

## ~Other Speakers A-F: Andrew Bonar:

In saying so much of Antichrist, it was impossible not to anticipate to a certain extent, what ought in proper order to have fallen under this division of the subject. It was necessary to allude to some of its circumstances in establishing his personality, the time of his appearing, and his duration. But having proceeded so far, it may be objected that in speaking of the Antichrist hitherto, we have been assuming without proof, that many different names in different parts of Scripture are all used to indicate this one and the same individual. It is admitted that similarity of destruction is not in itself sufficient to establish identity, and therefore this seems to be the place to show how the different names claimed for him in the Old Testament, as well as in the New, do, in fact, apply to him and to no one else.

First then as connecting the Old with the New Testament in what is said of the Antichrist, let us take the "little horn"\* of the first to compare with the "man of sin," "the son of perdition" of the second. The one name occurs in Daniel 7, the other in 2 Thessalonians 2, and we have been taking them till now as applying to one and the same individual. That this is a necessity will be seen without difficulty if the chronology is attended to.

\*(That "a horn" in the days of Babylon was used as the emblem of kingly rank, may be witnessed in the Nineveh sculptures recently deposited in the British Museum, where "horns" on their head-dress or caps are seen distinctly denoting the monarch from his attendants. This looks like a silent testimony introduced among us at the right time to the especial propriety with which "the little horn" is taken in Scripture to denote the rising power of this "king of Babylon," who, we have seen, is like the sculptures themselves, so associated with Assyria, as to be called "the Assyrian").

Daniel's vision of the four beasts is explained: "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" (Dan. 7:17-18). This is the general outline given of the world's history. But in the explanation which follows we see the first three rapidly passed over, whilst the description lingers upon the fourth and last to call our special attention to it. "Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, 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" (Dan. 7:19-20).

It is contended that the power so described must be in full dominion at the end, for the prophet proceeds thus, "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" (vv. 21-22), which again, further on, is declared to be the "everlasting kingdom" (v. 27). It is also explained of him (v. 25) that "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 shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (the three and a half years, the 1260 days, the 42 months already so frequently alluded to).

Now if we compare all this with what is said in 2 Thessalonians of the "man of sin," it cannot but be admitted that this little horn and he must be identical, for not only do their characters and actions agree perfectly, but both are seen "exalted" at the close, without mention of their being rivals to each other, and continuing till the saints possess the kingdom, which from other Scriptures cannot be until the Lord terminates the oppression by the brightness of His coming to destroy that wicked or lawless one; which, being in both instances in the singular case (2 Thess. 2:8 and Dan. 7:26) also forbids the thought of their being two such enemies, both exalting themselves above all, and both in existence when the time comes for the saints to possess the kingdom under the whole heaven at Christ's appearing, and not till then (see John 16:19-22).

Another name we have claimed for him is "the Assyrian," which occurs, among other places, in three of the chapters of Isaiah, where he is seen with the same prominence involved in what is to be only at the coming of the Lord.

In the first of these chapters (10:5), he is spoken of as "the rod of Mine anger," sent against "the people of My wrath . . . to tread them down like the mire in the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so (that he is but an instrument); but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." It is then added, "When the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish . . . the stout (proud) heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my

hand I have done it" (vv. 12-13). The time at which this happens, as we have seen, is, when God has performed his "whole work," after which (v. 20) in that day "the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel." The Assyrian having smitten them after the manner of Egypt, the Lord's indignation is seen to cease in their destruction, the remnant returns, and the consumption overflows with righteousness. Who can doubt that this will only be in the days when Israel at last exclaims, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord," to destroy Antichrist, the little horn, the lawless one, the Assyrian?

In Isaiah 14:25, mention is again made of the destruction of the Assyrian whose hand had been stretched out, not upon Israel alone, but upon "all nations," with mention at the same time of the downfall of Babylon, which is then to be swept with the besom of destruction, and with whose king each candid reader of the chapter will see "the Assyrian" identified. The chronology here again determines the place to be that of Antichrist's, for on the destruction of "the Assyrian," the yoke and the burden departs from off their shoulders, as he is broken "in My land," a consummation only to be at Christ's coming.

Once more, in Isaiah 30:31, the destruction of "the Assyrian" by that coming, is still more distinctly referred to, with allusion to the joy of "tabrets and harps" which follows it, after the Lord shall have caused "His glorious voice to be heard," and shown "the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones" (v. 30). Who can doubt that this is Antichrist, the wicked one, who is here called "the Assyrian," destroyed by the brightness of His coming?

It is equally evident that the Assyrian and the king of Babylon must be the same individual, the name being derived from the locality of Babylon in the land of Chaldea, embraced in Assyria. In one of the chapters just referred to (Isa. 14), they are distinctly identified, whilst to the king of Babylon there, the exact words and characteristics of Antichrist under all the names we have been considering, are given. "I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" etc. (vv. 13-14). And mark how the accompaniments again determine the chronology to be, like all the rest, at the coming of the Lord, for then only will it be said, "the whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they brake forth into singing" (v. 7); "The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth" (vv. 5-6).

The whole passage is strikingly descriptive not only of Antichrist, as given under other names identifying this, from the peculiarity, with all the rest, but of his coming by the agency of "hell" (v. 9), or as we read in Thessalonians, "after the working of Satan," and in Revelation 13:2, of the dragon, giving him "his power, and his seat, and great authority." Nor ought it to be overlooked, that when this "king of Babylon" (who can be from this description none other than the Antichrist), "falls" (Isa. 14:4-12), how distinctly his city, which is described similarly to that in the Revelation, is seen to fall with him; its very name thereafter is cut off (v. 22), whilst the designation of "the Assyrian" is there applied to its king as if to mark the locality in which that Babylon is to be at its destruction.

In Ezekiel 31, we find the Assyrian spoken of with remarkable distinctness, both in regard to his exaltation and his overthrow, the description being addressed to the king of Egypt—a name constantly employed in Scripture, as must have been observed, to express the help derived from the world, in opposition to the help which cometh from God alone. The Assyrian's connection with such must therefore be intimate, and accordingly at the conclusion of the warning given to all against attempted independence, as well as against seeking such godless appliances, the Assyrian, with "Pharaoh and all his multitude" are classed as one, as both the help and the helper are seen overthrown together. "To whom art thou thus like in glory . . . among the trees of Eden? Yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden into the nether parts of the earth; thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord God" (v. 18).

In Hosea 5, Ephraim is seen to have been among the seekers of this help, "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jereb (translated in the margin, the king that should plead); yet could he not heal . . . your wound" (v. 13).

Again, in Hosea 11:1-4, Israel and Ephraim, called as they had been out of Egypt and drawn with the cords of a man and with bands of love, yet "knew not that I had healed them." And mark what this their stubbornness will at last lead to. "He (Israel) shall not return into the land of Egypt (where the former oppression had been), but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return" (v. 5). Yet though God will give them such a king in His anger, hear the yearnings of His compassion and His mercy in the end, "I will not execute the fierceness

of Mine anger . . . for I am God and not man" (v. 9). The Assyrian, their last oppressor, does not finally destroy them. "They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord" (v. 11).

In Micah 5, Christ, Who comes out of Bethlehem Ephratah, is distinctly seen to be the Deliverer from "the Assyrian" to mark that his destruction is identical with that of the man of sin, the son of perdition, and that they are therefore one and the same. "And this man (the Ruler of Israel Whose goings forth have been from everlasting) shall be the peace, when the Assyrian . . . shall tread in our palaces" (plant the tabernacles of his palace . . . in the glorious Holy Mountain—Daniel 11:45). How accurate the agreement and how perfect the identification of the Assyrian with the king in Daniel also, "who does according to his will," as well as with Antichrist, the man of sin, who is destroyed by Christ's coming.

Another name given to him is the beast. This is in the Revelation and occurs there three times. In the first of these (13:1-2), his rising is described with seven heads and ten horns, which must be those spoken of by Daniel (7:24), as signifying the ten kingdoms of the Roman earth which were to be at the end. The "blasphemy" written upon his head and the devil giving him his power, can surely be supposed to apply to none other than to him who under the title of the man of sin, the son of perdition, comes also distinctly in the time of the end "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2).

The next mention of the beast (Rev. 17) shows him in connection with Babylon and the ten kings also, making war with the Lamb, and the Lamb overcoming him (v. 14), which is, as Antichrist is elsewhere described to be, destroyed with "the brightness of His coming."

And as if to remove all doubt of that identity, the destruction itself is described in the third passage alluded to (Rev. 19:19), where the beast encounters the Rider on the white horse Whose Name is declared to be "The Word of God"—the chronology being again fixed by the millennial reign immediately succeeding.

In 2 Thessalonians, Antichrist is called the "man of sin," as he is also in one of the passages already quoted (Isa. 14:16), a "man." "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake the kingdoms?" And he is also shown to be "a man" in Revelation 13:18, his number there (whatever it may be) "being the number of a man." This he must be to be the king of Babylon as we have seen he is, and his being so distinctly declared to be a man shows there is no absurdity in supposing he will be also a king according to the name so given him in Scripture. Besides these, there are various other names employed there also designating an individual, which on examining the context, will be seen to apply to none but him. They are apparently used to express one or other of the characteristics of "the lawless one," and do show him accordingly always in remarkable antagonism, as might be expected, to the characteristics of Him Whom he tries to supplant and overcome.

Thus in Zechariah 11:17, he is called the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock, in contrast to the Good Shepherd Who giveth His life for the sheep (John 10:11). The man of (or from) the earth (Ps. 10:18), in contrast to the Second Man Who is the Lord from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). The vile person (Dan. 11:21), to contrast with Him, Whom an unclean spirit even recognized as "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). The oppressor (Isa. 14:4), in contrast to the Deliverer Who shall come out of Zion (Rom. 11:26). The little horn (Dan. 8:9), in contrast to Him of Whom it is said "In My Name shall his horn be exalted" (Ps. 89:24). The destroyer of the Gentiles (Jer. 4:7), in contrast to Him in Whom shall the Gentiles trust (Rom. 15:12). Lucifer fallen from heaven (Isa. 14:12), in contrast to Him Who is "the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev. 22:16). The terrible one (Isa. 29:20), in contrast to the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The son of wickedness (Ps. 89:22), in contrast to the Son of God (Mark 1:1).

Surely no one on reflection can fail to be struck with the individuality indicated by each and all of these passages, which show the personality of Antichrist in as strong language as the personality of our blessed Lord Himself. The object however at present in making these references, is to exhibit not his personality alone, but how the different names all point to and imply one great and the same individual. If successful in this, the destruction of the Antichrist, which is the point now immediately to be considered, will be easily shown as will be the harmony of all the passages which speak of it as falling upon him under these different names and designations.

In the metaphorical system still followed by a large and influential class of interpreters, the thought of amelioration is constantly encouraged by what is made out of a gradual drying up of evil towards the end, by the advance and progress of Scripture truth which "Christ's coming" is declared to mean.

The pope, at all hazards, is still held to be the "man of sin," and this has contributed greatly to the maintenance

of this error, for his unsteady career and present decrepitude encourage the thought they cling to of a gradual disappearance, however he may, from time to time, still rise or sink. But surely no thinking inquirer can read the many passages which have been already referred to without seeing that increasing confusion and increasing evil with a sudden tremendous termination, in which an individual man, who had been exalted and was exalting himself in the midst of it, is signally and fearfully destroyed, is really what Scripture language indicates, if words are to mean any thing at all.

"The Antichrist" has all along, in what has been said, been regarded here as this individual, and is seen "before that great and terrible day of the Lord" distinctly denying (which no pope has ever done), the Father as well as the Son (1 John 2:22), or as elsewhere expressed, exalting "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4). He it is "whom the Lord shall consume (destroy) . . . with the brightness of His coming" (v. 8), a coming which so far from being a gradual coming, is constantly and invariably spoken of as sudden, "as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2), as the lightning that "cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27).

When the risen Saviour left this world, it was whilst He blessed them and as His disciples beheld that "He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). This surely was "sudden." And if so, His return will be in the same fashion, for the angels that stood by as His disciples were gazing after Him into heaven, declared "that this same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Let us remember that Christ had then been visibly as well as tangibly with them after His resurrection for Thomas had been told to thrust his hand into His side, and it was therefore in His body, in which He bore "the print of the nails" that He ascended. It is "in like manner" that that same Jesus shall come again in the clouds, though now "with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). It does seem indeed strange presumption to declare that a coming, so spoken of, can mean nothing more than a spiritual and gradual one, and that the destruction of the man of sin by it is only a slow consumption of the papacy by the substitution of Scripture truth in its stead.

When Christ comes, every eye shall see Him, and they that pierced Him shall mourn. But if by "the extension of truth" His coming is already taking place, alas! who are seeing Him? Surely it is high time for Christians to rouse up and investigate Scripture for themselves, and to cease from listening to those who would (perhaps unconsciously) turn its plainest warnings and declarations into anything or nothing.

If in the apostle's day it could be said that "the night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12), how near may, or rather must, that day be to us! And how ought men to be marking its description by the sure word of prophecy in all its particulars, instead of giving ear to those who are flattering themselves and others with the vain thought of a peaceful surrender of his dominion by Satan who is now "the prince of it," and a gradual advance of better things.

Hear how differently both prophet and apostle speak of the termination, if their emphatic language is good to express any thing. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My Holy Mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand! A day . . . of clouds and of thick darkness . . . a great people and a strong (the beast and the kings of the earth—Revelation 19:19); there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be . . . even to the years of many generations" (Joel 2:1-2).

It is gravely asserted that all this is past already, having had its accomplishment at the destruction of Jerusalem. If so, what cruel mockery must her children be thinking the words of the prophet to have been, for surely their floors are not filled with wheat nor their vats with wine (Joel 2:24) nor have they ceased yet to be a reproach among the heathen (v. 19). Must not they to whom Joel prophesied be thinking such predicted blessedness can only mean something still to be, even should they be overlooking "the day of darkness" and terror which is to introduce it?

Of "that great and terrible day" we have another prophet saying, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light . . . even very dark, and no brightness in it" (Amos 5:18-20).

Another, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isa. 13:9).

Another, "The great day of the Lord is near . . . and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the

mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zeph. 1:14-15).

Again, in the New Testament in perfect harmony, as ever, with the Old, "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 heavens 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 (land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29-30). It is clearly at that "coming" that the man of sin, the son of perdition of whom we have been speaking is destroyed, for Christ comes but "once again" when He is to "reign for ever and ever."

"Shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) will in that day be found to have been a question full of significant meaning, for Antichrist will then be exalted and all the earth wondering after him, nay, even worshipping the devil who had given him the power they see him exerting (Rev. 13:4). Is this the gradual amelioration, in the thought of which men are already beginning to enter into the delusion of mistaking evil for good, which will result in an "apostasy" from truth altogether?

We are apt to lose sight of what is said of the "deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10) in which Antichrist comes, and of which already, if Scripture warning was regarded, we might be seeing the "workings," although never was outward decency drawing a thicker veil than now over the hidden things of dishonesty and darkness. Men would be shocked and society call out against it were the grossness of bygone times to revive in these days. The tide of feeling is in another direction and perhaps towards greater refinement and elegance. But let us not blind ourselves to the declared results in which all this is to end. "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

The parable of the tares and the wheat in Matthew 13 might surely forbid the thought of this gradual amelioration, for they flourish together till the end of the harvest which is explained to be "the end of the world" (age), when they are to be gathered out. And Isaiah confirms this by telling us (Isa. 26:9) that it will be by God's judgments and not by man's efforts, that the world will even then be converted. For it is "when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

What the day of grace then had failed, through man's perverseness, to accomplish, the day of judgment will, that day meaning here the coming of the Lord to judge the world in righteousness. The distinctness of all Holy Scripture as to "that day" is as remarkable as the attempts being made to reduce the warning to nothing by spiritualizing (which is not spiritual! —Ed.) the plainest declarations of what will then be seen—As in the days of Noah, in spite of his preaching, men "knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:39).

And the same was it with our Lord's first coming, in the face of what prophets had spoken with perfect literality as the event itself proved, of the circumstances in which that "coming" was to take place. People perplex what is said by allowing themselves to be persuaded that the coming of the Lord to destroy Antichrist, is merely another expression for the final judgment, which all tell us they are assured of, whether prepared for it or not. But they will not see that events occur after the coming of our Lord which show that the end of all evil is not to be even at that time, and that therefore the final judgment which terminates all, must be future to it, for the devil himself, the great deceiver, is let loose a thousand years after Antichrist and his army has been consumed by His coming, when he gathers again a fearful confederacy before he himself, with Death and Hades (the last enemy), are cast into Gehenna (Rev. 20).

The terrible day of Christ's coming to destroy Antichrist and terminate his day as well as his tribulation, will have therefore long preceded the final judgment, and it is for Antichrist and the tribulation, and the apostasy he triumphs in, that the church is so strongly warned in all Scripture to be prepared even now.

Surely if these things are so, it is for every Christian to be watching and looking well to Scripture, for Christ's day will be ushered in by a time of "great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning," and which His glorious appearing alone will terminate. It is especially needful too, to think well of the "deceivableness" spoken of, and to be on our guard against a more open "working of Satan" who in introducing his Antichrist will aid him with all "signs and lying wonders" to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect (Mark 13:22). This could only have been written for their warning, for "none of the wicked shall understand" (Dan. 12:10). And if so, how amazing the slowness exhibited by Christians in giving heed to a message so distinctly delivered.

It is "in the last end of the indignation . . . and when the transgressors are come to the full" (Dan. 8:19-23) that

the spirit of Antichrist which is already in the world (1 John 4:3), is to be embodied in a man, like ourselves, and to him the devil will give "his power and great authority." He it is who will distinctly as a man, try to exalt himself, with that help, above all that is called God or is worshipped, denying the Father and the Son, even as the spirit that will be in him has been from the beginning a denial of the other Person in the Blessed Trinity.

And under man, so manifested and emancipated from all control by the permitted energy of Satan, will be seen what a world is, in which the God that made it, the Son that redeemed it, and the Spirit that sanctified it, are all at once and altogether disowned and insulted. Mercifully, God will shorten those days else, as He Himself has told us, no flesh should be saved (Matthew 24:22).

How distinctly may Habakkuk be seen on his watch-tower, looking out for the fulfillment of the vision he had seen, and which he knew at the appointed time was to speak in "the end" (2:1-3). And who can miss seeing that the vision itself, which is given (1:5-12) did distinctly intimate not only the tribulation "terrible and dreadful," but that one should be over it offending, and "imputing his power unto his god"—that god being, as we are told elsewhere, the devil (Rev. 13:4)?

In the description given, Antichrist is seen in connection with the Chaldeans, in respect to his being "king of Babylon." Judgment and dignity proceeding of themselves (v. 7), marking the lawless one who does according to his will—"the east wind" (v. 9), an emblem of blight and desolation following his steps. Scoffing at all kings (v. 10), who are sunk in his being exalted above all. His mind changing, passing over and offending (v. 11) refer to his breaking (in the midst of the week) the covenant so often referred to already (Dan. 9:27)—see also Psalm 55:20-23 in contrast with Psalm 89:34.

This is followed by the astonishment of the prophet that the Everlasting and Holy One should permit such terrible wickedness and misery.

How marvelously does Habakkuk afterward enlarge the description of him in chapter 2, and dwell in chapter 3 upon "the coming," by which Antichrist and his followers are to be destroyed, when as if to close all, and himself being in full preparedness for the confusion and terror seen to be coming, this man of God so "thoroughly furnished" could, in the failure of all things, rejoice still in the Lord and joy in the God of his salvation (Hab. 3:18). Nor is the support given to his faith less apparent, for he exclaims, "God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet"—an animal, as we know, fitted to walk safely in dangerous high places where others would stumble and be destroyed.

Intimation of the same may be noticed in Malachi also, where the "coming of the Lord," as a refiner and purifier, is distinctly seen to "cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar" (Mal. 2:12). "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" (3:2). Yet following immediately, as may be constantly observed in all Scripture when that trouble is past, is a comforting assurance, "then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years" (Mal. 3:4).

Joel, too, is full of striking allusions to the tribulation, which must be the same so often referred to for it ceases only "in the terrible day of the Lord," when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood (Joel 2:31), and when immediately after, the deliverance of Mount Zion and Jerusalem is seen and the bringing again the captivity. "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the Hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3:16).

The desolators had been spoken of previously (Joel 1:6), which surely describes Antichrist with the kings confederated with him (here spoken of as "one nation") for God had put it "in their hearts . . . to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast," until His purposes are fulfilled (Rev. 17:17). "For a nation is come up upon My land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion" (Joel 1:6). In Revelation 13:2, the description of him to whom the devil gives his power, is that he had "the mouth of a lion" and here is similarly described with similar outrage, as in that chapter of Revelation above referred to.

"He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white" (Joel 1:7). And that all this does really, without fancy, apply to Antichrist is proved by the chronology so often already noticed, the destruction being again in "the day of the Lord." "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction (fire) from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?" (vv. 15-16).

In Hosea, too, the warnings of coming wrath are mixed with promises of mercy and conversion—when "He shall roar . . . the children shall tremble . . . they shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria" (11:10-11). How true will these words sound to Israel in that day, "I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath" (13:11). "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon" (14:5)!

Amos has also, like the rest, a sight of the trouble as well as of the future blessing when the trouble is over and gone. "The Lord God of hosts is He that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as the flood of Egypt" (9:5). "All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen" (vv. 10-11).

An objection is sometimes made that by dwelling so much on an Antichrist that is future, we may become less sensitive than we ought to be to the many antichrists that are already in the world. But such an objection will cease to be thought of when we come to see that what is to be fully developed then, is just what we are to strive and watch against now, that watching and striving being quickened the more when we see whither the present tendency of all things is conducting, instead of deceiving ourselves with false ideas of the world, with some removable evils, being in progress towards amendment.

And although the thought that the pope is the man of sin has to be surrendered, why should this make us less alive to the real mischief of the papacy when we see, more than ever perhaps, how largely it is contributing by its "vain traditions and doctrines of devils," to hasten what we are now taught to believe will be an apostasy yet more dishonoring to God, and fearful in its consequences to man?

"The coming of the Lord" is what the apostles taught to be the hope of Christ's people, and this they would pray and long for more earnestly if they would only see how much Scripture says of the increasing antichristianism which is to prevail and prosper, until checked and destroyed by His appearing. Such would assuredly be the case if we were not fixing our eyes so resolutely on the papacy, and fancying that were it to fall, all would be well whilst error with which the papacy has nothing to do, and which, in fact, ignores the papacy like everything else, is all the while springing up and threatening the total rejection of the Bible itself as a rule of life, or even as a thing to be believed.

If evil is coming, it is scarcely less dangerous to be looking for it in a wrong direction than not to be looking for it at all. And if Scripture tells us where it is to be, it is purely presumptuous for any among us to be thinking we may do very well without the warning.

If we long, as we ought to do, for the destruction of all evil and the admission of the saints, whether alive or dead into an enjoyment with us of the blessedness which is to follow the sorrow and confusion of the present, how is it we do not pray with greater desire that "Thy kingdom come"? A consummation however will not be till the tribulation is past, and Antichrist himself destroyed by Christ at His appearing and kingdom.

We are told Christians ought to feel satisfied if individually they are safe and taken to be with Christ. But this is losing sight of the collective and increased blessing which will be when "the dead in Christ" in their glorified bodies (now lying in dishonor), shall be raised and "caught up to meet Him" and each other, and when they who are alive and remain shall be changed to be their fitting companions. Paul thought to depart and be with Christ was far better, but his longing, as may be seen, was not to "be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality (the earthly house) might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4); with this express condition however, if so be that when Christ appears, Who is our life, and in Whom it is now hid, we being already clothed in His righteousness, shall not be found naked, but ready to meet Him in the air, in our bodies, which are then to be raised in incorruption.

The whole creation, laboring and groaning, is said to be waiting for this manifestation of the "sons of God," and yet, are they themselves alone of all creation to be insensible to the glory, and careless of the reunion, which is awaiting and only delayed till the mystery has been finished in the revelation and destruction of the Antichrist himself? He is yet, if Scripture words mean anything, to appear in an apostasy, more dangerous to the church in its deceivableness as well as oppression, than any trial that has yet been encountered.

The nature and urgency of the crisis may be judged by the array brought forth to meet it. "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns . . . And the armies

which were in heaven followed Him . . . And He hath on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:11-16). It is He Who encounters the beast and his armies and destroys them with the brightness of His coming. The head of wickedness (see Gen.3:15) in the height of his rebellion is met and crushed by "the Seed of the woman," Who is also the Lord from heaven.

Is it possible that the church can any longer remain in such indifference as to the promised deliverance, which extends not only to those of its members who are to be "alive and remain" at that day, but to the loved ones who are asleep and whom Christ will bring with Him? Of their yearnings we seem actually to catch an echo, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rev. 6:10-11).

In the passages of Scripture which relate to the destruction of Antichrist, the various modes of expressing it are all in harmony with each other, and all agree in distinctly showing it to be accomplished by superhuman agency. The great fact itself is plainly proclaimed in the verses of 2 Thessalonians, so often referred to already—consumed by the spirit (breath) of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His coming—and all other mention will be found pointing to such a destruction as well as such a Destroyer.

In Daniel he is "broken without hand" (8:25). In another passage (9:27), which is more intelligibly translated in the margin than in the text, the allusion is first to his setting up his abomination and then to his destruction. "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and upon the battlements (or pinnacle, for it is the same word as is used to designate the pinnacle of the temple) shall be the idols of the desolator, and he shall make desolate, even until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator," meaning himself.

In another (Dan. 11:45), "he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain (Zion); yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

In Isaiah 10, also already referred to, Antichrist under his name of "the Assyrian" is seen with his apostate confederacy in his daring attempt to possess himself altogether of "Zion, the hill of Jerusalem" (v. 32). He shall "remain at Nob that day"—it is his last—for "behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror . . . and Lebanon shall fall by a Mighty One" (vv. 33-34). "The Assyrian" perishes "in My land, and upon My mountains" is trodden under foot (Isa. 14:25), thus marking, with all other Scripture, that Antichrist falls in the land of Israel.

In Isaiah it is further written (11:4), "with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked (one)," the instrument there being (as may be seen) Christ, the Branch out of the roots of Jesse, Who at that day stands up for "an ensign of the people" (v. 10) and to "assemble the outcasts of Israel" (v. 12), just as we see He does under another name\* in Daniel 12:1, where at the same terrible emergence, Michael, the Great Prince standeth up "for the children of Thy people."

\*(We wonder if Mr. Bonar is right in identifying the Son of God with the Archangel Michael. Mr. B. W. Newton helpfully comments "Michael the archangel is unquestionably an angel and not the Lord. It would not be said of the Lord Christ, as it is of Michael, that he durst not bring a railing accusation against Satan, but said, the Lord rebuke thee. Besides which, a comparison of Peter and Jude clearly shows that they are both speaking of the same circumstances; and Peter expressly ascribes to angels what Jude ascribes to Michael. Compare 2 Peter 2: 10-12 with Jude 8-10, observing the identity of the expressions in the Greek". We would add that the description of Michael as "one of the chief princes" in Daniel 10:13 would not be befitting of the Lord—Ed.).

Psalm 76 is one of thanksgiving for that great deliverance so wondrously accomplished, with mention also of the locality in which it is wrought, for God is seen in it to have caused His "judgment to be heard from heaven," when He arose "to save all the meek of the earth" (vv. 8-9). Jerusalem in that day will have become "a joy and her people a praise," and this psalm, among others, will then be sung there with a fullness of meaning, which faith in promises existing can alone now justify or appropriate when all remains so unlike to what it speaks of—"In Judah is God known: His Name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion. There (that is, the places just named) brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle." It is added,—"Thou art more glorious . . . than the mountains of prey," alluding to Christ—the Stone which had fallen on the image—having become then a "great mountain to fill the whole earth," displacing the robbers who had usurped His authority—"the stout hearted" will then have been "spoiled" (vv. 1-5).

Another passage in Isaiah (30:33) also describes the destruction to be in Judea, for Tophet is in the valley of the son of Hinnom (Jer. 7:31) close to Jerusalem, the south wall crossing over Mount Zion with this valley at its foot, while the adjacent eastern wall runs across the brow of Mount Moriah above the valley of Jehoshaphat.

This it is to which Joel alludes (3:12) for, though the gathering of the apostate nations under Antichrist is to be at Armageddon, the battle and destruction is to be in that "valley of decision" (v. 14) where God will "judge all the heathen round about." It is well known that in the wall over the valley where this is to be, the Turks point to a small projecting stone on which their Antichrist Mahomet, as it is believed by them, will sit when the world is to be assembled for judgment below.

This is in accordance with all that the spirit of Antichrist has ever been attempting to do since the beginning as he will to the end, in placing the false where the True is yet to be. But the crisis of all this is to be decided there under the very walls which are yet to be salvation and its gates praise (Isa. 60:18) "for Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood: the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

It is vain to say, as some do, that this was spoken of Sennacherib,\* inasmuch as he did not perish there, although his army did. We know from good authority that he returned and dwelt at Nineveh, and was slain in the house of Nisroch his god (Isa. 37:37-38).

\*(Sennacherib, like Saul, was a remarkable type of Antichrist, as will be seen more distinctly if we examine the answer God gave to Hezekiah's prayer against him (Isa. 37:21), for although that "king of Assyria" was overthrown in his attempt on Jerusalem, yet there will be noticed a distinct declaration of events connected with it, which did not at that time have any full accomplishment—What is said of the remnant (v. 31) that escape of the house of Judah, taking root downward and bearing fruit upward, must allude to what is to be at the great deliverance yet future, when Jerusalem is to be "safely inhabited" after the last "Assyrian king," like the other has been overthrown, for God is pledged to "defend Jerusalem" against which "the Assyrian" will yet come (Isa. 10:5-32), "for Mine Own sake" —verse 35, "and for My servant David's sake").

Nor can it refer to Satan, as Lowth imagines, for when his time arrives he is to be cast into the lake of fire where "the Assyrian" and his prophet will already be. It is manifestly spoken of Antichrist destroyed, as will be seen (Isa. 30:30) by the Lord's coming, and causing "His glorious voice to be heard," and showing "the lighting down of His arm."

Psalm 18 was spoken by the literal David, as is intimated, "in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand . . . of Saul," who we have seen was a type of Antichrist. It will be a song of praise for a greater than David, when all Christ's enemies, including the anti-type himself, are under His feet, for it is evident the deliverance there spoken of, could not have applied in full to the literal David, except as a figure of Him Who was to come. "The bowing of the heavens," "the coming down," "the brightness that was before him" (vv. 9-12) all indicate that it was the great enemy of Christ, described as "the violent man" (v. 48), who had been then destroyed by the "fire out of His mouth" (v. 8). "Therefore will I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Thy Name" (v. 49).

How wondrous to see in all this, Christ the true David giving thanks, for Himself and the people with whom He identifies Himself, to his Father in Whose Name He had come. "It is God that girdeth Me with strength" (v. 32); "Thou hast enlarged My steps" (v. 36), "Thou hast also given Me" (v. 40), "Thou hast delivered Me" (vv. 43 and 48), Thou hast avenged Me (v. 47), "Thou liftest Me up" (v. 48), etc. What an exhibition of the love which could have brought Him from the glory He had with the Father, and take our nature upon Him and exalt it again to be heir with Him Who is the Heir of all things! Surely, love like this might make us long to see the kingdom He has purchased, and in which we are to reign with Him for ever and ever.

In Isaiah 14, much will be found which can alone apply to Antichrist, for it is on his destruction that the "earth is at rest" (v. 7) under its rightful King, after the storm that will then have passed over it. "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?" can be none other than Babylon's Antichrist king, distinctly a man, and so spoken of in subsequent verses, "all the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one (of them) in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under foot. Thou shalt not be joined with (to) them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people" (vv. 18-20).

All this agrees with what is said in Revelation 19:20, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

How much is the terrible character of all this in unison with the daring wickedness that will have provoked it. The firmness of the impostor is supernaturally supported to the last. Upon his heart, seared as with a hot iron, no dew of repentance is seen to descend. In that terrible hour he justifies the selection Satan had made of him, as, in undismayed presumption he hurries both himself and "the kings of the earth and their armies" against "the city of the Great King," Who is Himself coming to meet him in the clouds of heaven and with all the accompaniments of Deity!

It was at the thought of that encounter that Habakkuk trembled, and of which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, heard the shoutings, exulting at the same time to proclaim the issue, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14-15).

If the reign of Antichrist, so fearfully terminated, will have been marked by such terror and tribulation as to have made men seek death without finding it (Rev. 9:6), what thought can imagine the joy and gladness of creation on that "morning without clouds" which follows when the storm will have passed away into the "clear shining after the rain"! What a scene will this freshened earth exhibit, reposing in the tranquillity of a reign of righteousness which comes at once upon the turmoil and anguish and blasphemy beneath which it had groaned under Satan and his antichrist king! "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, since thou (Antichrist) art laid down, no feller is come up against us" (Isa. 14:7-8).

It is impossible for a believer in that coming blessedness not to feel refreshed and invigorated by the very thought, and to wish to linger and linger still amidst the green pastures and still waters of comfort which its promise supplies. They restore the soul and make it to feel, with the way-worn psalmist of old, that a table has been prepared in the presence of its enemies. "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Ps. 23:5-6)!

An objection has been taken by many in our day to the study of prophecy, as being of little practical benefit. That there should be any ground for such a charge can arise solely from its having been misconducted, for it seems impossible that any one on reflection should think that so much of Scripture could be occupied with anything that really was useless or unprofitable.

In fact, however, the chief effort of writers on prophecy seems to have been now-a-days, to prove the truth of Scripture itself, not from its own, but from the pages of Gibbon, or Volney, or some such recorder of past events, which their system declares the prophecy to have previously indicated. In their fashion of accounting for it, nearly the whole of the Revelation has been accomplished. The pope, as the Antichrist, has nearly had his day and little remains in fact now to be arrived at but the probable year in which the dispensation will close, and the millennium, for which the world is so ripe, be expected to begin, if indeed it has not done so already.

Now this is really idleness, if it be no worse, for besides this mistake as to the times of the end, prophecy was given neither to gratify curiosity, nor to prove the general truth of Scripture. It was the doctrine on which its claims to inspiration chiefly rested. Our Lord Himself declares it to be so, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" etc. (John 7:16-17).

If a writer like Mr. Elliott (author of "Horae Apocalypticae" - see "The Prophetic System of Mr. Elliott and Dr. Cumming considered" in "Aids to Prophetic Enquiry" by Mr. B. W. Newton—Ed.) labors to prove the truth of Scripture from the two witnesses having appeared in Luther's time in exact fulfillment of its prediction, is there no risk of the ridicule of the scoffer being excited by such a conclusion as few, even among his own followers, are at all satisfied with, or even inclined to believe? The attempt therefore is more likely to prejudice than to advance its object, and to such things, it is to be feared, may be attributed the strange indifference observable now among Christians themselves to prophecy, scarcely however to be wondered at, if men of such talent and research can draw nothing more practical, or even likely to be believed, out of it than this.

The very erudition required to support such a system as his is against the probability of its being true, for what becomes of the poor man with his Bible for his companion, if such extended literary research is required to

make him understand what it means, and how its prophecies have been accomplished as he is assured they have been? And even if true, what benefit is it to him, if he was previously satisfied that the Bible was indeed God's Word, without all this labour to prove it so from statements he has no means of verifying?

He sees a distinct mention of the last days, and from his Bible written in the plainest and most intelligible language, believes we are entering upon them; and he reads there of the sure word of prophecy being a lamp in a dark place, to which it is well to give heed. Surely it is not what took place in the days of Constantine that can satisfy such as him, for he is told to "press forward" and it is in that direction he naturally expects the lamp to cast its light.

If warned of "perilous times" to come, surely he will seek to know the dangers there are to be in them, and not rest satisfied with being told what the General Councils of the Romish Church either said or did, hundreds of years ago.

What is it practically to him that there should be some who think the rider on the white horse "who goeth forth conquering and to conquer" to have been a Cretan, because he had a bow and Cretans had bows, or that the symbolic horsemen in Revelation 9 were Turks, from the mention of their power being in their tails, and horse-tails were the standard of the Turcomans?

He is told in his Bible of "a deceivableness of unrighteousness" with a coming that is to be "after the working of Satan," and he thinks of the light in a dark place, to which he has been told he would do well to take heed. But how can he feel satisfied in listening to such "tales of the past" as he can in no way connect himself with, even if he could understand, or remember, or believe them to have been the fulfillment of what his Bible had been telling him?

Zechariah, 500 years before the event, had told his people, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (9:9). Yet their fancy revolted at such a humiliating advent, however literal the event afterwards proved it to have been. And yet, in the face of the warning, every book is now searched, but the Bible itself, to furnish accomplishments, whilst the scoffers at the promise of His coming again "in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11), are scarcely to be distinguished from those, who, professing to believe and make others understand, are yet themselves scandalized at the thought that any but a spiritual return can possibly be intended, or that the man of sin means anything but a succession of popes, of whom it is now hoped from their calculations, we have seen nearly the last.

All this of itself is enough to repel men from the sure word of prophecy in absolute despair of finding anything sure or practical in it, whilst all the while, instead of traces of right triumphing over wrong, the most superficial observer may see that the reverse is the case, and that opinions subversive of the sure word of truth itself, are spreading with fearful rapidity.

The weekly issue of impure and irreligious publications in the Metropolis alone is, of itself, enough to create some doubts as to whether the world we live in will come out of the dispensation men are agreed in thinking to be drawing to a close, in so spiritual and peaceable a termination as our learned are trying to make us believe. In fact, no thinking man does believe this, or that the pope can be either the only or even the greatest Antichrist we are to see.

Let the literality of Scripture but be freed from the fancies which have been woven into it, and again it will be found a practical guide as well as comforter, amidst the increasing darkness, and the evil that is yet to be, before the delusion is broken by that coming in the clouds of heaven, which every eye shall see, and about which there will be no mistake, "for as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27).

From the explanation given of the seals, trumpets, and vials, and how their effects have been seen in the world, it is attempted to make us believe, against, as it would seem, to express Scripture, that God has already been reckoning with it in judgment instead of "waiting to be gracious," still causing His sun to shine and His rain to fall "on the just and on the unjust." How a day of wrath could consist with such a day of grace in which "God is not imputing trespasses," might have led any one to pause and ask, what if these judgments are yet to be?

If Scripture, as it is alleged, does speak of an Antichrist to be seen and of a worshipping of the devil under him, may it not happen that when the Son is denied, as it is at that time said He is to be, together with the Father, the effect will be shown by plagues then as typified by what fell on Egypt of old? Admit, even for argument's sake,

that this is possible, and Christians will soon discover how deeply they are concerned in the sure word of prophecy as pointing to what is still future, instead of in Gibbon to tell them it is all past.

It is by Scripture light alone, as shining in a dark place, that they will see to what all things are rapidly tending, with, at the same time, a comforting assurance that amidst the crash, God's faithfulness and promises will not only stand secure, but that He has cared for them with a Father's tenderness in having told His people before (Matthew 24:25) of what might well have shaken, if not overthrown their faith altogether, had it come upon them unawares," as it will upon all the world.

They will be saying Peace, peace, when there cometh sudden destruction from which they shall not escape.