

The Last Days of Gentile Supremacy.

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Many of our readers are no doubt aware that the words translated "Gentiles," whether in the Old Testament or in the New, simply denote "nations." Any distinctive use of these words must therefore have commenced when God had selected one nation, Israel, from among the rest, to be peculiarly His own. Israel thus became the one nation, owned, protected, and blest of the Lord; while all others began to be designated "the nations" or "Gentiles," as distinct from the one thus favoured and chosen of God. All that is written in the Old Testament, whether of Israel or "the Gentiles," may be referred to as illustrative of this remark.

"Gentile *supremacy*" commenced with Nebuchadnezzar. Until his times, Israel had been the centre, and Jerusalem the seat, of God's government of the surrounding nations. The kings of David's line were the last responsible agents of this divine government; but this government, so far from being confined to Israel, extended to all the nations which were in any way connected therewith. When the conduct of God's people or of their kings was such as to be approved by Him, He subjected all the surrounding nations to their sway. When, on the other hand, they walked disobediently, He used the surrounding nations to chastise them. Still, His throne was at Jerusalem; and it was not until the defection of Judah and its kings from their allegiance to God had become complete, that Jerusalem was given up to be utterly destroyed. The princes and nobles of the land were carried into captivity, the city was overthrown, and Ezekiel, prophesying among those captives who had first been

removed, beheld in vision the glory of the Lord depart, first from off the threshold of the house," (Ezek. 10: 18,) and then from the midst of the city." (Ezek. 11: 23.) The symbol of the divine presence, which, from their redemption out of Egypt, had never (save for a little season in Samuel's day) forsaken them, thus entirely departed, and Jerusalem ceased to be the place of Jehovah's throne. The whole order of things consequent on His dwelling at Jerusalem was set aside, and universal supremacy was conferred on Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and first great chief of the Gentiles. It was with him that the times of the Gentiles" began.

"Gentile supremacy," from its commencement to its termination by the just judgment of God at the coming of the Son of man, is the subject of Daniel's prophecy. Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 span the whole period from Nebuchadnezzar to the coming of Christ in judgment; while the other chapters fill up the outline by presenting either the moral features which characterize the Gentile powers, or the prophetic detail of their actings, and of God's dealings with them in judgment at the close. It is to Daniel and the book of Revelation we have specially to look for instruction as to our present subject. The difference between them is, that Revelation treats of the "last days of Gentile supremacy" as linked with and following upon the long course of corruption in the present dispensation, and the utter apostacy of Christendom; while Daniel treats of the same period in connection with the destinies of his own beloved nation, the Jews. The Lord grant to us becoming solemnity of spirit in examining the testimony of both.

In Daniel 2 the divine communication is to Nebuchadnezzar himself; but to him in such sort that it is of no avail to him, till recalled to his memory and interpreted by the prophet. God thus makes manifest that the knowledge of His secrets is with His people, the godly but poor and despised remnant of Israel; but, at the same time, He puts the Gentile monarch under the full responsibility of knowing at whose hands he has received the power and authority of which he is possessed. The substance of the communication made to the king and interpreted by the prophet, is so well known and so generally understood, that it needs no comment here. Three of the Gentile powers represented by the image, are declared in this and other chapters of Daniel, to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece; while Rome is demonstrated to be the fourth by a passage of the New Testament, which speaks of a decree of the Roman emperor, "that all the world should be taxed." (Luke 2: 1.) Now, as there were to be but four universal empires, and as the first three are specified in the book of Daniel itself, it is evident that the only one besides spoken of in Scripture as universal must be the fourth. It is, moreover, introduced in Daniel "under the name, of Chittim, where the ships of Chittim are represented as taking part in the struggles between the kingdoms into which the Grecian empire was to be divided. Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, are almost universally admitted to be the four monarchies symbolized by the image in Daniel 2. Any contrary opinion is so glaringly absurd as not to require discussion.

The leading features of this important prophecy are as follows.

1. It is as "the God of heaven" that God acts in bestowing power upon the Gentiles. As "God of the earth" His throne was at Jerusalem, and will be when He again makes Himself known thus. But His earthly throne being set aside, for the iniquity of those who had been the responsible depositories and agents of His authority, He now acts as "God of heaven," in bestowing authority on the Gentile monarch. "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold."

2. It would appear to be in this immediate reception of it from the God of heaven, that the superiority of Nebuchadnezzar's power consisted. Gold, silver, brass, iron, and iron mixed with miry clay, are the elements which composed the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar. The deterioration is most marked, but it is not in the *strength* so much as in the *value* of the metals; the fourth kingdom, indeed, is represented by that which breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things. Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold, received his power by direct and absolute gift from God; the other monarchs succeeded to it, or became possessed of it, in the course of providential circumstances, but not in this direct manner.

3. The Gentile kingdoms are here seen as a whole. As expressed by another, "It is neither historical succession, nor moral features with respect to God and man, but the kingdoms all together forming, as it were, a personage before God; the man of the earth in the eye of God — glorious and terrible in his public splendour in the eyes of men." (Synopsis of the Books of the Bible. Vol. ii.) So true is this, that in the prediction of the final overthrow, while the blow falls on the toes of the image, it is the whole image which is broken to pieces, and scattered like dust, — the iron, clay, brass, silver, and gold, all partaking in the overwhelming destruction. Gentile

power, symbolized by the image, continues from the days of Nebuchadnezzar till the epoch at which it is thus utterly overthrown and destroyed.

4. It is when Gentile supremacy exists in its last form that its destruction ensues. "The stone cut out without hands, smote the image *upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.*" This final blow falls not on the head of gold, the silver breast, the belly and thighs of brass, no, nor even on the legs of iron, but on the feet of iron and clay. This, of itself, proves that the smiting of the image is not the introduction and gradual spread of Christianity, as many have supposed, but an infliction by divine power when the fourth empire is in its divided and mingled state. It existed in full unity and power for centuries after Christianity commenced.

5. There is but little said in this chapter of the second and third empires. That which is put in prominence is the truth revealed respecting the first, which received its dominion direct from God, and the fourth, in the last days of which the whole fabric is to be set aside and not a trace remain. On this last subject the prophecy is even more copious and detailed than on the first.

6. There is a fifth kingdom, represented by the "stone cut out without hands," which at its introduction forcibly overturns and destroys the Gentile monarchy, and takes its place. "It does not act by a moral influence that changes the character of the object on which it acts. It destroys that object by force. It is God who establishes it and gives it that force. The stone does not gradually increase in size to displace the image. Before it enlarges, it destroys the image. When it has become great, it is not merely a right given by God over men — it fills the whole earth — it is the exalted seat of a universal authority." We may also observe," says the writer whose words we quote, that it is not God destroying the image, in order to establish the kingdom: but the kingdom which He establishes smites the feet of the image as its first act. It is the outward and general history of that which, by God's appointment, took the place of His throne and government in Jerusalem, and which had gradually degenerated in its public character with respect to God, and which at length comes to its end, in the judgment executed by the kingdom established of God without human agency. The kingdom of Christ, which falls on the last form of the monarchy formerly established by God, destroys the whole form of its existence, and itself fills the world." (Synopsis. Vol. ii.)

Daniel 3 - 6 records the history of past events; but it is a history prefaced by the chapter we have been considering, and followed by others, full of prophetic details as to the same general subject; and whether we regard this connection of chapters 3 - 6, or the contents of the chapters themselves, it is difficult to resist the conviction, that they are designed to inform us of the moral character of the Gentile powers which constitute the theme of the whole book. They furnish specimens, so to speak, of what Gentile dominion would always be. Idolatry and persecution in chapter 3 — the pride which attributes everything to self, instead of glorifying God, and which, in effect, reduces its subject to a brutal condition; in Daniel 4, hardness of heart, open revolt, and insensate mockery of God and His worship; in Daniel 5 and in Daniel 6, the deifying of man, and enforcing, on pain of death, submission to his blasphemous pretensions, are the moral features by which Gentile power is characterized throughout. No wonder, when its iniquity is full, and the ulterior purposes of God are ripe for development, that it should become the object of utter and overwhelming judgment.

Daniel 7 presents us with further predictions of this judgment, as well as of the final character of evil which becomes the occasion of its execution. We have here, under other symbols, the same four monarchies which in Daniel 2 are represented by the image. Four great beasts come up from the sea. It is not here the gift of authority by the God of heaven, but the rise of these kingdoms, as matter of history, from the unformed tumultuous masses of mankind, represented in prophetic language by "the sea." Revelation 17: 15, sufficiently establishes this to be the import of the symbol. "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Babylon is figured by the first beast, which resembles a lion with eagle's wings. Medo-Persia is represented by the second "like unto a bear; and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth, between its teeth: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh." The third beast, Grecia, is like a leopard with four wings of a fowl, and four heads: the well-known symbols of the fourfold division of the Grecian empire after Alexander's death. It is to the fourth beast, however, the Roman empire, that attention is chiefly called; and further, there is one particular in the representation of this, on which the prophet's attention seems to be specially concentrated, as to which he makes anxious inquiries, and with regard to which he receives fuller instruction. But let us turn to the details.

First, we have the vision of the fourth beast which the prophet beheld. "After this, I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it; and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." The same pen from which we have already quoted presents, in more forcible language than we can command, the substance and import of this vision. "The features of the fourth beast are clearly drawn. It is strong exceedingly; it devours and breaks in pieces, and tramples the residue under-foot. It has not the same character as the preceding monarchies. It has ten horns, that is to say, its strength was to be divided into ten distinct powers. Strength, and a rapacity sparing and respecting nothing, appropriating everything, or trampling it under foot without regard to conscience; such are morally the characteristics of the fourth beast. Its division into ten kingdoms distinguishes it as to its form. The uniform simplicity of the other empires will be lacking to it."

While the prophet is earnestly contemplating the horns of this fourth beast, a great change takes place among them. "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." The reader will bear in mind that we are occupied with the same subject as, in Dan. 2, is illustrated by the legs and feet of the image. The legs were iron — the feet and toes, part of potter's clay and part of iron. Then, verses 42-44 treat of the toes distinctively. "And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. *And in the days of these kings* (the kings or kingdoms represented by the ten toes) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." Now the horns in Dan. 7 correspond to the toes in Dan. 2; and both chapters show that it is in this final state — when the strength of the kingdom has been divided into ten powers, and when, according to chap. 2, the power originally derived from God has not only deteriorated from gold to iron, but is attempting to ally itself with something of an entirely different nature, potter's clay — it is in this final state of the fourth

kingdom that God sets up a kingdom which smites, overturns, and demolishes the whole fabric of Gentile power, taking its place and filling the whole earth. The modern attempts, throughout what was once the unbroken undivided Roman Empire, to unite monarchical with popular influences in what are called constitutional governments, can hardly fail to occur to the mind on perusing this prophecy. It is not intended by this remark to imply any censure on this or that mode of government. Such is not the province of the Christian. We simply note in the prophecy that which is given as the distinguishing form of Gentile power in the last stages of its existence. Moral characteristics are given elsewhere. Neither would we intimate that the ten toes can as yet be distinguished. A passage in Revelation, to be considered by and by, forbids such a thought. To return to chap. 7: it supplies us with particulars omitted in chap. 2. We have here indeed ten horns, as in the other case ten toes; but while the prophet considers the horns, there comes up among them another, an eleventh horn, and its actings are such as soon to absorb the attention of the prophet. It is a little horn, a power small and insignificant in its beginnings, but three out of the ten fall before it, plucked up by the roots; it is characterized by extraordinary sagacity and intelligence, having "eyes like the eyes of man;" and its boastings and pretensions are most loud and overbearing — it has "a mouth speaking great things." A session of judgment ensues. "I beheld till the thrones were set,* and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set and the books were opened." The chapter does not inform us where this session of judgment takes place; but all the effects of it which the prophecy records are upon the earth. "I beheld then, 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." While such is the terrible end of the fourth beast, its existence and its dominion terminating together by the overwhelming judgment which overtakes it, it is noted by the prophet that with the three former kingdoms it had been otherwise. "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." The dominion of Babylon ceased on the night when Belshazzar was slain. The dominion of Persia ceased when it was overthrown by the first Grecian king. The dominion of Greece was first divided into four, and then taken away as one after another of these Grecian monarchies fell before the Roman legions. But there has always been, and is still, a kingdom of Persia. So is there now a kingdom of Greece. It is in this way that these beasts had their dominion taken away, but their lives prolonged. Not so the fourth Roman beast. "I beheld, till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." Utter destruction is its doom. What is said, however, of those beasts which had their dominion taken away and their lives prolonged, sheds light on the statement in Dan. 2, that the whole image perishes when the blow descends upon its toes. Till then their lives are prolonged; but they, as well as the fourth kingdom, perish by "the stone cut out without hands." Every vestige of Gentile power disappears; and the monarchy of the whole earth is transferred to the One whom we know as having been despised and rejected of men, numbered with the transgressors, crucified between two thieves! He alone is worthy! Eternal blessings to His name!

*Not "cast down." Nearly all scholars agree in the correctness of the rendering given above.

The transfer of dominion to this blessed and adorable One is the subject, in the chapter before us, of a distinct vision. "I saw in the night visions, 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." Can there be any doubt that the Saviour had this prophecy in mind when He said to the high priest, "Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matt. 26: 64.)

"God hath spoken once," says the psalmist; "twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God." (Ps. 62: 11.) There is but One who has with perfect faithfulness owned this. Adam received power from God, and quickly betrayed both it, and himself, and the creation over which he was placed, into the hands of the deceiver and usurper. Noah received of God the power of the sword, but soon by his intemperance subjected himself to the mockery of his son, more guilty than himself in proclaiming the degradation he should have covered. God himself reigned in Israel, till the nation in its folly asked to have a king. Saul, the king of the nation's choice, though he received at God's hands his throne and sceptre, disobediently used them for self-aggrandizement, and perished on the mountains of Gilboa. "The man after God's own heart" did indeed truly — but, alas! he did not *perfectly* and *always* — own this foundation-truth. He did receive his kingdom at God's hands alone, nor was he actually installed in it, till he had been tested again and again whether he would take possession of it by his own energy, or wait God's time. In all this he was a type of Him, who, though his son, he, in spirit, calls his Lord. But David did get weary of the path of faith, and would have revenged himself, had sovereign grace not interposed. (See 1 Sam. 29: 8.) And when on the throne, in one instance at least, his heart did get lifted up; (see 2 Sam. 24;) and in another, he did use his power for the gratification of his lusts. His offspring inherited his throne. The first who succeeded to it, in his old age turned to idols. Jeroboam, made king over the ten tribes which were in consequence rent from David's house, set up golden calves, and one after another of his successors sank deeper and deeper in iniquity, till the ten tribes were carried away out of the land. David's house corrupted itself more and more, till the wrath of the Lord arose, and there was no remedy. Then followed the Jewish captivity and the times of the Gentiles. God established Nebuchadnezzar's throne at Babylon, and bestowed on him a grant of power almost, not quite, equal with that made to Adam. Have the holders of Gentile power, from Nebuchadnezzar down wards, been any more true than others to the principle that "power belongeth unto God?" Alas! the answer is before us and much that is still worse remains to be considered. Gentile power has, throughout, proved itself hostile to God, and disdainful of His claims: it will in the end be found in open revolt against His authority, and claiming for itself the homage due to Him alone. One there has been on this earth, the blessed Heir of all things, entitled to dominion by every possible claim, and having almighty power to enforce His claims, but who, having become man, and having taken thus the servant's place, the place of subjection and dependence, never swerved from it for a single moment. All the kingdoms of the world were offered to Him by Satan, on condition of His falling down to worship him. "Get thee behind me, Satan," was His reply: "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The multitude would have taken Him by force, and made Him a king; but the modern and blasphemous doctrine that "the people are the only legitimate source of power," had no place in His heart. When he perceived their designs, "he

departed again into a mountain himself alone." No, He had come in humiliation and obedience to glorify God in this world of sin and pride, and nothing could turn Him aside from the lowly, self-renouncing, self-sacrificing path on which He had entered. What the Holy Ghost witnesses of Him as priest, is as true of Him in His kingly character. "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest." He waited till the Father's time should arrive for investing Him with His royal as well as with His priestly dignity. "Power belongeth unto God," and this He owned in every step of his life below. Nay more, it is in obedience that He has sat down at the right hand of God. "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." So writes the psalmist. "From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." Thus writes the apostle. In Dan. 7: 13, 14, the passage on which we were meditating, the decisive moment has arrived. Human iniquity has reached its height in the blasphemies and revolt of the little horn; the judgment is set, the books are opened; one like the Son of man is brought to the Ancient of days, and there is given to Him dominion and glory and a kingdom — everlasting dominion — a kingdom never to be destroyed.

These visions of the future awaken in the prophet the deepest solicitude to understand their import. His desire is granted. "So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things." First, he receives a general explanation of the whole matter. "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." This is the substance of what the, visions were to disclose. Four great monarchies were to succeed each other, and at the end of these the saints of the Most High were to take the kingdom. Observe here that the explanation goes beyond the visions themselves. The visions had represented the reception of the kingdom by the Son of man; but here we find that it is to be taken and possessed by the saints of the Most High. But Daniel yearns for still clearer and fuller understanding. "Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, . . . and of the ten horns, . . . and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows." Not only does the prophet seek a fuller explanation of these details; he gives a fuller statement than previously of what he had observed in this little horn. "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." Thus we are informed of what had been omitted before, the war of the little horn against the saints; a war in which he prevails against them, till the coming of the Ancient of days brings his blasphemies and persecutions to an end, and the saints whom he had trodden down have judgment given to them and take the kingdom. The answer received by Daniel is very express. He is told that the fourth beast is the fourth kingdom, and that it should be diverse from all others, devouring, breaking down, and treading in pieces. "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. This is very plain. The fourth kingdom should first exist in its unity and strength; then afterwards ten kings (or kingdoms) should arise in it, and after these another, the little horn, who should subdue three out of the ten. "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they (the times and laws) shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time." Here we have several features of this little horn's career. His daring blasphemy against the Most High, his persecution of the saints, his impious interference with times and ordinances, and the

space for which these latter — no doubt Jewish times and Jewish laws — should be given into his hand. His power is to continue for three years and a half. "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." Everything then will be reversed. "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Blessed conclusion of the whole matter!

We turn now to Revelation. Other passages in Daniel will demand examination; but there are two chapters in Revelation so intimately connected with those we have been considering, as to claim our immediate attention. The first is chap. 13. Two symbolic beasts are there described. The first rises out of the sea, as did Daniel's four beasts; and between this one in Rev. 13 and the fourth beast in Dan. 7 there are points of identity amply sufficient to show that it is the same beast which both symbols represent. There are, at the same time, many additional features brought out in this later communication from God. The Apocalyptic beast, just like that in Daniel, has ten horns; but in Rev. 13 it is represented with seven heads as well as ten horns. The horns are crowned, and upon the heads are names of blasphemy. We are not told in Daniel to what species the fourth beast in resemblance belonged; in Rev. 13 he is seen as combining in himself the features of the three beasts which represented the three former empires - a leopard in its general appearance, but feet like those of a bear, and a lion's mouth. The swiftness of Grecian conquest, the weight of Persian oppression, and the majesty of Babylonian greatness, all found in this fourth great and terrible empire *in the special form in which it is beheld by the prophet of Patmos*. Further, we have here the source of its greatness and its strength. "And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." "The dragon" is explained in the previous chapter to be "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." He is represented as being cast out of heaven, and it is said by those in heaven, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." That short time is shown by verse 14 to be the very period to which Dan. 7 limits the reign of the little horn. Rev. 13: 5, moreover, gives the same period in months, forty and two months, as the period of the power of the beast in the peculiar form in which that chapter describes him. Is it not evident from these considerations, that the subject of Rev. 13 is not the Roman Empire during its entire existence, *but that empire in its last form*, when the ten horns have made their appearance, and when the dragon, cast out of heaven and come down to earth, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time, uses that time in giving to this beast "his power, and his seat, and great authority?" Further, one of the seven heads, treated of in this chapter for the first time, is seen wounded as it were to death; but the deadly wound is healed, and all the world wonders after the beast. Here is the renewal, and apparently by Satanic power, of a form of government under which the Roman Empire had once existed, but which had passed away. Now, on its reappearance, the whole world is filled with admiration and awe. Worshipping the dragon and the beast, they say, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" The moral identity between verses 5-7, and what is said of the little horn in Dan. 7, can scarcely fail to strike any mind. Here, however, the picture is darker than in the Old Testament. We have the full extent of his power brought out to view. "And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain

from the foundation of the world." In view of a delusion so awful and wide-spread, how reasonable the warning, "If any man have an ear, let him hear! "

The remainder of Rev. 13 is occupied with the description of another beast, coming up out of the earth — Christ-like in its power, ("two horns like a lamb") but dragon-like in its speech. This second beast is a kind of prime minister of the other, exercising all the power of the first beast in his presence, and causing the earth and the dwellers therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. It is by miracles that he is able thus to deceive. It is said of "the man of sin, that wicked," in 2 Thess. 2, that his "coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders," and of this second beast in Rev. 13 we are told, "and he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast." Ah, dear readers, these are no mere pretended miracles, such as abound in Romanism, but real prodigies, which, at a time when God shall send upon men strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, it will be permitted that this instrument of Satan shall produce. None will be deluded by them but those who would not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved; but how fearful to think of a time fast approaching, when the very miracle which in Elijah's day attested that Jehovah is the true God, shall be permitted to be wrought by Satanic power, to induce men to worship the beast, to whom Satan will have given his power, and his seat, and great authority. "And he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Awful alternative! On the one hand, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation;" (Rev. 14: 9, 10;) and on the other hand, the second beast has power, as we have seen, to cause that as many as will not worship the image of the beast shall be killed. Death in this world, or damnation in the next, will then be the dread alternative! Reader, if you have not yet fled for refuge to Christ, delay not a moment longer! God grant thee, while the day of salvation lasts, repentance unto life!

"The beast" is but a secondary subject in Rev. 17, Babylon the Great being its distinctive theme. Still her connection with the beast is such, that the latter is necessarily brought prominently to view; and we have a multiplicity of details presented which are not found elsewhere. The judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and by the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk — this is the subject of the chapter. John is carried away in the spirit, and sees "a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." The identity of this beast, both morally and in external form, with that of Rev. 13, and the fourth beast in Dan. 7, is thus evident. But here a woman is seen sitting on the beast. The Church, be it remembered, though betrothed to Christ, has never yet been married to Him. When, therefore, that which assumes

to be the Church forms unholy alliances with the earth's kings, and corrupts and intoxicates the earth's inhabitants, her sin is described, not as the infidelity to her husband of a married woman, but as the unchastity of one who should have kept herself as a chaste virgin for Christ. Jerusalem, which had been married to Jehovah, is always charged by the prophets with adultery.

It is not this sin but fornication which is charged on Babylon. And whether we regard this her unchaste character — her name, expressive of the attempt at unity and uniformity, on which God wrote confusion — her imperial state, arrayed in purple and scarlet colour — her riches, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls — her enchantments, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations (idols, see 1 Kings 11: 5, 7) and filthiness of her fornication — her effrontery, having her name written on her forehead — whether we consider these things, *or her cruelty, drunken with the blood of the saints; and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus* — what doubt can there be that she symbolizes that huge system of fraud, violence, idolatry, and persecution, which has for so many centuries, under the name of Christ, held the reins of empire in the Roman earth, and been supported by its resources? When John saw her, he wondered with great admiration. The angel undertakes to tell him the mystery, not only of the woman, but "of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." Let us listen to his explanation; and the Lord give us understanding in His word!

"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 yet is." The characteristics of this Roman beast are, that at some given epoch it can be truly said of it, that it was, that it is not, and yet that it shall thereafter exist; but as to this future existence, it is to be by ascending out of the bottomless pit; and its end, is to go into perdition. Moreover, it is when the beast has thus ascended out of the bottomless pit, that all whose names are not in the book of life wonder at it, and follow it. Apply this to the Roman empire. Once, as all know, it was. Then, as one firm, consolidated empire, it ceased to exist. But it has not passed off the stage for ever — it is to exist again; and when it does so exist, it will have ascended out of the bottomless pit — the dragon will have given to it his power and seat and great authority. The future and last form of the fourth great Roman empire is to be purely Satanic, and perdition is its certain doom, and the doom of all who acknowledge its claims. But further particulars are afforded. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." No one can question that both in Daniel and Revelation "beasts" symbolize kingdoms or empires. Must not then the heads of beasts represent the governments of those empires or kingdoms? The seat and centre of government may be a king, an emperor, a dictator, a popular assembly, or what not; But if a beast be a kingdom, the head of that beast is surely the governing, controlling power. Now this Roman beast was to have seven such heads, or forms of government. They are also said to be mountains, and every student of Scripture knows that a mountain is the emblem of authority. Of these seven heads, or forms of government in the Roman empire, we are told, "five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." When this explanation was given to John, five of these forms of government had already fallen: one, which we know to be the imperial, existed. Thus we have six. Another, the seventh, was yet to come, but when it came, it was to continue but a short space. This decides that it cannot be, as many have thought, Popery. When the relative and proportionate duration of seven forms of government is in question, to suppose that the one which lasts longest of any, is spoken of as continuing but a short space, is to do violence to every principle of sober judgment and interpretation. What this seventh head is we do not undertake to say.*

*We may mention what others have suggested, that in the new arrangements which followed the downfall of the late French Emperor, no one took the title of "the king of Rome,"

which had been held by the German emperors till his day, but which he had appropriated to himself, or given to his son. It has not existed since. His rule was certainly unique in character, and continued but for a short space; but we merely mention this as a suggestion which may deserve to be weighed by our readers.

But there is an eighth head. As in Daniel 7, the prophet first sees ten horns, and then another little horn come up among them, and that little horn thenceforth becomes the great final actor in the scene, so here there are seven heads, which are explained as we have seen; but then we are told, "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." After the seventh head, which continues but a short space, has passed away, there is to be yet another head, or form, or mode of government. It is to be "of the seven" as being the re-appearance of one of those which had previously existed, and yet it has this fearful distinction from the seven, which really constitutes it the eighth, namely, that it is from beneath. The resuscitated Roman empire, with a head or government politically resembling one of the previous seven, but really deriving his power, and seat, and great authority from the dragon, ascending thus out of the bottomless pit, — this resuscitated Roman empire, we say, will so take its character from this eighth head, will be so absolutely actuated and controlled by him, that in the passage before us they are completely identified — "The beast that was, and is not, *even he is the eighth*," that is, the eighth head, "and goeth into perdition." Remarkable as is this mode of expression, the meaning is not difficult to perceive. The revived Roman empire under its eighth, its Satanic head, is so identified with and characterized by that head, that they are spoken of as one. It is the Roman empire in this view of it that the passage represents to us.

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." We beg the reader's attention to these words. Daniel 2 speaks specifically of the toes of the image, and intimates thus that the last state of the fourth monarchy would be this tenfold division of its power. Daniel 7 speaks of the ten horns, and of the little horn which plucks up three, and the actings of which so pervade and characterize the beast, as to become the occasion of judgment being executed, not on the little horn alone, but on the beast as a whole. In Revelation 13 we have the ten horns, and here also. But here we have the important information that they are ten kings who had received no kingdom in John's day, and who do not receive power as kings till the beast, that is to say, the Roman empire under its eighth headship, receives power. "They receive power as kings one hour with the beast." No wonder then that such uncertainty should have attended all attempts to define the ten Roman monarchies. They only exist as such after the resuscitation of the Roman empire. And now mark the character and actings of these ten kings. "They have one mind and give their power and strength unto the beast." They are subsidiary kings, distinct from, and yet entirely and willingly subject to, the beast. "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Such is the doom of Babylon, and such are its executioners. The world itself, which the false Church has succeeded in corrupting, will recoil against its corruptress. The ten kings, and the beast to whom they give their power, will be her destruction. It has been the habit to interpret all these things of Popery: and God is our witness that it is no desire to screen or palliate the evils of Popery, which makes us reject such a theory. Babylon doubtless

symbolizes Popery; not Popery *alone*, but *chiefly*, we may surely say. But the more certain we are of Popery being symbolized by the great whore, the mother of harlots and abominations, the more certain it appears that Popery cannot be represented by the beast, which first supports and then destroys her, or by its eighth head, in whose days that destruction takes place. The little horn in Daniel 7, the man of sin in 2 Thess. 2, the beast whose deadly wound has been healed in Rev. 13, and the beast coming up out of the bottomless pit in Revelation 17, are all identified by marks both moral and historical, too plainly to be easily mistaken. It is the anxiety to fix on Romanism the brand of being so represented, which has doubtless led to the persuasion so many hold, of its being the subject of these scriptures. But do any of these symbols present us with a blacker picture than that of Babylon the great? And do we not need to beware of supposing that there is but one type of human evil? one product of Satanic skill and power? Popery, with every other form of ecclesiastical corruption, will be overthrown by the letting loose of man's violence, under the direction of that eighth head to which Satan will have given his power. But the agents of Babylon's downfall are not less wicked than Babylon herself. If God puts it into their hearts to fulfil his will as the providential agents of her destruction, it is from no love to God, or love to Christ, that they thus act. So far from this, we are told, "These shall make war with the Lamb." They, and the beast to whom they give their power, are the final adversaries of Christ. That which has falsely borne His name, borne it only to cause it to be blasphemed, will be given up to these ten kings to destroy; but when they turn to make war against the Lamb Himself, another destiny awaits them. "The Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

It is the Church, the saints, who will be with Him when He comes forth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. See Rev. 19: 14. And what, dear Christian readers, should be the course of those whose hope it is to be with Christ ere those final sorrows on earth commence, and to be with Him When He comes forth to destroy His adversaries? Ought we not to be with Him in the spirit of our minds, and with Him in our testimony, and with Him in the whole tenor of our walk, even now? There are two great currents in human affairs, on the bosom of which the great mass of mankind are thoughtlessly drifting onwards. Both end in destruction. The one in the destruction which awaits the harlot at the hands of the beast and his ten confederate kings: the other in the destruction which awaits these last enemies of Christ, at the moment of His appearing. What has the child of God to do with either? Nothing. His place is to live Christ — to confess Christ — to wait for Christ — to suffer with Christ — if need be, to die for Christ — assured that ere the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world arrives, Christ will have come to receive His saints in the air, and that so when the last conflict comes, his only relation to it will be that of being in the train of Christ's glory, when He shall come to tread the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

What a solemn light does this whole subject shed on what Scripture calls "the course of this world!" Many have supposed that the fourth empire having been nominally Christianized, its character had undergone an essential change, and that, in consequence, Christians might now interest themselves in its politics, and occupy themselves with its affairs. What a total mistake! Ancient Babylon might establish the worship of Bel and Nebo, — the Persian monarchs might enforce the more subtle idolatry of the east — Greece and Rome might both bow down to Jupiter and his hosts of inferior deities, — and the latter might, after a time, depose these and adopt, as it did a religion compounded of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, — *the character of Gentile*

power remains unchanged throughout. More modern nations may have come even more fully under Christian influences, and the attempted mingling of the iron and clay in these very countries may have given, nay, has given an opportunity to Christian people of all classes in society to mix themselves up with worldly politics, to an extent impossible in earlier times. But let not the Lord's people be deceived. The sitting of the woman on the beast has not made the latter any less a beast: and the scriptures we have been considering show us that under its eighth, Satanic head, with his ten confederate kings, this beast will unseat its rider, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. But is it a Christian's place to take any part in movements tending towards this result? Surely not. His citizenship is in heaven. His place is, as a stranger on earth, to yield hearty and unfeigned subjection to the powers that be, wherever it can be rendered without disloyalty to Christ. Then, it is his place to suffer, and take it patiently. But as to wielding this world's authority, or taking part in this world's politics, a Christian has no more to do with such things than Christ Himself had. The end of all Gentile politics, whether national or international, Protestant or Popish, progressive or retrogressive, — the end of all Gentile politics is the battle of the great day of God Almighty. The Lord keep His people from all the currents which lead on to such a vortex. The saints will indeed be there, but it will be as coming forth from heaven in the train of the mighty Conqueror. He is our portion, His descent into the air our hope, and when He appears we shall appear with Him in glory.

The Lord bless these meditations and inquiries to the separating His people more and more from every form and character of evil, to wait only and patiently for Him.