE TRUMPETS	THE VIALS	
ner	1. Plagues poured upon the	1. Plagues poured upon the	
eat	land.	land.	
ıld	2. Affects the sea, which	2. Affects the sea, which	
ole	becomes as blood.	becomes as blood.	
s a	3. Affects the rivers and	3. Affects the rivers and	
ial	fountains of waters.	fountains of waters.	
	4. Affects the sun, moon, and	4. Affects the sun.	
ns,	stars.	5. Poured on the seat of	
he	5. The abyss (the seat of the	the beast (the abyss). Men	
	beast) opened. Men tormented.	tormented.	
	6. The angels at the great	6. Poured on the great river	
	river Euphrates loosed. Muster	Euphrates. Hosts muster for	
	of hordes of cavalry.	the battle of the great day.	
	7. Catastrophe; judgment;	7. Catastrophe;	
	the kingdom proclaimed.	proclamation of the end.	
	Terrible natural phenomena-	Terrible natural phenomena-	
nd	voices, thunderings, and an	voices, thunderings, and an	
	earthquake.	earthquake.	
00.			

distemper and plague,---the frame of nature is out of joint, and the inanimate creation sickens and groans on account of the wickedness of men. This may be said to be a figure of speech, though enough in Scripture; how far it expresses any historical facts it is impossible to say, but it is remarkable that the language of our Lord in speaking of this very period comes very near the symbols of the Apocalypse: 'There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth [land] distress of the nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for

fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the land: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken' (Luke xxi. 25, 26). If the testimony of Josephus is to be relied on, the destruction of Jerusalem was preceded by portents of the most alarming kind. It is to be observed that the area affected by these plagues is 'the land,' national character of the transactions represented in the vision is distinctly brought out in ver. 6. When the waters is heard acknowledging the retributive justice of this plague,---'For they shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou has given them blood to drink; they are worthy.' This 'killing of the prophets' was the very sin of Israel, and of Jerusalem, nor is there any other city or nation against which this particular crime can be alleged as its peculiar characteristic. This impeachment decisively fixes the allusion in the vision to the Jewish people, and to that fearful period in their history when it might truly be said that their rivers ran with blood.

fifth trumpet. It is poured out on the seat or throne of the beast, which seems to be identical with 'the abyss' of the trumpet vision. The abyss is the region from which blood on which Israel as a nation was doomed to perish. the beast is said to ascend (chap. xi. 7); and that this was the name given to the abode of evil spirits appears from the fact that the demons cast out of the possessed Gadarene besought Jesus 'that he would not command kingdom of the power of darkness. What historical facts are signified by the symbols of terror and misery here that which it symbolises, is come; for it will be observed obscurely to the agonies of distress and suffering which preceded and portended the final consummation.

upon the great river Euphrates (ver. 12), the water of which is dried up, that 'the way of the kings of the east may be prepared.' We now approach the catastrophe. In referred to) 'was remembered before God, to give her the vision of the sixth trumpet we see an innumerable the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath;' her host mustered for the great battle; in the vision of the out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of her to drink. the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet;' the emissaries of the powers of darkness go forth to muster the armies of the 'kings of the whole world,' to gather them to the great war of 'the great day of God Almighty'. Translated into historical terms this symbol represents the mobilising of the forces of the Empire and of the kings of the neighbouring nations for the Jewish war. mention is made of the great hail which falls upon

The drying up of the Euphrates seems plainly to signify its being crossed with ease and speed; and this, taken in connection with the corresponding symbol under the sixth trumpet, viz. the loosing of the four angels bound at the Euphrates, points to the drawing of troops from that quarter for the invasion of Judea. This we know to that is Judea, the scene of the tragedy. The local and be a historical fact. Not only Roman legions from the frontier of the Euphrates, but auxiliary kings whose dominions lay in that region, such as Antiochus of third angel turns the rivers into blood, the angel of the Commagene and Sohemus of Sophene, most properly designated 'kings from the east,' followed the eagles of Rome to the siege of Jerusalem. The name given to the approaching conflict decisively determines the event to which reference is made:---it is 'the battle,' or 'war of that great day of God Almighty'---an expression equivalent to 'the great and terrible day of the Lord.' That this day was now at hand is plainly intimated by the warning in ver. 15, 'Behold, I come as a thief.' The scene of the conflict also, 'Armageddon,'---a name that is associated with one of the darkest and most disastrous days in the The fifth vial (chap. xvi. 10, 11) corresponds with the history of Israel, the field of Megiddo, the emblem of defeat and slaughter, lies in Jewish territory. That name of evil omen was meet to be the type of that final field of

The seventh vial, like the seventh trumpet, brings the catastrophe of the vision, accompanied by the same portents of 'voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake, and great hail. A voice from the them to go away into *the abyss'* (Luke viii. 31). The seat temple, a voice from the throne itself, proclaims the of the beast, therefore, is the same as the abyss,---the consummation, 'It is done! Tegonen! Actum est! All is over!' That is to say, the catastrophe of the vision, and employed it is impossible to say, though they point not that every catastrophe lands us in virtually the same conclusion. An earthquake of unparalleled violence shatters 'the cities of the nations' and divides 'the great The sixth vial, like the sixth trumpet, takes effect *city*' itself, the city which is pre-eminently the theme of these visions, into three parts. 'Babylon the great' (which is clearly meant to be the name of the city just sins cry for vengeance, and now her judgment is come, sixth vial we see 'three unclean spirits like frogs come and the wine-cup of the fierce wrath of God is filled for

> That all this refers indubitably and exclusively to Jerusalem is surely self-evident, and it is capable of the clearest demonstration as the sequel will show.

> One incident in this grad and awful catastrophe deserves special attention. In both the visions, the seventh trumpet and the seventh vial, particular

men. In the seventh vial the hail is more fully dwelt paragraph upon, and every stone is said to be about the weight of 2; bk. v. chap. i. paragraph 6. a talent. There is something so extraordinary, and yet 3 There is another curious circumstance connected so specific, in this statement that it arrests the attention with this passage in Josephus. Whiston has the following and suggests the inquiry, Is this wholly symbol, or is it not upon it:--in any degree fact? Of course, we cannot conceive literal 'What should be the meaning of this signal or hail of which every stone should be of the weight of a watchword when the watchman saw a stone coming from the engine, "The son cometh," or what mistake there is in the reading, I cannot tell. The MSS., both we are almost compelled to suppose that it is not mere hyperbole. Now, it is a remarkable fact that in Josephus Greek and Latin, all agree in this reading; and I cannot approve of any groundless conjectural alteration of the unintelligible symbol. He informs us that at the siege text from nioz to ioz, that not the son, or a stone, but that the arrow or dart cometh, as hath been made by enormous magnitude and power, which discharged Dr. Hudson, and not corrected by Havercamp. Had vast stones into the city. The whole description which Josephus written even his first edition of these books of the war in pure Hebrew, or had the Jews then used the pure Hebrew at Jerusalem, the Hebrew word for a son 'Admirable as were the engines constructed by is so like that for a stone,---Ben and Eben, that such a correction might have more easily been admitted. But excellence. Their scorpions were of greater power and Josephus wrote his former edition for the use of the Jews beyond the Euphrates, and so in the Chaldee language, as he did this second edition in the Greek language; and Bar was the Chaldee word for son, instead of the Hebrew weight of a talent, and had a range of two furlongs and Ben, and was used not only in Chaldaea, but in Judea more. The shock, not only to such as first met it, but even also, as the New Testament informs us. Dio also informs us that the very Romans in Rome pronounced the name of Simon the son of Gioras, Bar- Poras for Bar-Gioras, as we learn from Hiphiline, p. 217. Reland observes that "many will here look for a mystery, as though the meaning were that the Son of God came now to take posted on the towers, who gave warning when the vengeance on the sins of the Jewish nation," which is indeed the truth of the fact, but hardly what the Jews could now mean, unless, possibly, by way of derision of which those towards whom it was directed would Christ" threatening so off that He would come at the head separate, and lie down before it reached them. Thus it of the Roman army for their destruction. But even this interpretation has but a very small degree of probability. If I were to make an emendation by mere conjecture, I when, taking a more successful aim, as it was no longer would read petroz, instead of nioz, though the likeness is not so great as in ioz, because that is the word used by many at a single discharge?---Josephus, Jewish Wars, Josephus just before, as already been noted on this very occasion; while ioz, an arrow or dart, is only a poetical Is this only a fanciful coincidence, or is it a signal word, and never used by Josephus elsewhere, and is instance of the exact fulfillment of prophecy? We confess indeed no way suitable to the occasion, this engine not that we incline to the latter alternative, for it is perfectly throwing arrows or darts, but great stones at this time.'congruous to represent such a mode of assault as a --Whiston's Josephus, bk. v. chap. vi. paragraph 3, Note.

talent; yet the language is so precise and definite that we seem to get the explanation of this apparently of Jerusalem the tenth legion constructed ballistae of Josephus gives of these engines is of such extraordinary interest it is well worthy of quotation:--all the legions, those of the tenth were of peculiar their stone-projectors larger, and with these they not only kept in check the sallying parties, but those also on the ramparts. *The stones that were thrown were of the* to those beyond them for a considerable distance, was irresistible. The Jews, however, at the first, could guard against the stone; for its approach was intimated, not only to the ear by its whiz, but also, being white, to the eye by its brightness. Accordingly they had watchmen engine was discharged and the stone projected, calling out in their native language, "The son is coming," on happened that, owing to these precautions, the stone fell harmless. It then occurred to the Romans to blacken it; equally discernible in its approach, they swept down bk. v. chap. vi. 3.

storm or hail of projectiles, while the specific allusion to Dr. Traill makes the following observations on this the enormous weight of each stone seems to bring the passage:--statement within the domain of fact and history. "The son is coming." O nioz is the reading of all

1. Jewish Wars, bk. vi. chap. v. section 3, 4. the MSS. and of Rufinus; and it is not easy to conceive 2. See Josephus, Jewish Wars, bk. iii. chap. iv. how such a singular reading should be found in all if

were not the true one. Nor are the alterations proposed at all satisfactory. O ioz would give the "arrow," not the "stone." O liqoz is without authority. Cardwell hand a golden cup 'full of abominations and filthiness proposes outoz,---"here it comes." Reland's explanation is probably not far from the truth, viz. that the cry was wba ab = "the stone is coming," but that some, deceived by the similarity of sound, took it to be when ab = "the moreover, said to be 'drunk with the blood of the saints, son is coming." From such a mistake as this, or from some other cause, the term "the son" might come to be applied as a nickname.'---Traill's Josephus, Critical Notes, p. clx.

suggestions give a satisfactory explanation, though some of them come near the truth. It could not but be them of a very obscure character. The woman, or harlot, well known to the Jews that the great hope and faith of the Christians was the speedy coming of the Son. It was about this very time, according to Hegesippus, that St. James, the brother of our Lord, publicly testified in the language of great power and beauty. This is followed in temple that 'the Son of man was about to come in the clouds of heaven,' and then sealed his testimony with his blood. It seems highly probable that the Jews, in their defiant and desperate blasphemy, when they saw the white mass hurtling through the air, raised the ribald cry, 'The Son is coming,' in mockery of the Christian hope of the Parousia, to which they might trace a ludicrous resemblance in the strange appearance of the missile.

THE SIXTH VISION

The Harlot City

Chaps. xvii. xviii. xix xx.

We now approach a part of our investigation in which we are about to make great demands upon the candour and impartiality of the reader, and must ask for a patient and unbiased weighing of the evidence that shall be brought before him. Possibly we may run counter to many prepossessions, but if the seat of judgment be occupied by an impartial love of truth, we do not fear an adverse decision.

It may be convenient at the outset to take a general view of this vision as a whole, occupying as it does a larger space than any in the book, and thus indicating the pre-eminent importance of its contents.

It is introduced by a short preface or prologue (chap. xvii. 1, 2). One of the vial-angels invites the Seer to come and behold the judgment of 'the great harlot that sitteth on many waters.' The vision is seen in 'the wilderness.' The prophet sees a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured wild beast, full of names of blasphemy, and having seven heads and ten horns. The woman is

gorgeously arrayed in a robe of purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones, and holds in her of her fornication? On the forehead of this visionary figure is an inscription, 'Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.' She is, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.' The angelinterpreter then proceeds to disclose to the wondering prophet the meaning of the apparition. He identifies the wild beast in this vision with the first beast described in We are disposed to think that none of these chap. xiii., whose number is six hundred and sixty-six, adding additional particulars to the description, some of he declares to be 'that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.' In the next chapter (xviii.) the fall of Babylon the great, or the harlot city, is described in chap. xix. by the celebration in heaven of the triumph over Babylon, which gives occasion to introduce by anticipation the approaching nuptials of the Lamb; after which there is a description of the victory of the divine Champion, whose name is the Word of God, over 'the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth.' In chap. xx. the dragon, the head of the great confederacy against the cause of truth and of God, is bound and shut up in the abyss for a period of a thousand years. The vision then closes in a grand catastrophe, a solemn act of judgment, in which the dead, small and great, stand before God, and are judged according to their works. Such is a rapid sketch of the outlines of this magnificent

> The question of greatest importance and difficulty which we have here to deal with is, What city is signified by the woman sitting on the scarlet beast, and designated 'Babylon the great'?

vision.

By the great majority of interpreters it has been, and is, received as an undoubted and almost self-evident proposition that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is, and can be, no other than Rome, the empress of the world in the days of St. John, and since his time the seat and centre of the most corrupt form of Christianity and the most overshadowing spiritual despotism that the world has ever seen. That there is much to favour this opinion may be inferred from the fact of its general acceptance. It may even be thought to be placed beyond question by the apparent identification of the harlot in the vision, as the 'city of the seven hills,' and 'the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

It will seem presumptuous as well as hazardous

to challenge a decision which has been pronounced the old Jerusalem. In fact, this antithesis between by such high authority, and which has ruled so long the old Jerusalem and the new is drawn out for us so among Protestant theologians and commentators, distinctly by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians, and he who ventures to do so enters the lists at a great that he puts into our hand a key to the interpretation disadvantage. Nevertheless, in the interests of truth, of this symbol in the Apocalypse. The apostle contrasts and with all reverence and loyalty to the teaching of the Jerusalem 'which now is' with the Jerusalem which the divine Word, it may not only be permitted, but may was to be: the Jerusalem which is in *bondage* with the even be imperative, to show cause why the popular Jerusalem which is *free*: the Jerusalem which is *beneath* interpretation of this symbol should be rejected as with the Jerusalem which is *above* (Gal. iv. 25, 26). We untenable and untrue. have a similar antithesis in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 1 There is an *a priori* presumption of the strongest where 'the city which hath foundations' is contrasted kind against Rome being the Babylon of the Apocalypse. with the 'not-continuing city; the city 'whose builder is The improbability is great with regard even to Rome God' with the city of human creation; 'the city of the pagan, but far greater with regard to Rome papal. The living God, or the 'heavenly Jerusalem,' with the earthly very design of the book excludes the possibility of Jerusalem (Heb. xi. 10, 16; xii. 22). In like manner we Rome being represented as one of its *dramatis personae*. have the antithesis between these two cities distinctly The fundamental idea of the Apocalypse, as we have and broadly presented to us in the Apocalypse the one endeavoured to prove, is the approaching Parousia being the harlot, the other the bride, the Lamb's wife.

and the accompanying judgment of the guilty nation. Rome, Heathen or Christian, lies altogether outside the apocalyptic field of view, which is restricted to 'things which must shortly come to pass.' To wander into all ages and countries in the interpretation of these visions limitations laid down in the book itself.

is absolutely forbidden by the express and fundamental 2 On the other hand, it is to be expected apriori that great prominence should be given in the Apocalypse to Jerusalem. This is fact, if our view of the design and subject of the book be correct, ought to be the central figure in the picture. If the Apocalypse is only the reproduction and expansion of our Lord's prophecy on the Mount of Olives, which is mainly occupied with the approaching judgment of Israel and of Jerusalem, we may expect to find the same thing in the Apocalypse; and it is as unreasonable to look for Rome in the Apocalypse as it would be to look for it in our Lord's prophecy on the Mount. 3 It deserves particular attention that in the Apocalypse there are two cities, and only two, that

are brought prominently and by name into view by symbolic representation. Each is the antithesis of the other. The one is the embodiment of all that is good and holy, the other the embodiment of all that is evil and accursed. To know either, is to know the other. These two contrasted cities are the new Jerusalem and Babylon the great. There can be no room for doubt as to what is signified by the *new Jerusalem*: it is the city of God, the heavenly habitation, the inheritance of the saints of light. But what, then, is the proper antithesis to the new Jerusalem? Surely, it can be no other than

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE

These parallels or contrasts have only to be presented to the eve to speak for themselves:---

The New Jerusalem	The Old Jerusalem
The heavenly Jerusalem	The earthly Jerusalem
The city which hath the	The non-continuing city
foundations	The city whose builder is man
The city whose builder is God	The Jerusalem which now is
The Jerusalem which is to come	The Jerusalem which is beneath
The Jerusalem which is above	The Jerusalem which is in bond
The Jerusalem which is free	age
The holy city The bride	The wicked city The harlot

The real and proper antithesis, therefore, to the new Jerusalem is the old Jerusalem: and since the city contrasted with the new Jerusalem is also designated Babylon, we conclude that Babylon is the symbolic name of the wicked and doomed city, the old Jerusalem, whose judgment is here predicted.

4. If it be objected that other symbolic names have already been appropriated by the old Jerusalem,--that she is designated 'Sodom and Egypt,'---that is no reason why she may not be also styled Babylon. If she passes under one pseudonym, why not under another, provided it be descriptive of her character? All these names, Sodom, Egypt, Babylon, are alike suggestive of evil and of ungodliness, and proper designations of the wicked city whose doom was to be like theirs.

5. It deserves notice that there is a title which, in the Apocalypse, is applied to one particular city par excellence. It is the title 'the great city' [h poliz h megalh]. It is clear that it is always the same city which is so designated, unless another be expressly specified. Now, the city in which the witnesses are slain is expressly called

by this title, 'that great city;' and the names Sodom and Egypt are applied to it; and it is furthermore particularly identified as the city 'where also our Lord was crucified' (chap. xi. 8). There can be no reasonable doubt that this refers to ancient Jerusalem. If, then, 'the great city' of chap. xi. 8 means ancient Jerusalem, it follows that 'the great city' of chap. xvi. 8, styled also Babylon, and 'the scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out great city' of chap. xvi. 19, must equally signify Jerusalem. a sword after them.' By parity of reasoning, 'that great city' in chap. xvii. 18, and elsewhere, must refer also to Jerusalem. It is a mere not, the language is wholly unintelligible if applied to assumption to say, as Dean Alford does, that Jerusalem is never called by this name. There is no unfitness, but the contrary, in such a distinctive title being applied to Jerusalem, It was to an Israelite the royal city, by far the it to Rome that the cup of the wine of the fierceness of greatest in the land, the only city which could properly be so designated; and it ought never to be forgotten that the visions of the Apocalypse are to be regarded from a is a symbol appropriated to Jerusalem. 'Awake, awake, Jewish point of view.

seven mystic figures) the judgment of Israel is symbolised by the treading of the wine-press. We are told also that li. 17). 'the wine-press was trodden without the city' (chap. xiv. 20). Since the vine of the land represents Israel, as it undoubtedly does, it follows that 'the city' outside which the grapes are trodden must be Jerusalem. The only city between Jerusalem and Babylon, is that which is derived mentioned in the same chapter is Babylon the great (ver. 8), which must therefore represent Jerusalem. It is inconceivable that the vine of Judea should be trodden outside the city of Rome.

divided into *three parts* by the unprecedented earthquake mentioned in ver. 18. What great city? Evidently of the land.' Now, this is an appellation familiar and great Babylon, which is said to come in remembrance well known in the Old Testament, and one that is no special significance beyond the illustration of the disastrous effect of the earthquake; but more probably Ezekiel in describing the siege of Jerusalem. (Ezek. v. 1-5). The prophet is commanded to take the hairs of his Husband, for she never was the married wife of Jehovah. to burn one part with fire, to cut another with a knife, and to scatter the third to the four winds, drawing out preserved, and bound in the skirt of his garment. Then follows the emphatic declaration,--- 'Thus saith the Lord God, *This is Jerusalem*.' It is fitting that in a prophecy so full of symbols as that of Ezekiel we should look for *the name*, which they hurl against Jerusalem. We hear light on the symbols of the Apocalypse. How vividly this tripartite division of the city represents the fate of harlot!' (Isa. i. 21.) 'Thou hast discovered thyself to Jerusalem in the siege of Titus it is needless to say. It is another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged

scarcely possible to imagine a more truthful description of the actual historical fact than that which is summed up in the twelfth verse of the same chapter:---'A third part of thee shall die by the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee; and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will

But whether this be the allusion in the vision or any other city than Jerusalem. In what reasonable sense could Rome be said to be divided into three parts? Is it Rome that comes into remembrance before God? Is the wrath of God is given? This last figure ought to have suggested to commentators the true interpretation. It stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand 6. In the catastrophe of the fourth vision (that of the of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out' (Isa.

8. But a weightier argument, and one that may be considered decisive against Rome being the Babylon of the Apocalypse, and at the time proving the identity from the name and character of the woman in the vision. We have seen that the woman represents a city; a city styled 'the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified' (chap. 7. In chap. xvi. 19 it is stated that 'the great city' was xi. 8). This woman or city is also styled *a harlot*, 'that great harlot, 'the mother of harlots and abominations before God. Possibly the division of the city may have utterly inappropriate and inapplicable to Rome. Rome was a heathen city, and consequently incapable of that great and damning sin which was possible, and, alas, it is an allusion to the figure employed by the prophet actual, for Jerusalem. Rome was not capable of violating the covenant of her God, of being false to her divine head and beard, and, dividing them into three parts, This was the crowning guilt of Jerusalem alone among all the nations of the earth, and it is *the sin* for which all through her history she is arraigned and condemned. a sword after them; while only a few hairs were to be It is impossible to read the graphic description of the great harlot in the Apocalypse without instantly being reminded of the original in the Old Testament prophets. All through their testimony this is *the sin*, and this is Isaiah exclaiming, 'How is the faithful city become an

thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them' (Isa. lvii. We have thus decisive evidence that the characteristic 8). Still more emphatically does the prophet Jeremiah guilt of Jerusalem was that sin which is known in stigmatise Jerusalem with this reproachful epithet, 'Go, Scripture as spiritual adultery; an offence which could and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the not be imputed to Rome, because it did not hold the Lord: I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the same relation to God as Jerusalem did. It is to Jerusalem, love of thine espousals; '---but, 'upon every high hill and Jerusalem alone, that the disgraceful epithet is, with and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing melancholy uniformity, applied, as peculiarly and prethe harlot' (Jer. ii. 2, 20). 'Thou hast played the harlot eminently 'the harlot city'. with many lovers;' 'thou hast polluted the land with It will of course be urged as an objection to this thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness;' 'thou hadst identification of Jerusalem as the apocalyptic Babylon, a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.' 'She that the topographical description of 'the great city' is is gone up upon every high mountain and under every so exactly applicable to Rome that it is impossible that green tree, and there hath played the harlot. 'Turn, O any other city should be meant. For example, the ninth backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married verse states, 'Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The unto you.' 'Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, sitteth.' This must be Rome, and can be no other; for she O house of Israel, saith the Lord' (Jer. iii. 1, 2, 3, 6, 14, is notoriously the 'urbs septicollis,' the seven-hilled city. 20). 'Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though Yet the objector might have surmised that if the thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou identity of the city were so self-evident, it would scarcely rentest thyself with painting, in vain shalt thou make have been proper to preface the explanation with the thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek significant words, 'Here is the mind that hath wisdom;' thy life' (Jer. iv. 30). 'What hath my beloved to do in that is to say, it requires wisdom to understand the mine house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with interpretation of the vision. This explanation is too many?' (Jer. xi. 15.) 'I have seen thy adulteries, and thy superficial to be correct. neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine In the interpretation of a symbolic book an excessive literality may be a source of error. Especially the symbolic number seven is least of all to be taken in a strictly arithmetical sense. There are many examples in

abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?' (Jer. xiii. 27.) Passing by the other prophets, it is in Ezekiel that the Apocalypse of the use of this symbolic number, in we find the figure elaborated to the fullest extent. In the which no interpreter with common sense would dream sixteenth chapter the whole history of Israel, personified of counting the units. We have seven heads, seven eyes, by Jerusalem, is related in an allegorical and poetical seven lamps, seven stars, seven thunders, seven spirits. It would be a manifest absurdity to insist upon the style, and it will be sufficient here to quote the table of contents of that chapter in the words prefixed by our full numerical tale of such objects, why, then, should seven be understood arithmetically when predicated translators. Ezekiel Xvi. of *mountains*? Is it not much more congruous with the Contents nature of such a symbol that it should have a *moral*, or 1. Under the similitude of a wretched infant is shewed political, rather than a topographical sense, indicating the natural state of Jerusalem. 6. God's extraordinary the pre-eminence of the city in power or in privilege? love towards her. 15. Her monstrous whoredom. 35. Her Like Capernaum, Jerusalem was 'exalted to heaven,' and grievous judgment. 44. Her sin, matching her mother, like her was to be 'brought down to hell.'

and exceeding her sisters, Sodom and Samaria, calleth for But granting that the expression, 'sitting on seven judgments. 60. Mercy is promised her in the end. mountains,' has a topographical significance, this

We think it is scarcely possible for any candid and feature is adequately represented in the situation of intelligent mind to compare the allegories of Ezekiel in Jerusalem. It was really far more a mountain-city than the sixteenth, twenty-second, and twenty-third chapters, Rome herself. 'His foundation is in the holy mountains' with the description of the harlot in the Apocalypse, (Ps. lxxxvii. 1); 'God is greatly to be praised in the city of without being convinced that we find in the prophecy our God, in the mountains of his holiness' (Ps. xlviii. 1, the original and prototype of the vision, and that both 2). Jerusalem was 'a city set upon a hill.' To this day the portray the same individual, viz. Jerusalem. traveller is struck with this peculiarity of its site.

PART III THE PAROUSIA

around to guard her.'

the mystical Babylon shall have the full tale of hills, Jerusalem has as good a claim as Rome to sit upon seven mountains. In addition to the well-known hills Zion, Moriah, Acra, Bezetha, and Ophel, the castle of Antonia stood upon another height, and there was another rocky eminence or ridge on which the towers of Hippicus, Phasaelus, and Mariamne were built by Herod the Great. (See Zuellig on The Revelation, *Stud. und Krit.* for 1842.) It is possible, therefore, to find seven hills in Jerusalem; though it must be admitted that Josephus speaks only of four, or at most five. We consider, however, that the symbol refers to the elevated situation of the city, or to its political pre-eminence. Another objection, still more formidable, will be alleged in the declaration of ver. 18, 'The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth. This, it will be said, cannot apply to Jerusalem, and can apply only to Rome. Jerusalem never was an imperial city, with vassal nations and tributary kings subject to her authority; whereas Rome was the mistress and monarch of the world.

have shown that it is actually applied to Jerusalem in several passages in the Apocalypse (chap. xi. 8, 13; xiv. 8, 20; xvi. 19). To the Jew it was a great city, and with good reason. There is a remarkable passage in Josephus, where he gives a report of the speech of Eleazar, the or of Palestine. brave defender of the fortress of Masada, inciting his men to destroy themselves with their wives and children between the passage just referred to (Rev. vi. 15, 16) rather than surrender to the Romans:---

metropolis of the whole nation of Jews, protected by so many encircling walls, secured by so many forts, and by the vastness of its towers, which could with difficulty contain its munitions of war, and which was garrisoned by so many myriads of defenders? What has become of that city of ours in which it was believed God Himself the earth' as equivalent to 'rulers of the land.' was a dweller? Uprooted from its foundation, it has been swept away, one memorial of it alone remaining,---the camp of its destroyers still planted upon its ruins.

Such a passage disposes at once of the objection that the title of 'that great city' is not applicable to Jerusalem.

With regard to the phrase, 'which reigneth over the kings of the earth,'---the fallacy which has misled many is the mistranslation 'kings of the *earth*'. A very fruitful source of confusion and error in the interpretation of the New Testament is the capricious and uncertain way

'The city itself is superbly placed, *like a queen upon* in which gh is rendered in our Authorised Version. the mountains, with the deep valleys and mountains Sometimes, though rarely, it has its proper meaning, the land; but more frequently it is translated the earth, and Should, however, the literalist still require that our translators never seem to have given themselves any trouble to inquire whether the word should be taken in its widest or in a more restricted sense. With incredible carelessness they render pasai ai fulai thz ghz, 'all the kindreds of the earth,' instead of 'all the tribes of the land;' and h ampeloz thz ghz, 'the vine of the earth,' instead of 'the vine of the land.' so in the passage before us (chap. xvii. 18), the 'kings of the earth' should be 'kings of the land, *i.e.* Judea or Palestine. This very phrase is used in the New Testament in the restricted sense of 'the rulers of the land, by St. Peter in Acts iv. 26, 27, 'Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together in this city, etc. and he recognises this fact as the fulfilment of the prediction in the second Psalm, 'Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the land stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his anointed.' The 'kings of the land, therefore, are identified by the apostle Peter as the confederate rulers who put the Son of God to death So far as the title 'the great city' is concerned we in the city of Jerusalem. So also in Rev. vi. 15, where 'the kings of the land' are represented as hiding themselves from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, in the great day of His wrath. The phrase, therefore, is equivalent to 'the ruling authorities in the land of Judea,'

We have already pointed out the correspondence and the original draught of the scene as described in the 'Where now,' said he, 'is that great city, the prophecy of Isaiah (chap. ii. 10-22; iii. 1-3). It is, therefore, unnecessary here to do more than call attention to the obvious correspondence between 'the kings of the land' in the vision, and 'the mighty men, and the men of war, etc., in the prophecy. We are, therefore, not merely warranted, but compelled to regard the phrase 'kings of

> Thus interpreted, the description of Babylon the great as 'reigning over the rulers of the land' becomes perfectly appropriate to Jerusalem. This appears from the language in which both the Scriptures and other Hebrew writings speak of the authority and pre-eminence enjoyed by that city. For example, the prophet Jeremiah describes Jerusalem as 'she that was great among the nations, and *princess of the provinces*' (Lam. i. 1), language fully equivalent to 'that great city which beareth rule over the rulers of the land.' Again,

if so small a city as Bethlehem might be styled 'not the were slain in the land' (chap. xviii. 24); 'Rejoice over the metropolitan city might without impropriety be God hath avenged you on her' (chap. xviii. 20). Who said to 'reign over the princes, or rulers, of the land.' But can fail to recognise in this description the distinctive the language which Josephus employs on this subject characteristics of the Jerusalem of 'that generation'? is a full justification of the apocalyptic description of Who is it that kills the prophets and stones them that are sent unto her? Jerusalem. What is the city out of which 'Judea,' he tells us, 'reaches in breadth from the it cannot be that a prophet should perish---that enjoys river Jordan to Joppa. In its very centre lies the city of an infamous monopoly of murdering the messengers of God? Jerusalem. The blood of the saints and of prophets is the immemorial stain upon Jerusalem; the divided into eleven allotments (toparchies), whereof brand of the murderer stamped upon her brow; and the *Jerusalem, as the seat of royalty, is supreme, exalted over* generation that crucified Christ is described by Him as

least amount the princes of Judah' (Matt. ii. 6), surely her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for Jerusalem. Jerusalem; for which reason some, not inaptly, have styled that city "the navel" of the country. It [Judea] is all the adjacent region, as the head over the body. 'the children of them that killed the prophets,' and so

This is language which is tantamount to the 'filled up the measure of their fathers' (Matt. xxiii. 30expression, 'that great city which reigneth over the 32). kings, or rulers, of the land. It is impossible to mistake the bearer of this

It may possibly be felt to be a difficulty that the conspicuous and distinctive indictment inscribed upon Jerusalem of the apostolic age could not with propriety the front of Jerusalem, long before stigmatized by the prophet Ezekiel as 'the bloody city' (Ezek. xxii. 2; xxiv. be styled 'the harlot city,' since that name implies idolatry, i.e. spiritual adultery; whereas the Jews of 6-9). that period were intensely monotheistic, and actually It is not without cause, therefore, that the apostles threatened to rise in rebellion rather than permit the and prophets are invited to rejoice over the fall of their temple to be desecrated by the introduction of the relentless persecutor and murderer. The souls under statue of the emperor. This is undoubtedly true in the the altar had long cried, 'How long, O Lord, holy and letter; yet, as St. Paul intimates (Rom. ii. 22), the Jews of true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell in the land?' They had been comforted with his time, while abhorring idols, were guilty of sacrilege. It has been well said by Dr. Hodge:--the message 'that they should rest for a little season, 'The essence of idolatry was profanation of God: until their fellow-servants and brethren, that should of this the Jews were in a high degree guilty. They had be killed as they were, should be fulfilled,' then 'God made His house a den of thieves. would speedily avenge his own elect.' And now the day of vengeance, the year of His redeemed, is come. They had as truly apostatised from God as if they

had set up the worship of Baal or of Jupiter. In rejecting Can any proof be more conclusive that it is the Messiah they had definitively broken the covenant Jerusalem, the murderess of the prophets, which is of their God. Our Lord expressly declared that that here described---that Jerusalem is the Babylon of the generation summed up in itself the crimes and guilt of Apocalypse? How exact is the correspondence between all its predecessors. It was the child and heir of all the our Lord's prediction in Luke xi. 49-51 and its fulfilment evil generations that had gone before, and filled up the in Rev. xviii. 24:--measure of its ancestors:---'That upon you may come 'Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send all the righteous blood shed upon the land, etc. 'Verily them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this slay and persecute; that the blood of all the prophets generation' (Matt. xxiii. 35, 36). which was shed from the foundation of the world may One more argument for the identity of Jerusalem be required of *this generation*.

with the apocalyptic Babylon, and one which we 'And in her was found the blood of prophets and of consider conclusive, is to be found in the character saints, and of all that were slain in the land? ascribed to the city as the persecutor and murderer of Having thus endeavoured to identify the woman in the prophets and saints: 'I beheld the woman drunken the vision, we proceed next to investigate the mystery of with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the the beast upon which she is seated. martyrs of Jesus' (chap. xvii. 6); 'And in her was found The Mystery Of The Scarlet Beast the blood of the prophets, and of saints, and of all that

PART III THE PAROUSIA

Chap. xvii. 3, 7-11.

'And I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and indicate a person, whom he dared not name, by any ten horns . . . I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to ascend out of the abyss, and goeth into perdition: and they that dwell upon the land in the world could such an opinion be entertained? shall wonder, whose name is not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and shall come. Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there [they] are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come: and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition?

There can be no reasonable doubt that the beast [qhrion] here described is identical with that in chap. xiii. The name, the description, and the attributes of the monster plainly point to the same individual. There are, however, additional particulars in this second description which at first seem rather to obscure than elucidate the meaning. The *scarlet* colour, indeed, may easily be recognised as the symbol of Imperial dignity; but what can be said of the apparent paradoxes, 'he was, and is not, and shall come again'? and 'he is the eighth [king], and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition'?

wild beast (chap. xiii.) signifies Nero. The paradox or enigma which represents him as 'the beast which was, and is not, and shall appear, is a puzzle which at first sight seems inexplicable. It is evidently a contradiction in terms, and can only be true in some peculiar sense. That it should actually be true, in any sense of Nero, is one of the most extraordinary facts in history, and brings home to him this symbolic description with all the force of demonstration. It seems established by the in any other than the literal numerical sense. clearest evidence that at the death of Nero there was a popular and wide-spread belief that the tyrant was still alive, and would shortly reappear. We have the express testimony of Tacitus, Suetonius, and other historians to the existence of such a persuasion. It has been objected that this explanation of the paradox virtually imputes equivocation to the Scriptures. What can be more frivolous than such an argument? Any explanation of what is a contradiction in terms must be in some degree unnatural and equivocal; but it is absurd in dealing with a book of symbols to demand literal truth. Must it be ingenuity; but there are two fatal objections to it: first,

shown that Nero had ten horns?

It was surely competent for the prophet-seer to symbolic representation which would lead to his recognition. What could be more distinctive of the particular person intended than this very fact of his expected reappearance after death? Of how few persons That it should be historically true that such a popular delusion prevailed respecting Nero we regard as a singular and conclusive proof that he is the individual denoted by the symbol.

The Seven kings

It is more difficult to unriddle the enigma of the seven kings, of whom the beast is one, and yet the eighth. The seven heads of the monster seem to be emblematic, not only of the seven hills upon which the woman sits, but also of seven kings who have a twofold relation, viz. to the woman and to the beast. The antitype of the symbol ought, therefore, to sustain this double relation, though one would expect, as being connatural with the monster, that their relation to him would be the most intimate. Of these seven kings, 'five,' it is stated, 'are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space; and the beast that was, and is now, he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

We have already seen that in general, the number We have already been led to the conclusion that the seven being a symbolic number, is not to be taken as standing for so many units, but as indicating perfectness or totality. There are occasions, however, when it seems necessary to take it in an arithmetical sense, as, for example, when it stands in close connection with other numbers. In the instance before us, where we read of seven kings, five of whom are fallen, and one is, and the seventh is not yet come, while a mysterious eighth is hinted at, it is difficult to understand the number seven

> Where, then, are we to look for these seven kings or heads? It is presumable that they also are where the mountains are, in the place where the scene is laid. If the harlot means Jerusalem we should expect to find the kings there also. Where, then, are seven kings, and a mysterious eighth, to be found in Jerusalem? The kings of the Herodian line have been suggested, viz. 1. Herod the Great; 2. Archelaus; 3. Philip; 4. Herod Antipas; 5. Agrippa I.; 6. Herod of Chalcis; 7. Agrippa II. This is the suggestion of Dr. Zuellig, and deserves the praise of

they cannot all be said to have been kings or rulers in from them,---the eighth, and yet of the seven. This Jerusalem, or even in Judea; and, secondly, they do not gives a natural and fitting propriety to the apparently all belong to the apocalyptic period, the close of the enigmatical and paradoxical language of the symbolic Jewish age, or the last days of Jerusalem, which is an representation, and solves the riddle without violent indispensable condition. torture or dexterous manipulation.

Another Solution

We venture to propose another solution, which we There is much obscurity also in the next symbol in think will be found to answer in every particular the requirements of the problem. Bearing in mind what has chap. xvii. 12:---'And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten already been proved, that the title 'kings' is often used as synonymous with rulers or governors, we submit that kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings one hour [or at one hour,--the basileiz here alluded to are no other than the Roman *contemporaneously*] with the beast. procurators of Judea under Claudius and Nero. It was in It will be observed that these 'ten kings' have the the reign of Claudius that Judea became for the second time a Roman province. This fact is expressly stated by following characteristics:---1 They are satellites or tributaries of the beast, i.e. Josephus, and also the reason why the change was made. subject to Rome. On the death of Herod Agrippa I., on whom Caligula had conferred the sovereignty of the entire kingdom, his They are confederate with the beast against 2 son Agrippa II. was considered by Claudius too young Jerusalem. 3 They are hostile to Christianity. to fill his father's throne. Judea was therefore reduced 4 They are hostile to the harlot, and active agents to the form of a province. Cuspius Fadus was sent into in her destruction. Judea as the first of this second series of procurators. s

These procurators were really viceroys, and answer invested with power. well to the title basileiz in the vision. Their number also Their power was to be contemporaneous with exactly tallies with that given in the Apocalypse. From the appointment of Cuspius Fadus to the outbreak of that of the beast. On the whole, we conclude that this symbol signifies the auxiliary princes and chiefs the Jewish war, there were seven governors who bore who were allies of Rome and received commands supreme rule in Jerusalem and Judea. in the Roman army during the Jewish war. We know These were: from Tacitus and Josephus that several kings of 1. Cuspius Fadus; neighbouring nations followed Vespasian and Titus 2. Tiberius Alexander; to the war. Allusion has already been made to some 3. Ventidius Cumanus; of these auxiliaries: Antiochus, Sohemus, Agrippa, 4. Antonius Felix: and Malchus. There were no doubt others, but it is not 5. Portius Festus; incumbent to produce the exact number of ten, which, 6. Albinus; 7. Gessius Florus. like seven, appears to be a mystic or symbolic number. They are represented as animated by a bitter hostility to Here, then, we have a well-defined period, falling Jerusalem, the harlot city: 'These shall hate the whore, within the apocalyptic limits as to time, occupying and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat apocalyptic ground as to place, and corresponding with the apocalyptic symbol as to the number, character, and her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put into title. These viceroys sustain the double relation required their heart to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be by the symbol; they were related to the beast as Romans fulfilled' (Rev. xvii. 16, 17). Tacitus speaks of the bitter and as deputies; and they are related to the woman as animosity with which the Arab auxiliaries of Titus were governing powers. filled against the Jews, and we have a fearful proof of the It is now easy to see how Nero himself, the beast intense hatred felt towards the Jews by the neighbouring from the sea, or foreign tyrant, may be said to be the nations in the wholesale massacres of that unhappy eighth, and yet of the seven. He was the supreme people perpetrated in may great cities just before the head, and these procurators were his deputies, the outbreak of the war. The whole Jewish population of representatives of the emperor in Judea and Jerusalem.

Caesarea were massacred in one day. In Syria every Thus he might be said to be of them, and yet distinct

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE

The Ten Horns Of The Beast

- 5 When the apostle wrote these kings were not yet

city was divided into two camps, Jews and Syrians. In Scythopolis upwards of thirteen thousand Jews were 'man of sin' delineated by St. Paul in 2 Thess. ii. and the butchered; in Ascalon, Ptolemais, and Tyre, similar atrocities took place. But in Alexandria the carnage of It will be observed that neither of the apostles names the Jewish inhabitants exceeded all the other massacres. The whole Jewish quarter was deluged with blood, and fifty thousand corpses lay in ghastly heaps in the streets. This is a terrible commentary on the words of the angelinterpreter: 'The ten horns which thou sawest upon the to utter, probably not more than one, and that one the beast, these shall hate the whore, etc. It only remains to notice one other feature in the vision. The woman is represented as 'sitting upon many waters,' and in the fifteenth verse these waters are said to signify 'peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.' The mystical Babylon, like her prototype the literal Babylon, is said to 'sit upon many waters.' The prophet Jeremiah thus addresses ancient Babylon: 'O thou that dwellest upon minute and so manifold between 'the man of sin' of St. many waters' (Jer. li. 12), and this description appears to be equally appropriate to Jerusalem.

parts of the Roman Empire previous to the destruction of Jerusalem was immense; their synagogues were the Emperor Nero is intended by both apostles, and to be found in every city, and their colonies took root in every land. We see in Acts ii. the marvellous ramifications of the Hebrew race in foreign countries, from the enumeration of the different nations which were represented in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost: 'There were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven, . . . Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians.' Jerusalem might truly be said to 'sit upon many waters,' that is, to exercise a mighty influence upon 'peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.'

Such is the vision of 'the harlot city,' the fate of which is the great theme of our Lord's prophecy on Olivet as well as of the Apocalypse. That it is Jerusalem, and Jerusalem alone, which is here portrayed must, we think be abundantly clear to every unbiased and candid mind; and any other subject would be utterly foreign to the whole purpose and end of the Apocalypse.

NOTE ON REVELATION XVII

Identity Of The Beast Of The Apocalypse With The Man Of Sin

2 Thessalonians II Before quitting this chapter it will be proper to

point out the remarkable correspondence between the wild beast described by St. John in Rev. xiii. and xvii. the formidable personage at whom he points; and doubtless for the same reason. This circumstance alone might suffice to suggest who is intended. There could be very few persons whose name it would not be safe mightiest in the land. We cannot suppose that the name is suppressed merely for the sake of mystification: there must have been an adequate motive; that motive must have been a prudential one; and if prudential, then, no doubt, political, viz. to avoid incurring the suspicion of disaffection towards the government.

In addition to this there is a correspondence so Paul and 'the beast' of St. John as to render it all but certain that they both refer to the same individual. We The influence exercised by the Jewish race in all have already, on independent grounds and treating each subject separately, arrived at the conclusion that when we come to the place the two portraitures side by side this conclusion is decisively established. It is only necessary to glance at the parallel descriptions in order to be convinced that they depict the same individual, and that individual the monster Nero:---

THE MAN OF SIN 2 THESS. II. Ver 4	THE WILD BEAST REV. XIII. & XVII Chapter xiii. Ver 1
'Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped' (ver. 4) 'So that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God' Ver. 8. 'Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming' Ver. 9. 'Whose coming is after the working of Satan' Ver. 9. 'With all power and signs and	Upon his heads name of blasphemy' Chap. xvii. 3. 'Full of names of blasphemy' Chap. xvii. 8. He shall go into perdition Chap. xvii. 11 and goeth into perdition' Chap. xiii . 5 'Power was given unto him to do what he will' 'There was given to him a mouth speaking great things, and he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God.
lying wonders'	

THE MAN OF SIN	THE WILD BEAST
Ver. 10.	Chap. xiii ver 4, 8
And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish' Ver. 11. 'And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie " Ver.12. "That they might be condemned who believeth not the truth"	'And they worshipped the beast saying who is like unto the beast ?And all that dwell on the land shall worship him. Chap. xvii. 14, These shall make war with he lamb, and the lamb shall over come them. Chap. xiv. 20. 'And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet These both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone'. Chap. xiii. 2. 'And the dragon gave him his power' Chap. xiii. 13. 'And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven in the sight of men'
	The Wild Beast
	Chap. xiii. 14. 'And deceiveth them that dwell in the land by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast' (chap. xiv. 9, 10). 'If any man worship the beast and his i age, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God' etc.

The Fall Of Babylon

The next scene of the vision represents the fate of the harlot city, which occupies the whole of chap. xvii. First, a mighty angel, whose glory lightens the earth, proclaims with a loud voice, in nearly the same words as in chap. xiv. 8, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.' Her doom is the consequence of her sin, and at this supreme moment her moral degradation and debasement are most emphatically declared: 'She is become the habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hated bird,' etc. How true this description of Jerusalem in her decadence is the pages of Josephus testify:---'That period,' he tells us, 'had somehow become

so prolific in iniquity of every description among the Jews, that no work of evil was left unperpetrated, ... so universal was the contagion both in public and private, and such the emulation to surpass each other in acts of impiety towards God and of injustice towards their neighbours?

'No generation ever existed more prolific in crime.' 'I am of opinion that had the Romans deferred the

THE APOCALYPSE

punishment of these wretches, either the earth would have opened and swallowed up the city, or it would have been swept away by a deluge, or have shared the thunderbolts of the land of Sodom.

Next, a voice is heard from heaven calling upon the people of God to come out of the doomed city,---'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' We observe here how the final catastrophe is kept suspended,--again and again it seems as if the end had actually come, and then we find new circumstances interposed, and the blow apparently arrested when in the very act of falling. This feature of the Apocalypse greatly heightens the dramatic effect and powerfully stimulates the interest in the action. It might have been supposed that all the faithful had long before this abandoned the doomed city; but we are not to look for the same strict consistency and sequence in a poetical and figurative description as in a historical narrative. Besides, the imagery is partly derived from the prophetic description of the fall of ancient Babylon as set forth by Jeremiah (chap. li.), where we find this very call to 'come out of her' (ver. 45).

After this follows a solemn and pathetic dirge, if it may be so called, over the fallen city, whose last hour is now come. The kings or rulers of the land, the merchanttraders and the seamen who knew her in the plentitude of her power and glory, now lament over her fall. The royal city, the mart of trade and wealth, is wrapt in flames, and the mariners and merchants who were enriched by her traffic stand afar off, beholding the smoke of her burning, and crying, 'What city is like unto this great city?' The description given in this chapter of the wealth and luxury of the mystic Babylon might seem scarcely appropriate to Jerusalem were it not that we have in Josephus ample evidence that there is no exaggeration even in this highly-wrought representation. More than once the Jewish historian speaks of the magnificence and vast wealth of Jerusalem. It is very remarkable that the inventory of the spoils taken from the treasury of the temple contains almost every one of the articles enumerated in this lamentation over the fallen city,---'Gold, silver, precious stones, purple, scarlet, cinnamon, odours, ointments, and frankincense.'

No less striking is the description given by Josephus of the spoils of the captured city, which were carried in procession through the streets of Rome in the triumph of Vespasian and Titus, and which fully justify the picture of profusion and magnificence drawn in the Apocalypse.

PART III THE PAROUSIA

The last scene in the tragedy of the harlot city follows. A mighty angel takes up a stone, like a great millstone, is 'the marriage of the Lamb,' for which the note of and casts it into the sea, saying, 'Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all' (ver. 21). Her desolation is now complete: her glory is departed; she is left to silence and solitude, for 'in one hour her judgment is come,' in one This public and solemn union of Christ and His church hour she is made desolate.'

is also history. So total was the destruction of Jerusalem that Josephus says 'there was no longer anything to lead those who visited the spot to believe that it had ever been inhabited."

words of the chapter, which furnish decisive evidence (Matt. xxii. 7). of the identity of the harlot city: 'In her was found the blood of the prophets, and of saints, and of all that acts of judgment have to be executed. Mystical Babylon were slain in the land' (ver. 24). To no other city than Jerusalem will these words apply, and they conclusively demonstrate that she is the subject of the whole visionary representation. She was pre-eminently the 'murderer of the prophets,' and of her their blood was to be required, according to the prediction of our Lord,---'That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed in the land' (Matt. xxiii. 35).

We might suppose that we had now reached the catastrophe of the vision, since the judgment of the great harlot is complete, and she disappears from the scene; but the theme is still continued through the next two chapters, which are mainly occupied with acts of church.

First, however, we have a song of triumph in heaven over the fallen and condemned criminal whose fearful judgment has been consummated (chap. xix. 1-5). It is a Hallelujah chorus of a great multitude, whose voice is hath upon his vesture and on his thigh a name written, like the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, ascribing glory to God for the justice executed on the harlot city, and the avenging of the blood of His servants at her hand. Now is fulfilled the promise of God that He would speedily avenge His elect, who cried to Him day and night. Now, also, the kingdom of God is come: the long-predicted, long-expected consummation for which the prayers of the saints have ceaselessly ascended to heaven---'Thy kingdom come.' Messiah's great victory is won; His kingdom has reached its full development; He surrenders His delegated authority to His Father; and a burst of acclamation resounds through all heaven, 'Alleluia! for the Lord God

associated with other events, one of the chief of which preparation is now given, though the details of the event are reserved for the seventh and last vision. The nuptials of the Lamb are evidently announced proleptically, in accordance with the frequent usage of the Apocalypse. is what is shadowed forth in the parables of the marriage This it may be said is poetry, and no doubt it is; but it feast (Matt. xxii.) and of the ten virgins (Matt. xxv.). It is the marriage supper of the great King, to which the first invited guests refused to come, and shamefully treated and slew the king's messengers. Now judgment has overtaken them: 'The king sent forth his armies, and We have already commented on the concluding destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city'

> But before this happy consummation takes place, has been judged, but the other enemies of the King--the beast, his legate the false prophet, and the dragon--have vet to receive condign punishment.

Judgment Of The Beast And His Confederate Powers Chap. xix. 11-21

'And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knoweth, but he himself. And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed judgment on the other enemies of Christ and of His him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which omnipotent reigneth.' But the coming of the kingdom is he deceived them that had received the mark of the

confront the banded hosts of earth and hell. We cannot go to the pages of Josephus or Tacitus, or any other symbols. We read in them two great truths: Christ must conquer; His enemies must perish. Nevertheless, there This magnificent passage is descriptive of the great is a kernel of historical fact in this symbolism. Jus as in the symbolic representation of the great harlot we find the historical fact of the destruction of Jerusalem, so in this capture and execution of the wild beast and his congener we find the historical fact of the destruction of Nero and his lieutenant, or deputy, in Judea. This is the core of historic fact at the centre of the vision. Jerusalem, the harlot city, perished in fire and blood. Nero, the beast king, the sanguinary persecutor of the Christians; and Gessius Florus, the tyrant who goaded the unhappy Jews into revolt, both perished by a violent death. These events were really divine judgments, foreseen and predicted long before their occurrence, and written in lurid characters on the page of history, visible and legible for ever. These are the historical facts set forth in all the pomp and splendour of symbolical of the facts, and the facts are worthy of the symbols. No doubt there is here something of an anachronism. The death of Nero is placed in the vision subsequent to the judgment of Jerusalem, whereas it actually preceded that event by two years or more. As we have before remarked, something must be conceded to poetic license. In an epic, a drama, or a vision, it is unreasonable to require strict chronological sequence. Now the Apocalypse is composed with consummate art. As Henry More long ago remarked, 'There never was any book penned with that artifice as this of the Apocalypse, as if every word were weighed in a balance before it was set down.' The The sequel of the chapter relates the victory of the dramatic effect is certainly greatly heightened by the capture and punishment of the beast being placed where they are. The first and most prominent place is naturally given to the harlot city, and the Seer having begun with her judgment carries it on to its final consummation. He then returns to the beast, and depicts his fate; and, lastly, in the twentieth chapter, proceeds to describe the punishment inflicted on the third hostile power, the

and not before? It must be remembered that it is a poem

beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that historian, for the events which correspond with these sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.' event which occupies so prominent a place in the New Testament prophecy, the Parousia, or coming in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. He comes from heaven; He comes in His kingdom; 'on his head are many crowns;' he comes with His holy angels; 'the armies of heaven follow him;' He comes to execute judgment on His enemies; He comes in glory. It may be said, Why is the Parousia placed after the judgment of the harlot city, rather than a history that we are now reading; a drama, rather than a journal of transactions, and that there is no book in which poetical and dramatic effect is more studied than in the Apocalypse. These episodical visions are often taken out of their strict chronological order that they may be displayed in fuller detail and make an adequate impression on the mind of the reader. At the imagery in the Apocalypse. The symbols were worthy same time we do not admit that there is an anachronism in the place which the Parousia occupies. If we examine the prophetic discourse on the Mount of Olives we shall find the same order of events. It is immediately *after* the great tribulation that the sign of the Son of man appears in heaven, and they 'see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory' (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30). The scene represented in this vision is that very event. The Lord Jesus is 'revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ' (2 Thess. i. 7, 8). Lamb over the enemies of His cause. An angel standing in the sun summons all the fowls of heaven to prey upon the carcasses of the slain in the coming conflict. The armies of the beast and his confederate powers are marshalled to make war upon the Messiah. The two hosts engage, and the enemies of Christ are routed. The beast is taken prisoner, and with him his false prophet that ruled in his name. 'These two were cast alive into the dragon. lake of fire which burneth with brimstone, while their followers perish, 'slain with the sword of him that sitteth on the horse, whose sword goeth out of his mouth.

There is, however, another answer to the charge of anachronism. It deserves consideration whether this whole scene of the great battle and victory of Christ the If it be asked, What do these symbols represent? King, and the punishment of the beast and his armies, the answer is, Assuredly no literal conflict with carnal may not be properly conceived as taking place in the weapons. It is not on any battle-field on earthly ground spirit, not in the flesh? That is, whether it may not be that the glorified Redeemer and His heavenly legions the representation of transactions in the unseen state;

PART III THE PAROUSIA

spirit-world---a glimpse of that great judicial scene which is depicted in Matt. xxv., 'when the Son of gathered all the nations,'---this would relieve the vision of any anachronism and abundantly satisfy all the requirements of the case. The probability of this view of the beast and his armies follows the allusion to the imprisonment is distinctly stated to be for a thousand marriage supper of the Lamb, an event which is certainly

The Judgment Of The Dragon

Chap. xx. 1-3.

'And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he might deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.'

We now approach a portion of the Apocalypse which is involved in much obscurity, and which, from the very the express declarations of the writer, again and again repeated, circumscribe the rest of the prophecy of this book.

The fact that such a protracted period as a thousand years is embraced in the visions of the Apocalypse is to be imprisoned there for a period called 'a thousand considered by many an incontrovertible proof that the vears? fulfilment of the predictions which it contains is not to be restricted to a brief period. Dean Alford, for example, abyss is represented as taking place under the eye of says:-

principle are we to affirm that it does not embrace a period vastly greater than this in its whole contents?'

That which appears so insurmountable an objection in the eyes of Dean Alford is regarded as none at all by the Parousia. Moses Stuart, who says,---

'The portion of the book which contains this [reference to a distant period] is so small, and that part of the book which was speedily fulfilled is so large, that no reasonable difficulty can be made concerning have no hesitation in answering in the affirmative, and the declaration before us. 'En tacei, i.e. *speedily*, did the things, on account of which the book was principally

the judgment of the dead, and not of the living. An written, in fact take place.' Some interpreters indeed earthly transaction it certainly is not; and if we regard attempt to get over the difficulty by supposing that it as the symbolic representation of the judgment the thousand years, being a symbolic number, may and condemnation of the enemies of the Lamb in the represent a period of very short duration, and so bring the whole within the prescribed apocalyptic limits; but this method of interpretation appears to us so violent man shall come in his glory, and before him shall be an unnatural that we cannot hesitate to reject it. The act of binding and shutting up the dragon does indeed come within the 'shortly' of the apocalyptic statement, for it is coincident, or nearly so, with the judgment of is strongly confirmed by the fact that this punishment the harlot and the beast; but the term of the dragon's years, and thus must necessarily pass entirely beyond supposed to take place in the spiritual and eternal state. the field of vision so strictly and constantly limited by the book itself. We believe, however, that this is the solitary example which the whole book contains of this excursion beyond the limits of 'shortly;' and we agree with Stuart that no reasonable difficulty can be made on account of this single exception to the rule. We shall also find as we proceed that the events referred to as taking place after the termination of the thousand years are predicted as in a prophecy, and not represented as in a vision. Indeed the passage, chap. xx. 5-10, seems evidently introduced parenthetically, interrupting the continuity of the narrative, which is again resumed, as we shall see, at ver. 11.

The overthrow and punishment of the enemies of nature of the case, passes beyond the limits which, by Christ would evidently be incomplete without a similar act of judgment on the chief instigator and head of the confederacy, the dragon, or Satan. Accordingly his time has now come: he is seized, chained, and cast into the abyss, which is sealed over him, and he is sentenced

This act of seizing, chaining, and casting into the the Seer, being introduced by the usual formula, 'And 'The en tacei [shortly] confessedly contains, among I saw.' It is an act contemporaneous, or nearly so, with other periods, a period of a thousand years. On what the judgments executed on the other criminals, the harlot and the beast. This part of the vision, then, falls within the proper limits of apocalyptic vision, and is an integral part of the series of great events connected with

> Are we, then, to suppose that anything equivalent to this symbol, the binding and imprisoning of Satan, has actually taken place, and took place at the time indicated, viz. the close of the Jewish dispensation? We we think there is the clearest warrant both in Scripture and in history for this conclusion.

1. No one will contend that the symbols in the vision act of public and private life, it seems astonishing that require a literal or physical chaining of the dragon. a system so time-honoured and inveterate should have Common sense will teach that all that is meant is *the* withered away so as to wholly disappeared from the face repression and restriction of satanic power during the of the earth. No one can be at a loss to account for this period indicated. Now there seems no reason to doubt remarkable change: it is entirely due to the influence of that before and during our Saviour's incarnation there Christianity; and but for this new element in civilisation was an energy and activity of moral evil existing in the there is no reason to think that the ancient superstitions earth far exceeding anything that is now known among of Heathenism would have died out or given place to men. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the period something better. It is no less certain that this marvellous revolution must be dated from the time when the Gospel began to be preached in the apostolic age. We have the most convincing proofs that the change is not to be explained philosophy, nor by the natural progress of human society, but that it was predicted and expected from the very birth of Christianity as the effect of the redemptive work of Christ. Nothing can be more explicit than our Lord's declarations on this subject. When the seventy disciples returned with joy to report how even the devils were subject to them through their Master's name, Jesus said to them, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven' (Luke x. 18). It is absurd to explain this as an allusion to Satan's original expulsion from heaven, declaration that in the success of His messengers our Lord recognised and foresaw the coming overthrow of the power of Satan:--- 'Before the intuitive glance of His spirit lay open the results which were to flow from His redemptive work after His ascension into heaven. He saw, in spirit, the kingdom of God advancing in triumph over the kingdom of Satan.' To the same effect is our Lord's saying,---'Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out' (John xii. 31). What meaning can be attached to these significant words if they do not imply that a powerful check was about to be given to the influence of Satan over the minds of men; a check arising wholly from the death of Christ upon the cross? But it is in this apocalyptic vision that we see the actual representation of this It deserves, further, to be considered that the sin of curbing of Satan's power. It is here evidently defined as to the time of its commencement, and associated with the downfall of Jerusalem, and the consequent abrogation of the Jewish dispensation. Nor is there any absurdity Saviour's time in full and undisturbed possession of in accepting this date. The abolition of Judaism was the removal of the most formidable obstacle to the progress of Christianity; but, besides this, we have the national religion, in the apostolic age; the authority, most express assurance in the New Testament that this was the period of the consummation of the Messianic

of our Lord's earthly life was a season of intense and unparalleled activity among the powers of darkness. If they knew that the champion of God, the Redeemer of mankind, was come in order 'that he might destroy the works of the devil, there was cause for their alarm; by the advancement of knowledge, or science, or and our Lord's temptations in the wilderness, and the malignant opposition to Christ and His cause, everywhere ascribed in the New Testament to Satan, reveal both the knowledge of the adversary respecting the Saviour's mission and his unceasing efforts to counteract it. In addition to this, the remarkable prevalence of the mysterious phenomenon of demoniacal possession in the time of Christ is a decisive proof of the presence and activity of a malefic spiritual influence, in a form and degree which to us is unknown, and to many even incredible. Unless, then, we are prepared to give up the before the creation of the world; it is evidently a figurative reality of that mysterious influence, and resolve it into mere popular ignorance or delusion, we must admit that there has been a marked and decisive check to the power of Satan over men since the time of Christ. The same may be said respecting the prevalence of moral evil in that age of the world. Let any one consider what Rome was in the days of Nero, and what Jerusalem was in the closing period of the Jewish commonwealth, and he will at once concede the undeniable fact of an abnormal and portentous development of wickedness such as to us appears incredible. Juvenal and Tacitus will bear witness of Rome, and Josephus of Jerusalem; and it is not contrary to reason, while wholly agreeable to Revelation, to infer that such enormous and colossal vice betrays the operation of a satanic influence. idolatry, with all its mimicry of supernatural and divine power,---a system which the Scriptures recognise as pre-eminently the work of the devil,---was in our nearly the entire world. When we remember what Greece was, and what Rome was, in respect of their antiquity, and popularity of their gods, and the way in which their worship had entwined itself around every kingdom, and of Christ's putting down all hostile rule,

and authority, and power (1 Cor. xv. 24).

We conclude, therefore, that at 'the end of the age' a marked and decisive check was given to the power of Satan; which check is symbolically represented in the and shall reign with him a thousand years.] Apocalypse by the chaining and imprisoning of the dragon in the abyss. It does not follow from this that mysterious passage, carefully avoiding guesses and error and evil were banished from the earth. It is enough to show that this was, as Schlegel says,---

'the decisive crisis between ancient and modern times; ' and that the introduction of Christianity 'has changed and regenerated not only government and science, but the whole system of human life?

There was an hour when the tide of human Seer. wickedness began to turn: it was at the very period when that tide was in flood; ever since that time it has been ebbing, and we have no difficulty in recognising the first abatement of the power of evil as corresponding in time with the event here designated the binding of Satan and contrast the reward of the righteous and the retribution his imprisonment in the abyss.

Respecting the duration of this restriction of satanic power it is not easy to determine; but it seems, on the in this passage to the promise of our Lord to His whole, most in consonance with the symbolic character of the Apocalypse to understand the thousand years as significant of a long but indefinite period. When we have high numbers stated in the Apocalypse they are twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Matt. usually, if not invariably, to be understood indefinitely. For example, it is not to be supposed that the hundred and forty and four thousand of the sealed signify that number, and no more and no less. It would be absurd to say that there were exactly twelve thousand, to a man, is given unto them;' they 'sit upon thrones judging saved out of each of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The conception is appropriate in a vision, but incredible in a historical statement. In like manner the army of the horsemen in chap. ix. 16 is set down as two hundred millions; but no sane commentator ever ventured to assign to this a precise and literal brotherhood. signification. Following these analogies we are disposed to regard the thousand years as a definite for an indefinite period, covering doubtless more than that space of time, but how much more none can tell.

The Reign Of The Saints And Martyrs

Chap. xx. 4-6.---'And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and whosoever had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. [But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first

resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ,

We approach with the greatest diffidence this conjectural explanations, as well as any attempt to force in any way the natural signification of the words.

The first thing which we note is, that the vision now described falls within the apocalyptic period. It is introduced by the formula 'And I saw,' which marks that which comes under the personal observation of the

Next, it is to be remarked that there is an evident antithesis between this scene and the act of judgment executed on the beast and his followers. It is the usual method of the Apocalypse thus to place in striking of the wicked.

We further observe that there is a manifest allusion disciples, 'Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon xix. 28). That period has now arrived. The paliggenesia, or *regeneration*, when the kingdom of the Messiah was to come, is now regarded as present, and the disciples are glorified with their glorified Master: 'judgment the twelve tribes of Israel.' We are to conceive of the multitude of the redeemed from the land---the hundred and forty and four thousand out of all the tribes of the children of Israel---as forming the kingdom, or subjects, placed under the spiritual government of the apostolic

In addition to these the Seer beholds 'the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and also (for the word oitinez appears to indicate that this is another class who are specified) 'whosoever had not worshipped the beast, nor his image;' these also 'live and reign with Christ,' an expression which implies that they too had 'thrones' and 'judgment' given to them. It is impossible not to recognise in the 'souls of them that were beheaded' the same martyred saints whom the Seer beheld, in the vision of the sixth seal, lying under the altar and crying for vengeance on their murderers. They were comforted with the message that in a little while, when their fellowservants who were about to suffer as they had done had

joined them, their prayer should be answered. Now that shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four time is come; their enemies have perished, and they live corners of the earth [land], God and Magog, to gather and reign with Christ. them together to the battle: the number of whom is as This vision looks back also on the remarkable the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of passage in 1 Peter iv. 6. These martyrs are the dead to the earth [land], and compassed the camp of the saints whom the comforting message came [euhggelisqh]. about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of They had been condemned by the judgment of men heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived while in the flesh, but now they *live* in their spirit by the them was cast in to the lake of fire and brimstone, where judgment of God, which has vindicated and crowned also the beast and the false prophet are, and they shall them. What a new light is thrown upon the words of be tormented day and night for ever and ever.]

The mystery and obscurity which hang over a St. Peter, zwsin de kata qeon pneumati, by the language of the Apocalypse, ezhsan kai ebasileusan. This is one portion of the preceding context become still deeper, if possible, here. There are, however, certain points which of those subtle coincidences which are often the surest tests of a true interpretation. seem determinable.

These witnessing and suffering souls are represented It is evident that this passage is *direct prophecy*, as enjoying a privilege and a distinction not accorded and not a visionary representation taking place before to others: 'They lived and reign with Christ a thousand the eyes of the Seer. It is not introduced by the usual years: while the rest of the dead live not again until formula in such cases, 'And I saw,' but in the style of the thousand years are finished. This is the crux of the prophetic prediction. passage, and presents a very formidable difficulty. The It is evident that the prediction of what is to take only quarter in which we can discern any ray of light is place at the close of a thousand years does not come in the direction of the inquiry, Who are 'the rest of the within what we have ventured to call 'apocalyptic limits.' dead'? Are they the rest of the pious dead, or the wicked These limits, as we are again and again warned in the dead, or both the righteous and the wicked alike? The book itself, are rigidly confined within a very narrow compass; the things shown are 'shortly to come to pass.' judgment revolts from the idea that they are the pious dead. if they were to be excluded from participation It would have been an abuse of language to say that the events at the distance of a thousand years were to come in the blessedness of heaven for a vast period, how could it be said, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the to pass *shortly*; we are therefore compelled to regard this prediction as lying outside the apocalyptic limits Lord *from henceforth*? We are compelled, therefore, to imagine the possibility of the other alternative, and that altogether. the passage speaks of the wicked dead, though such a We must consequently regard this prediction of supposition is not without its difficulties. in this case the loosing of Satan, and the events that follow, as still 'the first resurrection' includes only the dead in Christ; future, and therefore unfulfilled. We know of nothing and this may be the true interpretation, for the next recorded in history which can be adduced as in any verse certainly intimates that *all* who have a part in 'the way a probably fulfilment of this prophecy. Westein has *first resurrection*' are blessed and holy, and enjoy the hazarded the hypothesis that possibly it may symbolise high privilege and honour of 'reigning with Christ.' the Jewish revolt under Barcochebas, in the reign of

One thing more to note, and that is, that the reign Hadrian; but the suggestion is too extravagant to be of the suffering and witnessing saints, and of all who entertained for a moment. have part in the first resurrection, is not said to be on There is an evident connection between this earth. They live and reign 'with Christ;' they are 'with prophecy and the vision in Ezekiel concerning Gog him where he is, beholding his glory. and Magog (chaps. xxxviii. xxxix.), which is equally Thus far we have endeavoured to feel our way in mysterious and obscure. In both the scene of conflict a region 'dark with excessive bright,' but we do not is laid in the same place, the land of Israel; and in both pretend to feel any confidence in the latter portion of the enemies of God meet with a signal and disastrous overthrow. our exegesis.

The result of the whole is, that we must consider the The Loosing Of Satan After The Thousand Years. passage which treats of the thousand years, from ver. 5 Chap. xx. 7-10.---['And when the thousand years to ver. 10, as an intercalation or parenthesis. The Seer, are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and having begun to relate the judgment of the dragon,

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what he had to say respecting the final punishment of 'the old serpent,' and the fate that awaited him at the close of a lengthened period called 'a thousand years.' This we believe to be the sole instance in the whole book of an excursion into distant futurity; and we are disposed to regard the whole parenthesis as relating the seven vials the same image is repeated (chap. xvi. 20). to matters still future and unfulfilled. The broken In the catastrophe of the seventh trumpet it is declared continuity of the narration is joined again at ver. 11, where the Seer resumes the account of what he beheld in vision, introducing it by the familiar formula 'And I saw.'

The Catastrophe Of The Sixth Vision

Chap. xx. 11-15.---'And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them: and they were and the same 'everlasting fire prepared for the devil and judged, every man according to their works. And death his angels. and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.' These verses bring us to the catastrophe of the sixth vision. Like the other catastrophes which have preceded it, it is a solemn act of judgment, or rather the same great judicial transaction presented in a new aspect. The Seer now resumes the narration which had been interrupted up the thread which was dropped at the close of ver. 4. We are therefore brought back to the same standpoint as in the first and fourth verses. This catastrophe naturally and necessarily belongs to the 'same series of events as have been represented in the vision of the harlot city, and falls within the prescribed apocalyptic limits, being among the things 'which must shortly come to pass.' As to the catastrophe itself, there can be no question that it represents a solemn judicial investigation on the vastest scale. It is the great consummation, or one aspect of it, towards which all the action of the Apocalypse moves, and which is reached, in one form or another, at the close of each successive vision. There are, however, special features in every catastrophe which distinguish it from the others, notwithstanding that they refer to the same great event. A comparison with the preceding

passes in ver. 7 out of the apocalyptic limits to conclude catastrophes will show how much the present has in common with them and what is peculiar to itself. In the catastrophe of the vision of the seven seals, for example, we have the very same imagery of the heaven departing, and the mountains and islands being moved out of their places (chap. vi. 14). In the catastrophe of the vision of that 'the time of the dead, that they should be judged, is come,' etc. (chap. xi. 18); and in the catastrophe of the seven mystic figures we see 'a white cloud, and on the cloud one sitting, like unto the Son of man' (chap. xiv. 14), corresponding with 'the great white throne, and him that sat on it, in the passage now before us. There are some features, however, peculiar to this catastrophe,---the books of judgment; the sea, death, and Hades, yielding up their dead; and the casting of death and Hades into the lake of fire.

There is no reason to doubt that the judgment scene depicted here is identical with that described by our Lord in Matt. xxv. 31-46. We have the same 'throne of glory, the same gathering of all the nations, the same discrimination of the judged according to their works,

But if the judgment scene described in this passage be identical with that in Matt. xxv., it follows that it is not 'the end of the world' in the sense of its being the dissolution of the material fabric of the globe and the close of human history, but that which is so frequently predicted as accompanying the sunteleia tou aiwnoz,---the end of the age, or termination of the Jewish dispensation. That great consummation is always by the digression respecting the thousand years, taking represented as a judgment- epoch. It is the time of the Parousia, the coming of Christ in glory to vindicate and reward His faithful servants, and to judge and destroy His enemies. There is a remarkable unity and consistency in the teachings of Scripture on this subject; and whether it be in the gospels, or in the epistles, or in the visions of the Apocalypse, we find one harmonious and concurrent scheme of doctrine, all parts mutually confirming and sustaining one another,---a proof of their common origin in the same divine fountain of inspiration and truth.

THE SEVENTH VISION

The Holy City, Or The Bride

Chaps. xxi. xxii. 1-5.

This vision is the last of the series, and completes the mystic number of seven. It is the grand finale of

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the whole drama, the triumphant consummation and with the manifestation. The passage now before us is climax of the apocalyptic visions. It stands in striking really an abridgment or outline of what is developed in fuller detail in the subsequent part of this and the first antithesis of the vision of the harlot city; it is the new Ierusalem in contrast to the old; the bride, the Lamb's five verses of the following chapter. wife, in contrast with the foul and bloated adulteress We now find ourselves surrounded by scenery so whose judgment has passed before our eyes. novel and so wonderful that it is not surprising that

we should be in doubt where we are. Is this earth, or The structure of the vision may detain us for a moment. It is introduced by a preface or prologue, is it heaven? Every familiar landmark has disappeared; extending from the first verse of chap. xxi. to the eighth. the old has vanished, and given place to the new: it is At the ninth verse the vision of the bride opens in the a new heaven above us; it is a new earth beneath us. same manner as the vision of the harlot, by 'one of the New conditions of life must exist, for 'there is no more seven angels, which had the seven vials, full of the seven sea.' Plainly we have here a representation in which last plagues,' inviting the Seer to come and behold 'the symbolism is carried to its utmost limits; and he who bride, the Lamb's wife.' The vision reaches its climax or would deal with such gorgeous imagery as with prosaic catastrophe at the fifth verse of chap. xxii. The remainder literalities is incapable of comprehending them. But the forms the conclusion, or epilogue, not of this vision symbols, though transcendental, are not unmeaning. only, but of the Apocalypse itself. 'They serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly

Prologue To The Vision

Chap. xxi. 1-8.---'And I saw a new heaven and a new employed to set forth the beauty of moral and spiritual earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed excellence. away, and there is no more sea. And I saw the holy city, It is impossible to regard this picture as the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, representation of any social condition to be realised prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. and I upon earth. There are, indeed, certain phrases which at heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the first seem to imply that earth is the scene where these tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with glories are manifested: the holy city is said to 'come them, and they shall be his people, and God himself down out of heaven;' the tabernacle of God is said to shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall be 'with men;' 'the kings of the earth' are said to 'bring wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall be their glory and honour into it; ' but, on the other hand, no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall the whole conception and description of the vision there be any more pain: for the former things are passed forbid the supposition of its being a terrestrial scene. away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I In the first place, it belongs to 'the things which must make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for shortly come to pass;' it falls strictly within apocalyptic these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, limits. It is, therefore, no vision of the future; it belongs It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the as much to the period called 'the end of the age' as the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of destruction of Jerusalem does; and we are to conceive the water of life freely. he that overcometh shall inherit of this renovation of all things,---this new heaven and all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. new earth, as contemporaneous with, or in immediate But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, succession to, the judgment of the great harlot, to which and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and it is the counterpart or antithesis. idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake Secondly, What is the chief figure in this visionary which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the representation? It is the holy city, new Jerusalem. But the second death.' new Jerusalem is always represented in the Scriptures as

Although this section may be regarded as situated in heaven, not on earth. St. Paul speaks of the introductory to the actual vision described from the Jerusalem which is *above*, in contrast with the Jerusalem ninth verse onwards, yet it is really an integral part of below. How can the Jerusalem which is above belong the representation, and covers the very same ground as to earth? There cannot be a reasonable doubt that the the subsequent description. It is as if the Seer, full of city which is here depicted in such glowing colours is the glorious object revealed to his eyes, began to tell its identical with that which is referred to in Heb. xii. 22, wonders and splendours before he could stay to explain 23: 'Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city the circumstances which had led to his being favoured of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an

things;' and all the pomp and splendour of earth are

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innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.' Clearly, therefore, the holy city is the abode of the glorified; the inheritance of the saints in light; the mansions of the Father's house, prepared for the home of the blessed.

representation of its being the dwelling-place of the Most High Himself: 'The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it;' 'the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it;' 'his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face.' In fact, this vision of the holy city is anticipated in the catastrophe of the vision of the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; the city which seals, where the hundred and forty and four thousand out of all the tribes of the children of Israel, and the great multitude that no man could number, are represented as enjoying the very same glory and felicity, in the very same place and circumstances, as in the vision before us. The two scenes are identical; or different aspects of one and the same great consummation.

We therefore conclude that the vision sets forth the blessedness and glory of the heavenly state, into which the way was fully opened at the 'end of the age,' or sunteleia tou aiwnoz, according to the showing of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Holy City Described

Chaps. xxi. 9-27; xxii. 1-5.

heavenly state is here signified, we shall not be guilty of explanation of the symbols themselves. There is an apparent confusion of the figures by which the new Jerusalem is represented, being sometimes described description of the harlot, or old Jerusalem, which is sometimes represented as a woman and sometimes as a city. In the seventh vision the figure of the bride is dropped almost as soon as it is introduced., and the whole of the remaining description is occupied with the and glory of the city. Some of the features are evidently and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they derived from the visionary city beheld by Ezekiel; but there is this remarkable difference, that whereas the temple and its elaborate details occupy the principal part of the Old Testament vision, no temple at all is seen in the apocalyptic vision,---perhaps for the reason that where all is most holy no one place has greater sanctity than another, or because where God's presence is fully David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit

manifested, the whole place becomes one great temple.

There is one point, however, which deserves particular notice, as serving to identify the city called the new Jerusalem. In Hebrews xi. 10 we meet with the remarkable statement that the patriarch Abraham sojourned as a stranger in the very land which had been promised to him as his own possession, and that he did Once more, this conclusion is certified by the so because he had faith in a larger and higher fulfilment of the promise than any mere earthly and human city could have bestowed. 'He looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' What is this but the very city described in the Apocalypse--the city which has *twelve foundations*, inscribed with the is built by no mortal hands; 'the city of the *living God*,' the heavenly Jerusalem? This is a decisive proof, first, that the writer of the epistle had read the Apocalypse, and, secondly, that he recognised the vision of the new Jerusalem as a representation of the heavenly world.

The Epilogue

Chap. xxii. 6-21.

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. And, behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

'And I John heard these things, and saw them. And Having thus arrived at the conclusion that the when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these the presumption and folly of entering into any detailed things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and [the fellow-servant] of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. And he said unto as a city. the same double figure is employed in the me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as details of the architecture, the wealth, and splendour, his work shall be. I am the Alpha and Omega, the first that wash their robes, that they may enter through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

> 'I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of

may be dark or doubtful, this at least is clear and certain. and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athrist come. And whosoever The interpreter who does not apprehend and hold fast will, let him take the water of life freely. this guiding principle is incapable of understanding the 'For I testify unto every man that heareth the sayings words of this prophecy, and will infallibly lose himself of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto and bewilder others in a labyrinth of conjecture and

these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that vain speculation. are written in this book: and if any man shall take away So ends this wonderful book; so elaborate in its from the sayings of the book of this prophecy, God shall construction, so magnificent in its diction, so mysterious take away his part from the tree of life, and from the holy in its imagery, so glorious in its revelations. More than city, which are written in this book. 'He which testifieth any other book in the Bible it has been sealed and shut these things saith, Surely I come quickly! Amen. Come, to the intelligent apprehension of its readers, and this Lord Jesus. 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with mainly on account of the strange neglect of its own you all. Amen.' unambiguous directions for its right understanding. This epilogue at the conclusion of the book Herder, who brought his poetical genius rather than corresponds with the prologue at the commencement, his critical faculty to the elucidation of the Apocalypse, and exemplifies the structural symmetry of the asks,---

composition. Still more remarkable are the emphasis 'Was there a key sent with the book, and has this and frequency with which the approaching fulfilment of been lost? Was it thrown into the sea of Patmos, or into the contents of the prophecy is affirmed and reiterated. the Maeander?' Seven times over it is declared, in one form or another, 'No!' answers an able and sagacious critic, Moses that all is on the point of being accomplished. The Stuart, whose labours have done much to prepare the statement with which the book opens is repeated at this way for a true interpretation,--close, that the angel of the Lord has been commissioned 'No key was sent, and none was lost. The primitive 'to shew unto his servants *things which must shortly come* readers---I mean of course the men of intelligence to pass.' The monitory announcement, 'Behold, I come among them---could understand the book; and were we for a short time in their place we might dispense quickly,' is thrice made into this concluding section. with all the commentaries upon it, and the theological The Seer is commanded not to seal the book of the prophecy, because 'the time is at hand.' So imminent is romances which have grown out of it, that have made their appearance from the time of John's exile down to the end that it is intimated that now it is too late for any alteration in the state or character of men; such as they the present hour.' 1 are so must they continue: 'He hat is unjust, let him be But perhaps a better answer may be given. The key *unjust still.*['] The invocation addressed by the four living was sent along with the book, and it has been allowed creatures to the expected Son of man, 'Come!' (chap. vi. to lie rusty and unused, while all kinds of false keys 1, 3, 5, 7), is repeated by the Spirit and the bride; while and picklocks have been tried, and tried in vain, until all that hear are invited to join in the cry: and, lastly, men have come to look upon the Apocalypse as an the final expression of the whole book is the fervent unintelligible enigma, only meant to puzzle and bewilder. The true key has all along been visible enough, and the utterance of the prayer, 'Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.' All attention of men has been loudly called to it in almost these are indications, which cannot be misunderstood, that the predictions contained in the Apocalypse were every page of the book. That key is the declaration so not to be slowly evolved as ages roll on, but were on frequently made that all is on the point of fulfillment. If the eve of almost instant accomplishment. The whole the original readers were competent, as Stuart contends, prophecy, from the first to last, relates to the immediate to understand the Apocalypse without an interpreter, future, with the solitary exception of the six verses of it could only be because they recognised its connection with the events of their own day. To suppose that they chap. xx. 5-10. Nineteen-twentieths of the Apocalypse, we might almost say ninety-nine hundredths, belong, could understand or feel the slightest interest in a book that treated of Papal councils, Protestant reformation, according to its own showing, to the very days then present, the closing days of the Jewish age. The coming French revolutions, and distant events in foreign lands of the Lord is its grand theme: with this it opens, with and far-off ages, would be one of the wildest fancies that this it closes, and from beginning to end this event is ever possessed a human brain. From first to last the contemplated as just about to take place. Whatever else book itself bears decisive testimony to the immediate

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fulfilment of its predictions. It opens with the express shortly come to pass, and it closes with the reiteration strain, to produce an exposition satisfactory even to of the same statement,---'The Lord God hath sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass.' 'The time is at hand.'

The only luminous interpretation of the vision of the Apocalypse has been given by critics who have consented to use this authentic and divine key to its mysteries. Yet it is remarkable that very few, if any, have done so consistently and throughout. It is surprising and mortifying to find such an expositor as Moses Stuart, It is no wonder that, occupying such a false position, after proceeding with courage and success a certain way, suddenly falter, drop the key which had done such good service, and then stagger blindly and helplessly on, groping and guessing through the Egyptian fog non-natural interpretation, endangered the very citadel which surrounds him. Yet no theologian of our time of the faith. It must be acknowledged that a culpable has contributed so much to the true interpretation of negligence of the 'true sayings of God' on the part of the Apocalypse. By his own admirable commentary Christian expositors has often given a vantage ground he has laid all students of this wonderful book under to the enemies of revelation of which they have not been the highest obligation, and conferred a lasting benefit slow to avail themselves. on the whole church of Christ. Unhappily, by failing to carry out his own principles consistently to the end, he missed the honour of conducting his followers into the that it is marked by extreme simplicity, by agreement with promised land of a true exegesis.

As for the majority of interpreters, it is scarcely possible to conceive a more absolute and reckless disregard to the express and manifold directions contained in the book itself than that which they have exhibited in their arbitrary speculations. Of willful perverseness no one will accuse them; but it seems unaccountable that scholarly and reverent students of divine revelation should either overlook or set aside the that they have not been insufficient. To assume that explicit declarations of the book itself with regard to its speedily approaching fulfilment; that they should, in spite of those plain assertions to the contrary, lay it down as an axiom that the Apocalypse is a syllabus of civil and what is shown to be right. ecclesiastical history to the end of time; and that they should then, in defiance of all grammatical laws, proceed to invent a non-natural method of interpretation, according to which 'near' becomes 'distant,' and 'quickly' means 'ages hence,' and 'at hand' signifies 'afar off.' All this seems incredible, yet it is true. Language serves only to mislead, words have no meaning, and interpretation has no laws, if the express and repeated declarations of the Apocalypse do not plainly teach the speedy and all but immediate fulfilment of its predictions. It ought before the passing away of the existing generation, to have occurred to the interpreters of the Apocalypse that it was an overwhelming *a priori* presumption against their method that it required an immense accompanying the Parousia, but entering far more into

apparatus criticus, vast stores of historical information, declaration that the events to which it refers 'must the lapse of many ages, and 'something like prophetic themselves. Of what value such 'revelation' could be to the primitive believers, who with trembling hearts obeyed the injunction that sent them to the baffling task of studying its pages, it is not easy to see. Nor is it much more value to the mass of modern readers, who must have a high critical faculty to be able to discern the fitness and truthfulness of the interpretation offered, and to decide between conflicting interpretations. the defenders of divine revelation laid themselves open to the assaults of such sceptics as Strauss and 'the destructive school of criticism,' and, taking refuge in

> Without undue presumption it may be claimed for the scheme of interpretation advocated in these pages historical facts, and by exact correspondence with the symbols. There is no wresting of Scripture, no perversion or accommodation of history, no manipulation of facts. The only indispensable *apparatus criticus* is Josephus and the Greek grammar. The guiding and governing principle is implicit and unwavering deference to the teachings of the book itself. The apocalyptic data have been the sole landmarks regarded, and it is believed no mistakes have been made would be preposterous; but succeeding travellers by the same route will soon correct what is proved to be erroneous, and confirm

> It has been the object of the writer to demonstrate that the Apocalypse is really the reproduction and expansion, in symbolical imagery adapted to the nature of a vision, of our Lord's prophetic discourse spoken on the Mount of Olives. That discourse, as we have shown, is one continuous and homogeneous prediction of events which were to take place in connection with the Parousia, the coming in His kingdom of the Son of man, an event which He declared would happen and which some of the disciples would live to witness. Similarly, the Apocalypse is a revelation of the events

gives place to the universal, 'that God may be All in all.' Eighteen centuries ago, as the Seer gazed on the This does not mean that the relation between Christ and humanity ceases, but that His mission as King of Israel is fulfilled; the covenant-nation no longer exists; there are no longer Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised; the Israel of God is wider and greater than Israel after the flesh; Jerusalem which is above is not the mother of Jews, but is 'the mother of us all.'

detail, and displaying far more of the glory and felicity 'a minister of the circumcision;' the local and limited of 'the kingdom.' glorious vision of the city whose walls were of jasper, and its gates of pearl, and its streets of pure gold, he was assured again and again that 'these things must *shortly* be done,' and that 'the time was at hand.' Standing on the verge of the long-expected Parousia, listening for the footfall of the coming King, knowing that 'the end of the age' must be imminent, and looking eagerly for It was in the full view of that glorious day, which was 'the day of the Lord,' how could it be otherwise than about to 'open the kingdom of heaven to all believers,' that St. John and his fellow-disciples should believe that the beloved disciple made response to his Lord's themselves on the point of witnessing the fulfilment of announcement of His speedy coming, 'Amen! Come, their cherished hopes? How could it be otherwise, when Lord Jesus!' the Lord Himself, giving His own personal attestation to 1 Stuart on the Apocalypse, sect. 12 the assurance of His almost immediate advent, declared **Summary and Conclusion** thrice over, in the most explicit terms, 'Behold I come We have now reached a point in our investigation quickly;' 'Behold, I come quickly;' 'Yea, I come quickly'?

where it is possible to take a complete and connected We are thus led to the conclusion, alike from the survey of the whole field which we have traversed, and teaching of the Apocalypse and the rest of the New to observe the unity and consistency of the prophetic Testament scriptures, that in the days of St. John the system developed in the New Testament. Parousia was universally believed by the whole Christian church to be close at hand. It was the promise of Christ, 1. We find that the Gospel dispensation does the preaching of the apostles, the faith of the church. not come upon us as an independent and isolated scheme,—a new beginning in the divine government of We are also taught the significance of that great event. It the world,—but that it implies and assumes the relation marked a new epoch in the divine administration. Until of God to Israel in past ages. The whole philosophy of that event took place the full blessedness of the heavenly Jewish history is condensed into a single phrase, 'the state was not open to the souls of believers. kingdom of God;' and it is this kingdom which, first John The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches that until the the Baptist, as the herald of the coming king, and next arrival of the great consummation something was the King Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaimed as wanting to the full perfection of them who had 'died in being 'at hand.' faith.' The same thing is taught in the Apocalypse. Until

2. We find that John the Baptist adopts the warnings the 'harlot city' was judged and condemned, the 'holy of Old Testament prophecy, especially of the last of the city' was not prepared as the habitation of the saints. We prophets, Malachi, and predicts that the coming of the are given to understand also that the close of the Jewish dispensation, the abrogation of the legal economy, and kingdom would be the coming of wrath upon Israel. He declares that 'the axe is already laid to the root of the the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, indicating the dissolution of the peculiar relation tree;' his cry is, 'Flee from the coming wrath,' plainly intimating that a time of judgment was fast approaching. between Jehovah and the nation of Israel. The nation had 3. Our Lord affirms the same speedy coming of rejected its King, and the King had judged the nation; judgment upon the land and people of Israel; and He and the Messianic mission, both for mercy and for further connects this judgment with His own coming judgment, was then fulfilled. The faithful remnant were in glory,-the Parousia. This event stands forth most gathered into the kingdom, or 'the new Jerusalem', and the whole frame and fabric of Judaism were shattered prominently in the New Testament; to this every eye is directed, to this every inspired messenger points. It is and destroyed for ever. The kingdom of God was now represented as the nucleus and centre of a cluster of great come, and He who for so long a period had conducted events; the end of the age, or close of the Jewish economy; its administration, its Mediator and Chief, now that He the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem; the has crowed the edifice, resigns His official character judgment of the guilty nation; the resurrection of the and 'delivers up the kingdom' into the Father's hands. dead; the reward of the faithful; the consummation of His work as Messiah is accomplished; He is no longer

PART III THE PAROUSIA

the kingdom of God. All these transactions are declared come in a particular month of a particular year, but they to be coincident with the Parousia.

our Lord, the uniform and concurrent teaching of His apostles, and the universal expectation of the church of the apostolic age, that the Parousia and its accompanying events were represented as nigh at hand; and not only of the leading testimonies borne by the apostles to the so, but as about to happen within the limits of a given period ; that is to say, in the time of the apostles and their contemporaries; so that many or most of them this cherished hope of the Christian church. might expect to witness the great consummation. This is the main point of the whole question, and must be the possibility of the Lord's coming in his and their decided by the authority of the Scriptures themselves. While the proof ought to be rigorously demanded, and the evidence thoroughly sifted, it ought also to be dispassionately considered, without resorting to non natural interpretation, uncritical and unfair evasion, or violent wresting of the plain sense of words.

5. Without going over the ground already traversed it may suffice here to appeal to three distinct and decisive declarations of our Lord respecting the time of His coming, each of them accompanied with a solemn from their present sufferings 'when the Lord Jesus was affirmation:-

(1) 'Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come' (Matt. 10:23).

(2) 'Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom' (Matt. 16:28).

(3) 'Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled' (Matt. 24:34).

The plain grammatical meaning of these statements along with those who survived to that period. has been fully discussed in these pages. No violence can extort from them any other sense than the obvious and unambiguous one, viz. that our Lord's second coming generation.

coming of the Lord is in perfect harmony with this. Nothing can be more evident than that they all believed and taught the speedy return of the Lord. From the first speech of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost to the last utterance of St. John in the Apocalypse, this conviction is clearly and constantly expressed. To say that the apostles were themselves ignorant of the time of their Lord's return, and therefore could have no belief on the subject,-could not teach what they did not know,is to contradict their own express and reiterated assertions. True, they did not know, and did not teach, 'that day and that hour;' they did not say that He would

assuredly did give the churches to understand that He 4. It is demonstrable by the express testimony of was coming quickly; that they might soon expect to see Him; and they never ceased to exhort them to maintain the attitude of constant watchfulness and preparation.

> It is not necessary to do more than advert to some speedy coming of the Lord:—

(1) St. Paul gives great prominence in his epistles to

a. In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians he implies lifetime,— 'We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord.' He also prays that 'their spirit, soul, and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

b. In the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (which is often erroneously understood to teach that the coming of Christ was not at hand, but which teaches precisely the contrary doctrine) he comforts the suffering believers with the promise that they would obtain rest revealed from heaven, etc. (2 Thess. 1:7).

c. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians the apostle speaks of believers as 'waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.' He warns them that 'the time is short;' that 'the end of the age,' or ' ends of the ages,' are come upon them; that 'the Lord is at hand.' d. In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul expresses his confidence that though he might die before the coming of the Lord, yet God would raise him from the dead, and present him

e. In the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul speaks of 'the glory about to be revealed;' of the whole creation waiting for the manifestation of the Son of God; of salvation would take place within the limits of the existing being near, 'nearer than when they first believed;' that 'it is now high time to awake out of sleep;' that 'the night 6. The doctrine of the apostles with regard to the is far spent, and the day at hand;' that 'God will bruise Satan under their feet shortly.

> f. In the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians the apostle speaks of 'the day of Christ' as the period of hope, perfection, and glory to which they were looking forward, and he declares emphatically, 'The Lord is at hand.'

> g. In like manner, in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus the expectation of the Parousia is conspicuous. Timothy is exhorted to keep the commandment inviolate 'until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'He is about to judge the living and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom.' Christians are exhorted to be looking 'for that

blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great themselves; which they never failed to keep before the God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.' attention of the churches, and about which they were all (2) St. James represents the coming of the Lord as just agreed?

at hand. 'The last days' are come. Suffering Christians There are critics who do not scruple to affirm that are exhorted to 'be patient unto the coming of the Lord.' the apostles were mistaken, and that time has proved They are assured that 'it is drawing nigh;' that the Judge the fallacy of their anticipations. They tell us that either they misunderstood the teaching of their Master, or that standeth before the door.

(3) St. Peter, like St. Paul, gives great prominence to He too was under an erroneous impression. This is of course to set aside the claims of the apostles to speak a. On the day of Pentecost he declared that those authoritatively as the inspired messengers of Christ, and to undermine the very foundations of the Christian faith.

the Parousia and its related events. were 'the last days' predicted by the prophet Joel, introductory to 'the great and terrible day of the Lord.'

b. In his First Epistle he affirms that it was 'the last There are others, more reverential in their treatment time;' that God was 'ready to judge the living and the of Scripture, who acknowledge that the apostles were dead;' 'that the end of all things was at hand;' that 'the indeed mistaken, but that this mistake was, for wise time had come when judgment was to begin at the house reasons, permitted,— that, in fact, the error was highly of God.' c. In his Second Epistle he exhorts Christians beneficial in its results: it stimulated hope, it fortified to be 'looking for and hasting unto the coming of the courage, it inspired devotion." * day of God;' and depicts the approaching dissolution of (* 'For ages the world's hope has been the second 'heaven and earth.' advent. The early church expected it in their own day,-

"We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the (4) The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of 'the last Lord." The Saviour Himself had said, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." Yet the Son of man has never come. In the first centuries the (5) St. John confirms and completes the testimony early Christians believed that the millennial advent was close; they heard the warning of the apostle, brief and sharp, "The time is short." Now, suppose that instead of this they had seen all the dreary page of church history unrolled; suppose that they had known that after two Finally, the Apocalypse is full of the Parousia: thousand years the world would have scarcely spelled out three letters of the meaning of Christianity, where would have been those gigantic efforts, that life spent Such is a rapid sketch of the apostolic testimony as on the very brink of eternity, which characterize the days of the early church?—F. W. Robertson, Sermon on

days' as now present; it is 'the end of the age;' the day is seen to be 'approaching;' 'Yet a little, little while, and he that is coming will come, and will not tarry. of his fellow-apostles; it is 'the last time;' 'antichrist has come;' 'he is already in the world.' Christians are exhorted so to live that they may not be ashamed before Christ at His coming. 'Behold, he cometh with clouds;' 'The time is at hand;' 'Behold, I come quickly.' to the speedy coming of the Lord. It would have been

strange if, with such assurances and such exhortations, the Illusiveness of Life.) the apostolic churches had not lived in constant and 'If the Christians of the first centuries,' says eager expectation of the Parousia. That they did so we Hengstenberg, 'had foreseen that the second coming of Christ would not take place for eighteen hundred years, have the clearest evidence in the New Testament, and we can conceive the mighty influence which this faith and how much weaker an impression would this doctrine hope must have had upon Christian life and character. have made upon them than when they were expecting Him every hour, and were told to watch because He But, admitting, what cannot well be denied, that would come like a thief in the night, at an hour when they looked not for Him!' (Hengstenberg, Christology, vol. iv. p. 443.)

the apostles and early Christians did cherish these expectations, and that their belief was founded on the teaching of our Lord, the question arises, Were they not mistaken in their expectation? This is practically But neither can this explanation be accepted as satisfactory. Unquestionably the first Christians did to ask, Were the apostles permitted to fall into error receive an immense impulse to their courage and zeal themselves, and to lead others into a like delusion, with from their firm belief in the speedy advent of the Lord; respect to a matter of fact which they had abundant opportunities of knowing; which must frequently have but was this a hope that after all made them ashamed? been the subject of conversation and conference among Must we conclude that the indomitable courage and

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the martyrs and confessors of the primitive age only mistaken enthusiasts? We confess that such a conclusion then living on the earth! But all such efforts are wholly is revolting to all our conceptions of Christianity as a revelation of divine truth by the instrumentality of inspired men. If the apostles misunderstood or misrepresented the teaching of Christ in regard to a a twofold fulfilment receives no countenance from the matter of fact, respecting which they had the most ample opportunities of information, what dependence the apostles speak of the approaching consummation, can be placed upon their testimony as to matters of faith, where the liability to error is so much greater? event in view, and that they thought and spoke of it as Such explanations are fitted to unsettle the foundations just at hand. of confidence in apostolic teaching; and it is not easy to see how they are compatible with any practical belief in hypothesis of a double, or even manifold, fulfilment inspiration.

There is another theory, however, by which many suppose that the credit of the apostles is saved, and yet of the real significance and grandeur or that great room left for avoiding the acceptance of their apparent crisis in the divine government of the world which is teaching on the subject of the coming of Christ. This is, by the hypothesis of a primary and partial fulfilment of their predictions in their own time, to be followed and completed by an ultimate and plenary fulfilment at of Christ in glory, meant no more than the destruction the end of human history. According to this view, the anticipations of the apostles were not wholly erroneous. Something really did take place that might be called 'a coming of the Lord, 'a judgment day.' Their predictions received a quasi fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem and in the judgment of the guilty nation. a type of another and infinitely greater catastrophe, thrilling incident in the drama of history, like the siege when the whole human race will be brought before of Troy or the downfall of Carthage, closing a chapter in the judgment seat of Christ and the earth consumed which is most commonly accepted by the majority of expositors and readers of the New Testament at the present day. The first objection to this hypothesis is, that it has no foundation in the teaching of the Scriptures. There is not a scintilla of evidence that the apostles and primitive Christians had any suspicion of a twofold end. No hint is anywhere dropped that a primary and partial fulfilment of His sayings was to take place in that generation, but that the complete and exhaustive covenant nation was dissolved. The Messianic kingdom, fulfilment was reserved for a future and far distant that is, the administration of the divine government by period. The very contrary is the fact. What can be more comprehensive and conclusive than our Lord's words, 'Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till ALL these things be fulfilled'? What critical torture has been applied to these words to extort from them some other meaning than their obvious and natural one!

devotion of a Paul rested mainly on a delusion? Were How has yevea been hunted through all its lineage and genealogy to discover that it may not mean the persons futile. While the words remain in the text their plain and obvious sense will prevail over all the glosses and perversions of ingenious criticism. The hypothesis of Scriptures. We have only to read the language in which to be convinced that they had one, and only one, great

This brings us to another objection to the of the predictions in the New Testament, viz. that it proceeds from a fundamentally erroneous conception marked by the Parousia. There are not a few who seem to think that if our Lord's prophecy on the Mount of Olives, and the predictions of the apostles of the coming of Jerusalem, and were fulfilled in that event, then all their announcements and expectations ended in a mere fiasco, and the historical reality answers very feebly and inadequately to the magnificent prophecy. There is reason to believe that the true significance and grandeur of that great event are very little appreciated That consummation at the close of the Jewish age was by many. The destruction of Jerusalem was not a mere the annals of a state or a people. It was an event which by a general conflagration. This is probably the view has no parallel in history. It was the outward and visible sign of a great epoch in the divine government of the world. It was the close of one dispensation and the commencement of another. It marked the inauguration of a new order of things. The Mosaic economy,—which had been ushered in by the miracles of Egypt, the lightnings and thunderings of Sinai, and the glorious reference in the predictions of Jesus concerning the manifestations of Jehovah to Israel,-after subsisting for more than fifteen centuries, was now abolished. The peculiar relation between the Most High and the the Mediator, so far, at least, as Israel was concerned, reached its culminating point. The kingdom so long predicted, hoped for, prayed for, was now fully come. The final act of the King was to sit upon the throne of His glory and judge His people. He could then 'deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father.' This is the

significance of the destruction of Jerusalem according can detach the one part of this prophecy from the other. to the showing of the Word of God. It was not an It is one from beginning to end—a complete whole. isolated fact, a solitary catastrophe,—it was the centre The finest instrument cannot draw a line separating of a group of related and coincident events, not only one portion which relates to that generation from in the material, but in the spiritual world; not only on another portion which relates to a different and distant earth, but in heaven and in hell; some of them being period. Every part of it rests on the same foundation, cognisable by the senses and capable of historical and the whole is so linked and concatenated that all confirmation, and others not. must stand or fall together. We are justified, therefore, Perhaps it may be said that such an explanation of the in holding that the exact accomplishment of so much predictions of the New Testament, instead of relieving of the prophecy as comes within the cognisance of the senses, and is capable of being vouched for by human region of the invisible and spiritual, and which cannot, in the nature of things, be attested by human evidence. This is not credulity, but reasonable faith, such as men fearlessly exercise in all their worldly transactions.

the difficulty, embarrasses and perplexes us more than ever. It is possible to believe in the fulfilment of testimony, is a presumption and guarantee in favour of the exact fulfilment of that portion which lies within the predictions which take effect in the visible and outward order of things, because we have historical evidence of that fulfilment; but how can we be expected to believe in fulfilments which are said to have taken place in the region of the spiritual and invisible when we have no witnesses to depose to the facts? We can implicitly We conclude, therefore, that all the parts of our believe in the accomplishment of all that was predicted Lord's prediction refer to the same period and the same respecting the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem, the event; that the whole prophecy is one and indivisible, burning of the temple, and the demolition of the city, resting upon the same foundation of divine authority. because we have the testimony of Josephus to the facts; Further, that all that was cognisable by the human senses but how can we believe in a coming of the Son of man, in is proved to have been fulfilled, and, therefore, we are a resurrection of the dead, in an act of judgment, when not only warranted, but bound to assume the fulfilment we have nothing but the word of prophecy to rely upon, of the remainder as not only credible, but certain. As the result of the investigation we are landed in and no Josephus to vouch for the historical accuracy of the facts?

this dilemma: either the whole group of predictions, To this it can only be said in reply, that the demand comprehending the destruction of Jerusalem, the for human testimony to events in the region of the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead, and unseen is not altogether reasonable. If we receive them the rewarding of the faithful, did take place before the at all, it must be on the word of Him Who declared that passing away of that generation, as predicted by Christ, all these things would assuredly take place before that taught by the apostles, and expected by the whole church; or, else, the hope of the church was a delusion, generation passed away. But, after all, is the demand upon our faith in this matter so very excessive? A large the teaching of the apostles an error, the predictions of Jesus a dream. portion of these predictions we know to have been There is no other alternative consistent with the fair grammatical interpretation of the words of Scripture. We may not tear the prophecy of Christ asunder, and arbitrarily decide, this is past, and that is future; this is fulfilled, and that unfulfilled. There is no pretext for such a division in the record of that discourse; like the seamless robe worn by Him who uttered it, it is all of one piece, 'woven from the top throughout.' The grammatical structure and the historical occasion alike imply the unity of the whole prophecy. Neither is there any 'verifying faculty' by which it is possible to But the part which confessedly has been fulfilled, distinguish between one part and another as belonging to different periods and epochs. Every attempt to draw such lines of distinction has proved a complete failure.

literally and punctually fulfilled; we recognize in that accomplishment a remarkable proof of the truth of the Word of God and the superhuman prescience that foresaw and foretold the future. Could anything have been less probable at the time when our Lord delivered His prophetic discourse than the total destruction of the temple, the razing of the city, and the ruin of the nation in the lifetime of the existing generation? What can be more minute and particular than the signs of the end enumerated by our Lord? What can be more precise and literal than the fulfilment of them? and which is vouched for by uninspired history, is inseparably bound up with another portion which is not so vouched for. Nothing but a violent disruption The prophecy refuses to be so manipulated, and asserts

its unity and homogeneity in spite of critical artifice or violence. We are compelled, therefore, by all these considerations, and chiefly by regard for the authority of Him whose word cannot be broken, to conclude human society and history which may claim the largest that the Parousia, or second coming of Christ, with its connected and concomitant events, did take place, according to the Saviour's own prediction, at the period The philosophic historian recognizes in Christianity a away of 'that generation.'

Here we might pause, for Scripture prophecy guides us no further. But the close of the æon is not the end of the world, and the fate of Israel teaches us nothing respecting the destiny of the human race. Whether we and forecasting the ultimate fortunes of a world which has been the scene of such stupendous displays of divine judgment and mercy. It will probably be felt by some and come out of the fire unscathed. It has survived to be an unwelcome conclusion that the Apocalypse is not that syllabus of civil and ecclesiastical history which have corrupted it into a superstition, perverted it into a a mistaken theory of interpretation supposed it to be. It will seem to them that the extinction of those false lights, which they took for guiding stars, leaves them in total darkness about the future; and they will ask in perplexity, Whither are we tending? What is to be the end and consummation of human history? Is this from the impurities and accretions which are foreign earth, with its precious freight of immortal and eternal into regions of darkness and distance from God?

height of presumption to prognosticate the future. 'It to proselytise, and therefore to grow, Christianity goes is not for us to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.' It has been instances approve the saying. Yet thus much it may be be saved. permitted us to conclude: there is no reason to despair Judaism was a failure, so Christianity will be a failure also. We are not persuaded of this; we regard it rather as an impeachment of the divine wisdom and goodness. Judaism was never constituted to be a universal religion; it was essentially limited and national in its operation; but Christianity is made for man, and has proved its indeed too true that the progress of Christianity in the being cleared away, the prospect brightens with a world has been lamentably slow; and that, after eighteen centuries, it has not succeeded in banishing evil from has been most powerfully felt. Yet, after every allowance for its shortcomings, it still remains the mightiest moral force ever called into operation for purifying and

ennobling the character of men. It is Christianity that differentiates the new world from the old; the modern from the ancient civilisation. This is the new factor in share in the beneficent reformations of the past and to which we may look for still greater results in the future. when Jerusalem was destroyed, and before the passing new power, which 'from its very origin, and still more in its progress, entirely renovated the face of the world. * (Schlegel, Philosophy of History, Lect. x.)

Nor is there any symptom of decrepitude or exhaustion in the religion of Jesus after all the ages and conflicts, and revolutions of opinion through which it will or no, we cannot help speculating about the future, has come. It has stood the brunt of the most malignant persecution, and come off victorious. It has endured the ordeal of the most searching and hostile criticism, the more perilous patronage of pretended friends who policy, or degraded it into a trade. While the enemies of the Gospel predict its speedy extinction, it enters on a new career of conflict and victory. There is a perpetual tendency in Christianity to renew her youth, to regain the ideal of her pristine purity, and defecate herself to her nature. Never since the apostolic age were there interests, advancing towards light and truth, or hurrying greater vitality and vigour in the religion of the Cross than today. This is the age of Christian missions; and Where nothing has been revealed it would be the while all the other religions of the world have ceased forth to every land and nation, with the Bible in her hand and the proclamation of the glad tidings in her said that 'the uninspired prophet is a fool,' and many mouth, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt

The true interpretation of New Testament prophecy, about the future. There are some who tell us that as instead of leaving us in darkness, encourages hope. It relieves the gloom which hung over a world which was believed to be destined to perish. There is no reason to infer that because Jerusalem was destroyed the world must burn; or, because the apostate nation was condemned, the human race must be consigned to perdition. All this sinister anticipation rests upon an adaptation to every variety of the human family. It is erroneous interpretation of Scripture; and, the fallacies glorious hope. We may trust the God of Love. He has not forsaken the earth, and He governs the world on a plan the world, nor even from the regions where its influence which He has not indeed disclosed to us, but which we may be well assured will finally evolve the highest good of the creature and the brightest glory of the Creator.

It may, indeed, seem strange and unaccountable

that we should now be left without any of those divine side. But this is not all: the redemptive work of Christ manifestations and revelations which in other ages God was pleased to vouchsafe to men. We seem in some respects farther off from heaven than those ages were when voices and visions reminded men of the nearness of the Unseen. We may say, with the Jews of the captivity, righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our 'We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: Lord' (Rom. 5:19-21). neither is there among us any that knoweth how long ' Ps. 74:9).

It does not fall within the scope of this discussion to argue on philosophical grounds the natural probability Eighteen hundred years have rolled away since of a reign of truth and righteousness on the earth; we a voice was heard upon earth saying, 'Thus saith the are happy to be assured of the consummation on higher Lord.' It is as if a door had been shut in heaven, and the and safer grounds, even the promises of Him who has direct intercourse of God with man were cut off; and taught us to pray, 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is done in heaven.' For every God- taught prayer contains a we seem at a disadvantage as compared with those who were favoured with 'visions and revelations of the Lord.' prophecy, and conveys a promise. This world belongs no more to the devil, but to God. Christ has redeemed Yet, even in this we may not judge correctly. Doubtless it is better as it is. The presence of the Holy Spirit with it, and will recover it, and draw all men unto Him. the disciples was declared by our Lord to be more than Otherwise it is inconceivable that God would have a compensation for His own absence. That Spirit dwells taught His people in all ages to utter in faith and hope with us, and in us, and it is His office 'to take of Christ's, that sublime prophetic prayer:and to shew it unto us.' We have also the written Word 'God be merciful unto us, and bless us; And cause of God, and in this we enjoy an incalculable superiority his face to shine on us; That thy way may be known over the former days. Better the written Word than upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations. Let the living prophet. But should it be needful for the the people praise thee, O God; welfare and guidance of mankind that God should Let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be again manifest Himself, there is no presumption against glad and sing for joy: For Thou shalt judge the people further revelations. Why should it be thought that God righteously, And govern the nations upon earth. Let has spoken His last word to men? But it is for Him to the people praise thee, O God; Let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; And God, choose, and not for us to dictate. It may well be that even now, in ways unsuspected by us, He is speaking even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; And to man. 'God fulfils himself in many ways, and human all the ends of the earth shall fear him? (PSALM 67) history is as full of God today as in the ages of miracle and prophecy. Far from us be that incredulity which **APPENDIX TO PART III** despairs of Christianity and of man. Surely, it was not in NOTE A. Reuss on 'the Number of the Beast.' (Rev. xiii. vain that Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the World'. 'God 18.) sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved. 'I, if I be lifted up 'It would form a very singular history were we to from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.

recount all that has been said by theologians with That favoured apostle who more than any other reference to the number 666 in the Revelation. This seems to have comprehended 'the breadth, and length, is not, however, the place to do so, and it is generally and depth, and height of the love of Christ, suggests mere waste of time to refute palpable errors and absurd to us ideas of the extent and efficiency of the great hallucinations. Our texts are so clear to those who have redemption which our latent incredulity can scarcely eyes to see and comprehend, that the simple statement of receive. He does not hesitate to affirm that the restorative their true meaning ought at once to dissipate the clouds work of Christ will ultimately more than repair the ruin gathered round them by dogmatic prejudices, interested wrought by sin. 'As by one man's disobedience the many imaginations, and political pre-constructions. were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall 'The number of the beast, 666, is the number of the many be made righteous.' There would be no point a man, ariqmoz, angrwpou, says the prophet. It is in this comparison if 'the many' on the one side of the the number of a name, he says again, and that name equation bore no proportion to 'the many' on the other is written on the forehead of those who are the loyal

PART III IN THE APOCALYPSE

does more than redress the balance: it outweighs, and that immeasurably, the counterpoise of evil. 'Where sin abounded, grace did beyond measure abound: that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign in

subjects and worshippers of the beast. But the beast itself is a personal being---Antichrist, and does not stand for some abstract idea. From this it follows that the number 666 does not represent a period of ecclesiastical history, as is maintained in the interpretation of orthodox Protestant theologians and of pietistic chiliasts of the reader before we utter it. Let us, however, cast upon it all school of Bengel. Nor does it stand for a common name, the light of historic science. and to characterise a power, an empire, as, for example, Roman Paganism, as Irenaeus sought to show with his brought us to the conviction that this book was written Aateinoz, which has been adopted by all subsequent before the destruction of Jerusalem. The temple and its interpreters who have failed to invent anything more inadmissible still, and which Protestants have eagerly made use of in the interest of their anti-papal polemics. The terms "Latium," "Latini," had no existence in the to sacrilege. These passages could not have been framed first century but in the poetry and local geography of the Campagna of Rome, and, as the name of a language, was utterly unknown in any form within apostolic decisive. We shall maintain that Rome is here spoken sphere (Luke xxiii. 38; John xix. 20).

name, the name of the political and historical personage who was to play the part of Antichrist in all the great revolutions awaiting the Judaeo-Christian world. this empire, has seven kings. The revelations of Daniel, After reading Daniel and the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians we know *what* is the subject. Our author finally proceeds to tell us of whom he speaks.

'Here, then, is the difficulty (if difficulty it be) which has most often misled even those who have approached the problem with a spirit free from prejudice and illusion. The beast of the thirteenth chapter is not an individual, but the Roman Empire, regarded as a power. The writer himself tells us (chap. xvii.) that the seven heads of the beast represent the seven hills on which his capital is built; and again, seven kings who have reigned, or still reign, there. This is quite true, but he tells us quite as plainly that this beast is at the same time one of the seven heads, a combination apparently inconceivable years and a half, perish finally, never to rise again. and more than paradoxical, but at the same time very natural, and even necessary. The idea of a power, seven, and is at the same time the beast that was, but at a concrete form, to personify itself in the popular mind. assumes a distinct human shape, and under this personal form ideas become popularised, till individuals come in their turn to be the permanent representatives of ideas and influences which outlive themselves. To most men a proper name conveys more than a definition, and is more apt to excite warm and living feeling. The pagan his reappearance. It cannot, then, be Augustus, Tiberius, power, idolatry, blasphemy, persecution, all that stirs the lawful antipathies of the church, all that inspires it with horror, and wrings from it the cry of woe, would fact that none of these stood in hostile relations to the

naturally be individualised and concentrated in the person of him who, a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem, had filled up the measure of his crimes. The beast is, then, at once the Empire and the Emperor, and the name of the latter is on the lips of the thoughtful

'An attentive reading of chap. xi. will have already inner court, with the great altar, are the measured--destined, that is to say, to be preserved (Zech. ii.), while the rest of the city is given up to the Pagans and devoted in view of the state of things which existed after the year 70. But the indications given in chap. xvii. are still more of till it can be shown that in the age of the apostles 'The number 666 must, then, contain a proper there existed another city built upon seven hills, urbem septicollem, in which the blood of the witnesses of Christ had been shed in torrents (vers. 6, 9). This city, or of Enoch, and of Esdras follow the same chronological plan, all counting successions of kings to put the reader upon the track of the dates. Of those seven kings five are already dead (ver. 10), the sixth is reigning at this very time. The sixth emperor of Rome was Galba, an old man, seventy-three years of age at his accession. The final catastrophe, which was to destroy the city and the empire, was to take place in three years and a half, as has already been noted. For this one simple reason the series of emperors will include only one after the then reigning monarch, and he will reign but a little while. The writer does not know him, but he knows the relative duration of his reign, because he knows that Rome will, in three

'There shall come an eighth emperor, he is one of the especially of a hostile influence, always tends to assume the moment, is not. This must refer, then, to one of the previous emperors, who is to come again a second time, The ideal monster becomes an individual; the principle but as Antichrist, that is, invested with all the power of the devil, and for the special end of fighting against the Lord. As it is said that, at the time the vision is written, he is not, but has already been, he must be one of the first five emperors. He has been already wounded to death (chap. xiii. 3), so that there is something miraculous in or Claudius, who none of them came to a violent end, and who are further place out of the question by the

church. This reason will also exclude Caligula. There of a Latin reader of the Revelation who had found the remains only Nero; but everything concurs to point solution, but who pronounced Nero like the Romans, him out as the personage thus mysteriously designated. while the writer of the Revelation pronounced it like the So long as Galba reigned, and even long after that, the Greeks and Orientals. The removal of the final n gives people did not believe Nero to be dead; they supposed fifty less? him hidden somewhere, and ready to return and avenge NOTE B. Dr. J. M. Macdonald's Life and Writings of St. himself on his enemies. The Messianic ideas of the Jews, Iohn. which had become vaguely diffused through the West This volume was ready for the press before the (as we learn from Tacitus and Suetonius), blending with author had an opportunity of consulting the elaborate these popular notions, suggested to the credulous the work of Dr. Macdonald of the Life and Writings of St. idea that Nero would come again from the East, to regain John. Though it cannot be said that Dr. Macdonald his throne by the aid of the Parthians. Many false Nero's does for St. John what Conybeare and Howson have appeared. These popular fancies spread also among done for St. Paul, yet there is much that is valuable in Christians. Visions were of common occurrence, and his work. It is especially gratifying to the author to find the Fathers of the church perpetuate the same tradition that, on the difficult question of 'the two witnesses,' Dr. through several centuries later. Macdonald has arrived at a conclusion almost identical 'Lastly, that nothing may be wanting to the full with his own. It would seem, however, to be with Dr. evidence, our book names Nero, so to speak, in every Macdonald only a *happy guess*. Paley says, '*He discovers* who proves;' and Dr. Macdonald has not gone deeply into the investigation of the problem.

character. The name Nero is contained in the number 666. The mechanism of the problem is based upon one of the cabalistic artifices in use in Jewish hermeneutics, On the question of the date of the Apocalypse Dr. which consisted in calculating the numerical value Macdonald unhesitatingly pronounces for the early of the letters composing a word. this method, called date; and his remarks on this subject are weighty and ghematria, or geometrical, that is, mathematical, and powerful. He sees, what indeed is obvious enough, that used by the Jews in the exegesis of the Old Testament, the internal evidence settles the question beyond all has given much trouble to our learned men, and has controversy. led them into a maze of errors. All ancient and modern But Dr. Macdonald has failed, as so many expositors alphabets have been placed under contribution, and have failed, to find the true key to the Apocalypse. He all imaginable combinations of figures and letters have follows Moses Stuart closely in the interpretation of the been tried in turn. It has been made to yield almost all latter portion of the Revelation, and sees in the harlot the historical names of the past eighteen centuries,--city, not Jerusalem, but Rome. There is an inconsistency Titus Vespasian and Simon Gioras, Julian the Apostate in his statements respecting Babylon (the city on the and Genseric, Mohomet and Luther, Benedict IX. and Euphrates) which amounts to self- contradiction. At Louis XV., Napoleon I. and the Duke de Reichstadt,--page 138 he represents the literal Babylon as a large and it would not be difficult for any of us, on the same and populous city in the time of St. Peter, and quotes principles, to read in it one another's names. In truth, the with approval from J. D. Michaelis and D. F. Bacon to enigma was not so hard, though it has only been solved show that it had a large Jewish population and offered by exegesis in our own days. It was so little insoluble a most desirable field for the labours of that apostle. At that several contemporary scholars found the clue page 225, however, he says: 'The literal Babylon was no simultaneously, and without knowing anything of one more. The prophecies in regard to it uttered by Isaiah another's labours. The ghematria is a Hebrews ar. The had long since been fulfilled.' Both these statements number has to be deciphered by the Hebrew Alphabet: cannot be correct. We have the clearest evidence that in rsq nwrn reads "Nero Caesar":--the apostolic age Babylon was a deserted city. Probably 200 the province, Babylonia, is confounded with the city, Babylon.

'The most curious point is that there exists a very ancient reading which gives 616. This might be the work

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The following extracts are interesting and valuable:---

DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE

'The external evidence seems, on the whole, to be

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of comparatively little value in deciding the true date close of the miraculous or apostolic age. All who find be upon the argument from internal evidence. When it has been made to appear that Irenaeus says nothing written, and that Eusebius ascribes its authorship to that the remaining testimony of antiquity, conflicting as it is, or about evenly balanced between the earlier and and altar in it were still standing, we need no date from early antiquity, nor even from the hand of the author himself, to inform us that he wrote before that great a prophecy which contains at the same time the only historical even and prophetic epoch, the destruction of history or notice of the events by which it was fulfilled. Jerusalem.'---Pp. 171, 172.

The Two witnesses

(Rev. xi.)

'If we had a Christian history extant, as we have a Pagan one by Tacitus and a Jewish one by Josephus, giving an account of what occurred within that devoted city during that awful period of its history, then we might trace out more distinctly the prophesying of the two witnesses. The great body of Christians, warned by the signs given them by their Lord, according to ancient testimony, appear to have left Palestine on its invasion by the Romans But it was the will of God that a competent number of witnesses for Christ should remain to preach the Gospel to the very last moment to their deluded, miserable countrymen. It may have been part of their work to reiterate the prophecies respecting the destruction of the city, the temple, and commonwealth. During the time the Romans were to read down the Holy Land and the city, they were to prophecy. Their being clothed in sackcloth intimates the mourningful character of their mission. In their designation as the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks or lamps standing before God, there is an allusion to Zechariah iv., where these two symbols are interpreted of the two anointed ones, Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the prince, founder of the second temple. The olive-trees, fresh and vigorous, keep the lamps constantly supplied with oil. These witnesses, amidst the darkness which has settled round Jerusalem, give a steady and unfailing light. They possess the power of working miracles as wonderful as any of those performed by Moses and Elijah. What is here predicted must have been fulfilled before the

of the Apocalypse. The main reliance, it is clear, must here a prediction of the state of the church during the ascendancy of the Papacy, or at any period subsequent to the age of the apostles, are of course under the necessity respecting the time when the Book of Revelation was of explaining away all this language which attributes miraculous power to the witnesses. They were at length another John than the apostle, it is sufficiently evident to fall victims to the war, or to the same power that waged the war, and their bodies were to lie unburied three days and a half in the streets of the city where later date, is of little account in deciding the question. Christ was crucified. Their resurrection and ascension And when we open the book itself, and find inscribed to heaven must be interpreted literally; although, as on its very pages evidence that at the time it was written in the case of the miracles they performed, there is no Jewish enemies were still arrogant and active in the city historical record of the events themselves. If these two in which our Lord was crucified, and that the temple prophets were the only Christians in Jerusalem, as both were killed, there was no one to make a record or report in the case; and we have here therefore an example of The wave of ruin which swept over Jerusalem, and wafted them up to heaven, erased or prevented every human memento of their work of faith, their patience of hope, and labour of love. The prophecy that foretold them is their only history, or the only history of the part they were to take in the closing scenes of Jerusalem. We conclude, then, that these witnesses were two of those apostles who seem to be so strangely lost to history, or of whom no authentic traces can be discovered subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem. May not James the Less, or the second James (in distinction from the brother of John), commonly styled the Bishop of Jerusalem, have been one of them? Why should he not remain faithful at his post to the last? According to Hegesippus, a Jewish Christian historian, who wrote about the middle of the second century, his monument was still pointed out near the ruins of the temple. Hegesippus says that he was killed in the year 69, and represents the apostle as bearing powerful testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus, and pointing to His second coming in the clouds of heaven, up to the very moment of his death. There seems to be a peculiar fitness in these witnesses for Christ, men endowed with the highest supernatural gifts, standing to the last in the forsaken city, prophesying its doom, and lamenting over what was once so dear to God.---Pp. 161, 162.

Supplementary Note

Bishop Warburton on 'Our Lord's Prophecy on the Mount of Olives,' and on 'The Kingdom of Heaven.'

The following observations by the learned author of 'The Divine Legation' are in remarkable accord with the

opinions expressed in this work:---The author avails himself of this opportunity to 'The prophecy of Jesus concerning the approaching make a few observations on several points which have destruction of Jerusalem by Titus is conceived in such come under his notice since the first publication of this high and swelling terms, that not only the modern volume. interpreters, but the ancient likewise, have supposed Dollinger On "The Man of Sin" that our Lord interweaves into it a direct prediction of It is with great satisfaction that he finds himself His second coming to judgment. Hence arose a current in substantial agreement with the distinguished opinion in those times that the consummation of all ecclesiastical historian and theologian, Dr. Dollinger, of things was at hand; which hath afforded a handle to Munich, in his interpretation of St. Paul's prediction in 2 an infidel objection in these, insinuating that Jesus, in Thessalonians. (1) Dr. Dollinger distinctly identifies the order to keep His followers attached to His service, and "Man of Sin" with Nero, a conclusion now so generally patient under sufferings, flattered them with the near accepted by the highest authorities, that it may be approach of those rewards which completed all their regarded as a settled point. (2) He clearly distinguishes views and expectations. To which the defenders of religion have opposed this answer: That the distinction between the "Man of Sin" and "the Apostasy," so of short and long, in the duration of time, is lost in frequently confounded by the mass of interpreters. Dollinger shows that the former is a person, the latter a eternity; and with the Almighty, "a thousand years are heresy. (3) He recognizes "the Beast" of the Apocalypse but as yesterday," etc. as the Emperor, and therefore identical with the "Man 'But the principle both go upon is false; and if what of Sin." (4) The miracles wrought by the "Second Beast" hath been said be duly weighed, it will appear that this (the Beast from the earth) he regards as a representation prophecy doth not respect Christ's second coming to derived from our Lord's prophecy on the Mount of judgment, but His first; in the abolition of the Jewish polity and the Olives.

establishment of the Christian,---that kingdom of Christ "Magical and theurgic arts are inseparable from which commenced on the total ceasing of the Theocracy. Heathenism." The whole of Dr. Dollinger's observations on this For as God's reign over the Jews entirely ended with the subject are most important, but as they are too lengthy abolition of the temple service, so the reign of Christ, for quotation here, the reader is referred to the "First "in spirit and in truth," had then its first beginning. Age of the Church," vol. 2. pp. 79-96. It is only fair to This was the true establishment of Christianity, not that add that Dollinger seems to hold a personal Antichrist, effected by the conversion or donations of Constantine. and a twofold or typical fulfilment of prophecy. Till the Jewish law was abolished, over which the "Father" presided as King, the reign of the "Son" could The Babylon Of The Apocalypse not take place; because the sovereignty of Christ over The belief that Rome is the Babylon of the Apocalypse mankind was that very sovereignty of God over the is so firmly established in most minds, that nothing Jews transferred and more largely extended.

'This, therefore, being on of the most important to dislodge it. Yet some of the ablest critics long since eras in the economy of grace, and the most awful suspected that Babylon was a pseudonym of ancient revolution in all God's religious dispensations, we see Jerusalem. The illustrious Herder in his Commentary the elegance and propriety of the terms in question to denote so great an event, together with the destruction on the Book of Revelation affirms -"Rome was not in the circle of the prophet's vision, of Jerusalem, by which it was effected; for in the whole nor is Rome in coincidence with the symbols and prophetic language, the change and fall of principalities metaphors; but the resemblance to Jerusalem is as and powers, whether spiritual or civil, are signified by perfect as the case can be supposed to furnish" (p. 153). the shaking of heavens and earth, the darkening of the The well-known commentator, John David sun and moon, and the falling of the stars; as the rise Michaelis, shrewdly conjectured that Babylon is and establishment of new ones are by processions in identical with Jerusalem. Speaking of the place from the clouds of heaven, by the sound of trumpets, and the which the First Epistle of Peter was written, he says: assembling together of hosts and congregations?

Afterword

APPENDIX TO PART III

but the clearest evidence to the contrary will be able

"If I could only find a single authority for calling Jerusalem by the name of Babylon, I would rather

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have been the place; which was also, according to Cyril second wall) and inclose Gibeat Gareb, or the Leper's of Alexandria, meant by Isaiah when he is speaking of Babylon. For the contents of this Epistle are not so well suited to any time as to that soon after the Council of Jerusalem, whilst Peter continued in that city. It is not impossible that St. Peter might call Jerusalem by the name of Babylon after she had begun to persecute the Church; and the expression of the elected church at Babylon seems to imply a paradox which would be removed had Jerusalem itself been named. It is therefore not improbable that St. Peter might in an epistle make use of this figurative and opprobrious name to signify Jerusalem. . . . Add to this that St. Peter sends a salutation from Mark, and this Mark, who was also called John, was returned to Jerusalem, not long before the said Council (Acts 13:13) All circumstances thus concurring, and it being never more necessary to the Gentile converts that they should 'stand in the true Christ Church, Jerusalem. Mr. Neil enumerates the grace of God,' it appears to me, whilst I am writing, probable in the highest degree, that this Epistle was written at Jerusalem soon after the Council, i.e., in the Acra, Mount Gareb, and Mount Goath. year of Christ 49. . . . I am the less influenced by the testimony of the ancients to the contrary, as the matter depends not upon the historical question, whether St. Peter ever was at Rome, but upon the critical question, whether he calls Rome by the name of Babylon?"

Michaelis has placed this title in the margin -

"The First Epistle of St. Peter was written at Jerusalem at the time of the first council" (See Introd. Lect. to the "Sacred Books of the New Testament," by J. D. Michaelis, § 148).

Jerusalem A Seven-Hilled City

"great city" in the Apocalypse, as seated on seven city hills, is conclusive evidence that Rome is here intended. The reader will see how this point is dealt with in its proper place. The author has shown how Zullig enumerates seven hills or mountains in Jerusalem. no historical evidence of the fact." Herder also remarks -

"The seven heads of the Beast are said to be seven mountains; assuming the woman to be a city founded upon seven mountains. Such was the situation of Jerusalem." (Comm., Herder, p. 156)

As Herder does not stay to prove his assertion, it may be well to supplement it with evidence of a confirmatory kind. Dr. Lange, in his discussion respecting the site of Golgotha, observes -

follow Cappellus and Harduin who take Jerusalem to should in future times extend beyond the north wall (the Hill, and Gibeat Goath, or the Hill of Death (of roaring, groaning). The position of Gareb can correspond only with Under Bezetha, and the position of Goath only with Upper Bezetha where Golgotha rose. Both of these elevations were inclosed by Agrippa, as parts of the new city, and lay inside the third wall. From the context we learn that Gareb and Goath were unclean places, but, being measured in with the holy city, became sanctified. That the Goath hill of Jeremiah is identical with the Golgotha of the Evangelists, is more than probable. The wall of Agrippa was built around Bezetha by Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great" (Lange on Matt. 27:33).

> A sketch-plan of ancient Jerusalem, showing Mount Gareb and Mount Goath is given in "Palestine Explored," by the Rev. James Neil, M.A., formerly incumbent of seven hills on which the city was built, Mount Zion, Mount Ophel, Mount Moriah, Mount Bezetha, Mount

The Crucial Question

Doubtless most readers will shrink from the demand made upon their faith, when they are asked to believe that the predictions of our Lord in Matt. 24, and the kindred prophecy of St. Paul in 1 Thess. 4., had a veritable accomplishment. Many will regard it as an extravagance which refutes itself. Let them consider whether this demand is not made by the most express affirmations of Inspiration. These predictions are bounded by certain limits of time. The time is explicitly declared to fall within the period of the then existing generation. No It has been supposed that the description of the artifice of logic, no violence of interpretation, can evade or gainsay this undeniable fact. credible or incredible, reasonable or unreasonable, the authority of Scripture is committed to the affirmation. And why should it be thought incredible? The reply will be, "Because there is

This, however, is an assumption. It deserves consideration whether we have not all the evidence which the nature of the case admits. What evidence, for example, may be reasonably required that the most seemingly incredible event predicted in Matt. 24:31, and in 1 Thess. 4:17, commonly denominated "the rapture of the saints," actually took place? The principal, if not the only, portion that seems to come within the cognizance of human sense, is the removal of a great multitude "Jeremiah predicts (Jer. 31:36-40) that the city of the disciples of Christ from this earthly scene. We

facts of their corporate history, and even the closing might expect, therefore, that there should be some trace details in the biographies of their very greatest teachers in history of this sudden disappearance of so vast a are plunged in entire uncertainty. When, with the last body of believers. It surely must have made a blank in word in the Acts of the Apostles, we lose the graphic history; a failure, at the least, in the continuity of the and faithful guidance of St. Luke, the torch of Christian records of Christianity. Admitting that the predictions history is for a time abruptly quenched. We are left, as it do not require an absolute and universal removal of the were, to grope among the windings of the Catacombs. whole body of the faithful (for it is manifest that there Even the final labors of the life of St. Paul are only so far is a clear distinction made between the watchful and known as we may dimly infer from the casual allusions the unwatchful, the ready and the unready, and that as of the Pastoral Epistles. For the details of many years in many might be shut out of the kingdom as those who the life of St. Peter, we have nothing on which to rely, went in), yet the language of the prophecy certainly implies the sudden and simultaneous removal of a very except slight and vague allusions, floating rumors, and false impressions, created by the deliberate fictions of great number of the faithful. Is there, then, any vestige in heretical romance. history of such a blank? Most certainly there is, and just "It is probable that this silence is in itself the result such an indication as we might expect. A silence which of the terrible scenes in which the apostles perished. It is expressive. Silence where, a moment before, all was was indispensable to the safety of the whole community life and activity. The ecclesiastical historian will tell you that the books of the Christians, when given up by that the light suddenly fails him. The Christian Church of Jerusalem, of which an apostle could say, "Thou the unhappy weakness of 'traditores,' or discovered by the keen malignity of informers, should contain no seest, brother, how many myriads there are among the Jews which have believed," suddenly dwindles into two compromising matter. But how would it have been possible for St. Luke to write in a manner otherwise wretched sects of Ebionites and Nazarenes. Where are than compromising, if he had detailed the horrors of the many myriads of St. James? Where are the hundred the Neronian persecution? It is a reasonable conjecture and forty and four thousand" whom St. John saw, with that the sudden close of the Acts of the Apostles may the seal of God on their foreheads, and standing with have been due to the impossibility of speaking without the Lamb on the Mount Zion? Did they perish in the indignation and abhorrence of the Emperor and the siege of Jerusalem? Certainly not; for it is universally Government, which, between A.D. 64 and 68, sanctioned agreed that, forewarned by their Divine Master, they the infliction upon innocent men and women, of retired from the doomed city to a place of safety. Yet atrocities which excited the pity of the very Pagans. The they seem to disappear and leave no trace behind. Ask the ecclesiastical historian to put his finger on the spot Jew and the Christians who entered on such themes, where the records of early Christianity are most obscure, could only do so under the disguise of a cryptograph, hiding his meaning from all but the initiated few, in and he will unhesitatingly point to the period when the such prophetic symbols as those of the Apocalypse. In Acts of the Apostles end. Of this period the learned that book alone we are enabled to hear the cry of horror Neander says that, "We have no information, nor can which Nero's brutal cruelties wrung from Christian the total want of sources for this part of Church history hearts." ("The Early Days of Christianity," vol. 2. pp. 82, be at all surprising." And, again, he speaks of "the age immediately succeeding the Apostolic," of which we have 83) Still more vividly and forcibly, if possible, the case unfortunately so few authentic memorials ("Planting is put by the able reviewer of Renan's "St. Paul" in the and Training," chaps. v. and x.). Hiudekoper, a Dutch theologian, in his work entitled, "Christ's Descent to the pages of "The Edinburgh Review," April, 1870 -"This volume ["The Life of St. Paul"] takes us

Under-world," remarks that through the whole period of, what we may call, the "On leaving the Apostolic age we almost lose sight ministry of the great apostle, embracing those allof the Christians in a historical chasm of sixty or eighty important fifteen or sixteen years (A.D. 45-61), during years." which his three missionary journeys were undertaken, Archdeacon Farrar more emphatically dwells upon the fact and probable cause of this unaccountable and the infant Church, with four bold strides, advanced from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Antioch to Ephesus, eclipse from Ephesus to Corinth, and from Corinth to Rome. "Although we are so fully acquainted with the Once arrived there, once securely planted in that central thoughts and feelings of the early Christians, yet the

APPENDIX TO PART III

APPENDIX TO PART III

and commanding position, strange to say, the Church, contemporary history; that there should be a solution of with all its dramatis personae, suddenly vanishes from continuity in the records of the Christian Church; that our view. The densest clouds of obscurity immediately the pen of St. Mark should be arrested in the midst of an gather round its history, which our eager curiosity in vain attempts to penetrate. It is gone, amid a wreath of smoke, as completely as when a train plunges into a tunnel. In the words of M. Renan - 'The arrival of His words had a veritable accomplishment; and all is St. Paul at Rome, owing to the decision taken by the author of the "Acts" to close his narrative at that point, marks for the history of the origin of Christianity the history of the time, and for the total obscuration of the commencement of a profound night, illuminated only Church, and all its greatest luminaries. Is it unreasonable by the lurid fire of Nero's horrible festivities, and by the to ask that the plainest declarations of the Lord Himself, lightning flash of the Apocalypse.' The causes of this sudden and confounding disappearance have not, to this day, been thoroughly investigated. . . . The history Lord and Master? Surely that robust faith is not utterly of St. Paul's life, and the history of the Apostolic age, together abruptly end. Black darkness falls upon the every man a liar." scene, and a grim and brooding silence - like the silence the 'day of the Lord' the awe-struck, breathless Church. No more books are written, no more messengers are sent, the very voice of tradition is still. One voice alone, the New Testament. from amid the silence and the dread, breaks upon the straining ear; it is the Apocalyptic vengeance-cry from Patmos, 'Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen! Rejoice over her, thou heaven! and ye holy apostles and prophets! for God hath avenged you on her: she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.' " (Rev.18:20)

The True Solution

causes suggested in the preceding quotations furnish an adequate explanation of this singular phenomenon; or whether the solution of the problem is not to be found in the actual occurrence of the events predicted by our Lord and His apostles. There, in the written record of Inspiration, stand the ineffaceable words which foretell the speedy return of the Son of Man to judge the guilty to the support of a preconceived opinion. For when nation and avenge His own elect. His coming was indissolubly connected with that same generation. The attendant circumstances of His coming are set forth with marked precision. Everything points to a sudden, swift, far-reaching catastrophe, analogous to that which took place "in the days of Noah when the flood came, and took them all away," or in the days of Lot, when the tempest of wrath overwhelmed Sodom and Gomorrah. These are the very images used by our Lord to describe the suddenness and swiftness of His appearing. No wonder that there should be a "total blank" in

unfinished sentence; that St. Luke should abruptly break off his narrative of the life and labors of St. Paul. Grant that there is no failure in the predictions of Christ; that explained. There is an adequate cause for the otherwise unaccountable hiatus which occurs in the Christian and of His inspired witnesses should obtain a candid hearing, and a cordial belief, from all who own Him as extinct, which once could say, "Let God be true, and

This postscript may close with the impressive caution of impending storm - holds in hushed expectation of of a great critic and theologian of the last century, which, though it has special reference to the Apocalypse, is equally applicable to the whole prophetical portion of

"If it be objected that the prophecies in the Apocalypse are not yet fulfilled, that they are therefore not fully understood, and that hence arises the difference of opinion in respect to their meaning, I answer, that if the prophecies are not yet fulfilled, it is wholly impossible that the Apocalypse should be a Divine work; since the author expressly declares (Rev. 1:1) that the things which it contains 'must shortly come to pass.' Consequently, either a great part of them, I will not say It remains for the reader to consider, whether the all, must have been fulfilled, or the author's declaration, that they should shortly be completed, is not consistent with fact. It is true that to the Almighty a thousand years are but as one day, and one day as a thousand years; but if we therefore explain the term 'shortly,' as denoting a period longer than that which has elapsed since the Apocalypse was written, we sacrifice the love of truth the Deity condescends to communicate information to mankind, He will of course use such language as is intelligible to mankind; and not name a period short which all men consider as long, or the communication will be totally useless. Besides, in reference to God's eternity, not only seventeen hundred but seventeen thousand years are nothing. But the author of the Apocalypse himself has wholly precluded any such evasion, by explaining (Rev. 1:3) what he meant by the term 'shortly,' for he there says, 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy,

and keep those things which are written therein; for the 'Surely he HATH borne our griefs, and carried our time is at hand.' According, therefore, to the author's sorrows.' Amidst the many comings of Christ spoken own declaration, the Apocalypse contains prophecies of in the New Testament that which is spoken of as a with which the very persons to whom it was sent were second, must, we think, be personal, and thus similar immediately concerned. But if none of these prophecies to the first; and such too must be the meaning of 'his were designed to be completed till long after their appearing.' Though the author's theory is carried too death, those persons were not immediately concerned far, it has so much of truth in it, and throws so much with them, and the author would surely not have said new light upon obscure portions of the Scriptures, and that they were blessed in reading prophecies of which is accompanied with so much critical research and close the time was at hand, if those prophecies were not to be reasoning, that it can be injurious to none and may be fulfilled till after the lapse of many ages" (J. D. Michaelis, profitable to all." "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. 4. pp. 503, For a closer look at Spurgeon's Preterist statements, 504). please see : Commentary Excerpts: Charles H. Spurgeon "The Kingly Prophet foretold the time of the end: **AFTERWORD BY RUSSELL**

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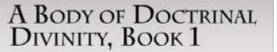
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"Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." It was before that generation had passed away that Jerusalem was besieged and destroyed. There

- was a sufficient interval for the full proclamation of the gospel by the apostles and evangelists of the early Christian Church, and for the gathering out of those who recognized the crucified Christ as their true Messiah. Then came the awful end, which the Saviour foresaw and foretold, and the prospect of which wrung from his lips and heart the sorrowful lament that followed his prophecy of the doom awaiting his guilty capital." (Commentary on Matthew, in loc.)

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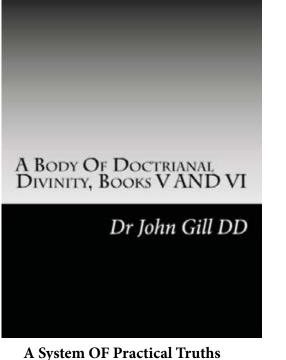
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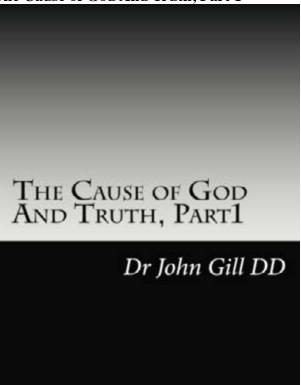
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This is volume 2 of this 4 part series and it should be known that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work. In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistical Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture. The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminian, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

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Romans 8:34. Romans 8:32. Romans 5:10. John 15:13. Chapter 4 OF EFFICACIOUS GRACE Ephesians 1:19, 20. 1 Corinthians 5:17. John 3:5. Ephesians 2:1. 1 Corinthians 2:14. 2 Corinthians 3:5. John 15:5. John 6:44. Acts 11:18. Acts 16:14. Jeremiah 31:18. Jeremiah 31:33. Ezekiel 11:36:26. Philippians 2:13. 1 Corinthians 4:7. Ephesians 2:8, 9. Chapter 5 OF THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE John 14:4 Psalm 51:5. Genesis 6:5. John 3:6. Romans 7:18, 19. Romans 8:7, 8. Chapter 6 OF PERSEVERANCE John 13:1. Iohn 17:12. Romans 11:29. Matthew 24:24. John 6:39, 40. Romans 11:2. Romans 8:38, 39. Ephesians 1:13, 14. 1 Peter 1:5. 1 John 2:19. 1 John 3:9. Isaiah 54:10. Isaiah 59:21. Hosea 2:19, 20. Jeremiah 32:40.

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252 John 14:16. John 10:28. 1 Corinthians 1:8, 9. Available as a Paperback Amazon.co.uk (click to view) £8.14 _____ Amazon.com (click to view) \$9.99 -----<u>CreateSpace eStore</u> (Direct) _____

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The Cause of God and Truth Part III:

THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH , PART III

Dr John Gill DD

The Doctirnes of Grace Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Authored by David Clarke CetEd List Price: \$9.99 8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm) Black & White on White paper 108 pages ISBN-13: 978-1544810591 (CreateSpace-Assigned) ISBN-10: 1544810598 BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic This book contains John Gill's answers to Dr Whitby objections to The Doctrines of Grace under the following heads. Chapter 1 OF REPROBATION Proverbs 16:4. John 12:39, 40.

1 Peter 2:8. 10 Iude 1:4. 1 Revelation 13:8.1 Chapter 2 OF ELECTION 1 Peter 2:9. 16 Romans 9:10-13. Colossians 3:12. Ephesians 1:4. Romans 8:28, 29. John 6:37. Acts 8:48. Romans 8:29, 30. 2 Timothy 2:19. Romans 5:19. Chapter 3 OF REDEMPTION Matthew 20:28. John 10:15. John 17:9. Romans 8:34 Romans 8:32. Romans 5:10. John 15:13. Chapter 4 OF EFFICACIOUS GRACE Ephesians 1:19, 20. 1 Corinthians 5:17. John 3:5. Ephesians 2:1. 1 Corinthians 2:14. 2 Corinthians 3:5. Iohn 15:5. John 6:44. Acts 11:18. Acts 16:14. Ieremiah 31:18. Ieremiah 31:33. Ezekiel 11:36:26. Philippians 2:13. 1 Corinthians 4:7. Ephesians 2:8, 9. Chapter 5 OF THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE John 14:4 Psalm 51:5. Genesis 6:5. Iohn 3:6. Romans 7:18, 19. Romans 8:7, 8.

Chapter 6 OF PERSEVERANCE John 13:1. John 17:12. Romans 11:29. Matthew 24:24. John 6:39, 40. Romans 11:2. Romans 8:38, 39. Ephesians 1:13, 14. 1 Peter 1:5. 1 John 2:19. 1 John 3:9.87 Isaiah 54:10. Isaiah 59:21. Hosea 2:19, 20. Ieremiah 32:40. John 14:16. John 10:28. 1 Corinthians 1:8, 9.

The following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time toy engage in such a work.

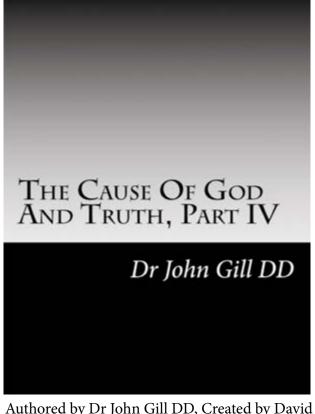
In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was Clarke CertEd published, in which are considered the several passages List Price: \$8.99 8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm) Black & White on White paper 126 pages ISBN-13: 978-1544848709 (CreateSpace-Assigned) ISBN-10: 1544848706 BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday It should be known by the reader, that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 The Second Part was published in the year 1736, or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one; and it was almost in the mouth of Arminians, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not reply made to answers and objections to them. ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined The Third Part was published in 1737. to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and

of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistical Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, evening's lecture. in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the

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The Cause Of God And Truth, Part IV



FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

254 seasonable time to engage in such a work.

published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the life and soul of Popery. Calvinistic Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in some alterations and improvements, is now published a just and proper light. These, and what are contained by request. in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

The Second Part was published in the year 1736, in which the several passages of Scripture in favour of special and distinguishing grace, and the arguments from them, are vindicated from the exceptions of the Arminian, and particularly from Dr. Whitby, and a reply made to answers and objections to them.

The Third Part was published in 1737, and is a confutation of the arguments from reason used by the Arminians, and particularly by Dr. Whitby, against the above doctrines; and a vindication of such as proceed on rational accounts in favour of them, in which it appears that they are no more disagreeable to right reason than to divine revelation; to the latter of which the greatest deference should be paid, though the Rationalists of our age too much neglect it, and have almost quitted it ; but to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.

In this part of the work is considered the agreement of the sentiments of Mr. Hobbes and the Stoic philosophers with those of the Calvinists, in which the difference between them is observed, and the calumny removed; to which is added, a Defence of the Objections to the Universal Scheme, taken from the prescience and the providence of God, and the case of the Heathens.

The Fourth Part was published in 1738, in which the sense of the ancient writers of the Christian Church, before the times of Austin, is given ; the importance and consequence of which is shown, and that the Arminians have very little reason to triumph on that account.

This work was published at a time when the nation was greatly alarmed with the growth of Popery, and several learned gentlemen were employed in preaching against some particular points of it; but the author of this work was of opinion, that the increase of Popery was greatly owing to the Pelagianism, Arminianism, and other supposed rational schemes men run into, contrary to divine revelation, This was the sense of our fathers in the last century, and therefore joined these and Popery

together in their religious grievances they were desirous In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was of having redressed; and indeed, instead of lopping off the branches of Popery, the axe should be laid to the root of the tree, Arminianism and Pelagianism, the very

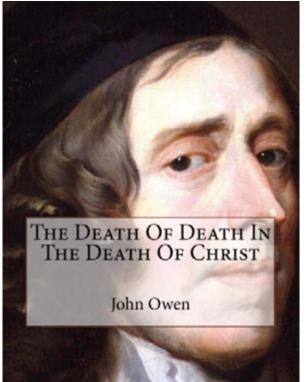
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The Death Of Death In The Death OF Christ



John Owen

List Price: \$9.99 8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm) Black & White on White paper 170 pages ISBN-13: 978-1544793733 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1544793731

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

The Death of Death in the Death of Christ is a is the new-but (so to speak) incidentally, for its first polemical work, designed to show, among other things, concern was always to give glory to God. It was always that the doctrine of universal redemption is unscriptural and essentially a proclamation of Divine sovereignty and destructive of the gospel. There are many, therefore, in mercy and judgment, a summons to bow down and to whom it is not likely to be of interest. Those who see worship the mighty Lord on whom man depends for all no need for doctrinal exactness and have no time for theological debates which show up divisions between so-called Evangelicals may well regret its reappearance. Some may find the very sound of Owen's thesis so old gospel was religious in a way that the new gospel is shocking that they will refuse to read his book at all; not. Whereas the chief aim of the old was to teach men so passionate a thing is prejudice, and so proud are to worship God, the concern of the new seems limited we of our theological shibboleths. But it is hoped that to making them feel better. The subject of the old gospel this reprint will find itself readers of a different spirit. was God and His ways with men; the subject of the new There are signs today of a new upsurge of interest in the is man and the help God gives him. There is a world theology of the Bible: a new readiness to test traditions, of difference. The whole perspective and emphasis of to search the Scriptures and to think through the faith. It gospel preaching has changed. is to those who share this readiness that Owen's treatise is offered, in the belief that it will help us in one of the Available as a Paperback most urgent tasks facing Evangelical Christendom Amazon.co.uk (click to view) today—the recovery of the gospel.

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

This last remark may cause some raising of eyebrows, but it seems to be warranted by the facts. There is no doubt that Evangelicalism today is in a state of perplexity and unsettlement. In such matters as the practice of evangelism, the teaching of holiness, the building up of local church life, the pastor's dealing with souls and the exercise of discipline, there is evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with things as they are and of equally widespread uncertainty as to the road ahead. This is a complex phenomenon, to which many factors have contributed; but, if we go to the root of the matter, we shall find that these perplexities are all ultimately due to our having lost our grip on the biblical gospel. Without realising it, we have during the past century bartered that gospel for a substitute product which, though it looks similar enough in points of detail, is as a whole a decidedly different thing. Hence our troubles; for the substitute product does not answer the ends for which the authentic gospel has in past days proved itself so mighty. The new gospel conspicuously fails to produce deep reverence, deep repentance, deep humility, a spirit of worship, a concern for the church. Why? We would suggest that the reason lies in its own character and content. It fails to make men God-centred in their thoughts and God-fearing in their hearts because this is not primarily what it is trying to do. One way of stating the difference between it and the old gospel is to say that it is too exclusively concerned to be "helpful" to man-to bring peace, comfort, happiness, satisfaction-and too little concerned to glorify God. The old gospel was "helpful," too-more so, indeed, than good, both in nature and in grace. Its centre of reference was unambiguously God. But in the new gospel the centre of reference is man. This is just to say that the Amazon.com (click to view) \$9.99

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The West And The Ouran

But though we, or an ungely than that which we for THE WEST THE AND QURAN



By David Clarke

Translation of The Quran

Authored by David Clarke, Authored with Abdullah Yusuf Ali

List Price: \$9.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

248 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1548914042 (CreateSpace-Assigned) ISBN-10: 1548914045

BISAC: Religion / Biblical Criticism & Interpretation / General

This Publication treats the subject of the Quran and the reason for presenting this is due to a rise in Islamic terrorism which has caused great concern to many in the West. So with the current massive influx of Muslim's migrating from the various parts of the world into Europe, Great Britain and the USA, it seems reasonable to discover the roots of Islam in order to deal with the problems that have occurred. Our Politicians seem clueless on how to deal with this enemy and when they are questioned they appear to know relatively little about Muhammad and his teaching. One of our greatest Prime-ministers in Britain William Gladstone declared the Quran an "Accursed book" and once held a copy of

Muhammad's Quran up in Parliament, declaring: "So long as there is this book there will be no peace in the world".

Winston Churchill was one of the greatest leaders of the 20th Century, who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during World War II and again from 1951 to 1955.

As an officer of the British Army in 1897 and 1898, he fought against a Pashtun tribe in the north west frontier of British India and also at the Battle of Omdurman in Sudan. In both of those conflicts, he had eye-opening encounters with Muslims. These incidents allowed his keen powers of observation and always-fluid pen to weigh in on the subject of Islamic society.

While these words were written when he was only 25-years-old (in 1899), they serve as a prophetic warning to Western civilisation today.

"How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism (Islam) lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy."

Churchill apparently witnessed the same phenomenon in several places he visited. "The effects are apparent in many countries: improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live."

He saw the temporal and the eternal tainted by their belief system. "A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement, the next of its dignity and sanctity," he wrote.

The second-class status of women also grated at the young officer. "The fact that in Mohammedan law every woman must belong to some man as his absolute property, either as a child, a wife, or a concubine, must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men," he noted.

"Individual Muslims may show splendid qualities, but the influence of the religion paralyses the social development of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world."

Well before the birth of modern Israel, its terror tactics and drive for world domination were felt. "Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is a militant and proselytising faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step, and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science, the science against which it (Islam)

 FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

 has vainly struggled, the civilisation of modern Europe
 The Even
might fall, as fell the civilisation of ancient Rome."

With the influx of Muslim people from the various parts of the continent along with their culture all of which is shaped by the teachings of Muhammad in the Ouran.

Some objections and Observations are as follows: Islam means submission

Islam does not mean peace

Multiculturalism is a failure.

Islam denies the natural rights of women

An Objection Halal Meat

An Objection To Shari-ah Law

Objects to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

An objection to Jihad which seeks over throw Western culture through education, Social activity, political activation and Law.

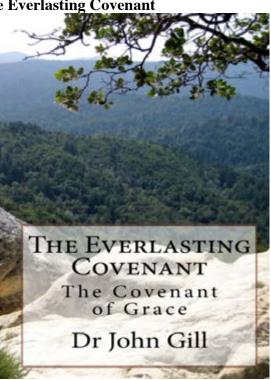
For this reason, this publication is made available for education purposes. With this prayer that God may grant us all wisdom as to how we may respond to the rise and threat of Islam.

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The Everlasting Covenant



The Covenant of Grace Authored by Dr John Gill. List Price: \$9.98 5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm) Black & White on White paper 188 pages ISBN-13: 978-1535011020 (CreateSpace-Assigned) ISBN-10: 1535011025 BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic

This book treats the subject of the Everlasting Covenant of grace. A covenant made between the three Persons Father, Son and Holy Ghost, before the world began. That has been gradually revealed by means of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant as declared by the Lord Jesus and His Apostles. It is by this covenant the whole Israel of God are saved.

Dr. John Gill (23 November 1697 - 14 October 1771) was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued selfstudy in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life. He is the only person to write a commentary on each very of the bible and after its completion wrote his Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity from which this subject The Everlasting Covenant is an extract.

Particular Baptists with a view to promote the cause of to Christ and turned their lives around. God and truth and to encourage all to read and study the scriptures for themselves. A knowledge of this in 1970 and that of Michael's conversion, 1999 some 30 subject will enable one to be free from the pitfalls of years later. Arminianism

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2nd Edition

BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS 2ND EDITION

David Clarke

Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert. List Price: \$13.99 5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm) Black & White on White paper 356 pages ISBN-13: 978-1519553287 (CreateSpace-Assigned) ISBN-10: 1519553285 BISAC: Biography & Autobiography / Religious

This book tells the story and life of David Clarke in the form of an autobiography. It is no ordinary book in that David and his brother were both notorious criminals in the 60's, living in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, where they were MODs and were both sent to prison for and malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS This book has be republished by Bierton license. They were however both converted from crime

This story tells of David's conversion to Christianity

It tells of their time in HMP Canterbury Prison and David's time in HMP Wormwood Scrubs and Dover Borstal. It also tells of David's criminal activity and the crimes he committed before his miraculous conversion from crime to Christ, during a bad experience on LSD, in 1970.

It tells how he became a Christian over night and how he learned to read in order to come to a fuller knowledge of the gospel. He learned to read through reading the bible and classical Christian literature. David tells of the events that led to him making a confession to the police about 24 crimes he had committed since leaving Dover Borstal in 1968 and of the court case where he was not sentenced. It tells how David's educated himself and went on to Higher education, and graduated with a Certificate in Education and how he went on to teach Electronics, for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education.

It tells of his life as a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church, which was a Gospel Standard cause, and how he was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel. David tells of the various difficulties that he faced once he discovered the many doctrinal errors amongst the various Christian groups he met and of the opposition that he experience when he sought to correct them. David recorded his experience and finding in his book "The Bierton Crisis" 1984, written to help others.

David's tells how his brother Michael was untouched by his conversion in 1970 and continued his flamboyant lifestyle ending up doing a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996.

David tells how Michael too was converted to Christianity through reading C.S. Lewis's book, "Mere Christianity", and him being convinced that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God. David then tells of his mission to the Philippines, to bring help and assistance to Michael, in 2001 and of their joint venture in helping in the rehabilitation of many former convicted criminals, not only in New Bilibid Prison but other Jails in the Philippines.

David tells how he felt compelled to write this story in his book, "Converted On LSD Trip". once he got news of his brothers arrest, in the Philippines, via ITN Television news broadcast, in 1995. This book was

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS published when he got news of his brothers conversion The Bier from crime to Christ in 1999, which was after serving 5 years of his 16 year sentence.

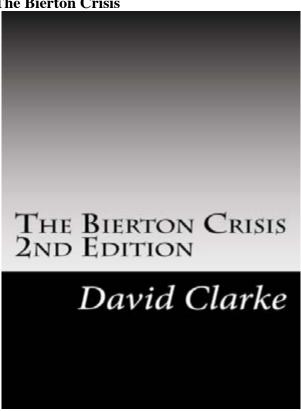
This story is told in their joint book, "Trojan Warriors", that contains the testimonies of 66 notorious criminals who too had turned there lives around, from crime to Christ, 22 of which testimonies are men on Death Row.

David say he believes his story could be of great help to any one seeking to follow the Lord Jesus Christ but sadly Michael died in New Bilibid Prison of tuberculosis, in 2005 before their vision of bringing help to many was realized.

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The Bierton Crisis



2nd Edition: A Testimony of David Clarke Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert.E List Price: \$10.99 5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm) Black & White on White paper 244 pages ISBN-13: 978-1534701717 (CreateSpace-Assigned) ISBN-10: 1534701710 BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

The Bierton Crisis is the personal story of David Clarke a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church. He was also the church secretary and minister sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982. The Bierton Church was formed in 1831 and was a Gospel Standard cause who's rules of membership are such that only the church can terminate ones membership.

This tells of a crisis that took place in the church in 1984, which led to some members withdrawing support. David, the author, was one of the members who withdrew but the church did not terminate his membership as they wished him return.

This story tells in detail about those errors in doctrine and practices that had crept into the Bierton church and of the lengths taken to put matters right. David maintained and taught Particular Redemption and that the gospel was the rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses as some church members maintained.

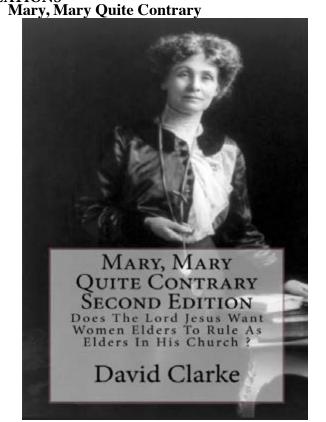
260 FURTHER PUBLICATIONS This story tells of the closure of the Bierton chapel Mary, M when David was on mission work in the Philippines in December 2002 and when the remaining church members died. It tells how David was encouraged by the church overseer to return to Bierton and re-open the chapel.

On David's return to the UK he learned a newly unelected set of trustees had take over the responsibility for the chapel and were seeking to sell it. The story tells how he was refused permission to re open or use the chapel and they sold it as a domestic dwelling, in 2006. These trustees held doctrinal views that opposed the Bierton church and they denied David's continued membership of the church in order to lay claim too and sell the chapel, using the money from the sale of the chapel for their own purposes.

David hopes that his testimony will promote the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set out in the doctrines of grace, especially Particular Redemption and the rule of life for the believer being the gospel of Christ, the royal law of liberty, and not the law of Moses as some reformed Calvinists teach, will be realized by the reader. His desire is that any who are called to preach the gospel should examine their own standing and ensure that they can derive from scripture the doctrines and practices they teach and advance and that they can derived the truths they teach from scripture alone and not from the traditions of men or their opinions however well they may be thought of.

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Second Edition: Does The Lord Jesus Want Women To Rule As Elders In His Church ?? Authored by Mr David Clarke Cert E List Price: \$8.99 5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm) Black & White on White paper 154 pages ISBN-13: 978-1514206812 (CreateSpace-Assigned) ISBN-10: 1514206811

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / General When treating the subject of women elders in the church we are not dealing with the affairs of a secular society and so it has nothing to do with women's rights, equality of sex or race in the world. This matter only relates to men and women in a Christian church. It is about the rules of the house of God, which is the church of the living God and rules for those who are members of the body of Christ and members of an heavenly county.

The Suffragettes

Emmeline Pankhurst 1858 -1928) was a Suffragette and worked very hard to bring equal rights for women to vote as men. In the year of her death all women over 21 gained the right to vote. The Suffragette movement brought about many changes for the better in a secular society but not so for women seeking to follow Christian principles. One of her famous quotes was, "Trust in God She shall provide". Terms which do not reflect Christian

beliefs. We know God will provide and He is not a she.

In the USA and the UK, women's political rights were brought into general political consciousness 446 pages by the suffragettes and since then there have been ISBN-13: 978-1508574989 (CreateSpace-Assigned) legal rights granted to the Lesbian, gay, bisexual and ISBN-10: 1508574987 transgender groups, same sex marriages, along with BISAC: Religion / Christian Life / General the development of the feminist movement and the Trojan Warriors is a true story of two brothers, appointment of persons from the LBGT community to Michael and David Clarke, who are brought up in responsible positions in the Church of England. All of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. They became criminals in the 60's and were sent to prison for this has caused conflict in the Christian community due to differences beliefs of right and wrong. malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a This book seeks to show what the bible has to say license, in 1967.

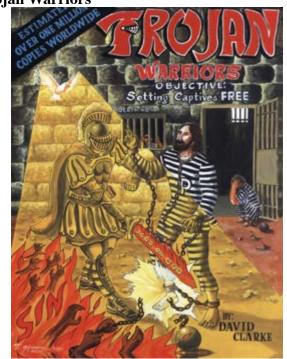
about the role of women in the church and family. Since They both turned from their lives of crimes in these rules are taught by the Apostles of Christ they are remarkable ways but some 25 years apart, and then they the word of God to us and we should obey. The secular worked together helping other prison inmates, on their own roads of reformation. world may differ and turn from the narrow path taught in scripture but we should follow the word of God, this David the younger brother became a Christian, is our wisdom. after a bad experience on LSD, in 1970, and then went

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Trojan Warriors



Setting Captives Free Authored by Mr David Clarke CertEd, Authored by Mr Michael J Clarke List Price: \$15.99

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

- 5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)
- Black & White on White paper

on to educate himself and then on to Higher Education. He became a baptist minister and taught electronics for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. Michael however remained untouched and continued his flamboyant life style ending up serving a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996, where he died of tuberculosis in 2005.

When David heard the news of his brothers arrest on an ITN television news bulletin he felt compelled to wrote their story. And then when he heard of his own brothers conversion from crime to Christ, after serving 5 year of his sentence, he published their story in his book, "Converted on LS Trip", and directed a mission of help to the Philippines to assist his brother. This book tells the story of this mission.

They then worked together with many former notorious criminals, who were inmates in New Bilibid Prison, who too had become Christians and turned their lives around. This help was to train them to become preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This book contains the 66 testimonies of some of these men who convicted former criminals, incarcerated in New Bilibid Prison. They are the, "Trojan Warriors", who had turned their lives around and from crime to Christ. Twenty two of these testimonies are men who are on Death Row scheduled to be executed by lethal injection.

Revelation 12 verse 11: And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the death.

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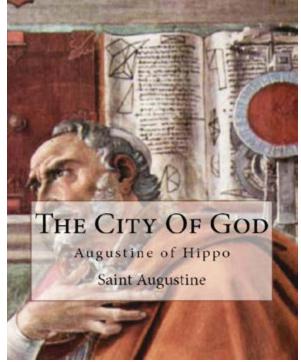
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The City Of God:



Augustine of Hippo Authored by Saint Augustine, Authored by David Clarke

List Price: \$10.28 8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm) Black & White on White paper 272 pages ISBN-13: 978-1547278985 (CreateSpace-Assigned) ISBN-10: 1547278986

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Soteriology

The City of God, is a book of Christian philosophy written in Latin by Augustine of Hippo in the early 5th century AD. The book was in response to allegations that Christianity brought about the decline of Rome and is considered one of Augustine's most important works.

The City of God is a cornerstone of Western thought, expounding on many profound questions of theology, such as the suffering of the righteous, the existence of evil, the conflict between free will and divine omniscience, and the doctrine of original sin.

Augustine is recognized as a saint in the Catholic

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS Church, the Eastern Christian Church, and the Anglican Communion and as a preeminent Doctor of the Church.

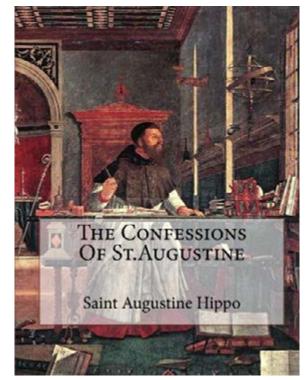
> Many Protestants, especially Calvinists and Lutherans, consider him to be one of the theological fathers of the Protestant Reformation due to his teachings on salvation and divine grace. Lutherans, and Martin Luther in particular, have held Augustine in preeminence (after the Bible and St. Paul). Luther himself was a member of the Order of the Augustinian Eremites (1505–1521).

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The Confessions Of St.Augustine by St. Augustine Of Hippo (Author),



This is an autobiography, a work, consisting of 13 books, by Saint Augustine of Hippo, written in Latin between AD 397 and 400. The work outlines Saint Augustine's sinful youth and his conversion to Christianity. Its original title was Confessions in Thirteen Books, and it was composed to be read out loud with each book being a complete unit. Confessions

is generally considered one of Augustine's most up the cause of God clearly demonstrating the the fall of important texts. It is widely seen as the first Western man and the inability of man to do good and defended autobiography ever written, and was an influential the truth of original sin. model for Christian writers throughout the Middle Ages. Available as a Paperback Professor Henry Chadwick wrote that Confessions will Amazon.com "always rank among the great masterpieces of western literature". Written after the legalization of Christianity, Amazon.co.uk Confessions dated from an era where martyrdom was no longer a threat to most Christians as was the case Issu.com (read on line) two centuries earlier. Instead, a Christian's struggles were usually internal. Confessions was written between The Bondage Of The Wil AD 397–398, suggesting self-justification as a possible motivation for the work. With the words "I wish to act in truth, making my confession both in my heart before you and in this book before the many who will read it" in Book X Chapter 1 Augustine both confesses his sins and glorifies God through humility in His grace, the two meanings that define "confessions," in order to reconcile his imperfections not onlyThis is an autobiography, a work, consisting of 13 books, by Saint Augustine of Hippo, written in Latin between AD 397 and 400. The work outlines Sais composed to be read out loud with each book being a complete unit. Confessions is THE BONDAGE generally considered one of Augustine's most important OF THE WILL texts. It is widely seen as the first Western autobiography On The Enslaved Will ever written, and was an influential model for Christian writers throughout the Middle Ages. Professor Henry Martin Luther Chadwick wrote that Confessions will "always rank among the great masterpieces of western literature". Written after the legalization of Christianity, Confessions dated from an era where martyrdom was no longer a threat to most Christians as was the case On The Enslaved Will two centuries earlier. Instead, a Christian's struggles Authored by Martin Luther DD were usually internal. Confessions was written between List Price: \$9.00 AD 397–398, suggesting self-justification as a possible 8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm) motivation for the work. With the words "I wish to act Black & White on White paper in truth, making my confession both in my heart before 150 pages you and in this book before the many who will read ISBN-13: 978-1547044207 it" in Book X Chapter 1 Augustine both confesses his ISBN-10: 1547044209 sins and glorifies God through humility in His grace, BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic the two meanings that define "confessions," in order to This work of Martin Luther is very relevant today as reconcile his imperfections not only to his critics but so many who profess a knowledge of God in the person also to God. Pelagius, a British monk, took exception to of the Lord Jesus Christ are unable to discern the error Augustines prayer "Grant what Thou commandest, and of so-called Free Will. So for any who find a problem command what Thou dost desire." Pelagius recoiled in with Calvinism and Arminianism it is important they horror at the idea that a divine gift (grace) is necessary grasp the issues discussed in this book. This was first to perform what God commands. For Pelagius and his published in 1525 and was Luther's reply to Desiderius followers responsibility always implies ability. If man Erasmus on Free Will, which had appeared in 1524 and has the moral responsibility to obey the law of God, he was his first public attack on Luther. The issue raised by must also have the moral ability to do it. Augustine took Erasmus was human beings, after the fall of Man are

and Erasmus is one of the earliest of the Reformation that the Revelation is about the fall of Jerusalem and over the issue of free will and predestination.

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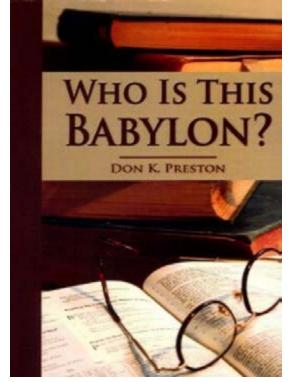
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Who Is This Babylon



by Don K. Preston (Author)

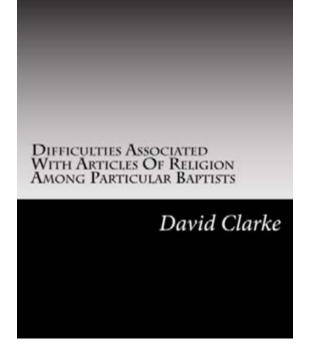
When the first edition of this work was introduced, it was called "ground breaking" and even "definitive" by scholars and laymen alike. The logical, analytical, and most of all textual approach to understand Revelation has helped thousands to better understand this enigmatic book. Preston's continued research has now resulted in this revised, enlarged, and vastly improved second edition. Here is a small sampling of what is added to the new version: 1.) A comparison between 1 Peter and Revelation. Everyone agrees that 1 Peter was written before A.D. 70. What is so important to realize is that Peter and John wrote to the same audiences. John predicted certain things to happen, but Peter, speaking of those identical things, said the things were present! This amounts to a very powerful argument in favor of the pre-A. D. 70 dating of the Apocalypse. 2.) The 144,000. Did you know that the the 144,000 out of

264 FURTHER PUBLICATIONS free to choose good or evil. The debate between Luther the 12 tribes comprise a veritable irrefutable argument was written before that event? This is one of the simplest, but powerful elements in the Revelation! 3.) A comparative study between the book of Lamentations, and the Apocalypse! You may have never thought of this relationship before, seemingly, few have. Yet, I produce 21 parallels between Jeremiah's historical lament over the fall of Jerusalem, and John's prophetic vision of the fall of Babylon. You will not find this material anywhere else! 4.) Special material on the millennium. Without doubt, the millennium is one of the most perplexing aspects of Revelation. Many use that reference as proof for the late date, and other speculations. However, I have added a lot of material on the millennium that proves conclusively that John was standing near the end of the millennium, and anticipating the end of the millennial period! The millennium is not the Christian Age, nor did the millennium begin in A. D. 70. The millennium ended in A.D. 70!

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Difficulties Associated with Articles of Religion Among Particular Baptists



Articles of Religion are important when dealing with matters of the Christian Religion, however problems occur when churches fail to recognize there is a growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ in any believer. When a person first believes in the Lord

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 Jesus Christ they cannot possibly have a comprehensive
 "Before
"Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of knowledge of a churches constitution or its articles Revelation" is a doctoral dissertation seeking to of religion, before solemnly subscribing to them. The demonstrate that Revelation was written prior to the author David Clarke has introduced the Doctrines of destruction of the Jewish Temple in AD 70 and that it Grace to Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan, situated was prophesying that event. It proves this early date for in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan and bearing in mind his Revelation by providing both internal evidence from own experience with articles of religion he has compiled within Revelation and external evidence from Church Bierton Particular Baptists Pakistan articles of religion history and tradition. It provides much exposition of from the first Bierton Particular Baptists of 1831,of the text of Revelation. A large part of the argument deals which he is the sole surviving member, the First London with the identity of the beast (666) as Nero Caesar, the Baptist Confession, 2nd edition 1646, and those of Dr first imperial persecutor of the Church. John Gill, in order to avoid some of the difficulties Available as a Paperback encounter by Particular Baptist during the later part of Amazon.com the 19 century and since. This booklet highlights the problem and suggests the Bierton Particular Baptists JOSEPHUS, The Wars Of The Jews Pakistan is as step in the right direction.

Isaiah 52:8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

ISBN-13: 978-1532953446 BISAC: Religion / Christianity / Baptist

Available as a Paperback

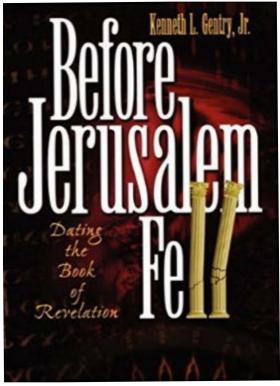
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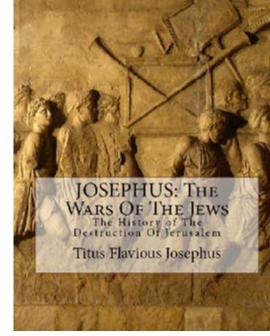
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Before Jerusalem Fell





The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem Authored by Titus Flavius Josephus, Designed by Translated by William Winston

ISBN-13: 978-1985029132 (CreateSpace-Assigned) ISBN-10: 1985029138

BISAC: Religion / Christianity / History / General

Josephus was an eye witness to those events that he records in this book, 'The Wars of The Jews', or 'The History of The Destruction Of Jerusalem'.

He records historic events that took place during and after the times of the New Testament scriptures.

The book of Revelation was a prophecy, given to Jesus Christ, and published by the Apostle John, about those things that were shortly to come to pass in his day.

From the internal evidence of the book Revelation was written before the Neuronic persecution, of 66 A.D.

266 FURTHER PUBLICATIONS and before the fall off Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, in 70. A.D. This is because the book records that the temple in Jerusalem was still standing at the time the book was written and not around 95 A.D. as Eusebius mistakenly says.

The historic events that Josephus records are remarkable as they give evidence to the fulfilment of Prophecy given by the Lord Jesus in his Olivet prophecy. In fact the book of Revelation was a prophecy of those events that were shortly to come to pass when Jesus spoke to John who wrote the Revelation. Jesus had informed his Apostles about future events and they lived in expectation of there fulfilment in their day.

Josephus gives the historic evidence of the fulfilment of those prophecies and that confirms scripture fulfilment.

We recommend the James Stuart Russell's book, 'The Parousia' as a very good introduction to this subject and advertised at the back of this book in our Further Publications.

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