Daniel - Commentaries by William Kelly

The Seventy Weeks: Daniel 9:24-27, Seventy Weeks, The: Daniel 9:24-27

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THERE is no prophecy of which the general scope is more certain than this of the Seventy Weeks; yet there are few on which so much debate has wrought, so much difference exists even among genuine believers. This is apt to create a certain measure of prejudice. So slow are our hearts to sure light from God, that the existence of a great variety of opinion, more especially if it be in those that love and value the truth, is apt to deter and turn aside even children of God. It ought not to be so; yet it is too often the fact. Yet to exclude part of the truth of God is not faith, but manifestly owing to prejudices or prepossessions; and particularly has it been so in the case of these Seventy Weeks.

But this at least is plain, that what God was here revealing to Daniel He was revealing through His servant to us. There is a snare too prevalent among Christians, now as ever, that they are on the lookout for something to bear upon their own circumstances. They have been apt to consider that the Church of God, being so great an object to God Himself, must therefore be always the foremost thought in prophecy.

But this does not follow, nor is it true in the Old Testament. The Church is not properly a subject of prophecy, but part of the mystery for which Scripture left room, and which is now revealed. Yet there may be some here who are under the influence of this opinion, and for their sake especially I may say that, besides salvation, there are two great subjects in the Bible; the one is the kingdom in the Old Testament, and the other is the Church in the New Testament. But nearer to God than the kingdom or the Church there is another object, and this is Christ, who is Saviour, as well as Head of the Church, and King not only of Israel but of the nations too. Hence the true key to understanding any part of Scripture, you will find, is to divest yourself as much as possible of any such external prepossession—in favor, for instance, of either the kingdom on the one hand or the Church on the other—as would hinder you from seeing that God is first of all thinking of Christ, whatever His special relation may be.

In this scene of the Old Testament we see the true center—Christ, but Christ there in view of the kingdom in its earthly aspect; that is, the kingdom of Messiah as the display of the divine power on earth, of which display Israel is the center. Indeed this is what gives us the real importance of either Israel or the Church; it is not because of anything intrinsically deserving in them, but wholly of Christ as connected with each. The moment we see that God is glorifying His Son, we understand that His object in heaven or earth must be Christ.

God, however, takes care that in the Old Testament there are words which could not be understood until the Church or Christianity came in. These words here and there received a blessed meaning when the assembly was introduced. And so with the Nov Testament: God takes care that none should think that the kingdom is done with. And this was of great importance. God had not abandoned the kingdom. Be it that the Church comes in; but even when it has been revealed fully, the kingdom must come also; so that neither when He was about to form the Church. had He dropped the kingdom, nor, on the other hand, when He has brought out all His glorious thoughts as to the Church, has He given up the kingdom. ‘The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.’

This helps us in the subject before us. If I approach it with the desire of seeing how it applies to me or the Church I am off the true ground. The translators seem to have turned aside the edge of the passage by trying to make its meaning bear on the Christian Church, whereas you will learn that this adds nothing to us, but rather takes away. Whatever is meant for the Church is given in the best possible way in the Scriptures which speak about the Church: everything from elsewhere is apt to weaken the truth.

I will use no further preface, but at once turn to that which is before us; and I think we shall see at a glance what God has in view in the Seventy Weeks.

But first of all I would call your attention to the error of regarding the vision as something which one cannot comprehend. The word is, ‘Understand the matter, and consider the vision.’ Further, had it been simply for Daniel’s personal understanding, it would not have been revealed to us. Daniel was inspired by the Holy Ghost to reveal the Seventy Weeks that we might not only read but with intelligence. We may, therefore, look to God tonight to give us such help by grace that we may comprehend this ‘great matter.’

And first of all you will notice that in the 24th verse you have the entire period. ‘Seventy weeks are determined’; which is to say, that from the mass of time God was pleased to cut out a certain portion for a special object; but whether the portion or portions set apart, or cut out, for the object in question—seventy weeks—were to be all in consecutive order, or whether there was to be a gap or breach between them, remains to be seen. But the first object conveyed is, ‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint a Holy of holies.’

Thus we have the scope of the vision; but we are not left to conjecture. ‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people.’ Whose people? Daniel’s people. The Church? Clearly not. They were the Jews, notoriously at that time in the utmost possible depression—so completely degraded from the grand position in which God had planted them in their earliest history, that God had at this time taken away His name from them. Gabriel does not say that seventy weeks are determined on ‘God’s people’ or on My people, as if speaking for Him, but on ‘thy people.’ They were only Daniel’s people now. Hosea had predicted this a long time before. He was the instrument in making it known to Israel, a most solemn fact for an Israelite that had the fear of God and felt the just delight that his nation had been singled out from all others to be the people of Jehovah and have Jehovah as their God. But God announced to them by His prophet that they were no longer to be His people, though grace will surely make them so once more and forever in the latter day (Hosea 1-3).

And now, you observe, they were in captivity. It is true the time was very nearly at hand when God declared that they should return from Babylon; but they were not yet taken from under His sentence. It was just before Jeremiah’s prophecy of seventy years was fulfilled. They

were on the eve of closing the seventy years of captivity in Babylon, and Gabriel was sent to announce the ‘Seventy Weeks’—that is to say, seventy weeks of years. Of course, these years were on that very same people; but on that people, be it noted, not yet taken from under God’s solemn ‘Lo-ammi.’ Whatever might be His glorious purposes in the future, and whatever His gracious ways with them for the present, still it is distinctly ‘thy’ people—Daniel’s people. God no longer owns them publicly as His people. No doubt there were believers among them, children of God like Daniel and others (as for instance, his three companions were of similar spirit, having received like precious faith with him); but the angel was not speaking of believers only, but about the Jews as a people. It is the Jews then who are called, not ‘My people,’ but ‘thy people’ —Daniel’s people. ‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city.’ Jerusalem, doubtless, is still called a holy city; but it is no longer as God’s own city: it is ‘thy’— Daniel’s—holy city. All this tends to make the great object of the Seventy Weeks perfectly plain. It is not Christianity or the Church that is contemplated, but Jerusalem—Daniel’s holy city, and Daniel’s people, the Jews.

The Seventy Weeks therefore, it will be seen from the very words with which they open, are bound up in the clearest possible manner with the Jewish people. ‘Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.’ Of the aim one cannot doubt when we look at these expressions as a whole; though we might perhaps have a question if we took up an isolated one. For instance, ‘to finish the transgression’ is, literally, to restrain it. But if one might have a little question about its meaning alone, when he adds, ‘to make an end of sins’ or, literally, to seal up sins, ‘and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,’ these words make the bearing perfectly plain. The seventy weeks were determined upon Daniel’s people and Daniel’s holy city to bring in the blessed time of which the prophet spoke—to fulfill the promises that God from the beginning held out to Israel. This, clearly, is the object; and accordingly we have it both in respect of sins, to dose them, and in respect of righteousness, to bring it in, and not only so but to bring it in everlastingly (that is, righteousness not only given but also secured forever). There could be no just question, therefore, that what Daniel was intended to gather, and what faith did gather, from Gabriel’s communication was this, that at the end of these seventy weeks of years the long-promised blessing would be made good to Israel.

It is plain however that we must look into the prophecy to see whether the Seventy Weeks were to be continuous; whether or not there intervene a breach, an interruption or postponement of some. But at any rate these Seventy Weeks, described as they are here—for this is all-important for the truth of the prophecy—must be filled up in all their details for the Jew and Jerusalem. I shall show the importance of this before I have done. Clearly the end of the seventieth week would close, according to the word of God, with the fullness of blessing, and righteous blessing, brought home to Daniel’s people and Daniel’s city. That is, it is not at all a question of saving souls and bringing them to heaven; it is not here a question, therefore, of the purposes of God in connection with Christ above. It is the earth, and, above all, the well-known city, Jerusalem, and the Jewish people. These are the objects of the prophecy. ‘And to seal up the vision and prophecy’ is another thing, too, confirmatory of what I have said. Prophecy, instead of being given out more, was to be sealed up; the whole thing was to be closed. It implies the completion of what prophets had been raised up to predict; henceforth it was to be sealed up, and a Holy of holies anointed; or, in other words, the unfailing power of the Spirit of God would make the sanctuary of the Lord to be in the fullest sense the most Holy. There is in the phrase a slight difference, which has been used, not only by unbelievers, but even by believers, to bring in confusion. But I do not dwell on small points now, wishing to develop the object of the prophecy in as clear and brief a manner as possible.

Let us examine further. The 24th verse sums up the general scope of the Seventy Weeks; but now we come to look at the parts into which the Seventy Weeks are broken up. ‘Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.’ Here again we have most abundant confirmation, if this were needed, from the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. It is not the new and heavenly city, but the old Jerusalem. The end, no doubt, would be Jerusalem brought under the new covenant and the Messiah—under the sway of the King, when the Lord will reign over Israel; but still it is Jerusalem.

‘Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.’ Surely this is a remarkable way of expressing it. The natural mode, it might seem to us, would be sixty-nine or threescore and nine; but not so: it is ‘seven weeks, and threescore-and-two-weeks.’ There is a design in this. God never says a word without a blessed reason—a wise and gracious motive; and so there is here. In thus naming the seven weeks there is a purpose, which appears in what follows; for we shall find that each of these two portions of time—the seven weeks, that is, forty-nine years, and then again the sixty-two weeks of years that follow—has a description that follows, which explains them, and shows the reason of the division, as well as the starting, point. ‘From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublous times.’ Here is the reason of naming the seven weeks. The rebuilding of Jerusalem, hindered as it might be, was an object of interest to God: His word both predicts and records it.

Sanballat, Tobiah, and their fellows, might show their scorn of the little walls that were rising up. Precious to God was the death of His saints—their very dust; even then His servants took pleasure in the stones of Jerusalem. So it will be in the day that is coming, when indeed it will be the full accomplishment of what is always before God. But even that which reminded Him, if I may so say, or was at any rate meant to remind His people, that God had purposes of good for His degraded and long guilty Israel—that God would yet appear for them, and rear up Jerusalem to far more than pristine splendor—this was before God even then. It is full of interest, and, I think, an instructive thing for us, beloved friends, that God in a day of ruin takes special consideration of what is despised. Nay, I believe further, that what was lowly, and calculated to draw out the indignation of those that hated them, and the scorn of proud men against them, had a very special interest for God, and God reveals it here. We might have thought it not worthwhile to have spoken of such a thing in a book of prophecy; but God would give ample encouragement to the Jew in the midst of such adversaries. Was it not sweet to them to know that God had told it them beforehand? Were they then to be discouraged? Now the books of Ezra and of Nehemiah particularly throw beautiful light upon the facts which were the accomplishment of this word. There we find the street built again; there we find the details of the wall. We know the different men that took part in building it. We know some women too; for these too were not wanting even for that work. Wherever the heart is in question, you do not find women absent; and so it was that God has taken care to record their names forever—those that took part in the building of that very wall, and occupied those very streets in these troubling times. In short, then, we see these seven weeks are singled out that God might give us not merely a history but a prediction of the troubles. The derision, the hatred, the enmity, the endeavors to destroy, the continual intrigues and plottings in and round the land, the efforts to stir up the court of Persia against them, the carelessness of the people, the faults of the princes, the unfaithfulness of the priests—all these things counter-worked, the bitterest and most humiliating of all their sorrows being found among themselves—Daniel’s people, not the Gentiles or even the Samaritans. Here then we have the prediction,

not only the history of it; so much does God think of His people in the day of small things. This, I think, explains the reason of the seven weeks.

But now for the sixty-two weeks. What makes up the sixty-two? Ah! here we come to something, I will not say externally grand, but I do say of all moment for God. and man; and what was that? The death of the Messiah—His cutting off. ‘After the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off.’ You will notice the peculiarity of the expression. It is not here said precisely, that He would be led as a lamb to the slaughter. It is not the point that He is to have our iniquities laid upon Him.

‘It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him.’ This is not the way in which it is now spoken of. The death of the Lord Jesus may be looked at in one of two way, either from God’s side, in the way of atonement, or from man’s side, in the way of rejection. It is in the latter point of view that Daniel was here inspired to predict it. ‘Messiah shall be cut off.’ It is the violence of His death from man’s hatred, and particularly too, as we know, because He had been cut off through the Jewish people—Daniel’s people. That is the very scene opened here. We find it elsewhere. ‘After the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.’

Now here I have to call attention to the warping, not to say the blinding, influence of prepossession. Our translators considered that the death of the Messiah could only be viewed as an atonement dare say we have known people of similar mind. We have known persons who could not take in the death of the Lord for anything except to atone for sins. That is, being preoccupied with self and the wants of self, they have forgotten that God comprises other views. For instance, God must use the death of the Lord Jesus as a proof of the wickedness of man. This is not atonement, although it be when man is thus guiltily rejecting and slaying the Messiah that God accomplishes atonement. But still, we may look at it on the side of man and man’s wickedness, or on the side of God, and God’s grace, which are two different things. In short, the true meaning of the clause is not that which our translators have given. The margin is much more correct— ‘and shall have nothing.’ I am not aware of any version which, on the whole, presents the true thought more clearly than this.

It has been a matter for a great deal of discussion to many, and particularly among scholars. And my experience, beloved friends—and I know a little about what these men have said and written—is this, that there are no men less to be trusted than mere scholars, because, being scholars, they are naturally apt to be proud of their scholarship; and whatever we are proud of is always the very thing in which God will humble us. There is the mistake that Christian people often make. They very often overvalue the knowledge of a little Greek or less Hebrew. Depend upon it, that to know the English Bible well is far better than to know somewhat of Greek or Hebrew; and I have rarely found that knowing a little of these languages has any other effect ordinarily than to give a good deal of conceit. It enables persons, of course, to talk about knotty points, especially to those that do not understand them; but I do not think that really profitable for either party. However, I will not expatiate upon this, although no doubt it has its practical lesson, because among active-minded Christians, such as those who are present, there is very often a strong desire to know accurately the things that God wrote. Now, if He give means and opportunity, I would not say a word to discourage; but I do advise you, before you begin, not to expect too much from it. Whatever may be the opportunities that you can look to have for learning, you are never likely to be great scholars. You may learn a little; but you must remember that as those of old who translated the Bible were men of real learning, so you are never likely, in this respect, to compare with them; nor can you hope to get by such study beyond what you have already got in the English Bible.

Is there no means then of getting further light? Certainly, and here we have a little help in the margin; for God takes care, in His grace, to raise up persons who, perhaps, spend a great deal of a long, laborious, and uninterrupted life in many of these pursuits; but even this would enable them, you may depend upon it, only to speak with considerable moderation. I think you will find that persons who know most are apt to speak most moderately. They are diffident, after all, as to their own judgment; and although they would give it where it is called for, they would not pronounce so dogmatically as a learner. Through such helps God corrects mistakes for His people.

I say then that the margin here gives the scope, in my opinion, more exactly; for it is not a question at all of the Messiah not being cut off for Himself. The thought would thus be that He was cut off for other people. This is the implication, as it seems to me, of our version— ‘but not for himself.’ He was cut off for our sins. He suffered in atonement for our iniquities. Thus they only viewed the death of Christ in the light of expiation. But not so. The meaning is, that Messiah should be cut off and have nothing; that is, His inheritance is completely gone, His people refusing Him, His land not possessed, His kingdom denied, everything that belonged to Messiah taken away from Him. It was not only that Christ met with a violent death, but there was no repentance on the part of the people afterward. Their cry was, ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’ Was this atoning blood? or was it not the expression of utter unbelief and the occasion of divine judgment? The Lord told them that He was about to leave their house desolate. He would not call it His Father’s house now but ‘their’ house, and they should not see Him henceforth till they should say, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah.’ And they will say so in the day that is coming; but this day is not yet come. Consequently, after the Lord was cut off on the cross, we see the Jewish people persisting in the same unbelief which put Him to that shameful death. They gave him up then to the hands of lawless menthe Romans, insisting on His crucifixion. And this is the point that the Spirit of God reveals here. He ‘shall be cut off, and shall have nothing.’ The literal meaning—though you must not suppose that the literal meaning is always the best way of rendering words—is this, ‘And it shall not be to him.’ This, of course, conveys no intelligible idea to most readers; but I presume that the meaning of the Hebrew idiom is, that nothing He could claim as His should belong to Him. He had now lost everything, as far as man was concerned. The Jews had risen up in rebellion against their own King, their own Messiah, the anointed Prince. They had put Him to death on the cross, and He had nothing. All the earthly hopes of Israel were buried in the grave of the Messiah. But it did not at all contradict what God shows elsewhere, that He will revive them in the end, and set them upon a solid basis that never can be shaken—that He will Himself see to it, and found it in pure grace upon that very cross, but the cross as used by God and not by man. Man used it to reject the Messiah. God will use it as a foundation for the kingdom in. power and glory by-and-by, just as He has made it the foundation for our salvation and bringing us to heaven. But this is not what is spoken of here. All the vision makes known is what concerns Daniel’s people and Daniel’s city. And how did the cutting off of Messiah affect them? In rejecting Him they lost their place and nation. It was not only that He had nothing of all His earthly kingdom, but that they lost everything along with Him; and this is shown more fully afterward.

‘And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city.’ Now, I ask, when did this come to pass? Clearly at the destruction of Jerusalem. We have seen that the cutting off of the Messiah was after the sixty-two weeks in addition to the seven (or sixty-nine weeks). Here is an interruption, and there could not be a more admirable place for marking the course of the seventy weeks as stopped. The death of the Messiah was a clean breach, not only between God and man, but very particularly between God and Daniel’s people and so-called holy city. Daniel’s people, Daniel’s holy city, rose up against their own Messiah, and crucify Him. Consequently, sixty-nine weeks having run out now, it was ‘after’ that period. He does not say exactly at the sixty-ninth, but afterward. That is, there is room left for a space, less or more: God does

not say how long or how short. All we can surely gather from prophecy is this: Messiah was not to be cut off till after the sixty-nine weeks. After that time, be the interval less or more Messiah was to be cut off, and He was to have nothing. And then the next thing of which we hear is an event that took place some forty years, we may say in a general way, afterward; namely, the destruction of Jerusalem.

Hence it is evident that the past siege has nothing to do with the line of these weeks. Their course is interrupted. The last link of the chain was broken after the Messiah's cutting off. The course of the sixty-nine weeks till then has been uninterrupted; but now the gap comes in. It is created by the death of Messiah; and the next thing that we hear of is, that the people of 'the prince that shall come shall destroy the city.' What people is here meant? The Roman people. Mark, he does not say that the prince shall come and destroy. He avoids saying so. The people of the future prince— 'the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy.' There is the most guarded care not to tell us that the prince came then, but only that the people of the coming prince would then come for their destined work of destruction. And this is so true that, although they had a prince at their head, the prince who then came up in command of the Romans was anxious not to destroy all. The great desire of Titus, as everybody who knows history must be aware, was to spare the temple; but, as the well-known historian of the Jews tells us, a Roman soldier flung a fire-brand into the temple, and the consequence was that, in spite of the efforts of the Roman commander, it was thoroughly consumed.

Thus, you see, Titus is not the prince that is meant here at all. It is a prince that was coming after the people came. His people were to destroy the city and the sanctuary, and so they did. The Romans came up, were manifestly used as the executors of God's vengeance against the Jews, and did destroy the city and the sanctuary, as the prophecy declares.

But there is a coming prince. A prince of whom? Of Israel? No; of the Romans. That prince has never yet come, and to this I call your particular attention. We have had the Messiah, the Prince; but He is the One that was cut off. Here we have a prince spoken of as coming after Messiah had come and been cut off. His people came and destroyed the city and the sanctuary; but he himself is not come. He was yet to be born. It is a future prince—a Roman prince; and this is the great link for which Satan is waiting. When the prince lifts up his head, Satan means to put forth his power in a way that he has never yet been able to do. He is coming, 'The people of the prince that shall come'—or of a prince that shall come— 'shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood.' The destruction of Jerusalem was not at all to be the end of Jerusalem's sorrows. 'The end thereof shall be with a flood,' just like water that does not come down in one sudden shower merely, but in an overwhelming flood. 'And unto the end war, desolatenesses, are determined.' That is, you have a long vista of things desolate as well as war, and this decreed, impending over Jerusalem after the destruction of it by the Romans.

Such has been the history of Jerusalem. What has it been up to the present day, but a city evidently and always under the abiding wrath of God! None but the enemies of God have been allowed to possess it. Nominal Christians, you know, took possession of it for a short time; but they were comparatively soon turned out, and the most violent enemies of Christianity, and especially of the Jews, as the rule, have followed. Even the nominal Christians hated the Jews. Thus Daniel's people have never had any except their bitterest enemies there, whether they might be Christians who attempted to found their supposed Christian kingdom, or Saracens, or Turks that hold Jerusalem up to the present moment. 'To the end of the war desolations are determined;' even as we have nothing but disaster threatened upon Jerusalem, so we also see how evidently this prophecy has nothing at all to do with the Church. It is Daniel's people, and Daniel's holy city.

But now we come to the last verse: 'And he shall confirm the covenant.' Who is he? Why, the last person just named of course. Who is that? 'The prince that shall come.' It is the Roman prince; and there is what has made the difficulty for most people in reading this prophecy, and made it impenetrable. They have actually confounded the Roman prince with the Messiah. They have not seen the Roman prince at all. They thought it must be Messiah that was to confirm the covenant. They had the new covenant in their minds, and therefore they could not understand. But where would be the good of a new covenant for one week? A covenant for the soul—a covenant for our sins—a covenant for the glory of God—how could this avail only for seven years? Where would be the sense of it? No; it is not Messiah. The Spirit of God here speaks of another prince, and a counter-prince—a prince that will ruin the people instead of loving them—a prince to be connected with the people that destroyed the city and sanctuary instead of building either up. Messiah is to build the temple; Messiah is to sit on the throne of His glory, and build it up another day. But this is to be an adversary of the Messiah—one of His great antagonists; for I suppose, not to speak of an antagonist opposed to both, that two will be at work on the same side; there will be a religious chief, and a political chief: a fact indeed of great importance for understanding, not only this Scripture, but prophecy in general. If the religious chief is to have his seat at Jerusalem, the political chief will have his seat at Rome (that is to say, 'the prince that shall come,' or the Roman prince). The prince of Jerusalem would not be described as either coming or making a covenant with his own people. This, of course, would be quite senseless. A reigning prince does not make a covenant with his OWN people. He makes laws, and he sees to the execution of his laws. But we can understand a league, treaty, or alliance, whatever the form of it may be, with another people. Thus every word confirms what I have said—that the person spoken of in the 27th verse does not mean the Messiah, who is the prince of Israel; nay, he does not mean the Antichrist, or the false prince of Israel who will be reigning by-and-by in Jerusalem; but the Roman prince, or 'the beast,' the prince that shall come in the closing crisis.

When he is come, then, he shall confirm a covenant with the many 'for one week.' This is the last week. Here again we see that the last week was severed from the chain of the sixty-nine. The first sixty-nine weeks ran without a break to the cutting off of Messiah. After the sixty-nine He was cut off. Then was the snapping of the connection of the last week from the chain. That week remains to be accomplished in due time; and as the first sixty-nine weeks ran out before Christ's death, the last week is occupied with the Roman antagonist of Christ—the future political chief of the Roman empire who covenants with the mass of Daniel's people, Daniel's holy city. But then the end of that seventieth week is that the Messiah comes in power and glory; and in spite of the efforts of those that help or hinder, and the excessive wickedness then to be found in Jerusalem, all the promises will be accomplished. The Seventy Weeks will be fulfilled, and divine blessing will follow.

Who can deny a great gap? and in the midst of that gap what has come in? Christianity, the calling of the Church. This it is fills up the space between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth; so that God is always actively working in His own grace and wisdom. Not a hint of this grace to the Gentiles appears here where the prophet speaks only of Messiah's rejection, and the consequent desolation of Jerusalem. Up to the sixty-ninth week it was a question of that poor people being delivered; but they trusted instead to the will of men and their own will to their utter ruin. They were slaves of Satan. The moment you get man's will you will always find Satan's service. Yet so it was. Satan hastened to take possession of that people too glad to throw off Jehovah, as it were, from making use of them as His goodly horse; and on the back of Judah vaulted Satan who thereon became their master and lord. Only there are greater abominations in store.

When and what will these greater abominations be? for such is not the case now. The Jews are what you may call decent people as yet. They are not worshipping stocks and stones. The unclean spirit that possessed them is gone. He left them, as our Lord intimated, after the Babylonish captivity, and he has staid away for many hundred years. The house is still empty, swept and garnished; but He told them that the unclean spirit shall return, and return not as he went out, but with seven spirits worse than himself. The full power of Satan would accompany the unclean spirit in taking once more possession of Judaism. This is to be in the seventieth week.

Let us look a little more into details. 'And he,' this prince, 'shall confirm a covenant.' It does not mean the covenant. There is no such word there as the definite article. It is corrected in the margin. This is another case in which the margin gives a sense better than the text. You cannot. always expect that; for sometimes the text is far better than the margin. But here we have two instances in this very prophecy where the margin is undoubtedly accurate. He shall confirm a covenant. Man is never to be trusted; and so, whatever the appearances may say, the Roman emperor is yet to make a covenant with the Jewish people to let them have their own religion to sanction its exercise in their own city, and in their own sanctuary. For this, I apprehend, is what the covenant was about. 'He shall make a strong covenant with the many.' 'The many' means the mass of the Jewish people; and the mass of the Jewish people are thus singled out for the reason that there will be some who will not trust the prince. There will be godly ones at this very time truly looking to the Lord. There will be a remnant, whose minds will turn towards Him and His coming; and the Lord will be working in them to draw forth that cry, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah.' They are looking for another prince; they are looking for Messiah the Prince; they are looking for Him whom their fathers pierced, whom they will acknowledge they pierced themselves when He appears in glory. And for this very reason, though they are only gradually rising, as it were, out of their long slumber of unbelief—for this reason, being born of God, they distrust the arm of flesh. They look for promotion neither to the north, nor to the east, nor to the west. They cry to Jehovah; and accordingly a covenant with the Roman prince does not satisfy them but the mass of the Jews, corrupt and about to apostatize. 'He shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week.' For the present, however, he engages to let the Jews have their own worship for the space of seven years.

'And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.' It is not Christ doing so by His death, which is the very perverse meaning tradition has put on this passage. Why, the cross had taken place many hundreds of years before—we may say nearly two thousand years before. We have seen in the beginning of the 26th verse 'Messiah shall be cut off, and shall have nothing;' and then followed disasters on the Jewish people and city and temple. When finally we plunge into the last week, it is the latter day, the end of the age; and this Roman prince comes forward, who makes a covenant with the mass of the Jews (that is, the unbelieving portion of them or the great majority of the nation); and he promises to let them have their own worship undisturbed, but in the midst he breaks it. Men cannot be trusted in divine things. Even when they agree together against our Lord Jesus, their witness is not true. Man never succeeds where it is a question. of God. The only hope for man is God Himself; and the only way in which God will make good his hopes is by his bowing to Christ Himself.

Now there was just the secret: Christ was a stone of stumbling, and the Jews would not have Him. By-and-by they fall not only under the willful king, the Antichrist in Jerusalem, but besides there will be the Roman prince—the revived imperial head—the great leader of the western powers in the day that is coming. Ere long he stops their worship, he will impose idolatry once more. 'He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease' —the general expression, you know, for the various offerings that the Jews presented to God. God will not be with their effort: it is not really in the current of God's ways. The time is not come. It is not a question of their offering sacrifice and oblation, but of their repenting and receiving Christ—of their finding out their sins, and looking to God about them. But no, they have trusted the prophet-king in Jerusalem, and they have trusted the emperor in Rome; and this is the result from them both: 'He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.'

One is sorry, where much is excellent in combating rationalism, to have to complain of the way in which a learned person here deserts his text, and mixes up without the least warrant the middle of verse 27 with the first clause of verse 26, to the total confusion of God's word. The most ancient commentary extant (Hippolytus, Rom. de Antichristo), which even at Rome, in 1772, they printed along with the true and lately-found Septuagintal version of Daniel, might have guarded him from an error as popular now-a-days and long-prevalent as it is grave and obvious. 'The entire cessation' (says Dr Pusey, Lectures on Daniel, p. 184) 'of the bloody sacrifices of the law has a twofold aspect—of mercy and of judgment. To those who have believed in Jesus, He caused the sacrifice and oblation of the law to cease by replacing the shadows, which portrayed His atoning sacrifice, by Himself, the substance, offering Himself once for all, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. To the Jews, who rejected Him, He caused sacrifice and oblation to cease by the destruction of the temple and city, and the dispersion of the people. On this, the death of the Messiah, follows the sentence of that utter destruction of the city and temple.' Quite true; but the cessation of sacrifice and oblation stands in a wholly distinct connection, and as evidently after the Roman destruction of the city, and in the midst of an entirely novel state of things, as the cutting off of Messiah is before that destruction. Is it not serious to bring in the cessation of the Jewish ritual where Scripture is silent, and to avoid speaking of it where Scripture expressly asserts it?

It is agreed that the central unmistakable prophecy lies in the connection of the destruction of the temple and city with their great sin, the cutting off of Messiah, and that the connection here is not of time, but of cause and effect. The Roman destruction of Jerusalem is carefully intimated to be within the gap after the sixty-nine weeks close, and before the seventieth begins. Some forty years, as we know, followed the sixty-ninth week, and the Romans came and took away both their place and nation. Ever since war, desolatenesses, have not been more surely decreed than accomplished.

But the seventieth week awaits its fulfillment; and it clearly supposes two immense changes still in the womb of the future, but as sure to be in the appointed hour, the end of this age, as every other word of the prediction. The Roman empire, or fourth beast, is to ascend out of the abyss, as St. John declares in the Revelation, to revive, after its long state of nonexistence, before it consummates its iniquity against the returning Lord Jesus as it did of old in His cross. 'The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and' [not 'yet is,' but] 'shall be present.'

This is one mighty change, pregnant with awful effects for mankind in general, and especially in these lands of the west; but there is to be another equally sure—the return of the Jews in unbelief into their own land by political means, and to the destruction of the mass when the Lord appears to the judgment of the beast and the false prophet, with all their adherents, and the deliverance of a godly remnant. The beast of Rev. 13 and 17 is the Roman empire, and the coming prince of the seventy weeks is none other than its last head, who is to confirm a covenant for the last week (or seven years) with the mass of the Jews, and break it in the midst, causing sacrifice and oblation to cease; when we see the last half-week of tribulation follow, or the three and a half years of Daniel and the Apocalypse.

The prophet does not say, but carefully avoids saying, what Dr Pusey makes him say (p. 188), that ‘in the last seven’ of the 490 years Messiah was to be cut off, or that in the midst of those seven He was to make sacrifice to cease; but to confirm a covenant, not with all, but with the many. It has been shown fully that not the foreign or Roman prince, but his people were to come, as they did, and waste city and sanctuary, with war and desolatenesses decreed to the end; and that this prince himself is to confirm covenant for seven years before this age concludes with the many of the Jews, but break covenant, and protect idols or abominations, and not without the guilty consent of the Jews; so that a desolator will come upon the desolate city, but a desolator quite as opposed to the Roman prince as to his associate, the false prophet-king in Jerusalem.

This alone squares with the grammatical context, with the scheme of prophecy in general, with a covenant for seven years (which most would think distinct enough from an everlasting one like Messiah’s), and with the evil character of ‘the many’ in our prophet. The reader can compare ‘the many,’ or mass, in Dan. 9:27, 11:33, 39, and 12:3, with chaps. 11:34, 44, and 12:2, 4, 10, where the article is absent and no such sense is intended. ‘The many’ cannot be viewed as the same with ‘many,’ but in contrast with the remnant who bow and taste the mercy of the Lord, who certainly are not to know sins ended, expiation for iniquity made, everlasting righteousness brought in, any more than vision and prophecy sealed up, or holy of holies anointed, till the seventy weeks are complete. The destruction and lasting desolation of the city and temple are not closing traits of the vision, but during a timeless gap after the sixty-ninth week and before the seventieth. Nor is there to be consolation for Daniel, or at least for his people as such, till all the weeks are ended. No doubt we Christians enter into the blessing, while the gap goes on for the Jew; and because we by grace believe, sin is brought to an end for us, and everlasting righteousness brought in—not a covenant for seven years, which no scripture connects with Christ. But for the Jew it is desolation, with worse to come, when the foreign prince of Rome confirms. covenant ‘for one week’ with them, and yet breaks, it off in the midst—a covenant which is plainly not the new covenant, but merely a human convention for seven years’ liberty to worship after the Jewish sort. Compare Dan. 7:25 for the Roman prince’s changing times and laws, and at this very epoch and for the remaining half-week. It is the Jewish laws and seasons, not the saints, which shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of times. It is the more to be regretted that one should find such mistaken interpretation here, especially as Dr Pusey does not deny, but seems to look for the Jews anew acquiring property in Jerusalem, ‘preparing the way probably for Antichrist’ (page 189, note).

But here we come to a very difficult phrase indeed. I am afraid the margin does not help us now; but I will endeavor to render a little aid. I have no doubt God has given special light for the moment out of His word; and you must remember that Christian people have been examining carefully our English version for the last 250 years since the translation was made. We must not be surprised therefore, if faults have been found in such a long period of examination, where such vast numbers study, men of prayer as well as of spiritual ability, some few mighty in the word of God.

The literal meaning of the clause is this: ‘Upon the wing of abominations a desolator.’ Here as often the literal way of rendering it gives but little notion of the sense; but the truth of it is that ‘wing’ is used figuratively. Now there are two ways in which a wing is thus used in Scripture. From the expanded wing, it may be either for the wider extension of anything or for protecting, as when the hen spreads her wing over her chickens. Thus the figure is frequently used as where the Lord speaks of the bird and her young, and so on. In this case, to spread a wing over signifies to protect the weak in the hour of danger or the like. It is thus used in a good sense, which is one use of the word wing; but there is another use, where it is rather the idea of overspreading from spreading out the wing. Here our translators considered that the word meant the overspreading of the desolations. They took the word ‘wing’ to indicate the abundant extent or spreading out of those abominations. I take it in the other sense—that the wing means protection, and therefore that the preposition means not ‘upon,’ but ‘because of,’ or ‘on account of;’ for the word may mean either the one or the other. If it be a material thing, it means ‘on’ or ‘over;’ but if it be a motive, it is rather ‘because,’ or ‘on account,’ of the protection of abominations. And everybody knows that ‘abomination’ means an idol; as ‘the abomination of Moab,’ or ‘the abomination of Ammon,’ means ‘the particular idol that each worshipped.’ On account of the protection of ‘abominations a desolator.’ This is the meaning of it—that God will raise up a desolating power to come down on the Jews, chastening them because of the protection given to idols. They had made, as the prophet Isaiah calls it, ‘a covenant with death and an agreement with hell:’ and he speaks of this very time, this very people, and this very circumstance. Isaiah 28 will furnish you with the most important commentary on, or further confirmation of, the expression.

Let us then consider what the meaning is that we have gathered from all. And on account of ‘the protection of idols;’ that is, because the Roman prince, along with his ally in Jerusalem, had not only interrupted the nominal worship of God among the Jews, but countenanced idolatry in their midst. The worship of God, begun in unbelief, had no value, no power, no acceptance. But still, after all, it was sincere; and it might be said to be, as far as it went, true in the way of form, if nothing more. But forms do not last; and men in the end find their level before God when they take up forms. They must then have reality, and when the forms are not filled with truth, they discard the forms for error, because error is more congenial to the heart of man in his natural state. Hence therefore they have determined to put an end to these forms of the worship of the true God. The emperor of Rome—along with the Antichrist his ally in Jerusalem, the great spiritual chief at that time, the religious head of the world—agrees to set up idols in the temple of Jerusalem. The latter finally sets himself up as an object of divine worship. This is the man of sin, man worshipped as God in the temple.

But Daniel does not give all these details. We only hear that in the midst of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease, and on account of the protection of idols [there shall be] a desolator. You may remember the same general truth elsewhere as ‘the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place.’ It is the same time and the very same place. Compare, with Matt. 24:15, Rev. 13:14, 15. Because of the protection (which I take to be the meaning of the word ‘wing’) given to these idols, there will be a desolator. A great scourge will be sent in the providence of God to chasten them. That desolator I hold to be what is called ‘the king of the north.’ He is the person that is referred to here; so that, in a few brief words, we have a reference and an insight to a great mass of facts in Scripture. A desolator is sent down; and you will find that in. Isaiah 28, to which I have called your attention already, where you have this ‘covenant of death and agreement with hell,’ you have an ‘overflowing scourge,’ the very personage that is called here a desolator.

It is a power from the north, the sovereign of Asia Minor acting under Russian influence. I do not say that it is Russia; but I do say that it is a power completely carrying out the designs of Russia, which is no less jealous of the western powers than anxious to get Jerusalem under its sway. And then they will think they have got a case, and that it is their bounden duty to interfere. Here is the emperor of the west supporting the king in Jerusalem, who is setting up idols and himself in the temple there. The emperor of Russia will not allow this, and he seizes the fact as an opportunity for carrying out his own ambitious designs. His care is not for God; but he makes this his occasion. Men must, of course,

always have some plausible excuse for aggrandizement; and this will be the plea. It seems a righteous one; and, having a ground of righteousness in it, God favors it at the beginning. As far as there is righteousness, God always goes so far with it, no matter who they are. Suppose even a child of God, but that what he does will not stand scrutiny? does not God chasten for that bit of unrighteousness? Always. It may be that other people take advantage of the unrighteousness. God will deal with them afterward; but He will chastise the righteous first. (Cf. 1 Peter 4).

Here then, where all is bad, God permits these men to show themselves out; and, first of all, He judges and scourges the infamous alliance between the people in Jerusalem and the emperor of the west. The desolator comes down from the north, takes Jerusalem in part, and leads into captivity a certain portion (Zech. 14). Excited with hopes, and filled with the highest expectations of success, he goes down into Egypt—as we are told in the last prophecy of this book—to punish the king of the south (that is, the king of Egypt) in that day. In the meanwhile Christ appears and destroys the antichrist. It is the day of the Lord and of His glory; and when the king of the north comes up again, it is not a question of the emperor of the west, for he is gone; it is not a question of the king of the Jews, for he is destroyed. The northern foe too meets the Highest, and the question is decided. He is cast into Tophet. How worthy of God when the day is come to judge the quick!

This therefore is the point, although it be not all entered into here; but you will see the general facts. ‘On account of the protection of idols [there shall be] a desolator until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate,’ that is, upon Jerusalem.

Thus, then, beloved friends, I have given as succinctly, and at the same time with as much clearness, as I was capable of, the general meaning of the prophecy. May the Lord help you, in reading His word, to be more and more strengthened in your souls, and may you be enabled also to see MORE THE CONNECTION WITH CHRIST, AND SO THE DEPTH, OF THE WORD OF GOD.

W. K.

The Seventy Weeks, Seventy Weeks, The: 3

THE vainest of delusions is to talk of man's rights in the presence of Christ's cross, which proclaims nothing but his wrongs. There all mankind stands convicted; and the Jew cannot cast a stone at the Gentile, as he himself had the greater sin. For the Jew took the lead in cutting off the Messiah by the hand of lawless men, as Peter preached to them at Pentecost. The cross of Christ denies the rights, and demonstrates the wrongs, of man. But God thereby wrought atonement and set forth Jesus a mercy seat through faith in His blood, not only for vindication of His passing over of sins that are past in the forbearance of God, but for declaration of His righteousness at this gospel time, in His being just and justifying the believer.

This however is the apostolic doctrine in Rom. 3:25, 26. The prophecy in Dan. 9:26 does not go beyond the sin of Messiah cut off, and its consequence in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans, as well as in the disastrous history of the Jewish people to this day. The cross of Christ accordingly has two sides, the judgment of man, and the grace of God. Man displayed therein his wickedness, the Jew his hatred, to the uttermost; as God thereby is justifying freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God raised from the dead and set at His own right hand in a glory incomparably higher than David's. Then is the church formed, from Jews and Gentiles, and by the Holy Spirit sent down united to the glorified Head on high as His one body. This was an entirely new thing, which the N. T. makes as plain as possible; but it is wholly distinct from what the prophecy discloses.

The Jew is blotted out meantime, but will as surely reappear as the object of divine dealing in the end of the age, as we see in ver. 27. Israel in the new age will have the first place on earth. She that was cast far off shall be made a strong nation, and the former or first dominion shall come to Zion.

But what was to happen as the judicial consequence of Messiah cut off? “The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” And so the Romans did, as the Lord warned in Matt. 22:7, and in Luke 19:42-44. It is not said, that a Roman prince should come, but the people of the coming prince. This prince was not Titus. He no doubt came with his people, his army; but here it is the people of the prince that shall come, the future imperial enemy of God, the Beast or fourth empire of that time revived, not the foe but the avowed friend of the apostate Jew and of the Antichrist reigning over Jerusalem. The people came then, but under another prince, for the destruction of the city and sanctuary; the prince here predicted is not come yet. They came then to destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof was indeed with a flood or overthrow, and even to the end was desolation determined.

The Jews tried to rebuild Jerusalem later, and were almost exterminated by the Emperor Hadrian. Since then what slaughter and persecution in almost every country under the sun! Sad to say, our own forefathers were guilty of selfishly and savagely ill-treating the Jew. Things no doubt are changed now, not because the world compassionates the Jew as God's ancient people suffering for their sins, but rather through a godless respect for the fancied rights of man. But this will fail, when God begins to move on their behalf, as we read in Isa. 18:6 and elsewhere. “And he shall confirm covenant with the many for one week.” Attention is called to the correct rendering, which when pointed out no scholar can fairly question. Who is the “he"? Not a few imagine it is the Lord Jesus. But where is the sense (I do not even ask, the spirituality) of such a view? How could Christ be referred to in “He shall confirm covenant with the many for one week” or seven years? Christ make a covenant as here “with the many” or mass of faithless Jews! for seven years! Short-lived princes may make short covenants with their fellows; but the idea is preposterous of Christ (Who had been “cut off,” and is therefore risen again) making a covenant for seven years! and with had people, as “the many” invariably means in Daniel, is yet more so! Theologians who do not understand the prophets may believe it, as they seem never able to rise above the weakest tradition.

I looked purposely at dear old Trapp, and found him no better than the rest. For he endorses the same delusion. You may perceive how much depends on the right consideration of the article, which is here doubly misrepresented. “Covenant” has got the article without warrant, and “many” has been stripped of it. What corresponds with our “the” is as important a factor in Hebrew as in other languages. To be brief then, let me repeat the true force: “And he shall confirm covenant for one week with the many.” How very different a thing from Christ's confirming the covenant! Are the wicked mass of the Jews the persons with whom the Lord made covenant? The context makes it all plain and sure.

The last person named is the far different and coming prince of the Roman people. He is already familiar to us in chap. 7; the same “little horn” who is to aggrandize himself by the uprooting three of the first horns, and then by his blasphemies he leads the entire empire to its destruction by the Most High, when he shall be given to the burning of fire. He it is that makes a covenant with the wicked Jews at the close, when the last or seventieth week receives its fulfillment. Isaiah seems to refer to this as “a covenant with death,” and “an agreement with hell” or Sheol: totally different from the gospel or even the law. No thoughtful mind should overlook a covenant expressly limited to seven years, any more than that the coming prince of Rome is the last personage named, or than the “many” with whom it is to be made.

Besides, this brief agreement is soon broken. How could it be if grace made it? The Roman prince breaks it. He allows their worship for three and a half years, the first half of the seventieth week; “and in the midst of the week he shall cause sacrifice and oblation to cease.” That is, he puts an end to the Jewish ritual, in order, as we learn explicitly from elsewhere, to bring an image of himself into the holy place, the abomination of desolation, as it is called.

You all perhaps know that “abomination” is the regular term for an idol. And here we read, “And for the wing (or protection) of abominations [is] one that maketh desolate.” I understand the meaning to be, that because of the protection given to abominations, or idols, by the Roman emperor and his ally in Jerusalem (the Antichrist), there shall be a desolator, a power quite opposed to both. He is in fact no other than the one whose career is given in the close of Dan. 8, the “little horn” of the East. He may pretend zeal for God in opposing the Antichrist and the Western chief; but he is just as wicked as they, and will meet with a no less terrible end in due time. This we shall see clearly in the close of Dan. 11. The Antichrist is to reign in the land; and he, too, is to set himself up as God in His temple, as we know from 2 Thess. 2, where the Roman prince sets up his image. This the king of the north resents and opposes. How the Lord deals with each will be shown in the next lecture. Here we are only told that “[there is, or shall be] a desolator, even until the consumption, and what is determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

The prophecy is by no means obscure. It is only when misapplied that men complain of difficulty. When we seize the Holy Spirit's aim in it, all flows with an easy and onward current. Without His guidance no scripture can be entered into or yield enjoyment and profit. May it be yours to search “the scriptures whether these things be so.”

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The prophecy is distinguished by several defined times, more marked than any other vision of scripture. There is no small variety in the character of the prophecies. God gives the very best of every kind; but here we have certain definite times. You may recall what the Lord said in the beginning of His ministry (Mark 1:15), “The time is fulfilled.” What time? Does He not allude to this vision of Daniel? Notoriously, as a matter of fact, “the people were in expectation,” and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ. The Magi in the East might not know the recent prophets; but they had preserved the remembrance of a vision seen of old by a Gentile seer, hired to curse Israel, yet compelled of God to bless. He had said, “I see Him, but not now, I behold Him, but not nigh. There shall come forth a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel,” &c. When God gave the star to these gazers, it was enough to send them to Jerusalem. Evidently they had conscience toward God, and when they saw the star they connected it with the ancient prophecy, and set out on their long and arduous journey to pay honor to the one born King of the Jews.

Certain it is that they were in earnest, and the Lord blessed them. Thus not only the Jews but also distant Gentiles were on the watch when the time arrived. It was more especially “fulfilled” when the Lord presented Himself to Israel as the Messiah and began to preach the kingdom of heaven as drawn nigh.

Here are the terms of this prophecy. “Seventy weeks are decreed (or apportioned) upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression and to make an end of sins, ant to make expiation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies (ver. 24).

Here the scope is laid down with precision. The period as a whole regards, not the gospel or the church, or even Israel in general, but the Jews as such: “Seventy weeks are apportioned (or decreed) upon thy people and upon thy holy city.” Nor is this all, but we have this result— “to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins,” &c. This cannot be for the Jews distinctively till they shall say, Blessed be He that cometh in the name of Jehovah. Then will they see the Messiah with the eye of faith. It will only be when the last week has run its course; but this, as will appear shortly, supposes the condemnation of this age, and the beginning of the age to come. No doubt we receive the blessing of the gospel now, while the Jews as a people are wrapped up in unbelief. We who know Christ gone on high after suffering on the cross do not wait for expiation till then; whereas the Jews have it only when the Great Priest comes forth from the heavenly sanctuary by-and-by, as Lev. 16 shows. Then for them will everlasting righteousness be brought in, vision and prophet be sealed up, and the holy of holies anointed; for us who walk by faith, not sight, God foresaw and bestowed “some better thing.” But the Jews will surely have their good portion at the close of the age.

The Seventy Weeks are beyond just question four hundred and ninety years; but we are prepared, not only for sections, but also for an interruption of indefinite length between the last two. This seems clearly conveyed by the language of the prophecy itself in verse 26: “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince are seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It shall be built again, street and moat, even in troublous times. And after the sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and its end shall be with an overflow, and unto the end war—the desolations determined” (vers. 25, 26).

The first section of seven weeks means a period of forty-nine years; and this was occupied with the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah. Then come the sixty-two weeks besides, which bring us down to Messiah expressly. Of course the starting-point from this period of sixty-nine weeks is itself important. It is the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, of which we

have the inspired account in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. There are two commands of the same king. The one was in the seventh year, the other in the twentieth, of Artaxerxes Longimanus. The one more particularly referred to the temple, and the other to the city. Thus a question has arisen, as to which it is well not to speak too confidently. It is, after all, an interval of less than fourteen years. Between the two the epoch must fall. It may help to observe that the beginning of ver. 26 gives a little latitude, as the text says, not “at” but “after the sixty-two weeks” with the first seven. This appears to leave room for the margin; and such care seems to be consistent with God's wisdom. After the sixty-two weeks then, we are told that Messiah would be received? The saddest reverse: “Messiah shall be cut off, and shall have nothing.”

The prophecy, therefore, is remarkable, not only for giving the time with a noteworthy care, but also for that momentous truth: the actual downfall of Judaism in the rejection of Christ. The latter clause is wretchedly mistaken in the Authorized version. The Revised, on the contrary, gives it right. It should not be, “but not for himself,” but “and shall have nothing.” There is no question on the ground of Hebrew grammar. It can mean only “and shall have nothing.” “But not for himself” is wholly unfounded. Shall I tell you how it came in? Because the Authorized Version wanted to make it sound Christian doctrine. But what had this to do with Gabriel's communication to Daniel? The only legitimate sense is “He shall be cut off and shall have nothing.” With His cutting off went the loss of His Messianic rights, His glory as set king on the holy hill of Zion. All that was His in connection with the Jewish people and Jerusalem passed away entirely for the time. And how true is all this? “They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek” (Mic. 5:1). Christ has none of the promised glory as Ruler in Israel, though “His goings forth are from of old, from the days of eternity.”

As far as the Jews are concerned in His blessings, He is as if He did not exist. It is blessedly true, as we Christians know, that God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory of a new kind, altogether outside of prophecy, not David's throne in Zion, but God's throne in heaven. How absurd to confound with this the throne of David! David never reigned in heaven, and Christ does not reign on earth; and that theologians confound the two wholly different things is an error which not only makes their scheme fabulous, but lowers His glory and our hope from heaven to earth. The proper character of Christianity is lost, and Israel are naturally defrauded of their peculiar prospects.

It is not scripture that is wrong, but only men's version and interpretation, made to suit a Judaized Christianity. Our Lord being rejected by the people would and could not reign over a rebellious people. Even when they wanted to force on Him a kingdom on earth, the Lord withdrew to the mountain and would have none of it. He was not to reign over the wicked, the unclean, the unbelieving. Men thought it excellent to have a king that could give them bread without working for it. And such is the socialist craving in another form to-day. Man would provide for the needy out of the means of the thrifty and industrious. Certainly the Jews desired then to make Jesus their king who had proved His power and willingness to feed them freely. There was no repentance any more than faith in that. Why were Jews without bread? Why, servants of the Gentiles? Repentance owns our sins, and faith cannot stop short of remission of sins from the God Who has sent His Son to save. Miracles are a sign to sinners that God concerns Himself compassionately with those who have departed from Him. Only in the Son of God is life, eternal life; and God is giving it in Him to all that believe; and it is He Who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, so that the blessing is complete.

Dan. 9

Let us now turn to the next chapter which contains Times and Seasons with their deeply interesting introduction. Why do we rise here? Because Christ is brought in, and Christ rejected. Notice further that here for the first time in these prophecies is Jerusalem expressly mentioned. There is also the sanctuary, and the One who sanctifies it and is infinitely higher, whatever unbelief may think or say. In order to have such a vision Daniel was again and more than ever on his face. It was a truly remarkable epoch too. Daniel was a student, among the other prophets, of Jeremiah, who is the weeping prophet of Israel. More than anyone else was he the witness of deep suffering, sorrow, and shame, and aware that deeper was coming. The consequence is seen in a whole book of his devoted to “Lamentations.” And Daniel had thorough communion with him, and knew through him that the time was come for “accomplishing the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years.” Instead of elation, as the natural impulse would have been in hailing such an auspicious event, he betook himself to humiliation before God. “And I set my face unto the Lord God to seek after prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes; and I prayed unto Jehovah my God, and made confession.” A holy man, he looked beneath the surface of circumstances, so pleasant to the Jew, of returning to his own land. No doubt, the Jew was entitled to have a deeper feeling than others. It was “Immanuel's land,” and one day to be made worthy of the name, as Israel will be of Jehovah's choice. But the realization is inseparable from faith in the Messiah, Who alone will make either land or people what promise intends them to be.

No Christian should envy such a prospect: alas! that one should speak of a feeling so unworthy in a believer's heart. Are we not blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ? Let us rejoice that Israel are yet to be blessed on earth, and to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.

But Daniel, knowing the moral state of the Jewish captives, poured out his confession in verses 4-19, and found no rest save in God's manifold mercies. He was right. The heart of the remnant was sadly wrong. Nor in fact did Daniel return. As things were, he justly thought that he might as well die in Babylon as in Jerusalem. As we hear later (Dan. 12:13), his hope was in God for the end, and meanwhile it was for him to rest, and stand in his lot at the end of the days. He was waiting, not for Cyrus' proclamation, but for the great trumpet to be blown, that shall gather the perishing in Assyria and the outcasts in Egypt, who shall worship Jehovah in the holy mountain at Jerusalem. Indeed it will be his to hear ere that a greater trumpet at Christ's coming, when “we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in the twinkling of an eye.”

Daniel the prophet did not slur over his own sins, holy as he was, but he also confessed the sins of all Israel. Yet there was but a small part of Israel in Babylon, a little remnant of two tribes. Where were the ten? They are still in the east; and as Psa. 83 calls them, “hidden ones,” to emerge in due time. What nonsense has been talked about them! The American Indians, the Nestorians, the Anglo-Saxons! Nobody as yet knows anything of them; but all the world shall learn at the right moment. This will begin when the Lord has performed His whole work upon mount Zion and upon Jerusalem.

I met Dr. Joseph Wolff many years ago, and a question was raised by a person of learning, how it was that Israel, as compared with the Jews, only came distinctly forward in the middle or third book of Psalms (73.-89). In order to solve the question, during the course of a long conversation, W. was asked if he did not recollect once meeting a family in Central Asia, who claimed to be, not Jews, but Israelites? He had an excellent memory but had forgotten it, though repeatedly related in his Journals and Travels. Their tradition was that, when Cyrus proclaimed liberty to return, some did not avail themselves of it, to escape some terrible evil into which those returning were to fall. Therefore did they prefer to remain dispersed, till Messiah could recall His people triumphantly into the land. It is not far to seek. For as Isaiah long ago had predicted the rejection and sufferings of Messiah through Israel's unbelief (Isa. 1; 53), so it is made known in this very chapter to our prophet; and Zechariah named it more than once (ch. 12:10, 13:6-7). This extreme enormity of sin befell the Jews or two tribes that went up from Babylon. God is always righteous in His dealings, and special sin brought special suffering. Therefore are the Jews to go through the tribulation without parallel at the end of this age. The same people who rejected the true Christ will receive the Anti-Christ. The ten tribes, not having so treated the Messiah, will take no part with Anti-Christ. For the Jews is reserved this last hour of Jacob's trouble in its intensest degree. Then God will bring the ten tribes from their hiding place. Apparently this is what will trouble the last king of the north (Dan. 11), as we shall see later.

But here Daniel brings all the people before God. Is this what you do about Christians? The Pope is busy sending out his emissaries in the vain effort to unite all Christendom. If it could be, what would be the effect? “A hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird,” and if any saints could be there, only the more a conglomerate of horrors. More and more do the professors of Christianity deny the spotless humanity of Christ, as others His deity, while we hear of His person divided now as of old. Most prevalent is the revolt against God's judgment of sin, as well as against the divine authority of scripture. These abominations are as rife at least among Romanists as among Protestants, Anglicans, &c. What sort of Christians are such? and what would be the value of their re-union?

The Jesuits of course are committed to this and every other ambitious project of the Papacy; but Babylon is doomed to fall. Strong is the Lord God that judgeth her. For all saints there is revealed “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him.” This is our sure re-union, but it will be under a heavenly banner, and to the one Name, Who is worthy of all glory. In scripture we see that when Israel broke up into two kingdoms, and idolatry was imposed to keep up the breach, the time came for the dispersion of the ten tribes among the idolatrous heathen. In their case no such thing as re-union can be until Christ comes. Is it otherwise with the church? Long has it been broken up through sin and idolatry; never will it be re-united in a holy way; and the deeper the plunge of Christendom is into unbelief and pride and indifference to grace, truth, and holiness, the less desirable is the gathering of such abominations into one. The only way that glorifies God now is to keep Christ's word, and not to deny His name. Pretentiousness is of all things the least becoming in God's sight; as humiliation for all saints is precious to Him.

So Daniel brings “all Israel” (vers. 7, 11, 20) before God—the people as a whole. This was faith and love; for in fact only a remnant of Judah and Benjamin was in Babylon. Let us weigh too the righteous feeling, as well as the faith in God's compassion that pervades His prayer, “We have sinned” (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15). It is a mere cheat if we confess only some of our sins, and perhaps not the greatest. God will have all out in order to forgiveness. And oh! the sin and folly of making confession of our sins to man. Grace alone removes guile and imparts integrity.

When Daniel was humbling himself; and while he yet spoke in prayer, fresh light is given through Gabriel, who told the prophet that he was now come to make him skilful of understanding. It lies on the surface that Daniel was encouraged to consider the matter and understand the vision; and as he was inspired to write it, the Jews had it before them, as we now have had it before us. By faith alone can we understand this scripture or any other.

Selections for Saints, Secret Revealed, The

“Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision.” (Dan. 2:19.)

Neither does he go directly to the king, nor even to his companions, to tell them that God has made known the dream to him. The first thing he does is to go directly to God. The God that had made known the secret is the One that Daniel at once owns. He is in the place of one that worships God. And allow me to say, that this is the grand object of all the revelations of God. Do not suppose it is a question of making known unto me my sin, and a Saviour meeting all the need of my soul. What God works by His Spirit in His saints is not merely that they should know that they are delivered from hell, or that they should walk as His children. There is a higher thing still. God makes His people worshippers of Himself, and if there is one thing in which God’s children fail more than another, it is in realizing their place as worshippers.

Extract From “Notes on Daniel” by William Kelly, p. 26, 27.

The Christian Shepherd: 1997, Whose Will?

“And the king shall do according to his [own] will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and... against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished” (Dan. 11:36).

“The king shall do according to his [own] will.” Believers are not sufficiently aware of what a fearful thing it is to be doers of our own will. This was the characteristic of sin in Adam resulting in the fall of the world. This king, perhaps the loftiest and most influential of Adam’s sons, does nothing worse than that which is “according to his [own] will.” May we not receive moral profit for ourselves from this history? Before one can exercise righteous rule, he must know what it is to be subject.

May we be deeply impressed to realize that “the king,” the Antichrist, is first stamped as one doing his own will. This ought to test our hearts as to how far we are seeking to do our own wills! As believers, how far under any circumstances are we doing or allowing anything that we would not wish another soul in this world to see especially those nearest to us? Alas! one knows from experience and observation the difficulty and danger in these things from one’s own heart. Yet there is nothing more contrary to that Christ whom we have learned.

We are sanctified “unto [the] obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” It is not only to the blessing in the sprinkling of the blood, but to the obedience of Jesus Christ to the same spirit and principle of obedience. (This is the meaning of the expression.) We are not like the Jews who were put under the law, and whose obedience had the character of obligation to do such and such things under penalty of death. We are already alive to God, conscious of the blessedness in which we stand, and awakened to see the beauty of the will of God, for His will it is which has saved and sanctified us. This is our calling and our practical work here below.

Christians have no other business, properly speaking, than to do the will of another. We have to do God’s will according to the character of obedience of Christ as sons delighting in the will of the Father. It does not matter what we may have to do. It may be one’s natural daily occupation. But do not make two individuals of yourself: one principle in your business and family and another for the church and worship of God. Never allow such a thought! We have Christ for everything and every day.

Christ is not a blessing for us merely when we meet together or are called to die. If we have Christ, we have Him forever, and from the first moment we are emancipated from doing our own will. This we learn is death, but it is gone now in Christ’s death. We are delivered, for we are alive and risen in Him. But what are we delivered for? To do the will of God. We are sanctified unto the obedience of Jesus Christ.

W. Kelly

Lectures on Daniel, Daniel 11:36-45, Remarks on

FROM the twenty-first verse we have had the account of the king of the north, known in profane history as Antiochus Epiphanes. The Spirit of God has entered into much fuller detail in speaking of his history, because his conduct, specially at the close, in meddling with the Jews, and their city, and their sanctuary, furnished the occasion for a type of the last king of the north, who will be found following in his predecessors' wake, save that his guilt will be incomparably graver in the sight of God—so flagrant, indeed, that His judgment can tarry no longer. This accounts for a circumstance that has often perplexed the students of Daniel's prophecy. We read of an abomination of desolation in the predicted account of Antiochus; (11: 31); and it has been commonly supposed that our Lord refers to this in Matt. 24:15. Those who looked for the future fulfillment of this abomination have sought to reconcile it with the facts, by the assumption that the Spirit of God must have branched out into the future personage that Antiochus represented. But in my judgment there is no need for anything so unnatural. Antiochus Epiphanes was only a type, and verse 31 does not go beyond his history, save as a foreshadowing.

In other words, to the end of verse 31 all is strictly historical—typical, of course, of the future, but nothing more. And therefore the answer to the difficulty that some find in our Lord's quoting, as they suppose Dan. 11:31, is really as plain as possible. He does not quote this verse. The passage he refers to is in chap. 12. In chap. 12:11, you will find an expression similar to this. “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.” There we have a defined date, which connects this last setting up of the desolating abomination with the deliverance our Lord predicts in Matt. 24., and Jacob's most fiery trial is that which just precedes his deliverance. Now there are more reasons than one for believing this passage in Dan. 12. to be what our Lord cites. Some of them depend upon considerations more fit for the study than for public ministry. But the sum of the matter is, that the expressions the Holy Ghost employs in chap. 11:31, and in chap. 12: 11, differ. In chap. 11: 31, it means the abomination of him that desolates, or of the desolater. Whereas, in chap. 12: 11 The true meaning is that which is given in our Lord's words—not the abomination of him that maketh desolate, but “the abomination of desolation;” which is, I suppose, what is meant in the English version by the words, “that maketh desolate.” Thus the two phrases are distinct. Although there is a resemblance between them, there is also a difference; and that difference is enough to show that our Lord spoke not of the abomination set up by Antiochus, but of that mentioned in chap. 12. Consequently, there is, in fact, no difficulty to be removed; because the desolation spoken of in chap. 11. is past—the desolation (chap. 12.) that our Lord draws attention to is future. That this is so will appear from other considerations also. Thus, in the verses that follow, we have a state of things distinct from what will be in the future tribulation of Israel. “Such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries; but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.” Now we find from the Revelation, and other parts of Scripture that speak about the future of Israel, that the godly remnant could hardly be said to do exploits. They will suffer; but I do not think that deeds of power thus characterize the blessed ones who are to pass through the dreadful crisis of the future. In the days of Antiochus, it was not so much suffering, but “being strong, and doing exploits” —exactly what was true of the Maccabees and others, who undoubtedly were not so much a baud of martyrs as a set of men who roused the spirit of Israel, and resisted the cruel and profane scourge of that day. Again, we read, “And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.” There is a long period, observe, of sorrow and trouble, that follows the outburst of courage and prowess against the desolater, and this is still continued in further verses. “Now, when they shall fall, they shalt be holpen with a little help; but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end; because it is yet for a time appointed” —clearly showing that this is before the time of the end. The Spirit of God is here referring to what has already taken place. And then we have a picture of terrible desolation that goes on, as it is said, “to the time of the end.” I infer, then, that the Spirit of God singles out the desolation that then befell the people of Israel, and the defiling of the sanctuary under Antiochus or his generals. This brought vividly out the circumstances of the last days; but along with them certain other circumstances were added, that ought not to be expected in those days. In other words, we arrive at what may be called the long and dreary blank that severs the past history of Israel, and the struggles in their land against neighboring aggressors, from the great crisis of the last days. This is where the true break occurs. Certain disasters were to go on “to the time of the end; because it is yet for a time appointed.” There is no place in the chapter where the interruption of the history: so well fits in as after verse 35.

But now, in verse 36, at once we have a person abruptly introduced into the scene. We are not told who he was, or where he came from; but the character that is given of him, the scene that he occupies, the history that the Spirit of God enters into in connection with him, all declare too plainly that it is the terrible king who will set himself up in the land of Israel in personal antagonism to the Messiah of Israel, the Lord Jesus. He it was of whom our Lord spoke when he said that if they refused Him who had come in His Father's name, they would receive another coming in his own name, Nor is this the only passage of Scripture, where this same false Christ, or rather Antichrist (for there is a difference between the terms), is described as “the king.” Not only have we different references to him under other epithets, but in the first great and comprehensive prophecy of Scripture, Isaiah, we have him introduced in an equally abrupt manner. In Isa. 30 we have an enemy of

Israel, called the Assyrian. Doubtless, looking at past history, Sennacherib was their great head in that day. But he only furnished the opportunity to the Spirit of God to bring out the future and final adversary of Israel. His fall is here brought before us. “For through the voice of the Lord, shall the Assyrian be beaten down who smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps, and in battles of shaking will He fight with it.” After the end of that victory there will be exceeding joy for Israel; instead of the train of sorrow which most victories bring, there follows unfeigned gladness before the Lord. “It shall be with tabrets and harps.” For the enemy there will be proportionate misery. Sometimes still more awful and unending than temporal destruction falls upon the proud foe. “For Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared: He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.” In our version there is a singular obscurity, remarked by another, in this verse. At first sight it might appear that the Assyrian and “the king” were the same person. The true rendering is “For the king also it is prepared” —that is, Tophet is prepared for the Assyrian, but besides, for THE KING also. Just as in our passage in Daniel, we have the Assyrian or king of the north on the one hand, and “the king” on the other. The same frightful end awaits them both. But I only refer to this now for the purpose of showing that the expression “the king” is not unprecedented in Scripture, and that it applies to a notorious person that the Jews were taught in prophecy to expect. God, in judicial retribution for their rejection of the true Christ, would give them up to receive the Antichrist. This is “the king.” He would arrogate to himself the royal rights of the true king, the Anointed of God. Tophet was prepared for the king of the north, and also for “the king.”

But this is not all. In Isa. 57 we have him introduced with similar abruptness. In chap. 55. are shown the moral qualities that God will produce in His people. In chapter 57. He shows us the fearfully iniquitous state then also found in Israel. And in that day God will no longer endure anything but reality. Forms of piety, covering uncleanness and ungodliness, will have passed away. There “the king” is suddenly introduced to us (v. 9). “Thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.” To have to do with him was to debase oneself unto hell. No wonder that for “the king also” Tophet was prepared. This shows that before the mind of Israel from the first there was one that the Spirit of God led them to expect to reign over the land in the last days, who is Called “the king.”

This at once furnishes a most important clue to Dan. 11. We are come to the time of the end. The bank is closed—the long dark night of Israel's dispersion is well-nigh over. The Jews are in the land. In what condition? Are they under Christ? Alas I there is another and a terrible scene that must first be enacted there. “The king” that we have read of is there, and the course he pursues is just what we might expect from the landmarks of the Holy Ghost. “The king shall do according to his will.” Ah! are any of us sufficiently aware what a fearful thing it is to be the doers of our own will? Here is the end of it. It was the first great characteristic of sin from the beginning. It is what Adam did, and the fall of the world was the immediate result. Here is one who at that day may seem to be the loftiest and most influential of Adam's sons. But he does according to his will.” And nothing worse. Are we to read such a history as this without moral profit to our own souls? To forget what an evil thing it is ever to be the doers of our own will? Let none suppose that, because they may be in a position to rule, they are therefore outside the danger. Alas! it is not so—no one thing so unfits a person for righteous rule as the inability to obey. It is good first to know what it is to be subject. Oh! may it strike deep into all our hearts, that “the king,” the Antichrist, is first stamped as one doing his own will. May it test us how far we are seeking ours! How far, under any circumstances, we are doing or allowing anything, that we could not wish every soul in this world to see—perhaps even those that are nearest to us. Alas! one knows the difficulty and danger in these things from one's own heart, from experience and observation. Yet there is no one thing more contrary to that Christ that we have learned. We are sanctified “unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” It is not only to the blessing, the sprinkling of the blood—but to the obedience of Jesus Christ—to the same spirit and principle of obedience; for that is the meaning of the expression. We are not like the Jews who were put under the law, and whose obedience had this character—bound to do such and such things under penalty of death. We are already alive unto God, conscious of the blessedness in which we stand, and awakened to see the beauty of the will of God, for His will it is which has saved and sanctified us. This is our calling, and our practical work here below. Christians have no other business, properly speaking, than to do the will of another. We have to do God's will according to the character of the obedience of Christ—as sons delighting in the will of our Father. It does not matter what we may have to do. It may be one's natural daily occupation. But do not make two individuals of yourselves—with one principle in your business or family, and another for the church and worship of God. Never allow such a thought. We have Christ for everything and every day. Christ is not a blessing for us merely when we meet together or are called to die: but if we have Christ, we have Him forever, and from the first moment we are emancipated from doing our own will. That we learn is death; but it is gone now in Christ's death. We are delivered, for we are alive in Him risen. But what are we delivered for? To do the will of God. We are sanctified unto the obedience of Jesus Christ.

As for “the king,” you have in him the awful principle of sin that has always been at work, but which here exceeds all bounds. The moment has come when God will remove the providential checks which up to that time, He will have put upon men, when Satan will be allowed to bring about all his plans; and that, too, in the very land whereon the eyes of God rest continually.

“The king shall do according to his own will; and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself” —not only above every man, but “above every god.” And it is not only that he takes his place above these so-called gods, but “he shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods.” And, strange to say, (if one did not know the perfect wisdom of God, and could not wait for His counsels to be matured,) in spite of his fearful profanity, “he shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.” There at once is a word that gives us the key to the passage. For some have found immense difficulties in this portion of the word of God. Many have transported into this verse the Pope of Rome, others Mahomet or Bonaparte. But here we find that this king is to prosper till the indignation be accomplished. What, or about whom? Has God indignation against His Church? Never. This is the time of the perfect patience of God—not of His indignation. With whom, then, is it connected? The word of God is perfectly plain. It is when dealing with Israel that God speaks of indignation I have already shown that fully from Isa. 5; 10; 14, and other passages, as it is entirely confirmed by the whole nature of the revelation here. For we read of one that would be the king of Israel—not in Constantinople or Rome, but in Palestine. And the time is a future outburst of indignation against Israel in the promised land. He (the false king) shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women. The expression, “the desire of women,” clearly, to my mind, refers to Christ—the one to whom all Jews were looking forward, and whose birth must have been above all things desired by Jewish women. It is plain from the connection that such is the true meaning. For it occurs between “the God of his fathers” (Jehovah) and any god.” Nothing is less likely than, if it had merely referred to natural relationships, that it would have been thus placed. It was, probably, from the wish to apply this to the pope that such an interpretation has found currency. But let us only understand that the prophecy concerns Israel and their land, and all is plain. “He shall not regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women.” Christ is distinguished from the God of his fathers, perhaps, because the Son was to become

incarnate. But Christ is regarded no more than the God of his fathers—an expression, by the way, which implies that he himself is a Jew. It is “the God of his fathers.” “For he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces.” It is not that he goes forward as Antiochus did, trying to force Jupiter Olympius upon the Jews; but he adopts a new superstition. This also disproves the reference to Antiochus, who was a Gentile. Here it is a Jew, who will take the place of the Christ, and who, of course, regards neither the true Christ nor Jehovah.

It is a self-exalting personage who opposes the true God, i.e., who equally sets aside the superstitions of men and the faith of God's people. Self-exaltation is his marked feature.

But that is not all. The antichrist will be infidel, but not merely infidel. He will have rejected the God of Israel, and the Messiah. Nor will he honor any of the gods of the Gentiles. But even this man, although he sets himself up as the true God upon the earth, will, for all that, have some one to whom he bows and causes others to bow along with himself. The human heart, even in antichrist, cannot do without an object of Idolatry. So, in ver. 38, there is this apparent inconsistency that comes out in the antichrist. “But in his estate shall he honor the God of forces.” He makes a god, as well as setting himself up to be God. “A god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.” It is entirely an invention of his own. More than that. He will divide the land among his adherents. “He shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.” There we have God's account of this king that will be found in Palestine in the last days. And it is plain that this last verse is a most conclusive proof that he is in Palestine reigning, It is “the land.” The Spirit of God never so speaks of any other country. It was that land which was nearest to God—a sort of center for all others.

Here we have a change in the history. “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him.” This confirms what was said before—that “the king” is found “at the time of the end.” Then “shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots and with horsemen, and with many ships.” The Spirit of God had long before spoken about the kings of the north and of the south. It was important to show that at the time of the end these powers will have successors, who will make their push at “the king” in the holy land. “The king of the south” —that is, Egypt—and “the king of the north” —that is, the holder of the present Syrian possessions of the Sultan. These two persons shall make a movement against “the king.” Not that they have a common policy: on the contrary, they seem bitter enemies one of another. But “the king” so exalts himself, arrogating to himself such pretensions in the holy land, that God permits the final catastrophe to arrive. The king of the south comes first, and then the king of the north, who appears to be the great military and naval leader of the east in those days. “The king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.” “shall enter also into the glorious land.” This can be no other land than that of Israel. The king is there. The northern king is a totally different person, an antagonist of “the king,” as well as the king of the south. The Spirit of God having introduced “the king,”

without telling us whence he came, now drops that personage without telling us what became of him. His frightful destiny shown us fully in other scriptures. But it was important to introduce him as an episode in chap. 11., for the purpose of showing the last great conflict between the kings of the north and of the south. Accordingly he drops “the king,” and the rest of the chapter is occupied with the king of the north. He not only enters the glorious land, but he goes on with conquests elsewhere. “Many countries shall be overthrown, but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom and Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon.” We find from Isa. 11 That this is a very notable fact. These borderers lived on the outskirts of the holy land. God so orders that if they escape the king of the north, they are to be ravaged by the triumphant Israelites. God will not permit that the early and bitter enemies of Israel should meet with their righteous retribution from the hands of any but the people whom they had so sought to oppose and injure. Accordingly, it would appear from Isaiah, that, a very little after, the Israelites execute God's judgment on them.

“He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries; and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.” From this we learn that the king of the north is not acting as a colleague with the king of the south. He proceeds down to the south, where, it would appear, (ver. 43,) there will be a great development of material prosperity, whether from the resources of the land itself, or more probably from its becoming the great emporium of western and eastern commerce in that part of the world. “But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him.” It is when he is down in the south, beyond Palestine, that he hears these rumors of perplexity in the north and east. He had come himself from the north, and was the conqueror over the east also; and now he has tidings from these quarters that agitate him. He hastens back from the land of Egypt and reaches Palestine. “And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas (that is between the Mediterranean and the Dead seas) in the glorious holy mountain: yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him.” This is the doom of the once victorious king of the north not of “the king” who was introduced by the way to show us the occasion of the final struggle between the north and south.

I would now desire to inquire whether there be not other scriptures of interest to connect with what we have just been looking at. In the close of Zechariah, we shall find information of great interest. Just a word or two first on the end of chap. 11. The Spirit of God there says, “Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock.” This I conceive is clearly the Antichrist— “the king.” For, looking at verse 16, we learn that this idol shepherd is in the land. “Lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit them that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that which is broken, nor feed that that standeth still; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces.” This utter selfishness, and self-exaltation, and spoiling the flock, instead of feeding it and carrying the lambs in his bosom, is in frightful contrast with Christ, the Good Shepherd. Then the false shepherd, Antichrist, is to be raised up in the land of Israel, and there he does not spare the flock of God. In chap. 12. we have another power. It is said, in verse 2, “Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.” There are nations gathering against Jerusalem. Just as in Dan. 11., the king of the north comes down and the king of the south. Nations assemble against Jerusalem while this idol shepherd is there. Jerusalem and the Jews are the object of attack. “And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.” Victory seems to incline to the assailants of Israel. But none can then harden themselves against them and prosper, because the Lord will have identified Himself with them in that day. “In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah;” and then we have the way in which the Lord will defend His people in that day. But what will make it still plainer is that which we read in chap. 14:2, “For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.” Here

we have additional disclosures that you would not have gathered from chap. 12. Thus we learn that “the city shall be taken and half of the city shall go forth into captivity;” evidently distinguishing this future siege from the past. When the Chaldeans took the city, they carried all away captive. When the Romans took it, all they spared were made prisoners of. Were we have another siege, in which half will be taken and the other half not. And if anything can more clearly mark off the future from the past, it is that the nations, having taken half of the city, will not pursue their victory further. Why? “Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.” Who can pretend that that has ever been accomplished? Who can say that the Lord has thus come and stood upon the Mount of Olives? How can you reconcile the past with such a statement as this? The Lord has never been on Jerusalem's soil as a conqueror since that day. Was it thus when Titus besieged it? Do you try to explain it away as merely a providential deliverance? But, I ask, were they delivered then? They were taken captive. Jerusalem to this day remains trodden down to the Gentiles, and must, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. But the passage indicates the times of the Gentiles closing in; the end of Gentile oppression. When this day is verified, and the Lord goes forth to fight against those nations, His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives. And as a mark that this is not to be allegorized, we find that the Spirit adds that the Mount of Olives is to split in twain—an outward physical proof that the Lord God has planted His feet there. “The Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley: and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.” “Ye shall flee to the valley of the mountain,” —that is, it will form a valley between the two— “for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal.... and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.” Now, then, there we find a most clear proof that there is a future siege of Jerusalem, and that this siege will be characterized by two attacks. The first attack will be successful against Israel; half the city will be taken, and all the miseries of a frightful siege will follow, as far as half the city is concerned; but the other half is reserved for the Lord, who will bring the third part through the fire. He will put Himself at their head, and crush all the nations of the earth that come together against Jerusalem. Thus the second attack will be to the ruin of those that make it. If we connect this with Daniel, how plain is the additional light that we get! The king of the north first comes down when the king of the south is pushing at “the king” in the holy land. There is a simultaneous assault made upon Israel, to destroy the people in the land, who, alas! deserve it. But in the midst of evil there will be a godly seed. God will employ these assailants to do the work of the executioner. The wicked will be taken away, and when God has purged those that are there, there will come another scene. The king of the north having been successful in his first attack, pursues his way towards Egypt, against the king of the south. He comes there, but tidings from the north and east trouble him.

Meanwhile, we may ask, what is become of “the king?” Has he been destroyed in the collision between the kings of the north and of the south, that had taken place in the land? No. What then is become of him How does he fall? By the brightness of the appearing of the Lord from heaven. He is reserved for the hand of God himself. He will be cast alive into a Lake of fire burning with brimstone. “For the king also it is prepared.” Thus we have the Old Testament and the New giving us one concurrent testimony. It will be by no ordinary doom of ruined man that he will perish. It is God departing from all His ordinary ways of dealing with the wicked. Men have been from time to time taken up in the grace of God from this world without passing through death; and there are men for whom it is destined of God to be sent down alive into hell—the terrible contrast of those who are alive when Christ comes, waiting to be taken up to heaven. It will be so with that wicked one, the idol shepherd—the king—and not with him only. The king of the north is a bolder enemy still. “The king” has set himself up in the land, corrupting and apostatizing the people of Israel. He has met with his doom. If only the slightest word of the judgment that had been executed in that land were to reach the king of the north, we can understand how he would be troubled. Whether that is the cause of his hasty return against Israel., or because the ten tribes were in movement, I do not pretend to say. We are not told. But he comes up to the holy land again; and this time, it is to fall under the immediate hand of God—not with the sword of a mighty man, nor with the sword of a mean man. No man, but God, will execute the vengeance upon him. Here we find the reason why there were two attacks. He has gone down, after his first assault on Jerusalem into the south and has pursued certain conquests there. Excited by the tidings referred to, he hastens to return, hoping now to have it all his own way. “Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle.”

But I must also ask you to look, before closing, at one or two other passages. Take Isa. 28 and 29., where you will find abundant confirmation of all that I have touched upon in this closing scene. In Isa. 28. you will observe that there are two great powers of evil connected with the land of that day—one “the king,” who is in relation with the people, and in the land; the other the king of the north, who comes down as an antagonistic power. We shall find both these in this chapter. First, Ephraim is mentioned, and the Lord pronounces woe upon “the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower Behold the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which, as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.” There, I apprehend, you have the Assyrian threatened, as this dreadful storm from the north, that would break forth upon Ephraim. If we look at the middle of the chapter, we shall find another thing. We have seen what was the condition of Ephraim, who dwelt in the outskirts of the country. But what was the destiny of Jerusalem, the capital “Because ye have said, (ver. 15,) We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement.” There we have evidently what is connected with “the king” who will be in Jerusalem, and who will form a compact with “the beast,” the great imperial power of that day, to whom Satan will have given his throne. There is harmony between what we have in Isaiah and in Revelation and in Daniel. “We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us.” Mark that. The over flowing scourge is the king of the north, the outside power that is coming down upon them. They of Jerusalem have made a covenant with death and with hell, that is, with instruments of Satan in that day: and they hope by this means to escape the king of the north. I have already shown that the beast, the great power of the west, will be in connection with the “king” at Jerusalem—that the western parts will be the great seat of the beast—that he will command all Europe, that properly belonged to the Roman Empire. When that empire is re-organized, he will be the great instrument of using its strength. “The king” will have made a covenant with him; or, as it is said in chap. ix., he, that is, the Roman prince, will make a covenant with the mass of the Jews. At the close, both are found in Jerusalem, fighting against the Lord and His saints coming from heaven. They will find their supposed strength in this covenant, but it will not stand. The overflowing scourge (the Assyrian) sweeps on, and half the city of Jerusalem is taken. How marvelously does Scripture hang together! Then (Isa. 28:16) comes in the reference to the Lord's laying a foundation-stone in Zion, which is evidently a word for the faithful remnant of that day, however true for us who believe now.

Isa. 24 is the last portion to which I wish to refer. There we have the closing desolation of the city. “Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt. . . Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow; and it shall be unto me as Ariel. And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.” That is the siege spoken of in Zechariah. “And thou shalt be brought down and shalt speak out of the ground,” &c. That is their condition when they are desolated. But mark, in verse 5: Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust..... Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of Hosts with thunder and with earthquake And the

multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night-vision.” The Lord has gone forth and fought with those nations as He fought in the day of battle. I have brought sufficient evidence from various parts of the word of God, which entirely falls in with, and throws light upon, the very interesting portion of Daniel now before us. All concur in showing most clearly that there is a terrible future for apostate Israel and their western associates; and no less terrible for their confederate eastern adversaries. The covenant with hell will not stand. When the great powers of the world will have, apparently, swept all before them, and have gathered for the last great struggle before Jerusalem, God will take that opportunity for dealing with them after His long term of patience. It will be the closing scene. They will think that universal monarchy is to be in their hands; but it will be God's day for summoning them to judgment. Here I speak of a judgment of nations and of kings—not of the dead before the great white throne.

God is about to deal with the earth—with men in the midst of all their plans. The regeneration of the world will be the great day when the Lord, having weeded out of Israel the transgressors, and used “the king” himself, and the judgment that fell upon him, to separate the true ones of Judah from the wicked, will cause the hour to chime when the account must be settled with the nations. This appears to me to be the simple, straight-forward statement of the truth of God that we have here. We are not to suppose it is merely a question of one great power only. There will be different principles at work. And it is an awful thing to think that these lands where we enjoy such privileges are to be then overspread with the deepest darkness. The covenant with death and with hell will be because of an alliance made with the highly civilized western world. What a humbling thing for the pride of man! Civilization in a day that is past did not keep the mightiest minds from degrading idolatry and filthiness. Alas! we shall have a still worse scene at the close. Christendom will end in restored idolatry, in novel false gods,—in man himself worshipped as God. Such I believe, is the predicted future of this age. But one can keep the heart the same from being entangled with all that leads to it—Christ Himself. May we be occupied with Him; not building upon men's foundations, not hoping their hope, not trusting to progress, or even to religion, so called. If Christ is my object in everything, there is safety there, and nowhere else.

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