

The Coming Crisis and Its Results.

Paper 3 of 20 'Plain Papers on Prophetic and Other Subjects'.

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Scripture testimony to approaching judgments was what last engaged our attention. As to these judgments, three things may be affirmed. First, They introduce the Millennium. Secondly, They are the precursors or accompaniments of Christ's second appearing. Thirdly, They are connected with a total change of dispensation. Each of these statements I hope, by the Lord's help, to establish by plain and abundant testimony of Scripture. It is to the first and second I would now entreat my reader's attention. The proof of the third will more naturally present itself when some other points have been considered.

Judgment has often been executed on the wicked. The deluge, the overthrow of Sodom, the destruction of the Canaanitish tribes, the destruction of Jerusalem, whether by Nebuchadnezzar or by the Romans, the overthrow of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, as well as other similar events, each affords an instance of the execution of righteous judgment on the wicked. What is it, then, which distinguishes this interposition of God in judgment which is yet future, (and which we saw in *"Approaching Judgments"* to be foretold throughout Scripture,) from all other judgments such as have been enumerated? The distinction is in this, that the awful judgments which are fast approaching introduce the Millennium; and further, *that Christ Himself comes in connection with these judgments*. Let us look at the evidence of these things in Scripture. But earnestly would I remind my christian readers, that it is not the coming of Christ to earth to execute judgment which is our hope, but His descent into the air to receive us to Himself. It was this we sought, in *"The Heavenly Hope,"* to place in the foreground; and so the subject is presented in the New Testament, however needful it may be to be forewarned of Christ's coming to execute judgment also. When He so comes, we shall come with Him. Must we not have been previously gathered to Him?

No passage is more commonly or more justly quoted in proof that there is to be a Millennium, than that in which Jehovah promises to His Son, to give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. But turn to Psalm 2, where this promise is recorded, and you will find that it is by the execution of terrible judgments on the wicked, that it is to be made good. It is not peacefully, or by man's submission brought about by the gospel and by grace, that the rightful Heir takes possession of His dominions. We read of a confederacy against Him: the heathen rage, the people imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah, and against His anointed. Their cry is, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." True, we learn from Acts 4: 25-27, that this confederacy was formed in the days of Pontius Pilate, Herod, and the rulers of the Jews. But then we have intimation in the psalm, that there would be a period during which the Lord would laugh at their puny rage. Not as yet interfering in judgment, He would allow them, as it were, to go to the length of their chain, but treat with utter derision their attempts to set aside His purpose, and to order the affairs of the earth after their own hearts' desire. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in

derision." But this period of patient endurance comes to a close. It gives place to judgment. "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." God's purpose is irrevocable. Their rage and opposition cannot alter that. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Thus far the passage is often quoted. But what follows immediately? How are the rights of God's anointed, but earth-rejected Son, to be established? "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Could any language be employed to teach more clearly or impressively, that it is by judgments on the wicked that Christ's glorious kingdom will be introduced?

We see thus how it is God's irrevocable decree, that His Son shall reign over all the earth, and how vain and puny are all man's efforts to prevent it. Turn to Psalm 96, and you will find all the earth invited to sing a new song unto the Lord. It is in anticipation of the blessings of His reign, that universal anthems are thus demanded. True, that it is by power in judgment, that His reign is to be introduced and established; and the psalm before us recognizes this. But universal blessing will attend His reign; and hence the call for universal joy and praise. But it is not the mere execution of providential judgments which introduces this glorious period, and wakes up this universal harmony. No, the Lord *comes* to judge, and *comes* to reign. "Say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: FOR HE COMETH, FOR HE COMETH to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." So also at the close of Psalm 98: "Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm: with trumpets, and sound of cornet, make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King. . . . Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord: FOR HE COMETH to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity." Reader, have you ever considered these passages? It is not of the judgment of the great white throne they treat. Then, heaven and earth are to flee from before the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, and no place is to be found for them. Here, heaven and earth are called on to rejoice at the coming of the Lord, at His coming to judgment, as that which introduces the period of His universal reign, and of earth's universal blessing and delight.

Another passage, beautifully depicting the happy days which are yet to dawn on this afflicted and groaning earth, is that well-known one in Isaiah 11. Sweet it is, (whether the language be understood literally of a change in the brute creation, or figuratively* of peace and concord among men,) to think of the wolf dwelling with the lamb; the leopard lying down with the kid; the calf, the young lion, and the fatling together; and all so gentle, that a little child shall lead them. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Delightful prospect for this miserable world! But how are those days of peace, and piety, and universal blessing to be ushered in? By the interposition of One, whose lowly grace, and perfect rectitude and holiness, are so touchingly portrayed in the opening verses of the chapter. The Christian can be at no loss to say whose portrait it is, with which we are furnished here. But, are grace, and lowliness, and perfect faithfulness, the only features presented to us? No; we are told of His acts as well as of His moral

excellencies, — acts such as He never performed when He was here before. "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." The predictions of the Millennium follow.

*It is not meant by this to raise any doubt as to the meaning of the passage I have no doubt myself that it is to be taken literally.

But if we turn to 2 Thess. 2: 8, where the apostle seems to quote this prophecy, we find additional instruction on two points. First, we find that it is Antichrist, the man of sin, that is intended by the term, "the wicked." Both in the Hebrew of Isaiah "and the Greek of 2 Thess. 2, the term is in the singular number, and means literally, "that wicked one." But without insisting on this, it is enough to notice that in 2 Thess. 2, our English translators have marked that it is some one, or something, pre-eminent in evil that is intended, by using a capital letter in the word "wicked." "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit (or breath) of his mouth, and shall destroy with *the brightness of his coming*." This is the other point here brought out: It is *by the brightness of the Lord's coming*, that Antichrist, this wicked one, is to be destroyed. But let us examine a little more minutely the combined testimony of these connected passages.

The apostle informs the Thessalonians that the day of Christ shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed. He had told them of these things when present among them, and now reminds them that they know what hindered the revelation of this man of sin. The mystery of iniquity doth already work," is his language; only he who now letteth (hindereth) shall let (hinder) till he be taken out of the way, and then shall that Wicked be revealed." The mystery of iniquity was working then, and would continue to work, until, the hindrance being removed, it should issue in the revelation of the man of sin, that Wicked, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." Thus we have the continued working and progress of evil, from its germ, which existed even in the apostle's day, to its maturity in this man of sin, who only meets his doom at the coming of the Lord, and *by the coming of the Lord*. Isaiah takes up the subject where the apostle lays it down, and shows, us the blessed results of this glorious interposition, — the peace, the concord, the happiness of Messiah's reign; the earth full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. The two passages together afford the most conclusive proof of all we are seeking to establish, that the Millennium is introduced by judgments on the wicked, and that those judgments attend the coming of the Lord.

My readers will remember the quotations from Isaiah 24 as to the earth being made empty and waste, as to its being utterly broken down, and clean dissolved, and moved exceedingly. It would be well to read the whole chapter. How does it close? What is the sequel to those overwhelming judgments which it teaches us to expect? "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients, gloriously." The judgments commence and introduce this glorious, universal reign. I say universal: for while Zion and Jerusalem are its special earthly* centre, its blessings will extend to all the earth. Thus, a few verses below the one just quoted, after having again celebrated God's interposition in judgment, making of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin; a

palace of strangers to be no city; bringing down the noise of strangers; the prophet thus speaks of the issue, the effect, of these judgments. "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations." Then in the next chapter, verses 8, 9, the righteous are represented as saying, "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night: yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: *for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*" Here is the definite, absolute assertion, that it is by God's judgments the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

*Our place, the Church's place, will be in the heavens.

But what is the peculiar character of these judgments, that they should have such an effect? Let my reader compare this passage with 1 Cor. 15: 54, and he will find that these stupendous events are connected with the coming of the Lord, and the resurrection of the saints. 1 Cor. 15, it is well known, treats fully the subject of the resurrection: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's" — When? "at his coming." The resurrection of the saints, then, takes place *at the coming of Christ*. But what connection has this with Isaiah 25? We shall all see immediately. The apostle declares that we shall not all sleep — that the living saints shall be changed when the departed ones are raised: "for this corruptible," he says, "must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Where is this saying written? - *In only one place in Scripture, and that* Isaiah 25: 8. We have the awful judgments in Isaiah 24; and at the end of it, the reign of the Lord of hosts in Mount Zion. Then, in Isaiah 25, we find that in this mountain the Lord of hosts is to make a feast unto all nations, and to remove the veil the covering. The words quoted by the apostle immediately follow: "He will swallow up death in victory." In a word, the apostle tells us when the prophecy of Isaiah 24, 25 will be accomplished. "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, *then* shall he brought to pass the saying which is written, (in Isaiah 25,) Death is swallowed up in victory." And when is this corruptible to put on incorruption? When are the dead to be raised? "Every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's *at his coming.*" Could there be more decisive proof, that the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the sleeping saints, and the change of those who are alive, the fearful judgments which are to destroy the wicked, and the commencement of the reign of Christ, are all indissolubly linked together? They all are comprised in, and constitute, the grand epoch to which everything is tending, and with which nothing in the history of man, or of the world, can compare.

Another remarkable testimony to the same effect we have in Isaiah 59: 18, 19. The prophet has been lamenting, in the most moving terms, the deep and wide spread and universal corruption which precedes this interposition of God in judgment. "For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as

for our iniquities, we know them: in transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart, words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth: and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment." No doubt the prophet has in this passage a special eye to Israel and its moral condition. But what a picture, my brethren, have we here, of the state of things existing at the present day! How is it to be terminated? The Lord is represented as interfering. In what way? "He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence. So (mark, reader, this word SO) shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun." Could words more accurately express, could language more emphatically announce, the very position we are seeking to establish? What is that position? That the approaching judgments, considered in our last, are what will introduce the Millennium. What is the testimony of the passage before us? That all power of judgment and testimony having failed and ceased *morally* among men, the Lord will Himself rise up to execute judgment *by power*: repaying men according to their deeds, repaying recompence to the islands: thus universal is to be this interposition of God. And what is to be its effect? "SO shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun." From hemisphere to hemisphere is the fear of the Lord's name and glory to extend, as the result of these retributive judgments on the wicked. Had there been no other passage of Scripture on the subject, we might have supposed that the testimony of this would have been completely decisive.

But does not this passage shed further light on our present subject? Does it not afford evidence of both the truths we are seeking to establish? Here is the answer: "*And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.*" This also is quoted in the New Testament. Paul quotes it in Rom. 11: 26. He has been treating of the temporary setting aside of Israel, but declares that it is only for a time; that "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." No doubt my readers are aware that before New Testament times, the Old Testament had been translated into Greek, and that from this translation, called the Septuagint, many of the quotations in the New Testament are made. This accounts for the verbal difference in many such cases as the one before us. But no one can doubt that the passage quoted by the apostle is the one in question in Isaiah 59. Nor is it possible to evade the proof afforded by the two, that it is *at His coming* the Lord renders recompence to His enemies and to the islands, SO that they shall fear His name and His glory from sphere to sphere.

Let us now turn to Isaiah 66. There we read, amid strongest exclamations of surprise, of the earth being made to bring forth in one day, of a nation being born at once; "for as soon," says the prophet, "as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." All who love Jerusalem are called upon to rejoice with her. "For thus saith the Lord, Behold I will extend peace unto her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees." Who can fail to discern here the bright anticipations of Millennial blessing? But how is such blessing to be introduced? "A voice of

noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompence to his enemies." Then again: "The hand of the Lord shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies." We are told that "by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." It is not that all flesh will be slain. Many, so many as to baffle description, and defy conception, will be slain; but there will be many spared. By fire and by His sword will the Lord thus plead with all flesh: and what shall be the result? "For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles." What further ensues? The perfect re-gathering of God's earthly people Israel, brought for an offering to the Lord out of all nations to God's holy mountain Jerusalem; "and I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord." Is this the whole? Is Israel only to be brought into blessing? No. "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." I enter into none of the questions which have been raised as to the precise meaning of these words. All agree that they express, in one way or another, the universal prevalence of true religion in the Millennium. And surely the whole chapter leaves us in no doubt, as to its being by overwhelming, desolating judgments, that this glorious period is to be introduced. But further: the memorial of these judgments is in some way to remain. "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

With regard to this chapter, I will only add, that it also connects the judgment on the nations, and introduction of the Millennium, with the coming of the Lord. "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." It is then, at the coming of the Lord, that by fire and by His sword will He plead with all flesh, and subdue the whole world to His sway.

My readers will remember the passage quoted from Ezekiel in "*Approaching Judgments*;" a passage predicting judgments so terrific, and a destruction so overwhelming, that seven months are to be occupied in burying the dead. I would add here a passage on the same subject, from the previous chapter. "For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath, have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel: so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him* throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone." And what is to be the result among men of this awful interposition? "Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself: and I will be known in the eyes of many nations; and they shall know that I am the Lord." Then, after the fearful predictions in the next chapter, quoted at length in our last, we have these words. "And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I

have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them." And though the predictions of Millennial blessing which follow are restricted to Israel, they are so expressed as to show indisputably, that it is the Millennium of which they treat, and that it is at the commencement of the Millennium that these terrible judgments take place. The verse immediately succeeding the one last quoted, is as follows: "So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward." How manifest, that it is at the epoch of these terrible judgments, that their national conversion takes place. Nor their conversion only: their national restoration will also then take place. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name." After being thus converted and restored they are not to apostatize any more. Their blessing is to be permanent. "Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." Could there be more conclusive proof than that which the whole passage affords, that the judgments of which these two chapters treat, are at the commencement of the Millennial period?

*That is, against Gog. But let not my reader confound the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel, with the Gog and Magog of Revelation 20. The latter do not arise till after the Millennium. The former, as may be seen above, have their existence and downfall at its commencement.

If we turn to Daniel 2, what is it that follows the smiting of the image on his feet, by the stone cut out without hands? The destruction of the image is complete; but what follows it? what takes its place? "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." As to what the meaning of all this is, we are happily not left to our own thoughts. The prophet not only gives us the symbols, but also the interpretation of them. Still men have substituted their own imaginings and speculations for the plain words of the prophet. It is not disputed generally, that the interpretation of the first part of the vision is correct. All agree, that four empires or universal kingdoms are set forth: nor is there much dispute as to what kingdoms these are. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, are agreed almost on all hands to be the four empires represented by the image. But the Stone is erroneously supposed by many to represent the gospel, and that what is foretold respecting it is, that it will gradually spread, until the whole world, these four kingdoms included, shall, by its means, become the kingdom of Christ. But who does not see, that there would thus be no destruction of the image, or of the empires which it represents? What is foretold respecting the Stone, is not, that contemporaneously with the existence and supremacy of the fourth empire, the Stone should be slowly and gradually increasing, and, as it increases, changing the character of the image, as this false interpretation suggests. No, but, that at a given epoch the Stone should smite the image on its toes; that in the last days of the fourth empire a sudden blow should be given, which should be fatal to the whole image; and that then, and not until then, the Stone that smote the image should become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for

ever." Here we have the formal declaration, that it is by the overthrow and destruction of the previously existing kingdoms that the final, Millennial kingdom is to be established.

Daniel 7 gives us still more full and explicit instruction. It is the same general subject, embracing many additional particulars, and the whole presented, if possible, with greater precision. Four beasts represent the same kingdoms which in Daniel 2 are symbolized by the several parts of the metallic image. But the fourth is represented in a form which it, has never yet assumed, viz. as having ten horns, in the midst of which comes up another, a little one, whose rapid growth, amazing intelligence, swelling words, and valiant looks, excite the special and wondering attention of the prophet. This one continues till the thrones are set, the Ancient of days sits, the judgment is set, and the books are opened. "I beheld then," says the prophet, "because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." And what is it that accompanies this judgment? And what succeeds it? "I saw in the night vision, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Who that believes the Bible can resist the evidence which thus accumulates on our hands, that it is by such destroying judgments as have been considered, that the Millennium, or universal kingdom of Christ, is to be introduced?

Zephaniah tells us of a great gathering of the nations; of terrible judgments overtaking them when thus gathered; and of Millennial blessedness as that which ensues. Hear his words. "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then (mark, dear reader, how God tells us when the Millennium shall commence) *then* will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering." All the rest of the chapter describes the happiness of those Millennial times.

Zech. 14 I purposely pass by for the present, as it will have to be specially considered further on. In turning to the New Testament, Luke 19 may claim our first consideration. Can there be any doubt that what is there termed "the kingdom of God," is really the Millennium which prophets had foretold, and which the Jewish nation had been taught to expect? "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Were they wrong, then, in expecting God's kingdom to be set up? No; it was the expectation of its *immediate appearance* in which they were mistaken. In a certain sense it was even then among them: and in this sense it has been among men ever since. But it had not then *appeared*: nor has it yet. Listen to the parable of our Lord. "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." There can be no mistake as to the person represented by the nobleman, or as to what is intended by His going into a far country. Instead of openly setting up the kingdom when He was here before, Christ had to be rejected by the earth,

and to ascend into heaven. His servants occupy during His absence, and His citizens send after him the insulting defiance, "We will not have this man to reign over us." What is it terminates this state of things? "And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him," etc. His servants are rewarded according to their works. But is this all? No. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." This verse was quoted in our last, as prophetic of approaching judgments on the wicked. But what does this judgment on the wicked introduce? *The kingdom — the kingdom in open manifestation, or display.* They thought it was immediately to appear. No, says our Lord, I will tell you what must intervene. What is it that intervenes? or rather what are the last intervening events? *The Lord's return, and judgment on the wicked.* Our Lord was to depart; His servants were to be held responsible to Him in His absence; He was to receive the kingdom, to return, to reward and punish His servants; and then, last of all, His enemies were to be slain. This accomplished, what but the kingdom can remain? The kingdom, not in mystery as at present, but in full, manifested, and universally acknowledged glory — in other words, the Millennium.

To pass by a number of other passages which might be adduced, what is the testimony of Rev. 11: 14-18? Without at present entering into any questions as to the general interpretation of this wondrous book, suffice it to remind my reader. that seal after seal having been opened, and trumpet after trumpet blown, we arrive, in the chapter before us, at an epoch of which intimation has been given in the previous chapters. Four trumpets sound their loud, shrill blast of warning and of terror: "And I beheld," says the prophet, "and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound." (Rev. 8: 13.) Then, another mighty angel is seen by the apostle, his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth. His voice is as when a lion roareth; and when he cries seven thunders utter their voices. This angel lifts his hand to heaven, and swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer. "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared by the prophets." (Rev. 10: 7.) Such are the terms in which the last three, and especially the last, of the seven trumpets, are previously announced. What, then, is the language of our chapter itself? "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever." Need we, my brethren, any further witness? Whatever fancies men may have indulged, and however counsel may have been darkened by a multitude of words without knowledge, (as, alas! it often has been,) no one dreams that this epoch has arrived, that the predictions of the verses just quoted are fulfilled. The kingdoms of this world have not yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. When shall they become so? When the first and the second woe trumpets have sounded, and the third woe, following quickly, and accompanying the sounding of the seventh angel, has spent itself on the guilty inhabitants of the earth, then shall the mystery of God be finished; then shall the many voices in heaven proclaim the transfer, to our Lord and to His Christ, of the sovereignty of the whole earth. But listen! There is a second chorus. "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, (not converted!) and thy

wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." Oh yes! it is thus the universal reign of Christ is introduced. The nations, we know, will be angry; (see Psalm 2;) but when the seventh angel sounds, and God takes to Him His great power, and His wrath comes, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and reward be given to the saints, while the destroyers of the earth are themselves destroyed; when this epoch arrives, then, and not until then, shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. It is by judgments, overwhelming, and yet rapidly approaching judgments, that the Millennium will be ushered in.

Dan. 12: 1 informs us, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Why do I quote this? On account of our Lord's quotation of it in Matt. 24. He foretells a time of unequalled tribulation. But might not that be at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans? No; because the passage just quoted from Dan. 12 declares, that the time of trouble, unequalled by any since there was a nation, is when the Jews, Daniel's people, are delivered — not dispersed. Bear this in mind, my readers. The tribulation attending the deliverance of the Jews is to be such as never was till then. So says Daniel. Now this shows that it could not be of any event now past that our Lord speaks. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." There cannot be two such periods; for our Lord declares that this is unequalled by anything before it, or by anything after it. It must be future, for the Jews are not yet delivered; and Daniel assures us that it is then there shall be tribulation unequalled by anything till that time. Clearly, then, it is of the same period that Daniel prophesies and our Lord speaks. Equally plain is it that it is yet future. But why so anxious to establish this? Turn to verse 29. What have we there? "Immediately after" — mark, dear reader, not a thousand, or thousands, of years, but *immediately* after — "the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Ah! this is the event which is to bring the present dispensation to a close, and usher in the period of universal righteousness and peace.

Let us turn now to Zech. 14 "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle." Here I pause. Many passages speak of a gathering of all nations. "It shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues." (Isaiah 66: 18.) "For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations." (Joel 3: 1, 2.) "Now also many nations are gathered against thee . . . for he shall gather them as sheaves into the floor." (Micah 4: 11, 12.) "For my determination is to gather the nations." (Zeph. 3: 8.) It is of the same subject the passage before us treats. "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 of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." Such are the straits to which the returned Jews will be reduced in that time of unequalled

tribulation of which Daniel and our Lord inform us. How are they to be delivered? "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." But is this anything more than a figurative prediction of some striking providential interposition at the juncture referred to? Read what follows. "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and 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. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah; AND THE LORD MY GOD SHALL COME, AND ALL THE SAINTS WITH THEE." If this does not foretell the coming of the Lord with all His saints at the period of this great gathering of all nations, where could language be found in which to clothe such a prediction? And what follows this event? To what is it introductory? To a period in which, we are told, "living waters shall go out from Jerusalem;" "in summer and in winter" are they to flow. But more than this — "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." Here we have the whole matter. Desolating judgment on God's congregated adversaries; the coming of the Lord, which brings this judgment; and, as the result, His peaceful reign over all the earth.

Turn now, dear reader, to Rev. 19 and 20. We are told previously (Rev. 16: 14) of three unclean spirits, "spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Here, in these chapters, we have the issue of this gathering. The apostle says, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." We are left in no doubt as to who this is. "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called the Word of God." Nor does He come alone. As in Zech. 14 we have read, "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee," so here, "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." In verse 8 we read, "for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Thus He comes, attended by His saints. Woe to the wicked then! "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Yes, the hardihood of God's enemies will not then protect them from His wrath. Infatuated beyond conception, they will indeed rush to the battle; but it will be to their everlasting overthrow. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Distinguished above all others in iniquity, they will be thus awfully distinguished in their doom. And will their followers escape? Alas, no! "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." What ensues on this glorious advent of Christ and His saints, and this utter overthrow of His enemies? Read Rev. 20, and you will find Satan bound for a thousand years, and Christ reigning, with His risen and glorified saints, throughout that blissful period.

Here I pause. Space forbids further proof at present of what is, however, fully proved by all the Scriptures which have passed under review, that it is by judgments, and by the coming of the

Lord, that the Millennium is ushered in. As to what it is that makes these judgments needful, we are not left ignorant. Scripture fully informs us. And this is one thing which makes the study of prophecy of such immense practical importance. It is not, my brethren, that we shall be on earth when these judgments are executed. Our scriptural hope, as we sought to exhibit it in our first paper, is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so to come with Him when He comes to execute judgment on the wicked. But we are surrounded by those principles, influences, and systems, which are ripening to that maturity of evil which mankind will reach ere those judgments come. God will judge them at the coming of Christ, when they are fully ripe. But has acquaintance with these subjects no tendency to keep us apart from such evils now? Surely it has; and that we might be so sanctified, or kept apart from evil, is one object God has in view in revealing these things to us.

It is not by exciting applications of prophecy to passing events, that true edification is secured. The natural mind may feel the deepest interest in prophetic inquiries thus conducted; but Scripture was never designed to instruct us as to what transpires in the arena of political strife, or to occupy our souls with such subjects. "Our citizenship (*politeuma*) is in heaven." "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth." It is not with such contentions that God's revelation of the future concerns itself. It forewarns us, in general terms, that wars and rumours of wars may be expected, till God shall interpose in power for the settlement of His great controversy with mankind: — till, as the result of this interposition, the sceptre of universal dominion shall be wielded by the Prince of peace. But it is as to this interposition in judgment, and the approaching climax of iniquity which renders it inevitable, that prophecy instructs us. And even as to this, *it is not because the Church is to be on earth, amid the desolations of the crisis which is so rapidly approaching*, that she receives those revelations respecting it. Ere the coming crisis opens upon the world, the Church will have been received into heaven, at the descent of Christ into the air. I do not enter here upon the proof of this, It belongs properly to a further stage of our inquiries. But I would not here withhold the expression of this conviction; entreating my readers to search the Scriptures as to it for themselves; and trusting that, if the Lord will, the grounds of this conviction may ere long be fully presented in the progress of this little work. The Church is not instructed by prophecy as to the approaching crisis of evil and of judgment, because she is to be present on earth when it arrives, but because she is now surrounded by all those active and insidious principles of evil, which when ripe God will judge. The Church is thus enabled morally and spiritually to judge those things *now*, which, in their maturity of evil, God will judge by the righteous retributions of His wrath. All the principles of Babylon and of the ten-horned beast are in existence and operation now. How can a Christian more effectually learn what they are, and why and how they are to be avoided, than by the prayerful study of God's prophetic description of their final forms, and of the awful judgments by which they will, at the coming of Christ, be destroyed? Nothing can be more dissimilar to this, in its moral tendencies and effects, than the attempt to weave together human political speculations, and the solemn prophetic announcements of Scripture. The one course tranquillises and sanctifies; the other, while it excites the imagination and distracts the mind, tends powerfully to draw the thoughts and affections from heaven to earth.

There are three very distinct spheres on which the judgments will fall, when the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: Israel, the Gentiles, and professing Christendom. These will, indeed, be all united in the final climax of

evil, and so judgment will come upon the whole. Still, as their responsibilities, and the dealings of God with them, have been so very distinct, each demands distinct consideration. And if we are to understand why judgment comes upon Israel, we must know what the calling and testimony of Israel are, and how that nation has failed therein. If we are to discern the grounds of God's righteous judgment upon the Gentile nations, we must be acquainted with His past and present dealings with them, and with their conduct under their special responsibilities. So also, to understand the guilt of professing Christendom, and what it is that brings judgment on the highly favoured nations which are so designated, we must know what the calling of the true Church is, what is its testimony, and in what respects Christendom, while assuming the place and owning the responsibilities of the Church, has acted contrary thereto. These are solemn subjects of inquiry. May our hearts be prepared for them. Much that is brighter remains beyond. But all these things, and others, must be left for succeeding papers.