

The Olivet Discourse.

MATTHEW XXIV. AND XXV.

AN EXPOSITION

BY

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THE OLIVET DISCOURSE.

I. INTRODUCTION.

The great Olivet discourse of our Lord is found in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters in the Gospel of Matthew. Next to the thirteenth of Matthew, the seven parables, these two chapters are the most misunderstood. We shall have occasion to point out the erroneous interpretations which spring mostly from a false conception of the characteristics of the age in which we live. We approach with much prayer this part of the Gospel. We look to the Holy Spirit for guidance. He is able to open these words of our Lord to our understanding. May He help us to give a clear and simple exposition of the great prophetic unfoldings of the Lord.

First of all we shall look at the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters in a general way. We mention them together for they should never be separated. They contain one great discourse, the Olivet discourse, spoken in answer to the questions the disciples had

asked of the Lord Jesus. In Mark and Luke the Spirit of God has recorded parts of this discourse, but only in the first Gospel, the Gospel of Matthew, do we find a full report. This is in fullest harmony with the scope of the Gospel.

"I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee." Thus God had spoken to Moses (Deut. xviii:18). We know from the Book of Acts that this was a prophecy to be fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts iii:22 and vii:37). But the Lord is greater than Moses (Hebrews iii:5-6). In the first great discourse in this Gospel, the sermon on the mount, He expounded the law and spoke with greater authority than Moses ever could speak; "I say unto you." He fulfilled the law. But Moses was also a prophet. Before he left his people, he uttered a great prophecy. This is found in Deuteronomy xxxii. It is in the form of a song, a wonderful inspired unfolding of the history of Israel. God's dealings with them in the past is reviewed and then follows a forecast of their future to the very end, which up to the present time has not yet been reached. This is followed by the Blessing of Moses, likewise a prophecy.

And now He, who is greater than Moses, the prophet like unto Moses utters a great

prophecy, more complete and far-reaching than that of Moses. He, Jehovah, had come in the midst of His people. As king He had offered the promised kingdom; He and the offer of the kingdom had been rejected by His own, and now before He goes to the cross to fulfil all that was written concerning His sufferings in the law and the prophets, He predicts events connected with the end of the age and His future glorious manifestation, which will usher in that new age of blessing and glory, of which His own Spirit testified in all the prophets.

The Olivet discourse is a great prophecy, the King's last, great utterance. It was spoken, as we shall see later, in answer to the question of the disciples. He had just predicted the destruction of the magnificent temple buildings, and while He sat upon the Mount of Olives, where in the future His glorious feet shall stand in the hour of His manifestation, they asked Him: "Tell us when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the Age?" We shall find later that here in Matthew, the Spirit of God in giving us the discourse does not give us the words which relate to the destruction of the temple, which was then standing. He omits here certain words, which, however, are given in the Gospel of Luke. All this and much else our exposition will bring out.

The discourse itself is divided into three great parts clearly marked. The answer of the Lord to the question asked begins with the fourth verse. Up to the forty-fourth verse we have the first part of His predictions. Beginning with the forty-fifth verse, He changes His mode of speaking. No longer direct predictions, but He speaks again in parables. These are three: 1. The parable of the faithful and evil servant. 2. The parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins. 3. The parable of the man traveling into a far country and delivering unto his servants his goods. In one of these parables we find again the phrase so peculiar to the Gospel of Matthew "the kingdom of the heavens." These parables end with the thirtieth verse. In the verses which follow the Lord no longer speaks in parables. It is true Matthew xxv:31 to 46 is often called a parable, but it is not. It is a revelation the King gives concerning His own glorious appearing and the judgment He will execute in that day. We have therefore a three-fold division of the Olivet discourse.

First division: Chapter xxiv:4-44. Second division: Chapter xxiv:45 to chapter xxv:30. Third division: Chapter xxv:31-46.

We shall look at these divisions first of all to find out to what season or time they refer and after we have cleared away some of the

false interpretations and misconceptions, we hope to study each division in detail.

In reading over the first part of the discourse of our Lord we find that it relates to disciples, which of necessity must be Jewish. In this part the Lord speaks of the ending of the age, the time of distress which is to come, the great tribulation and a climax is reached in this division, when the Lord speaks of His coming again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. This is to take place immediately after the days of that tribulation.

The most widespread interpretation of this part of the discourse is that it all was fulfilled in the past. The great tribulation is a thing of the past and the Lord Jesus Christ came again in the destruction of Jerusalem. This is the foolish, spiritualizing method, which does such violence to the Word of God. These interpreters are given to the wildest and most fanciful imaginations to prove their assertions. Quite often they make use of the writings of Josephus instead of God's Word. According to them the year 70 was the year in which "the Son of Man came in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory." In a recent volume published in defense of this theory, which is unknown in primitive Christianity, the writer tries to get over the difficulties by saying the following: "But who can say what other

sights appeared at the final moment of the catastrophe? (The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.) The "Coming" was like a lightning flash, not abiding for days like the glory on Sinai. The sight of the Glory of Jehovah was like devouring fire on the top of the mountains to the eyes of the sons of Israel; and that glory was a real presence, a veritable parousia, for Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai. And yet in that Sinaitic parousia the Israelites saw no form or shape of the divine person. Whether those who saw the sign of the Son of Man which appeared in heaven immediately after the tribulation of those days saw the person and form of the Son of Man Himself, or only some symbol of His presence, must remain a mystery." This interpretation, which looks upon verses 4-44 fulfilled in the past at the time when Titus besieged Jerusalem, has its origin in a deplorable ignorance of God's dispensational dealings with the Jews and the Gentiles. It leaves nothing for the Jewish nation in the future. It would take us too long to show the impossibility that the Lord meant by these predictions the events which transpired between the time of His resurrection and the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70. But had the Lord nothing to say in this discourse about the great judgment, which befell Jerusalem? He certainly gave a reve-

lation concerning it as well as warnings. But the record of this prediction of the fall of Jerusalem under Titus is not at all given in Matthew twenty-four, but we find that the Spirit of God has put that in the Gospel of Luke. In Luke xxi:20-23 we have the words which predict the siege and fall of Jerusalem in the year 70. The prediction is, that after that catastrophe has taken place and they have fallen by the edge of the sword and are led away captives, that Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. This happened after the destruction of the City and Jerusalem is still trodden down, because the times of the Gentiles have not yet run out. But now turning to the words in Matthew we find an entirely different result from the manifestation of the Son of Man in Glory and in the clouds of heaven (that which postmillennialism claims to be identical with the destruction of Jerusalem). There is not a word mentioned of their being scattered among the nations, but the very opposite is said "they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other." The predictions in Matthew xxiv:4-44 have nothing whatever to do with the 40 years which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, nor with that event in the year 70. That they refer to Judea and Jeru-

salem, that the predictions concern Jewish disciples and that they describe scenes of distress and tribulation to be enacted in the land of Israel is quite true.

Another mode of explaining these first predictions of the Olivet discourse is, to apply them to this Christian age in which we live. This is generally done by those who have the correct Scriptural belief in the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They reject the spiritualizing teaching of postmillennialism and hold that there will be a future great tribulation, which will close with the visible and glorious manifestation of the Son of Man out of heaven. They tell us that the Lord describes this entire Christian age and especially the closing of it, the end. Then they maintain that the church is to remain on the earth in this end of the age and to pass through the great tribulation, and therefore the exhortations contained in this chapter are meant for Christian believers living in the end of the age. This wrong interpretation has confused not a few of God's people. Let one get clear on two important teachings of the word and deliverance from this false interpretation of this part of our Lord's discourse will speedily follow. We mean the teaching of the Scriptures of what the church is, her calling and her destiny. And in the second place the teaching of the

prophetic word, that the Lord will call a believing Jewish remnant, which will suffer and witness at the end of the age. If a person, be he a teacher or not, is ignorant of either one of these, he must be confused in his conception of the first part of Matthew xxiv.

Furthermore it is to be said that the disciples knew absolutely nothing of a Christian age. Such an age could not even begin, when they asked the question about the end of the age. They did not mean a Christian age, but their Jewish age. All through these forty verses everything is of a Jewish character. The warning is against false Christs and false prophets; the warning given to church is against false spirits. The condition of salvation that one must endure to the end is nowhere given to the Christian believer, who is saved and safe in the Lord Jesus Christ. It has an entirely different meaning here. Again the prayer that the flight should not take place on the Sabbath day is Jewish, for the Christian believer has no Sabbath day, but the Lord's day. The reference to Daniel and the great tribulation, which never concerns the church, but Israel, shows us that we are not on Christian, but Jewish ground. The preaching which is mentioned is that of the Gospel of the kingdom, but that Gospel is not now preached, for we preach the Gospel of Grace. When we

turn to the different verses we shall go carefully over this theory again and disprove it by what is written.

There remains the third way of interpreting these words of our Lord, it is to look upon these predictions about the end of the Jewish age as being still future. This is the right and only key to understand these verses. The first part of the Olivet discourse of our Lord is a prediction of how the Jewish age will end. The disciples only knew of a Jewish age. This Jewish age has not yet ended; it has been interrupted. A careful study of the great prophecy in Daniel ix:24-27 reveals the fact that one year-week, the seventieth, has not yet been fulfilled. The Christian age, in which God visits the Gentiles and takes out a people for His name, the church, is the great parenthesis, which has come in between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth week of Daniel. As soon as the purpose of God is fulfilled, the church complete, the Lord will resume His dealing with Israel and the seventieth week (seven years) will end the Jewish age. Before that end, the seventieth week can come, the church must be complete and be removed from these earthly scenes, according to the divinely revealed destiny of the church. The church complete and taken up, the end of the age will follow and that will be Jewish and as far as

the so-called "christian world" is concerned one of complete apostasy. Then the 144,000 of whom we read in Rev. vii will be sealed and bear their witness. This is the Jewish remnant and the exhortations here concern them. No doubt when the time comes they will find great comfort here in the words of our Lord. They will preach the Gospel of the kingdom and the unfinished testimony, of which we read in Matthew x, will be finished by them. Thus the disciples the Lord addressed were typical of similar Jewish disciples living after the church has ceased her testimony. A striking fact is that this interpretation can be verified by many Scripture passages from the Old Testament. The teaching of a future remnant of Jewish believers, suffering and witnessing for God during the great tribulation, is very pronounced in the Old Testament. We shall have occasion to turn to some of these Scripture references when we come to the different verses. The Old Testament predicts a siege of Jerusalem which has not yet been. The reader in turning to Zechariah xiv will find a full description of what awaits Jerusalem and a faithful remnant in the end time. Though Jerusalem has had so many sieges in the past there is not one which could be said to be a fulfilment of Zechariah xiv. The Lord Himself appears for the deliverance of His people,

His feet standing on the Mount of Olives. Matthew xxiv:4-44 refers to this, and His coming and all His saints with Him in Zechariah corresponds to "the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

In the second part of this discourse, chapter xxiv:45-xxv:30, we find that the Lord speaks in an entirely different way. He mentions no longer the tribulation, nor the Sabbath or Judea. He speaks again in parables. These parables, each one having for its central thought, His coming again, relate not to the Christian church as some have expressed it, but rather to the Christian profession. We notice the true and the false throughout. A faithful servant and an evil servant; wise virgins and foolish virgins; servants who use their talents and one who does not. Here, then, we have the revelation of the judgment between the true and the false.

The third part, chapter xxv:31-40, is not a revelation concerning the universal judgment; no such judgment is ever mentioned in the Bible. The Lord describes the judgment of nations which takes place when he sits upon the throne of His glory.

THE FIRST PART.

Matt. xxiv:4-44.

THE END OF THE AGE

The first part of the Olivet Discourse, verses 4-44, is now before us. At the close of the previous chapter we learn that the King after His loving outburst over Jerusalem had made the declaration, "Behold *your* house is left unto you desolate." This prophecy is fulfilled throughout this present age. In the beginning of the twenty-fourth chapter we read that the Lord left the temple. "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple; and His disciples came to show Him the buildings of the temple." There is a strongly marked correspondency between the end of the twelfth chapter and the beginning of the thirteenth and the close of the twenty-third and the beginning of the twenty-fourth. At the close of the twelfth chapter the Lord by His symbolical action in refusing to see His mother and brethren,

declared His relationship with His own to whom He had come, and who received Him not, broken; at the close of the twenty-third there is a fuller break with the nation, the nation for whom He came to die. In Matthew xiii it is recorded that on the same day Jesus went out of the house, and sat by the seaside, giving there His parables concerning the kingdom of the heavens. In the twenty-fourth He also goes out and departs, to give soon after the great Olivet discourse. While His parables, the mysteries of the kingdom, relate to this present age and the end of the age, in a general way, in the first part of the Olivet discourse, He makes known the details of that ending of the age, of which He spoke repeatedly in the thirteenth of Matthew.

In leaving the temple and going towards the Mount of Olives, the Lord had to cross over the brook Cedron, and in ascending the mountain, they must have had a magnificent view of the temple buildings. These buildings were of the most massive construction, some of them still in process of erection. An enormous wall encircled the whole temple area; some of the stones used in that wall were 23 and 24 feet in length. It must have been a wonderful sight for human eyes to behold. Not a word had come

from the disciples' lips during the events recorded in the twenty-second and twenty-third chapters. They had heard His answers to the tempting Pharisees, and the pronounciation upon them. They listened to His loving outburst over Jerusalem and heard His prediction of the desolation of their house. But now they call His attention to the buildings of the temple, to the great sight before them. "And Jesus said unto them, see ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." What a solemn prediction this was! How it must have impressed these Jewish men, His disciples, whose hearts clung to the temple and its wonderful buildings. These mighty stones, so solidly put together, were to be rent asunder, not one remaining upon the other. Only the Lord could make such a prediction. Here then is a prediction which refers to the destruction of the temple in the great catastrophe which came upon Jerusalem in the year 70. It is, as stated before, fully given by our Lord in Luke xxi:20-24: What should happen to the rebellious city, to the murderers, the Lord had revealed in the parable of the marriage feast, when He said: "But when the king heard it he was wroth; and he sent

forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city."

"And as He was sitting upon the Mount of Olives the disciples came to Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be, and what is the sign of Thy Coming and the completion of the age?"

The question asked by the disciples is threefold. When shall these things be? The sign of Thy Coming? The completion or consummation of the age? It is of great importance to see that the record of the discourse, as given by the Holy Spirit, passes over the answer to the first question, "When shall these things be?" This is evident by the fact that the Lord says not a word in the discourse of Jerusalem or the destruction of the temple, and as stated in our introduction to this chapter, while in Luke we hear that Jerusalem is to be besieged by armies, and the inhabitants are seen falling by the edge of the sword and led away captive into all the nations and Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles; in Matthew xxiv we do not find a word of all this at all. Indeed we read of great distress, which is to be in Judea, but nothing whatever of them being led away captive, or Jerusalem to be trodden down by the Gentiles. Instead of a scattering of the elect people at the close of the great tribu-

lation, we have a gathering of the elect. The word in the passage (xxiv:31), that is the word "elect" refers to the literal Israel.

Turning to the next two questions, "What is the sign of Thy coming and the completion of the age?" it is to be said that undoubtedly in the minds of the disciples this question was one. He had repeatedly spoken about His return. As true Jews they expected, and that with perfect right, the establishment of the messianic kingdom by the Messiah. They had seen how He, in whom they had believed, and the kingdom He offered, had been rejected. All, of necessity, must have been very misty before their view; but they take heart and ask Him about the sign of His coming, the coming He had mentioned before. It is evident that the coming is His coming in power and glory for the establishment of the kingdom promised to Israel in the Old Testament. This coming is His visible and glorious return to the earth "in like manner as He went up into heaven"; it takes place in the land and His feet will stand on the mount of Olives. The synoptic Gospels know of no other coming of the Lord than His visible return to Jerusalem; connected with this return we find always besides blessings, judgment. Entirely different is His coming for

His Saints who compose the Church. This coming is revealed through the Apostle Paul in I Thessalonians, the fourth chapter. There we read that the Lord will descend into the air, not to the earth. The dead in Christ will be raised and the living saints be caught up, together with them, in clouds to meet the Lord *in the air* and to be forever with the Lord. In John xiv the Lord gives a little word which may be taken to indicate that coming for His own, though the manner is not made known. It is that word of comfort to His own. I will come again and receive you unto myself." It is strange that believers in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ can fail to see the strongly marked difference between His visible and glorious return, His coming in power and great Glory, taking place in the land of Israel and His coming for His Church, as revealed exclusively through the great Apostle. It is not strange that where this distinction is given up confusion and error results.

Then they asked about the completion or consummation of the age. The authorized version simply has it "the end of the world." That is a translation which is responsible for much wrong teaching. The end of the world as generally understood in Christendom is not at all in view here. It is the

consummation, the winding up of the age, the *aion*. As we have shown this age could not be the "Christian age," but it is the ending of the Jewish age, which is still future. Such an age ending predicts the entire Old Testament prophetic Word.

There we find numerous predictions of a great coming day, the day of the Lord, in which Jehovah is visibly seen in His Glory and majesty, coming forth to deliver His persecuted and downtrodden earthly people, who wait for Him and to judge the nations likewise. According to Old Testament prophecy this day of the Lord's visible and glorious manifestation is preceded by a time of great trouble and distress. The center of the tribulation is Jerusalem, and when the height of the tribulation is reached, the heavens and the earth are shaken and Jehovah appears. Furthermore is it seen that there is a believing and suffering remnant of Jews passing through that time of trouble, who are faithful in the midst of universal apostacy, wickedness and worship of the false king, who is likewise described in the Prophets. Their prayers and calls upon God are prophetically recorded by the Spirit of God as well as their deliverance by the manifestation of Jehovah. Now all this has never been fulfilled. That great day so often

spoken of by the Prophets, the day of the Lord, has not yet come; it is still future. So is the time of distress, which is called "the time of Jacob's trouble," and therefore the suffering of a Jewish remnant, which is not identified with the church is likewise future. When the Lord speaks in Matthew xxiv about the consummation of the age and the signs of His coming, He gives altogether that which is revealed in the Old Testament and which has not been fulfilled up to the present time. The purpose of God in this present Christian age is to take out from among the Gentiles a people for His Name. This taken out people is the Church. As long as this calling out through the preaching of the Gospel continues and new members are added to the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ (the church), the predicted end of the age does not come. Besides having a description of the end of the age, of which our Lord speaks here, in the Old Testament we have also one in the Book of Revelation. From the sixth chapter on to the nineteenth we find another record of the future age-ending. In studying the account our Lord gives here in Matthew we must compare Old Testament prophecy and the visions of the Book of Revelation, with what the Lord saith in His discourse. If our interpretation is the

right one there must be perfect harmony between these three: Old Testament Prophecy; Matthew xxiv:4-44, and Revelation vi-xix.

And now we turn to the text and give the first section of the discourse. "And Jesus answering said to them, See that no one mislead you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ, and they shall mislead many. But ye will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that ye be not disturbed; for all these things must take place, but it is not yet the end. For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. But all these are the beginning of the throes. Then shall they deliver you up to tribulation, and shall kill you and ye will be hated of all the nations for my name's sake. And then will many be offended, and will deliver one another up, and hate one another; and many false prophets shall arise and shall mislead many; and because lawlessness shall prevail, the love of the most shall grow cold; but he that endureth to the end, he shall be saved. And these glad tidings of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole habitable earth for a witness to all

the nations, and then shall the end come" (verses 4-14).

These are the opening words of the Lord, which describe the age ending. In a secondary and general way they likewise describe, no doubt, the characteristics of the times during which the Lord is not on the earth. Looked upon in this light what an argument they form against the modern optimistic dreams of the professing church! Neither the Lord, nor the Spirit in giving the Epistles of the New Testament have a single word to say that this present age and the world is to be getting better and that the end will be righteousness and peace. The testimony of the Scriptures is wholly on the other side. Wars there have been all along as well as rumors of wars. Famines, pestilences and earthquakes have again and again swept over this globe, as well as the persecution of such who are the Lord's. All this is true in a general way. But the Lord describes not the age as such, but shows what will be in the end. The words we have before us refer us to the beginning of that end, while in the last verse quoted, the fourteenth, the Lord saith "then shall come the end." What follows the fourteenth verse then refers directly to the end. The last

week of Daniel, the seventieth, is marked off in two halves, each having three and a half years. The words here before us up to the fourteenth verse refer to the first half of the last week, while the fifteenth verse and the verses which follow bring us to the middle of that week.

Verses 4-14 then contain the prophecy of our Lord relating to the beginning of the end of the Jewish age, while with the 15th verse the end itself in its fearful great tribulation and "the abomination of desolation" is described. The whole period is the last week of Daniel's great prophecy, a prophetic week, consisting of seven years, which cannot begin as long as the church is on the earth. The first part of it is now before us. The Lord saith in His answer to the question concerning the sign of His coming and the end of the age, that these things He mentions first are "the beginning of throes" (verse 8).

And now let us look at the predictions. We find them in the following order:

1. Many coming, saying, I am the Christ and succeeding in misleading many.
2. Wars, rumors of wars. Nation lifting up sword against nation. Kingdom against kingdom.

3. Famines and pestilences and earthquakes.

4. Many witnesses to be killed and hated by all nations. False prophets and lawlessness prevailing.

5. The preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom before the end is reached.

These are the startling prophecies of our Lord, soon to be followed by other predictions of what shall be before He returns in the clouds of heaven, immediately after the tribulation of those days. The disciples, all Jews, no doubt well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures, must have had considerable knowledge of such awful events as described by the Lord, for Old Testament prophecy predicts precisely such troubles preceding the visible manifestation of Jehovah out of the opened heavens, the beginning of the restoration of His earthly people and the blessings of the coming age. The following passages are but a few of those which might be quoted: Joel ii:1-17; Hosea v:14; Jer. xxx:4-9; Ezekiel xxi:27; Daniel xii:1; Micah vii:1-7; Hab. iii:16. It is also true that Jewish tradition maintained in fullest harmony with these teachings that the days preceding the glorious coming of the Messiah are to be days of woe and sorrow.

One of these ancient traditions is so striking that we quote it.

Rabbi Jochunan says: "Seven years of trouble come before Messiah comes. The first year before the Son of David comes the prophecy of Amos (chap. iv:7) will be fulfilled. In the second year of tribulation there will be six months of famine. In the third year there will be the great famine. Many men, women and children will die and the pious will be few. The law and the prophets will be forgotten by Israel. The last years will bring signs in heaven and wars and at the end of the seventh year the Son of David will come." Similar statements could be easily quoted from the Talmudical writings.

All that which the above Old Testament passages predict, a time of trouble, before an age of blessing begins and nations learn war no more, is still a matter of the future, and so are the predictions our Lord makes here. The disciples to whom He gives these words and warnings are typical representatives of disciples, who will live when that end comes; they will be Jewish disciples. When on the Mount of Olives, before His ascension, they asked Him their *last* question: "Lord, is it at this time that Thou restorest the kingdom to Israel?" He an-

swered: "It is not yours to know times or seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority" (Acts i:6-7). The kingdom will be restored with the coming of the King. It was not revealed when it was to be; all was to be postponed. They passed off the scene. When the end at last will come other Jewish disciples, waiting for the kingdom to be restored to Israel, will witness and suffer, and they will turn to these words of our Lord and find comfort and instruction in them.

And now there is something still more significant. Not alone does Old Testament prophecy predict great distress for the ending of the Jewish age, but we have an additional description of these great coming events in the last book of the Bible, the only book of prophecy in the New Testament, that glorious book, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ."

That book is divinely divided into three parts (chapter i:9): I. The things seen; Christ walking in the midst of the candlesticks (chapter i). II. The things which are. The present church age; a wonderful prophecy concerning the history of the church (chapters ii and iii). III. The things which shall be after these (chapter iv to xxii). Here follows all which will take

place after the church has completed her history. The removal of the true church from earth to heaven is promised in the third chapter of Revelation and is indicated in the opening verses of the fourth chapter. In the fourth and fifth chapters the church is seen symbolically in the twenty-four elders, seated, clothed and crowned in the presence of the throne. Then the Lamb takes the book to break its seals. That which is revealed, beginning with the sixth chapter, the breaking of the seals, the sounding of the seven trumpets and the outpouring of the seven vials together with the great events described from that chapter to the nineteenth, is nothing else but a more detailed history of the last week of Daniel. It is here in the last book of the Bible fully revealed what judgments will be executed upon the earth during that period of distress and what that great tribulation will be for those who dwell upon the earth, Jews and Gentiles (never the true church). It is an intensely interesting fact that this part of Revelation (chapters vi-xix) ever points us back to Old Testament prophecy. Hundreds of passages from all the prophets can easily be put alongside of the visions of judgment, tribulation and wrath in the Apocalypse.

The point which we wish to make is the following: If this is the correct interpretation, if Matthew xxiv:4-14 refers to the beginning of that coming end of the age and if Revelation vi refers to the same beginning of the end and that which follows the sixth chapter leads us on into the great tribulation, then there must be a perfect harmony between that part of the Olivet discourse contained in Matthew xxiv and the part of Revelation beginning with the sixth chapter. *And such is indeed the case.*

We turn briefly to the sixth chapter of Revelation. The Lamb opens one of the seals, after that great worship scene in heaven had taken place. Then we read: "And I saw; and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon it having a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering and that he might conquer." It is strange that so many expositors have expounded this to be the Lord Himself. The Lord indeed is described in this book as coming riding upon a white horse; but this description is found at the close of the Revelation in the nineteenth chapter. The rider upon the white horse under the first seal is a counterfeit. He is a false Christ, who goes forth to conquer. His conquest is a bloodless one, as he has only a bow.

He will bring about a false peace among the nations, which for a time may have been alarmed by the supernatural removal of the church. The second rider "takes peace from the earth," from which we would conclude that the first rider upon the white horse (white the emblem of peace) had established peace.

And as we turn to Matthew xxiv we find that the first thing our Lord saith, is about the deceivers who will come with the beginning of the age ending saying: "I am Christ," and succeeding to lead away many. It is true throughout this age impostors came among the Jews claiming to be the Messiah. It is true even now men rise up saying they are some great one, Elijah, prophets or even Christ.

All these are but faint shadows of what will take place in that soon coming end. Indeed the increasing delusions and the claims of, as we believe, demon-possessed men and women, are strong indications that the end is very near. Then deceivers, led by Satan, possessed by his demons, will arise and among them there will be a mighty leader going forth to conquer, saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace.

The rider upon the red horse, as already stated, takes peace from the earth. The

second seal shows him coming forth with a great sword, "that they should slay one and another."

And the very next thing which the Lord saith in Matthew xxiv is, "But ye will hear of wars and rumors of wars * * * Nation shall lift up sword against nation and kingdom against kingdom" (verse 7). Wars there have been in the past; this earth is saturated with blood. But there will be a time, and it is soon coming, when literally nation will lift up sword against nation and kingdom against kingdom, when they will slay each other. Any one who follows present-day history will see how everything is ripening for just such a universal warfare. And yet secure, sleeping Christendom is dreaming of peace, world wide peace and times of prosperity!

The third the Lord mentions is "there shall be famines." And the third seal reveals a rider upon a black horse and he has a balance in his hand and what he saith indicates clearly that he brings famines (Rev. vi:5-6). The fourth rider of the fourth seal is upon a pale horse. His name is "Death." He takes the fourth part of the earth away. This corresponds to the Lord's announcement that there will be "pestilences and earthquakes in divers places." Fearful have

been the famines, pestilences and earthquakes of the last twenty-five years.* But these are insignificant in comparison with those to which our Lord refers here, the mighty events which tell all the earth that the day of wrath is rapidly approaching. Blessed be His name, who delivereth us from that wrath to come that "His Beloved," "His Dove," "His Bride," the church, will be safe within when these awful things come to pass.

And now under the fifth seal we do not behold another rider, but instead of it we hear the souls underneath the altar, that had been slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they gave, crying out with a loud voice, saying, How long? (Rev. vi:9-11.) Who are these? Not saints of the church. These are all raised up when the Lord comes into the air (1 Thess. iv:17) and are caught up with the living saints. They are such of the remnant of Jews who began to give their witness for the Word of God after the church had departed and

*Especially great has been the loss of life and property from earthquakes and volcanic disturbances since 1900. The last, the destruction of San Francisco, has been one of the most terrible of the recent catastrophes. A harbinger indeed of the nearness of the far greater earthquakes to come.

they suffered martyrdom in consequence of their faithful testimony. It is exactly that of which our Lord speaks next in His discourse. "Then shall they deliver you up to tribulation and shall kill you; ye will be hated of all the nations for my name's sake." As we shall show later this faithful Jewish remnant will go throughout the world proclaiming the coming of the kingdom and calling to repentance.

We see then how striking the agreement is between the beginning of Matthew xxiv and the book of Revelation, the seal judgments. The interpretation we have undertaken to give is therefore proven to be correct.

We point out but a few more of the facts mentioned by our Lord. False prophets shall arise misleading many. The Jewish age has false prophets; the Christian age has *false teachers*. "But there were false prophets also among the people, as there shall be also among you false teachers, who shall bring in by the bye destructive heresies, etc." (2 Pet. ii:1). These false prophets who come in the end of the Jewish age will be possessed by evil spirits. Such was the case during the great apostasy of Israel under the reign of Ahab. The Lord permitted then a lying spirit to take possession of the

false prophets as revealed by the prophet Micaiah (2 Chronicles xviii:18-22).

"Lawlessness shall prevail;" that is, complete anarchy will hold sway. This too is clearly seen in the breaking of the sixth seal (Rev. vi:12-17). The earthquake, the darkened sun, the blood-red moon, the falling stars, the rolled up heavens and the removal of mountains and islands are all great symbols of startling political events, which will take place in the first three and one-half years. Government and authority is swept away; civil and ecclesiastical powers are shaken; mountains (the type of kingdoms) are moved out of their places and as a consequence of this awful upheaval, the reign of terror and anarchy, worse than that of the French revolution and the Russian revolution of to-day, all classes of men, the kings, the wealthy, the rich and the poor, the bondman and the free, will be seized with terror. Well has a recent writer said: "The scene here described is an awful and sublime one. The symbols employed to set it forth are the powers of nature convulsed. The whole fabric of civil and governmental power on earth breaks up. Disorder reigns supreme. It is not simply the collapse of this or that government, but the total subversion of all governing authority—both supreme and de-

pendent. The general idea which the metaphors present is a universal overthrow of all existing authority; a revolutionary crisis of such magnitude and character that kings and slaves are in equal terror. The coming crash will involve in one general catastrophe everything on earth deemed secure and strong. A vast civil and political chaos will be created. What an awful scene to contemplate! a world without a magistrate! without even the semblance of power! without government! without the authority of repression!"

This is the sixth seal, and it is precisely what the Lord saith: "Lawlessness shall prevail." And later the lawless One will take the lead. He comes into full display in the middle of the week. How near, how very near all these events are, even at our doors, is seen by the increasing unrest of all nations, the manifestation of the spirit of anarchy among all people. Yet there is One who hindereth (2 Thess. ii). The Holy Spirit is the One who keeps it back and He has His abode in the Body of Christ, the church. Only after the church is taken into glory can that lawless One be revealed. But even in those awful days the mercy of God lingers and one more great testimony goes forth; the Gospel of the kingdom will

yet be preached in a very short time to all the nations, then the end comes.

“And these glad tidings of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole habitable earth for a witness to all nations, and then shall come the end” (verse 14). This verse relates exclusively to the end of the age, that is the Jewish age. And here we have to speak first of all of the wrong application of this word of our Lord.

It is generally looked upon as a condition to be fulfilled before the Lord can come. Post-millennialism, believing as it does, without any authority from the Word of God, in the conversion of the world before the Coming of the Lord, makes use of this verse to uphold its unscriptural theory. Then there are others who believe in the premillennial coming of Christ who mis-apply this statement of our Lord. They ever speak of preaching the Gospel to all the nations as a necessary condition before the Lord can come for the church. It is often pressed in this way in missionary meetings, conventions as an incentive to giving, that unless the Gospel is preached to all the nations, the Lord cannot come. Now such an application of this verse is certainly wrong.

It is true that the Gospel is to be preached

in the regions beyond and that by this preaching a people is called out from the Gentiles, a people for His name, the church; but it would be incorrect to say that in order that the Lord may come for His Church, all the individuals of all the nations must hear the Gospel. Believers in the blessed Hope of the Coming of the Lord have a deep interest in foreign missions, unless they are given to extreme, fanciful or unscriptural notions. This is clearly established by a number of foreign missionary enterprises of the last twenty-five years, which have been inaugurated by men who believe in the premillennial Coming of the Lord and also by the large number of missionaries in all lands, who are out and out premillennialists. The accusation that believing in the imminent Coming of the Lord paralyzes missionary efforts is unjust and unfair. It stimulates missionary activity. The believer in the Coming of the Lord desires the Gospel to be preached in the great, wide field of the nations, that the church may be completed as to numbers. How soon this may be none can tell.

If the verse before us contained a necessary condition before the Lord can come to receive His fellow heirs, the church, in Glory, then the end must be indefinitely

postponed. Other difficulties arise if this were the case.

But let us look at this preaching of this Gospel as in the future and all will become clear. In the first place must we remind ourselves that it is at the end of the age that the glad tidings of the Kingdom are to be heralded through the earth. The end of which the Lord speaks, the termination of that Jewish age, as we shall see later in this chapter, will be the visible manifestation of the Son of Man in power and in glory out of the opened heavens. The glorified church, the Lamb's wife, comes forth with Him in that visible manifestation.

Let us then have this fixed first of all, the preaching of which the Lord speaks is a future witness to all the nations, and that witness must be given before His visible manifestation will take place.

In the next place we have to ascertain what witness will be given. It will be the proclamation of the glad tidings, or Gospel, of the Kingdom. What does this mean? Superficial readers of the Word of God make no difference between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace. Many speak of the preaching of John the Baptist and the Lord and His disciples in the first part of Matthew, when they announced "Re-

pent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," as if it were the same thing as the Gospel of Grace, which is so freely offered after the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a difference between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Grace.

What then is the Gospel of the Kingdom? As we learn in the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom is the good news that the promised Kingdom* of the Old Testament was about to be established with the manifestation of the King. But the nation rejected Him and rejected the offered Kingdom. Some time after the day of Pentecost this Gospel of the Kingdom was preached to the nation. It was to Jews that Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. It is the Gospel of the Kingdom when Peter declared unto them after the healing of the lame man, he being a type of the nation (Acts iii:1), "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ,

*Our lecture on the Kingdom in the Old Testament, published in tract form, will give more complete information about the Kingdom.

which before was preached to you; whom the heavens must receive, until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts iii:19-20). This was the good news of the Kingdom. If the nation had then repented and accepted the renewed offer, the Lord would have come again and with His coming the restitution of all things as foretold by all the prophets. This restitution, of course, does *not* consist in the resurrection and restoration of the wicked dead, as an unscriptural restitutionism claims, but in the glorious things of the earthly Kingdom and the promised blessings to Israel. Soon the nation rejected the last offer in the stoning of Stephen. The measure was full. In the Old Testament Jehovah had offered Himself to them as their King and they had rejected Him. Then He came manifested in the flesh and they rejected Him, God the Son. Then the Holy Spirit in Stephen's testimony was likewise rejected.

With that event the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom ceased. Another Gospel was preached. The Lord gave it to the great Apostle, whom He called Himself, Paul. And Paul calls this Gospel "my Gospel." It is the Gospel of God's free

Grace to all who believe, the Gospel of the Glory of God, the Gospel of a risen and glorified Lord. The mystery of the church is made known to Paul, and it is part of that blessed Gospel that every believing sinner, Jew or Gentile, is baptized by the one Spirit into the one body. This Baptism took place on the day of Pentecost. The Gospel of Grace declares that all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are quickened together with Him, raised up and seated with Him in the Heavenly, that they are Sons of God and Heirs of God and joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. This then is the Gospel of Grace. This wonderful offer goes out now to the nations of the earth that the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ may be gathered. It had a definite beginning, it will have a definite end. When that body, the church, is complete, the church will be removed from the earth in the manner as revealed in 1 Thess. iv:16-17, and with this the preaching of the Gospel of Grace will come to an end, because the purpose for which God had this Gospel proclaimed is accomplished.

Now during the time that the Kingdom was preached to be at hand the Gospel of Grace was not heard, and during the time the Gospel of Grace is preached the Gospel of the Kingdom is not preached. But as

soon as the Gospel of Grace has fulfilled its mission and is no longer heard, the glad tidings of the kingdom will be preached again.

As soon then as the church leaves this earthly scene and the end of the age begins, the Gospel of Grace will no more be heard, but in place of it, the Gospel of the Kingdom will be sounded forth once more to all the nations, before the heavens, silent for so many, many centuries will be opened again to reveal the King, who comes to execute judgment and to rule the earth in righteousness. Under the solemn signs of the ending Jewish age it will be proclaimed world wide, "Fear God and give Glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come and worship Him that made heaven and the earth and the sea and the fountains of waters." The Kingdom is at hand; repent!

And who will be the preachers of this last witness, the missionaries who reach all nations with this final message before the King appears in judgment? They are a believing Israelitish remnant. God in His wonderful grace will begin a work among His earthly people Israel. The Holy Spirit, who has His abode, as long as the church is forming, in the church will have accomplished His mission in the completed body

and will no longer be present on the earth as He is now; but He will still be working and that in the same way as He did in the Old Testament, He will come upon a remnant of believers from the long blinded nation Israel. These will take up the work of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to all the nations, and no doubt special power will rest upon them for that service. How well this people is fitted to do this, needs little comment. They are now scattered among all the nations. They understand the languages of the nations, they are at home in every climate. When the church is no longer here, God in His mercy will turn to His own people again and the blindness of a company of them will be removed and the Spirit of God will come upon them. We believe this remnant will most likely consist of such Hebrews who are at this time still holding to the Messianic hope of a coming deliverer, who hold fast the law and the testimony, who firmly believe in the prophecies of their own Scriptures. Alas! hundreds of thousands have broken with the faith in God's Word and God's promises.

Such a remnant according to the election of Grace (Romans xi) will be called, and this remnant will be used as the great her-

ald to announce to all the nations the great coming events. What preachers they will be!

And now before we look at the purpose of this preaching and to whom they will go and what their success will be, we have to follow the argument laid down in the beginning of the exposition of this chapter. We remind the reader that we claimed that inasmuch as these predictions of our Lord refer to the end of the Jewish age, that we must be able to find all what is spoken of here both in the Old Testament and in that part of the book of Revelation, which treats of the things to come, after the history of the church is finished on earth (chapters vi-xix). We have found already the remarkable correspondency which exists between the predictions of the Old Testament concerning the time of distress of the end of the age, the predictions of our Lord and the seal judgments of Revelation. Is there a similar agreement about a witnessing remnant of God's earthly people? Has the Old Testament anything to say about this? Do we find anything mentioned about such a remnant in the book of Revelation? Both Old Testament prophecy and the book of Revelation give us most interesting light on this remnant, the testimony

they will bear, the suffering and the persecution they will have to stand, and their final deliverance.

The Old Testament is full of predictions and descriptions of this remnant. Indeed it is next to impossible to understand prophecy relating to the things to come if one does not reckon with that remnant, which is so prominent in the pre-written history of the end of the age. Especially rich is the book of Psalms. The great prayers, cries to God for deliverance, calls to God to destroy the enemies, are all prophetic descriptions of how a faithful remnant of God's earthly people will go through that time of great trouble and be delivered out of it. In these great prayers and calls upon God for interference, the ungodly part of the nation as well as the Gentiles are mentioned. Showing how they are in the midst of them giving their faithful testimony. It would be impossible to show all the passages which speak of this future remnant in the Old Testament. Almost throughout every one of the prophets do we find this remnant and the words which God speaks to encourage and comfort them.

Turning to the book of Revelation we find a very striking confirmation of this fact. We found that under the sixth seal a great

upheaval took place. Anarchy is let loose and all the mighty governments of the earth are shaken, rebellion spreads worldwide. Before the seventh seal is broken by the Lord we read of something else. The seventh chapter of Revelation is a parenthesis. The first part of it tells us that then in the beginning of these fearful events, a company of 144,000 will be sealed. Who is this company? It is a most fanciful, worse than that, evil interpretation, which makes of the 144,000 a company of Christian believers. The theory of a "first-fruit" rapture has no scriptural foundation whatever and it aims in a most subtle way at God's Grace, giving man a share, by his attainments, experience, suffering and other things, to become worthy to enter into the presence of the Lord. We have listened to such teaching repeatedly that the 144,000 of Revelation vii are a company of "sanctified" Christians (as if there were sanctified and unsanctified believers). Companies of people all over this country claim to be part of "the elect Bride," a part of the 144,000, and not a few of these hold extremely fanatical views. The Word of God makes it so clear that it is almost impossible to believe that any intelligent person could fail to see who these 144,000 are. The Spirit of God tells us that they are "of

all the tribes of the children of Israel." Christian believers do not belong to the twelve tribes of the children of Israel; furthermore if these 144,000 were parts of the church, a first-fruit, the previous part of Revelation especially chapters ii-v would be most difficult to explain, and the divinely given division of the book would be wiped out. The 144,000 then are literal Israelites and these constitute the remnant of God's earthly people, the preachers of the Kingdom Gospel during the great tribulation.

In the second part of Revelation vii we read of a countless multitude out of all nations, who have come out of the great tribulation and who stand before the throne of God. This multitude is not the church, because the church does not come "out of the great tribulation," nor do the church saints stand before the throne, but they are seated upon thrones in the presence of the throne of God (Rev. iv). This great multitude are those who heard God's last witness during the end of the age, the preaching of the Kingdom Gospel and who believed the message and were yet saved and we see these in the presence of the throne of God, their millennial position and blessing in the earth. The multitude is the blessed result of the preaching of the remnant of Israel.

It is, however, to be stated that those who had the Gospel of Grace presented unto them and who rejected God's gracious offer, who went on in apostasy will not have another chance to accept "the Gospel of the Kingdom." Second Thess. ii:10-12 reveals the fate of all the Christ and Gospel rejecting professing "Christian" masses. But the nations in Africa, China, India, the isles of the sea will hear and accept the Gospel of the Kingdom and gladly receive these messengers whom later the Lord calls "*these my brethren*" (Matthew xxv:31, etc.). Thus during the very end, God's Grace will still be manifested ere that great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

The next verse brings us into the middle of the week, the great tribulation, and we shall have to turn to the prophet Daniel and the thirteenth chapter of Revelation to establish still clearer the fact that our Lord has in these predictions exclusive reference to the end of the Jewish age.

We have learned then that the events predicted by our Lord up to the fourteenth verse fall into the beginning of the ending of the Jewish age, the seven prophetic years; with the fifteenth verse we reach the middle of this period, three years and a half are passed and the second half with its mighty

events culminating in the personal and visible manifestation of the Son of Man out of heaven is now described. With the second half of these seven years, the last 1,260 days, the great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble is fully developed. We shall find as we advance that not alone the interpretation we have laid down for this chapter is the right one, but that no other one is possible; all expositions, which claim a fulfilment of these words of our Lord in the past, or which apply these events to the church period, must be rejected as incorrect. Let us read the words of our Lord beginning at the fifteenth verse.

"When therefore ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which is spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in what is a holy place (he that reads let him understand); then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let not him that is on the house come down to take the things out of his house; and let not him that is in the field turn back to take his garment. But woe to those that are with child, and those that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight may not be in winter time nor on Sabbath; for then shall there be great tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now nor ever

shall be; and if those days had not been cut short no flesh had been saved; but on account of the elect those days shall be cut short" (verse 15-22).

Our Lord gives us a most important hint on what He means by these words, by mentioning the Prophet Daniel. Then furthermore, the Holy Spirit adds through Matthew a word of exhortation, which calls special attention to the Lord's reference to Daniel, the prophet. The Holy Spirit saith, "He that reads let him understand"; or, as it might be put, "Consider so as to understand." It will, therefore, not do for us to hurry over this word of our Lord, to which the Holy Spirit calls our special attention, which He the great interpreter of the Word of God wants us to consider and to understand fully.

We must, therefore, turn first of all to the Prophet Daniel. Does he mention anything in his great prophecies about a future abomination and where do we find these passages? He does in three places.

"And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and because of the protection of the abominations there shall be a desolator, even until that the consumption

and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolate" (Daniel ix:27).

"And forces shall stand on his part, and they shall profane the sanctuary, the fortress, and shall take away the continual sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate" (xi:31).

"And from the time that the continual sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days" (xii:11).

There can be no doubt that the Lord refers to these three passages in Daniel, and it is of that abomination mentioned in these passages of which He speaks. These three verses in Daniel refer all to the same period of time; this period is three years and a half. The same space of time is mentioned in Daniel vii:25. "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 shall be given into his hands, until a time and times and the dividing of time" (which makes three and a half). Then in Daniel xii:7 we have it mentioned again. . . . "It shall be for a time, times and a half, and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all

these things shall be finished." When later in the course of this exposition we come to the book of Revelation we shall discover the same period of time there.

It is not our purpose to enter fully into Daniel's great prophecies. To do this would lead us too far and prolong our exposition. The most important passage of the three we have quoted, is the one from the ninth chapter; as the others treat of the same period, we shall not consider these (Dan. xi:31 and xii:11) at all. The ninth chapter in that prophetic book contains the prayer of Daniel and the wonderful answer he received. He was meditating on the Word of the Lord as it came to Jeremiah the prophet, when he turned to the Lord in prayer. This seems to us is the true and perfect way of turning to God in prayer. First communion with God through the written Word, His revelation, and then to seek His face. He was occupied in his prayer with the years of the captivity. The man Gabriel appears, he came flying swiftly to assure him that he was greatly beloved and to give him the answer to his prayer. The answer is a revelation relating to seventy-year weeks, that is seven times seventy; a period of time which was to come.

We take it for granted that our readers

are delivered from the old, superficial and erroneous interpretation, which looks upon Daniel ix:24-27 as having been completely fulfilled with the death of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. It is strange that the clear division of these seventy weeks has been so much ignored.* The 24th verse in Daniel ix is the prophecy stated in a general way. "Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to close the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make expiation for iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of ages, and to seal the vision and the prophet, and to anoint the Holy of Holies." Seventy sevens, as it is in the Hebrew, make 490. This space of time is, so Gabriel declared, apportioned out for the people of Israel and Jerusalem, and at the close of it the full blessing of Israel will come to pass; the righteousness of the ages, undoubtedly refers to the kingdom age, the millennium. So in a general way the whole prophecy of

*To our readers who are unsettled on the interpretation of this most important prophecy, or who desire a real good work on Daniel ix, we recommend Sir R. Anderson's most excellent work, "The Coming Prince." It is most helpful, clearly written and sound. It may be ordered from us.

seventy-year weeks is given and what shall be accomplished in them and at the close of them for the people Israel and for Jerusalem. But now as we read on we find a division of these seventy weeks. First: *Seven weeks*; secondly: *Sixty-two weeks*; thirdly: *One week*. What does this division mean? We are not left to speculation for the Word makes it plain. "Know, therefore, and understand: From the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, are seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. The street and the moat shall be built again, even in troublesome times. And after sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with an overflow, and unto the end war, the desolation determined (verses 25-26)." The first seven weeks, that is 49 years, is the period of time which elapsed from the giving of the command to rebuild Jerusalem and its walls till this was accomplished. The commission to restore and build Jerusalem was given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes in his twentieth year. The sixty-two weeks is the period of time from the complete restoration of the city and the walls till Messiah

is cut off, that is the death of Christ, and there is nothing for Him. His own people reject Him and then in consequence of that rejection, the city and the sanctuary is to be destroyed by the people of the prince, that shall come. Wars and desolations, persecutions and troubles, bloodshed and sufferings, was to be the lot of the Jewish people after the rejection of the Messiah, a prophecy stated not only here but throughout the prophetic Word and so solemnly come true for well nigh two thousand years. The people who destroyed the city and the sanctuary were the Romans. But now we have one week left. Of this last week we read in the last verse of Daniel ix, the verse in which the abomination is mentioned, to which our Lord and the Holy Spirit calls attention. This week, or seven years, is the end. It is a week, a period of time still future. With the 69th week Messiah was cut off, He had nothing; His people had rejected Him and the offered kingdom; an indefinite period follows, during which the Jews are outcasts, scattered into the corners of the earth, Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles. It is the present age in which we live, in which God's gracious offer of free and full salvation for the gathering out of a people for His Name (the church) is preached. How soon

this may end no one knows. It will end at some time and then Jewish history from a prophetic standpoint will be resumed, the Jewish age will close to be followed by the kingdom or millennial age, when the righteousness of the ages will come in.

And what then is to take place in that last week, in the coming seven years, that very time which was indicated in the question of the disciples when they asked about "the end of the age" and which the Lord describes in this part of His discourse? We say again it seems strange that so many learned men should be so superficial in expounding the Word of God. How true it is, many of these things are hid from the wise and the prudent; and they are revealed unto the babes. Thus many have not alone made no distinction of the division of the weeks as given in the text, but they have not distinguished between the two princes mentioned in these verses. The one Prince is Messiah, the other prince is a counterfeit, the false prince. It is claimed by this incorrect interpretation that the prince who confirms the covenant with the many for one week is Christ. But the one of whom the 27th verse speaks is not Messiah the Prince, but "the prince who shall come." It is that wicked head of the Roman empire in

its last and revived form of whom we read in different parts in prophecy. The Roman power had come upon the land and destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple. This was prophetically stated in verse 26; but it does not say that "the prince shall come to destroy the city," but the people of the prince "*that shall come*," in other words, the Roman power destroyed the city and from that power a prince is to emanate in the future. Up to now this prince has not yet appeared; when he comes he will be the leader of the confederacy of the nations, who inhabit the territory of the Roman empire, a mighty man who is under the control and inspiration of Satan. Perhaps Napoleon I is the nearest photograph the world has seen of that prince who shall come. It would be most interesting to follow all this in detail, but we are not writing on Daniel or the false king and the anti-Christ, but on Matthew xxiv, and so we can only give the most simple facts so as to make the chapter as clear as possible. Now when this prince, the head of the revived Roman empire, appears, he will make a covenant with the Jews. His covenant will be for one week, that is for seven years. It is interesting to notice that the covenant will be made with "the many," not with

all for the believing Jewish remnant will know the true personality of the wicked prince and refuse to enter into that covenant. What this covenant will be we do not follow now. Suffice it to say that it will be undoubtedly of a political nature and connected with the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine, the rebuilding of the temple and the institution of their worship by sacrifices. Zionism, the great restoration movement of the Jews in unbelief, sheds a flood of light on these coming events. If Zionists were ready to herald the Sultan as their deliverer, should he allow them the practical carrying out of their programme, how much more will they be willing to accept an agreement with that mighty prince, who is to come. This covenant will be effected in the beginning of the week (seven years) and all will run smoothly for a while. But in the middle of the week he will unmask himself and in conjunction with that other wicked one, the man of sin, the son of perdition, the personal anti-Christ, he will break the covenant and cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease. In its place he will set up the abomination (Dan. xi:31). What then is this abomination? It will be idolatrous worship. The xiii chapter in the book of Revelation gives us more light on this

abomination of the last three years and a half of the Jewish age ending. We shall turn to this chapter at once. However, before we do so we wish to say that to our mind the argument is complete. The seventy weeks have to do exclusively with the Jewish people. The first seven weeks, the sixty-two weeks and the last, the seventieth. *It is impossible to find a place for the church in this prophecy.* Her place is in the unreckoned period *between* the sixty-ninth and seventieth week. She does not belong, nor a part of the church, into the last week.

And now we shall briefly examine the book of Revelation on this subject. We have laid this down in the beginning of our exposition, if the words of our Lord refer to the future events of the definitely marked end of the age then these three, Old Testament prophecy on this theme, the Words of the Lord, and the book of Revelation must be a complete harmony. We have seen how perfectly this has been the case up to the fifteenth verse and now we have still more striking proof

The thirteenth chapter of Revelation corresponds in part to the middle of the week; the last half of the seven years and the events transpiring on Jewish ground, in Jerusalem, are described here. Here we find

the 1,260 days, the 3½ years. In the twelfth chapter Satan is seen cast out of heaven, cast down upon the earth and the heavens pronounce a woe upon the inhabitants of the earth for he is come down and has great wrath, for he has but little time. When the church is received into glory, the casting out of Satan will take place. He comes down and finds the church gone from this earthly scene and then in his great wrath he begins his awful work.

The thirteenth chapter of Revelation is the perfect counterpart of Daniel's prophecies; even a beginner in the study of prophecy can see that. Two beasts are seen in this chapter. The first rises out of the sea typifying the nations. The second comes out of the earth and has two horns like a lamb, but speaks as a dragon. The first is "the prince that shall come," the wicked leader of the revived Roman empire; the second one is the false Messiah, the anti-Christ, who mimics the true Christ. What will then take place is clearly stated in Rev. xiii:12-18. There we read of an image. "And he had power to give life unto 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." This, no doubt, will be the abomination, an image

worshipped; as well as the second beast, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God (not in Rome, but in Jerusalem), showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 11:4). This then is the abomination which falls in the last half of the seventieth week. The result of this abomination, the revelation of Satan's power upon the earth, will be the great tribulation. This is fully borne out by the thirteenth chapter in Revelation. Of this our Lord speaks, when he said, "for then shall there be great tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world, until now, nor ever shall be." And in Daniel we likewise read of this tribulation. "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" (xii:1). The context shows that it will be at this very time of which the Lord speaks, immediately before His personal, visible and glorious Coming.

The words which the Lord utters concerning those who will be then on the earth show clearly that they are not church saints. They are in Judea and are asked to flee to the mountains; a foreshadowing of this was seen at the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. They are asked to pray that their flight should not take place on the Sabbath; they are called the "elect," a term which in this chapter as well as

throughout the Gospels always means His earthly people; in the Epistles the word "elect" always means the church.

The next words of the Lord in His discourse contain warnings. "Then if any one say to you, Behold here is the Christ, or here, believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall give great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. Behold I have told you beforehand. If, therefore, they say to you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; behold he is in the inner chambers, do not believe it. For as the lightning goes forth from the east and shines to the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man" (verses 23-27). Deceivers have appeared from time to time throughout this age, claiming, like Simon Magus "to be some great one." No question that many of these evil, fanatical leaders were and are energized by Satan. Not a few of such deluded persons we see to-day; the evil power likewise manifests its signs and lying wonders to a certain degree, while another system claims that the Lord Jesus Christ came in a secret manner in 1874 (Millennial Dawnism). But all this is not a fulfilment of the words spoken by the Lord. The fulfilment comes in the great tribulation. Of the second beast, who imitates the lamb, but speaks as a dragon it is written, "He doeth

great wonders so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of these miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast" (Rev. xiii:13-14). This corresponds with that passage in 2 Thess. ii from which we quoted above; the false Christ will deceive by his signs and lying wonders and the strong delusion, all those who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Not alone will the apostate part of the Jewish people be deceived by these lying wonders, but also the apostate part of Christendom, left behind after the rapture of the church has taken place, will be deceived and swept away in the great judgments of that coming day. These warnings will be of great importance and value to the Jewish believing remnant, living in those days. The Lord tells them that His coming will not be in a secret way but openly, seen by all like the flash of lightning. It will be a sudden, a startling coming; as the lightning flashes over the dark sky and strikes down upon the earth, so will He the Son of Man make his appearance. It is not necessary to say that this lightning-like Coming is wholly distinct from His coming for His own. Then the Lord adds a significant word, "For wherever the carcass is, there will be gathered the

eagles" (verse 28). The interpretation which makes the eagles the church, or a certain class of "advanced believers" is so weak and fanciful that we do not think it necessary to speak of it here. The carcase is the type of corruption and it represents here the unbelieving part of the Jewish people, that part which followed the beast. The eagles stand for the judgments. In the next verses the Coming of the Son of Man in Power and Glory is revealed by Himself, the coming One. Once more we shall have to turn back to the Old Testament and to the book of Revelation to find another perfect harmony.

"But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon 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; then shall all the tribes of the land mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds from the one extremity of the heavens to the other extremity of them" (verses 29-31).

It is unnecessary to call attention to the misinterpretation of this passage, which by the

spiritualizing method claims a fulfillment of these words at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. What we have learned in the exposition of this part of the Olivet discourse makes such an application and interpretation an impossibility. It is ridiculous to say that the Lord spoke these words about His visible manifestation, but did not really mean a literal return; but what He meant is the destruction of Jerusalem. The context proves that the event could not have taken place at the time of the destruction of the city.

What is before us in these words of the Lord is the great climax of the end, the visible appearing of the Son of Man. It is to be *immediately* after the days of tribulation; that tribulation we have seen is still future and has for its center Jerusalem, though all the earth will share in it. And now we have to turn once more to the Old Testament Word of Prophecy. Do we find there anything promised, which corresponds to this predicted visible and glorious coming of the Son of Man? And if we find in the Old Testament prophecies which correspond to these words, in what connection do we find them?

We find indeed in the Old Testament numerous predictions of just such an event of which the Lord speaks here and a careful investigation will show that these predictions of

the Old Testament and the prediction of our Lord here fully harmonize.

The first passage we desire to mention is a prophecy in the last chapter of Joel. "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining" (Joel iii:15). Joel is one of the earliest prophets. While he announces and speaks of a great locust judgment which came upon the people Israel and upon the land, his prophecy points to the great future fulfillment in the "*Yom Jehovah*," the Day of the Lord. The third chapter contains one of the great prophecies of that future day and the events connected with that day. The verse we quoted gives the physical signs and the verses which follow show that the Lord will be manifested in His Glory in the midst of these wonders in the heavens. The prophets which prophesy after Joel have nearly all visions of that day.

We give a few other Scriptures to show this. "And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land saith the Lord God" (Ezek. xxxii:7-8). Here it is the proclamation of the day as it is to come upon Egypt and the nations. Another prophecy of the day of the

Lord's manifestation is found in Isaiah xiii: 9-10. "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. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." We do not need to quote other prophecies from the prophetic books and the Psalms. The day of the Lord is announced in many passages. It is always seen in connection with great troubles on the earth, tribulation for His earthly people, culminating in these startling physical signs, darkened heavens, shaking earth and the manifestation of the Glory of the Lord. And this is the event of which our Lord speaks in Matthew xxiv:29.

But there will be not only physical signs, but something else will occur. The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the heaven. This will be followed by the mourning of the tribes and then the Son of Man will come on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

What is the sign of the Son of Man? We believe it will be the Shekinah cloud. It was a cloud which enshrouded His form when He tarried with Israel of old. A cloud it was which received Him out of the sight of His disciples; a cloud must bring Him back. At

the bitter end of the great tribulation, when His faithful remnant is hard pressed on all sides, when they cry to God for the heavens to open and to come down, there will be seen, we believe, in the heavens a bright and shining cloud, a cloud from which fire shines out. Well may the believing Jewish remnant then cry out, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, this is the Lord, He will save us." His elect earthly people, those which have not been swept away during the great tribulation, the "all Israel" of Romans xi:26 will know what that cloud means. Jehovah is coming to be manifested. What their prophets saw and predicted is at last to come true. The Day of Jehovah is about to dawn, the Lord their King is coming.

The consequence will be a national mourning. It is not to be thought for a moment that all the tribes must be in the land. The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the heavens and will be seen from all continents. "All the tribes of the land" simply means that the persons who mourn belong to all the tribes of Israel. This again is predicted in the Old Testament. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born" (Zech. xii:10).

But that sign of the Son of Man will not tarry long in the heavens. He Himself comes on the clouds of heaven in great power and glory. The promise given by the two men at the time of the Lord's ascension is now to be fulfilled. "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye see Him go into heaven." He ascended upon high; He predicted this event in uttering these words in the Olivet discourse.

And this too is found in the Old Testament prophetic Word. "I saw in the night visions and behold, one, like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven * * *" (Daniel vii:14). This takes place after the ten-horned beast with the little horn, with the eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things, had come forth. All this refers to the end of the Jewish age. The little horn is the same evil person seen elsewhere in prophecy. It is then and not before, when the little horn is in existence, that Daniel sees the Ancient of Days and the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven to receive the Kingdom. What a wonderful and divine unity the Scriptures are!

If we turn briefly to the Book of Revelation, we shall find once more a minute confirmation of these revealed events. It is the Book which in its greater part is taken up with the descrip-

tion of the tribulation, judgments and other events of the last week of Daniel; the seven years with which the age closes. Therefore in the very beginning of the Book do we find a solemn announcement which fully harmonizes with the words before us here. "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen" (Rev. i:7). It needs no further comment to show how fully these words confirm both the Old Testament predictions and the prediction of our Lord. This striking harmony should not appear to us as so very wonderful, for He who speaks the words on the Mount of Olives is the same who spoke through the prophets and the last Book is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him."

For a fuller description of His Coming the reader will turn to Rev. xix:11-16.

Let us now turn to the next words. "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the one extremity of the heavens to the other extremity of them." Angels appear now once more upon the scene. Throughout this present dispensation angels as the ministering spirits are not seen; that they do minister is certainly a fact.

But as soon as He comes again, He who was made a little lower than the angels, and who is above the angels in Glory, they will be sent forth again. When he was born in Bethlehem they appeared with their heavenly song of praise; when He comes again the holy angels will accompany the Christ and His church and the angels will worship Him (Heb. i:16). It is also written "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i:7-8). In Matthew xiii we likewise find that angels are mentioned in connection with the end of the age, the same end as here. "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and He shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity" (xiii:41). "So shall it be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just" (xiii:49). In our passage the angels sound a trumpet and they go out to gather His elect from the four winds. We say once more that this has nothing to do with the church. The removal of the church takes place before the last week of Daniel's prophecy begins and when the Lord comes immediately after the days of tribulation, the church is with Him and in His Glory the church is manifested.

He comes and brings His saints with Him. The revelation concerning His coming for the church is recorded in 1 Thess. iv:15-18. To make the elect in Matthew xxiv:30 the church, as it is done so often, is bewildering and a wrong interpretation. This part of the Olivet discourse, as we have shown, has nothing whatever to do with the church. The "Elect" in this chapter always means His elect earthly people, as stated before.

The angels will gather them back to the land and bring them in, for the people in greater part are still scattered in the corners of the earth, when the Son of Man, the King of Israel, returns. Of this the Old Testament bears witness. "And it shall come to pass in *that day*, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come, which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount of Jerusalem" (Isaiah xxvii:13). "And it shall come to pass in *that day*, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros and from Cush, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dis-

persed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah xi:11, 12). "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. But the Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them; and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers. Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall find them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks" (Jer. xvi:14-16). This regathering of the remnant of Israel, the people left after the great tribulation, takes place after the Lord has been manifested out of the heavens. Then the "lost tribes" will be discovered, and during the age of the Kingdom, God will fulfil in His regathered people, the nation Israel, all the precious promises His prophets spake and which a false theory called "Anglo-Israelism" attempts to have realized in this present Christian age.

What follows now are exhortations and solemn warnings given by the Lord, and these form a sublime conclusion of this first part of the Olivet discourse, referring, as

we have learned, to the end of the Jewish Age. We shall look briefly at each verse.

"But learn the parable from the figtree: When already its branch becomes tender and produces leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh. Thus also ye, when ye see all these things, know that it is near, at the doors" (verses 32, 33). The figtree is the picture of Israel. The parable of the figtree in Luke xiii is well known, and its application is Israel, to whom the Lord came, looking for fruit, and did not find it. Luke xxi, the record there of this discourse, mentions likewise the figtree and *all the trees*; these are the Gentiles, the nations. In Matthew xxi, we see in the withered figtree a type of Israel's spiritual and national death. But that withered tree is to be vitalized. The figtree will bud again. However, the characteristic of the figtree is that fruit and leaves are there together. As soon as the branch becomes tender the fruit is found. It is a rapid development. This is the lesson here. Israel's blessing, new life, fruit and glory will *quickly* be realized in those end days. When in these last seven years, and especially the last 1,260 days, all these things come to pass, they will know that all which is promised to Israel will be at hand. The other application, that *now* we behold

Israel like a budding figtree, signs of new national life and in this a sign of the times, is certainly not wrong. It tells us of the nearness of the end.

"Verily I say unto you, This generation will not have passed away until all these things shall have taken place. The heavens and the earth shall pass away, but my Words shall in no wise pass away" (verses 34, 35).

The wrong interpretation of the word "generation" is responsible for the erroneous conception so prevalent in our days. It is said that "this generation" must mean the very generation, the people who lived then upon the earth, when the Lord spoke these words. It is easily seen how, if this is the meaning of "this generation," the events predicted by our Lord *must* have been fulfilled within the life-time of the people living then. What other event could be meant than the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70? Thus the wrong interpretation of these two words, "this generation," has led the large numbers of Bible teachers and readers of this discourse astray. But let us get the right meaning of "generation," and all will be clear. The word *genea* means not necessarily the same persons living, but it has also the meaning of *race*. The Eng-

lish word "generation" has this meaning of "family or a race of a certain class of people." And so has the Greek. It is used in that sense in Luke xvi:8. "This generation" is the race sprung from Abraham, God's chosen earthly people. Well have they been called "the everlasting nation;" better still we could call them "the nation of destiny." God has kept this race, and is keeping them for the fulfilment of His own great, revealed purpose. The verse, however, has also the meaning that the people living, when the end of the Jewish age sets in, will behold its termination; it will all be accomplished in a small space of time. Yea heaven and earth may pass away but *His Words* will not pass away. How solemn this is! Here we read still the same great and mighty Words, which were hated by thousands of God's enemies in the past; words which have been attacked and denied. And still the old enemy of the written Word is at it, and through his chosen instruments (alas! many of them in the midst of the professing church) attacks and belittles these Words. They stand! They are as eternal and divine, as infallible and true, as He, the eternal Son of God, is from whose lips they came.

"But of that day and hour no one knows,

not even the angels of the heavens, but my Father alone" (verse 36).

This makes the matter still more solemn. That day and hour, which will usher in these mighty events, of which the Lord speaks in His discourse, culminating in His own personal and glorious manifestation, is unknown. In the Gospel of Mark the Holy Spirit adds, "nor the Son." This addition is made in Mark because there our Lord is viewed as God's servant, and a servant "does not know what his master doeth." The Father knows the day and the hour, when all this is to come to pass. The beginning of it is liable to occur at any time. How foolish, then, to speculate on the possible time of our Lord's return—and the setting of years and days. It dishonors the Word and brings reproach upon Prophecy.

"But as the days of Noe, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. For as they were in the days which were before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day on which Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not till the flood came and took all away; thus shall be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two shall be in the field, one is taken and one is left; two women grinding at the mill, one is taken and one is left. Watch

therefore, for ye know not in what hour your Lord comes" (verses 37-42).

The introduction here of Noah and the flood is in fullest accord with the entire chapter. Noah lived at the close of an age, and was saved with his house through a great judgment, and then became the beginning of a new age. That this is typical of the remnant of Israel living at the close of the Jewish age is well known. As Noahic age closed with the deluge, so will the Jewish age close with judgment. The judgment came suddenly upon the ungodly generation of Noah's day; *thus* will it be when the Son of Man cometh. Two classes were living in Noah's day. The one who were unbelieving and these were swept away by the divine judgment. The other class was Noah and his house, and he and his own were left and not destroyed by the judgment. It will be so again in the coming of the Son of Man. The unbelievers will be *taken* away in the day of judgment and wrath; the others will be *left* on the earth to receive and enjoy the blessings of the coming age and enter into the kingdom, which will then be established. It is the opposite meaning of "taken" and "left" when the Lord comes as the "Bridegroom" for His church. Then, too, some will be taken

and others left. The true believers will be taken into glory, caught up in clouds to meet Him in the air; the unbelievers and mere professors will be left. Some deny that the word "taken" in our passage means a judicial taking away. The context, however, shows (the reference to Noah and the flood) that this must be the meaning. Surely those who were taken by the flood were not "received into glory."

And now once more His warning voice is heard.

"But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched and not have suffered his house to be dug through. Wherefore ye also, be ye ready, for in that hour ye think not the Son of Man comes" (verses 43, 44).

With these words of warning and exhortation to watch, our Lord closes the predictions relating to the end of the Jewish age. This warning will be understood and heeded by the Jewish remnant, to which it is addressed. They are to *watch* for the Son of Man; the church is to *wait* for her Lord.

With the next verse, the beginning of the first of three parables relating to His coming, a new part of the Olivet discourse be-

gins. We will find this very clearly marked and shall prove next that this part, from chapter xxiv:45 to chapter xxv:30 refers no longer to the events which transpire on the earth during the end of the Jewish age, but to something altogether different.



THE SECOND PART.

Chapters xxiv:45—xxv:30.

THE CHRISTIAN ERA.

The second part of the Olivet discourse begins with the 45th verse of this great chapter and extends to chapter xxv:30. The contents of this division are entirely different from the preceding one. Up to the forty-fourth verse we learned that the Lord gives predictions relating to the end of the Jewish age, an end still to come. We traced all these predictions in the Old Testament and in the great book of prophecy in the New Testament, the Revelation. We found the closest correspondency between Matthew xxiv:3-44, certain parts of the Old Testament and the Book of Revelation, because all three deal with the same period of time. But now another series of predictions are before us which have no connection with Old Testament prophecy nor with Revelation vi-xix.

In the first part of this discourse we hear of wars, pestilence, famine, great tribulation, false Christs, the abomination of desolation,

Judea, the Sabbath day and the visible and glorious coming of the Son of Man. The exhortations were to flee to the mountains, to pray that the flight take not place on the Sabbath day, to endure unto the end for salvation, etc. *Of all this we do not read a word in the second section* of our Lord's utterances. Here again he speaks in parables as He did in His second discourse in this Gospel, contained in chapter xiii. The three parables which make up this part of the Olivet discourse picture the condition of things during the absence of the King and how in the professing church, in Christendom, there will be the true and the false, possessors and professors, saved and unsaved, such who have life and such who have a name to live but are dead. These three parables then may be justly put alongside of the seven parables in chapter xiii dealing with the kingdom of heaven; the phrase the Lord uses again in giving the second parable. The great parables in the thirteenth chapter give the beginning, the external and internal development of Christendom, in a general way; the three parables in the Olivet discourse give the moral aspect of those who are in the professing church, and each is linked with the fact of His coming again. His coming discerns the

true and the false and brings the separation of the good from the bad.

Let us, however, understand clearly that we have in these parables not the full revelation of what is the blessed Hope for the Church. The Church is, as we have seen from our exposition, mentioned in this first Gospel and spoken of as being an institution of the future.

Not in the Gospels do we find full revelation about the church, her relationships, her calling, her heavenly hope and glorious destiny. All this is made known elsewhere in the New Testament. The parables concern the Christian profession in a general way. If we hold this fast in our minds we shall find no difficulties at all. This Christian age is a mixed age and will be so to the end and the Coming One will find the faithful and prudent servant and the evil servant; the wise virgins and the foolish; the faithful servants using their talents and the wicked and slothful servant. The Coming One will mete out the judgment. The faithful servant is called "Blessed," the evil servant is cut in two and cast out. The wise virgins go in with the bridegroom and the foolish face a shut door. The servants who used the talents are set over many things and the slothful servant is cast out into the

outer darkness. That the Lord will first descend into the air (1 Thess. iv:15-18) and that the true believers, resurrected saints and living saints will be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air to appear then before the judgment seat of Christ; that the unsaved, nominal Christians will go into apostasy and after the great tribulation receive judgment when the Lord comes out of heaven and all His saints with Him—all this is not revealed in these parables.

And now we turn to the first parable.

“Who then is the faithful and prudent bondman whom his lord has set over his household, to give them food in season. Blessed is that bondman whom his lord on coming shall find doing thus. Verily, I say unto you, that he will set him over all his substance. But if that evil bondman should say in his heart, My lord delays to come, and begin to beat his fellow bondmen, and eat and drink with the drunken, the lord of that bondman shall come in a day when he does not expect it and in an hour he knows not of, and shall cut him in two and appoint his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth” (verses 45-51).

The Lord still speaks to His disciples, but let us understand now while they are

viewed in the first part as Jewish disciples and typical of the remnant of Israel in the end of the Jewish age, here the Lord looks upon them as soon to be in connection with something new, that is, Christianity. The parable itself is the simplest of all three; yet it has very significant and far-reaching lessons. The thought in this parable is service over the household; the household are those who are Christ's. This household is to receive food in season and the bondman or servant, faithful and prudent, is to supply the household with that food. He does it faithfully and at the coming of the Lord, this faithful and prudent bondman is set over all the substance of his lord. This is an extremely beautiful and blessed parable. It takes us at once upon an entirely new ground. Judaism knows nothing of that kind of ministry which is spoken of here; it is essentially Christian. The Lord, the great shepherd of His sheep, for whom He died, whom He loves so much, appointed His own as bondmen of *Himself*, to feed His flock, to give them to eat. This is what pleases the Lord, and it is only another proof of how dear and beloved His own people are to Him. Faithfulness to Him and to His own, His household, is the teaching of these words. The true servant (and every

true believer has a service) is faithful and prudent and attends to that, to which his Lord has called him. And what keeps in such service? What is it that makes it ever fresh and refreshing, sweet and precious? It is the Hope of His Coming, yea, His imminent coming. The next paragraph, the description of the evil servant with his evil watchword, will bring this more prominently to our view. The reward of the faithful and prudent servant is a higher service, a service over all the substance of His Lord. Service does not terminate with this earthly life; there is a service up yonder, for "His servants shall serve Him." Faithful service here fits for that higher service in His presence. According to our faithfulness in service here we shall find service there to the praise and glory of His Name.

But now the other side comes up. The Lord pictures an evil servant and he saith in his heart, "My lord delays his coming." He acts outrageously, smites his fellow servants and eats and drinks with the drunken; suddenly his lord comes and gives him his portion with the hypocrites.

The interpretation is easily made. **Here** is the spurious, that which has taken the name of Christ and claims to be a servant likewise. The person described is a hypo-

crite; he professes outwardly to be a servant under his lord, but in his heart he saith, "My lord delays his coming." Then he usurps the place of authority, instead of serving in meekness, feeding Christ's own, he domineers over fellow servants and associates with the drunken.

The faithful and prudent servant is a picture of how it ought to be in the house, the church, and the evil servant in his hypocrisy and evil work is a picture of Christendom in corruption. The starting point of this corruption, this domineering over fellow servants and association with the drunken, the world, began with saying "my Lord delayeth his coming." It began in the heart. He gave up first in his heart that Hope, which was so pronounced in the early church. The belief given up that the Lord would come back, the departure from the doctrine of the imminency of the coming of the Lord, soon brought out the evils which the parable pictures. If the return of the Lord at any time had been the heart faith of the professing church, all the abominations of which the parable speaks would have been well nigh an impossibility. Gradually the belief in the coming of the Lord was given up; and as it was abandoned in the professing church, "the domin-

eers of the people," the Nicolaitans sprung up; an earthly priesthood was inaugurated, fashioned after a priesthood, which was the shadow of the better things, fulfilled in Christ. This false priesthood took the place of authority and domineers over the others, the servants of Christ. The separation was likewise given up and the church became identified with the world. It is another glimpse of the mustard seed in chapter xiii becoming a great tree with the birds flocking into its branches. The evil servant and his deeds are more fully pictured in the church message to Pergamos in the book of Revelation. But let us not pass lightly over the fact that the evil servant began by saying in his heart, "my lord delayeth his coming." He may not have been that evil servant all at once; but as soon as he said in his heart that the lord delays he had taken the first step towards becoming corrupt in doctrine and in practice. The enemy had put that foolish thought into his heart and then led him on into the wickedness he practiced.

And has this no meaning for us? Indeed it has. God's own Spirit through the Word has but a few years ago led back to the blessed Hope and the midnight cry has been heard, "Behold the bridegroom; go ye forth

to meet Him." There has been a most powerful revival of the study of prophecy and the imminency of the coming of the Lord has been taught and believed with apostolic simplicity. It has led out and on into true service for Christ. One who believes in the imminent coming of the Lord cannot help himself from looking to that Lord of being responsible to Him for service and wait on Him for service. This has been the case. Of the large numbers of servants who have been used in preaching the Gospel and shepherding the flock of Christ, the great majority have been and are such "who wait for His Son from heaven." There is a remnant of faithful ones who expect Him to come, who wait for Him; this expectation leads to faithful and happy service. One can be very happy indeed in serving the Lord with the childlike but scriptural Hope "He *may* come to-day."

The enemy, however, is not satisfied with having God's people waiting for the Lord. He is the author of that evil cry, "my Lord delayeth his coming." And he has succeeded in producing it in these days of revival of the study of Prophecy. We know some who taught and believed the imminency of the coming of the Lord. All at once their voices were silent as to the blessed Hope,

Why? In some way they became ensnared in teachings which put off the glorious event till after the great tribulation, the manifestation of the Antichrist, etc., and this unscriptural view silenced their testimony completely. It is sad to see this, and we fear, if our Lord tarries, some of these men (as it has been already the case) will act the part of the evil servant in a still more pronounced way.

Let us beware of any teaching which has even the faintest insinuation in it of the Lord delaying his coming. It is not of God. Let us rather begin each day with the blessed expectation that He may come to-day and then go forth to serve and be faithful to Him. But be assured the enemy will not rest, but find some new and subtle way to take away the blessed Hope and the blessed expectation, and to try and bring us into conformity with the world. Only the power of God can keep us in these evil days in this simple path and that will rest upon us as we cling to Him, the Lord who comes.*

*We take the following from a recent volume by W. Kelly:

"Only let the children of God get clear of those clouds of noxious and unwholesome vapors that constantly rise up between the Lord and them. Let

The second parable is the parable of the ten virgins. It is one which is interpreted by students of the prophetic Word in different ways; we are therefore obliged to give it our closest attention.

"Then shall the kingdom of the heavens be likened to ten virgins that, having taken their lamps, went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were prudent and five foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and did not take oil with them; but the prudent took oil in their vessels

them cherish in their souls the hope He gave them. If you bring in a millennium first, it is hard to see Christ's coming clearly; it must act as a veil, which dulls the hope of that day. It may not destroy the hope; yet one cannot but look for His coming in an imperfect manner. If you bring in a great tribulation first, this also lowers the outlook and enfeebles the hope greatly; it occupies one with evils as they rise, produces a depressing effect, and fills the heart with that judicial trouble and its shade of desolation. They are mistakes of theorists. The one puts a wrong expectation between you and the coming of the Lord, kindling meanwhile a dreamy excitement in waiting for that day. The other case produces a sort of spiritual nightmare, an oppressive feeling in the thought that the church must go through so dreadful a crisis.

"Be assured, my brethren, that the Scriptures deliver us from both the dream and the nightmare. They entitle the believer to wait for Christ as sim-

with their lamps. Now the bridegroom tarrying, they all grew heavy and slept. But in the middle of the night there was a cry, Behold, the bridegroom; go forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the prudent, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the prudent answered, saying: We cannot, lest it might not suffice for us and for you. Go rather to those that sell and buy for yourselves. But as they went away to buy the bridegroom came, and the ones that were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut. Afterwards came also the rest of

ply as a child, being perfectly certain that God's word is as true as our hope is blessed. There is to be God's glorious kingdom; but the Lord Jesus will bring it in at His coming. Without doubt the great tribulation shall come, but not for the Christian. When it is a question about the Jew, you can understand it well; for why does the greatest tribulation come upon him? Because of idolatry; yea, of the Beast and the Antichrist worshipped. It is for him a moral retribution, with which the Christian has nothing directly to do. The predicted trouble falls on the apostate nations and the Jews. Those that ought to be witnesses of Jehovah and His Christ will at last fall into the dreadful snare of allowing the abomination to be put into the sanctuary of God."

the virgins, saying Lord, Lord, open to us; but he answering, said, Verily I say unto you, I do not know you. Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour." (Verses 1-13.)

We have already shown that these parables have nothing more to do with the Jewish age and the remnant of His earthly people, which stands out so prominently in the first part of this discourse. However, as there is an increasing tendency among teachers of Prophecy to apply this parable of the virgins in a Jewish way, putting its fulfillment in the time of the great tribulation, we will be obliged to look at this view first and show that it is incorrect. After we have done this we shall be able to better grasp the meaning of this great parable and its teaching. The theory advanced is the following:

The Lord begins His parable with the word "then". This word proves that the parable refers to the time of the end of the Jewish age for that is described in the preceding chapter. Then—when?—when there is a time of trouble and the Lord is about to come. The parable is therefore applied by some teachers as referring to the condition of things on the earth at the close of the great tribulation. "Then" at that time when He returns after the

great tribulation, shall the kingdom of the heavens be like ten virgins. It is furthermore claimed that the ten virgins do not represent the church, as the Bride of Christ. That the Bride is already with the Bridegroom and as the virgins are not the Bride, but go forth to meet the Bridegroom who comes with the Bride to the wedding feast, the parable could not be applied to present conditions; the Bride, the church, must be first with the Bridegroom, before the virgins can go out to meet Him.

Another fact is used to strengthen this exposition. Some of the oldest versions have additional three words in the first verse, so that it reads: "Then shall the kingdom of the heavens be made like ten virgins that having their torches, went forth to meet the bridegroom *and the bride.*" These words are found in the Syriac version and also in the Vulgate. This is generally taken to be the conclusive evidence that the parable falls in its fulfillment in the close of the great tribulation and that the five prudent virgins are the Jewish remnant.

And now we challenge this exposition as being incorrect and contrary to Scripture. Let us look at the arguments against it.

The use of the word "then" proves the very opposite from what it is made to prove.

"Then," this little word, has always a great significance in Prophecy. Now if the parable of the ten virgins would come in at the close of the forty-fourth verse in chapter xxiv, the parable could mean absolutely nothing else but an event which is connected with the end of the great tribulation. We learned that the forty-fourth verse in the preceding chapter marked the close of the part of the discourse in which the Lord speaks of the signs of His coming and the end of the age. If we were to read in the forty-fifth verse, "Then shall the kingdom of the heavens be likened to ten virgins, etc.," there would be no other way but to connect the parable with the mighty events which the Lord had just described. It would have the same application as the "then" in verse forty. "Then two shall be in the field, one is taken and one is left." But will the reader notice as we have shown before, that with the forty-fifth verse the Lord introduces an entirely different theme; it is no longer the Jewish end of the age, the Jewish remnant, their suffering and deliverance, no longer His glorious visible manifestation out of the heavens, but it is teaching in parables concerning this present Christian age, the Christian profession. One parable He had spoken, the parable of the faithful and the evil servant. How perfectly it applies to Christian

conditions in this age, the true and the false, we have seen in our exposition. The "then" with which the second parable begins is to be brought in connection with the first parable; it refers to the same period of time when in the professing sphere of Christendom there is a faithful servant and an evil servant, and not to the end of the Jewish age.

A brief word on the question of the virgins representing the Jewish remnant and the apostate part of the nation (in the foolish virgins) is in order. We read in the parable of the ten virgins going to sleep because the bridegroom tarried. It is generally conceded that the going to sleep happened on account of the long delay of the bridegroom and that the virgins watched no longer for his coming. It is impossible to apply this to the condition of things during the great tribulation. It is all out of the question to think of the remnant, if that remnant is represented by the wise virgins, as going to sleep, when that remnant, as we learned from Chapter xxiv will preach the Gospel of the Kingdom and herald the coming of the King. This one argument is sufficient to completely answer this mode of interpretation. Furthermore the remnant is not called out to go forth to meet the bridegroom. The virgins are such who are called out to go forth. The remnant is

the opposite. The prudent virgins have the oil, which is a type of the Holy Spirit; they have the supply of the Holy Spirit, which could hardly be applied to the Jews before the visible return of the Lord.

And what about the reading of some of the old versions? There is not sufficient evidence that it is genuine. The evidences against it are two-fold. The teaching that the church is the bride of Christ is a subsequent revelation. We cannot look for it here and in the second place it is opposed to the meaning of the parable itself. This parable relates to the coming of the Bridegroom and that is why there is no need of mentioning the Bride. With this we dismiss this theory that the parable is one which refers to the Jews during the tribulation.

Before we turn to the exposition of the parable itself we want to mention another wrong interpretation which likewise is gaining ground in these days. It is taught that the five prudent virgins with the oil are such who have received the fullness of the Holy Spirit, who have attained to a high standard of holiness, who are fully surrendered and are virgins indeed, separated from the world in the highest sense. The foolish virgins are Christians too, but lack the "higher life," a phrase as unscriptural as "the second blessing."

Such teaching is not alone confusing but it aims finally at the Grace of God and the blessed work of our Lord.* We do well to beware of anything which magnifies the attainments of man and thereby obscures Grace. No, the wise virgins do not represent the select company called by some "the First Fruits," who are filled with the Spirit and are taken to be with the Lord while the foolish are "only justified believers" who have to go through the tribulation. The foolish virgins could not represent real Christians for the Lord tells them "*I know you not.*"

And now before we look at the parable, which is simple indeed, we wish to remind the reader again, that it is not necessary that everything in a parable be applied in some way. A parable is an allegorical representation illustrating some great principle. This parable shows under the picture of the ten virgins the Christian profession, the true and the false again and yet in profession alike in having gone out to meet the Bridegroom.

It must be looked upon as referring first of all to the beginning of this Christian age. The Christian church started out so to speak

*Quite often Psalm xlv is used in teaching the difference of the Bride and the virgins. However, that Psalm refers to Israel and the nations.

with this two-fold attitude, separation from the world and in expectation of the Coming of the Bridegroom.

The teaching of Christianity is that such who accept the name of Christian are to go out and separate from the old and go forth with the purpose to meet the Bridegroom. It was so in the beginning. The Jews had to go forth from the camp and the Gentiles had to turn to God from their idols; all waited for His Son from heaven that blessed Hope, which was so lively in the very start of Christianity. The name "virgin" conveys the same thought of separation. The lamps which they had tell us of another Christian characteristic; he is called to give light. The first verse of the parable gives us in a few words that which is characteristic of the Christian calling and which was so marked in the beginning. Going forth, that is separation from the world, going forth with lamps, to give light and shine and going forth to meet the Bridegroom, who promised to come again. Separation, manifestation and expectation is that in which Christianity consists.

In the next place we read that half of the virgins representing the Christian profession were foolish. Their foolishness consisted in taking their lamps, but they took no oil. However, their condition is fully discovered and

demonstrated after the midnight cry. The other five were wise and they took oil in their vessels with their lamps. What these lamps and vessels were is best explained by Edersheim. He says: "The lamps consisted of round receptacles for pitch or oil for the wick. This was placed in a hollow cup or deep saucer, which was fastened by a pointed end into a long wooden pole, in which it was borne aloft."

That we have in the division of the ten virgins, into five foolish and five wise, the false and the true is obvious enough. The five foolish virgins are representing such who are only professing Christians, while the five wise are possessing Christians, true believers. But it may be said, did not the foolish virgins go forth to meet the Bridegroom? In their *profession* they certainly did, but that does not make them really saved persons. Everything later shows that they were unsaved and all their profession was simply empty. They are the representatives of such who have the form of godliness (the lamps) but who deny the power thereof, who lack the power to give out light (the oil). And here again is an objection. Did they not later say "give us of your oil for our lamps are going out?" Then they must have had some oil else how could they say that the lamps were going out? There is no proof at all in this that they possessed oil.

In the first place, it says in the beginning, "they took no oil"; this in itself should settle this question. In their alarm, however, when the cry of the coming of the Bridegroom was heard they made an effort to have shining lamps. Who does not know that a wick may be set burning without oil to give forth a puff of smoke and then to go out? This was the case with the foolish virgins. They never had oil as the great masses of professing Christians in these days have lamps, the form outwardly, but they have never accepted Christ in the heart, and therefore the oil, the Holy Spirit and His power, is lacking. A fearful condition it is! Alas! the innumerable thousands and hundreds of thousands who are in this condition to-day! The wise virgins represent the true believers, who not alone have lamps, but oil in their lamps with their vessels. The Holy Spirit is present with every true child of God, though he be the weakest and the least taught.

And now we read of the tarrying of the bridegroom and that both, the foolish and the wise, grew heavy and slept. This has been interpreted in different ways, but only one interpretation can be made. The bridegroom tarrying long they did no longer expect him and were overcome by sleep. In the beginning of the Christian church they all expected the coming of the Lord, but as years went on they

gave up the blessed Hope and ceased looking for the Lord. The sleeping of the virgins stands for this fact that the expectancy of the coming of the Lord was given up. Occasionally during the centuries when the professing church had gone into corruption, there was an alarm of the coming judgment day. It was so in the beginning of the seventh century and about the year 1000. But it was not a going forth again to meet the Bridegroom with joy, but rather the opposite, an expectation of judgment and the end of the world. The priests then made use of the opportunity and the poor frightened people expecting the end of the world handed over their treasures to the "church." Aside from these alarms of the end of the world the sleep continued, and instead of waiting for the Bridegroom, going forth to meet Him, the professing church, the foolish and the wise, became occupied with earthly things, earthly power and government and the conversion of the world. Here in this verse we note a second period in the history of Christendom, the period in which the return of the Lord is not expected; they all slept.

But now comes a third period. "But in the middle of the night there was a cry, Behold the Bridegroom, go ye forth to meet Him." The question is, has this period been reached or are we to wait for a startling cry of this nature,

awaking the foolish and the wise, the professors and the possessors? Some teach that this midnight cry refers to the shout of the Lord when He comes into the air (1 Thess. iv:13-18). Dear readers, we are living in the very time of the fulfillment of this verse and are facing the soon coming of the Bridegroom. The midnight cry has been heard toward the middle of the last century, when the Holy Spirit through mighty instruments, though humble, gave a revival of the blessed Hope and all that which is connected with it. And this cry is still heard, "Behold the Bridegroom! go ye forth to meet Him." The enemy would silence this blessed word, but he cannot do it. But notice it is not alone the announcement of the fact of the coming of the Bridegroom, but it is more than that. The right reading is to leave out the word "cometh" in the authorized version and read simply, "Behold the Bridegroom!" The blessed Hope of His coming does not so much put the coming before our hearts as it does Himself. And as we behold the Bridegroom and know He is soon coming, how can we help ourselves but to go forth to meet Him. That means then a return to the true Christian calling, which is separation from the world, separation from all which is false and unscriptural, which dishonors Him. His person, His Work or His Word. And this has

been exactly the case. The midnight cry has awakened the true believers to a return to the true position and led on to a separation from that which is evil. It is so still. There is of course a preaching and teaching of Prophecy which does not touch the conscience, which is only for the head. Men teach correctly all about the 70 year weeks in Daniel, the restoration of the Jews and the millennium, and they go on in their evil ways. This is an evil thing. May the Lord keep us from it. The midnight cry is given that we may go forth to meet Him and be truly separated unto Him, who is soon coming. And if we have heard that cry by the power of the Spirit of God and are gone forth to meet the Bridegroom, we have a responsibility to take it up and sound it forth. And now what happens next? "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the prudent, Give us of your oil for our lamps are gone out. But the prudent answered saying, We cannot lest it might not suffice for us and for you. Go rather to those that sell and buy for yourselves. But as they went away the Bridegroom came, and the ones that were ready went in with Him to the wedding feast and the door was shut."

The midnight cry discovers the true condition of the foolish and the wise. The foolish

without oil running hither and thither, the prudent calm, arising, trimming their lamps, ready for the Bridegroom. It is a most significant fact that the blessed Hope of the coming of the Bridegroom, the midnight cry, is causing a separation between the true and the false. Those who are the Lord's and have the oil seem to be attracted to Himself and love His appearing, while the others, the mere professors, are behaving as foolishly as the foolish virgins in the parable. We can do no better than quote from the writings of one of the earnest and devoted men, who were used under God, to have a part in giving the midnight cry. "Awestricken come the foolish virgins to the wise saying, 'Give us of your oil,' but this is beyond the Christian, and the wise bid them, 'Go buy oil for yourselves.' There is one who sells, but freely, without money and without price, to buy even from an apostle is fatal. The cry was given to revive the hope, as it had the effect also of recalling the original and only right attitude of the saints toward Christ. It was enough to sever the wise as alone ready to act accordingly. It was too late for the foolish; who but one could give what they wanted. What is the meaning of all the recent agitation? People zealous for religious forms, who know not really of Christianity. The foolish virgins are in quest of the

oil, leaving no stone unturned to get what they have not, the one thing needful—taking every way except the right. The decking of ecclesiastical buildings, the fantastical costumes of clergymen, the modern taste for church music, simply show that the foolish virgins are at work. They are not in fit state to meet the Lord and fear it themselves. They are troubled with the rumor of they know not what. The consequence then of this midnight cry is that a double activity is going on. For the Lord is awakening those who know Himself, and are wise by His Grace to go forth to meet the Bridegroom. The others, if indirectly are none the less powerfully, but in their own way affected by the cry and its effects, which rise not above nature and the earth.” Utterly ignorant of the Grace of God, they are trying to make up by what is called “earnestness.” They know not that they are far from God, yea, dead in trespasses and sins. So they think or hope, that being “earnest they may somehow or other get right at last. What delusion can be more hopeless?”

And what else might be added to this? Religious activities, societies, endeavors and other things are constantly multiplying and one can see readily in much of this the running about of the foolish virgins. None could take from the parable however that when the midnight

cry is heard that an individual who discovers that he has no oil, that he is not the Lord's, could not come to Him, who is ready to sell without money and without price. Blessed be His Name, He stands ready to the very last moment to give the oil, fulfilling to the last moment while He tarrieth His own gracious word, "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." The trouble however with the foolish virgins is they do not want to come to HIM to buy of Him, but rather go on in their own natural, foolish way.

And now comes the last stage of this parable. The Bridegroom comes. The prudent enter in, the foolish are shut out. The door was shut. Oh, solemn, solemn word! The door was shut! How soon all this may be a reality. The midnight brought the cry; now we are facing the dawn of the morning. We are in the fourth watch. Soon He will come and *all* who are saved by Grace, though they may be ignorant of His premillennial coming, or sadly lacking in other respects, will go in to the wedding feast. All others, who are not saved, will be shut out. It is a final judgment. They can *never* enter in. "I know you not," is all they hear. "Watch therefore, for you know not the day nor the hour." *Reader! Are you ready?*

And now we come to the third parable.

This parable concludes the second part of the Olivet discourse. "For it is as if a man going away out of a country called his bondsmen and delivered to them his substance. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his particular ability, and immediately went away out of the country. And he that had received the five talents went and trafficked with them, and made five other talents. In like manner also he that had received the two, he also gained two others. But he that had received the one went and dug in the earth and hid the money of his lord. After a long time the lord of those bondmen comes and reckons with them. And he that had received the five talents came to him and brought five other talents, saying, My lord, thou deliveredst me five talents; behold I have gained five other talents besides them. His lord said to him, Well, good and faithful bondman; thou wast faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had received the two talents came to him and said, My lord, thou deliveredst me two talents; behold I have gained two other talents besides them. His lord said to him, Well, good and faithful bondman, thou wast faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And he also that had re-

ceived the one talent coming to him said, My lord, I know thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sowed, and gathering from where thou hadst not scattered, and being afraid I went away and hid thy talent in the earth; behold thou hast that which is thine.

And his lord answering said to him, Wicked and slothful bondman, thou knewest that I reap where I had not sowed, and gathered from where I had not scattered; thou oughtest then to have put my money to the money changers, and when I came I should have got what is mine with interest. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it to him that has the ten talents; for to every one that has shall be given, and he shall be in abundance; but from him that has not, that even which he has shall be taken from him. And cast out the useless bondman into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth" (verses 14-30).

This parable is not identical with the one which is recorded in the Gospel of Luke (chapter xix:12-27). The one in Luke, the parable of the ten pounds, was uttered before the last visit to Jerusalem; the one here in Matthew when His visit was almost ended. The parable in Luke has more to do with the rewards in the Kingdom and has its special application into which we do not enter here. The

parable here, following that of the ten virgins, shows us the same period of time, when the Lord is not present. We see in it again the responsibility which man has, in possession of the gifts which the absent Lord has bestowed and how the gifts may either be used or not used and that when He comes again the good and faithful servant will have an abundant entrance into the joy of His Lord, while the unprofitable servant is cast out.

The difficulty in this parable seems to have always been the servant who received the one talent. The teaching which is often, or rather generally given from his case, is one which is positively unscriptural. It is taught that he, as a believer and servant of Christ, did not make use of his talent and that all Christian believers who act in the same way, must share his fate. Upon this conception, believers are exhorted to faithfulness, to be diligent and use that which the Lord has given to them, in case they do not, they will surely be cast out into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. According to this teaching final salvation depends not upon the work of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, but upon the faithfulness of the believer and upon the use of what he has received. How this thought can be enlarged is easily seen. Some say, indeed, that every human being has some

talent, even if it is a very small one, some light, something good, and if it is used, improved, that little good developed, it will result in salvation. That all such teaching is wicked and strikes at the very fundamentals of the blessed Gospel, is seen at the first glance. How can we reconcile the teaching of the Gospel of Grace with the case of the unprofitable servant in this parable? There is no need of attempting to reconcile it, for the one who had received the one talent and who hid it does not represent a true believer at all. To verify this we only need to hear what he has to say, what excuse he gives for having put away the talent. His words discover his true condition. He was far from being a true servant with a heart full of confidence and love. He is the very opposite. He did not trust the Lord at all, and with his words he accuses the Lord of being a hard master. Surely a true believer could never say such words about his gracious Lord. That he did not use the talent at all and then upon his idleness accuses the Lord unjustly is proof enough that the man represents a mere professing servant. *What the Lord had put at his disposal he had refused by not using it.*

The whole parable, aside from the case of the unprofitable servant, is not difficult to understand. We must, however, be careful to

avoid the thought that the talents, the five talents and the two talents, are things like earthly possessions, mental faculties, such as a good memory, a keen, logical mind, or a robust body. That all these are blessings and gifts of God none would doubt. The talents are His goods and delivered into the hands of the servants when He went away. However natural endowments are considered in the distribution of the gifts. To each is given "according to his particular ability." His own divine wisdom manifests itself in the bestowal of these talents. There is no true servant of Christ who is left without a gift. The absent Lord has given to each according to their ability.

Another great principle which this parable teaches is that the gift can be enlarged and increased. The two trafficked with the talents and doubled them. Exercise of any gift, no matter how small it is, will increase that gift and there will be gain, which of necessity is gain first of all for the Lord Himself. It will be for Him, as these servants laid before Him what they had received and what they had gained.

However, the distinction between the parable of the prudent servant and the evil servant at the close of chapter xxiv must also be maintained. The sphere of the prudent servant was narrower. He had to give meat in season to

the household. The talents here are to be used in a wider sphere. Just as the merchant who trafficks and wishes to gain goes outside, the servant of Christ is to use that the Lord has given to him according to his natural ability and as he uses it, whether it is the preaching of the Gospel or labor among God's people, it will increase.

And then the Coming of the Lord and how He dealt with the good and faithful servants brings out another principle. Each receives a reward. To each the Lord saith, "Well, good and faithful bondman, thou wast faithful over few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." He does not speak a higher and better word of approval to the one who had the five talents and brought him five other talents. Both hear the same word of approval. It is therefore not the question of how much we have received of the Lord, but how we *use* that which He has given to us. Faithful service, even in the smallest matter, though there be but one talent, will bring approval.

To fully understand "the setting over many things," and what it is "to enter into the joy of the Lord" we shall have to wait until we stand in His own glorious presence and see Him face to face.

May this parable, like the preceding ones,

urge us on as true believers to be faithful to the Lord. Soon He will come. Soon we shall appear before His judgment seat to give an account. May we all use what He has given and use it with confidence in Him and with Love for Him.



THE THIRD PART.

Matthew xxv:31-46.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS.

In the closing verses of this chapter (v. 31-46), we find the third part of the great prophetic discourse of our Lord. It relates to the Gentiles. Quite often this part is spoken of by expositors as a parable, just as some call the description of the future state of Dives and Lazarus in Luke xvi, a parable. But neither is a parable. Both are solemn descriptions of events and conditions which are real.

The King here gives us the picture of a great judgment, which He Himself conducts while He occupies the throne of His glory.

“But when the Son of man comes, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon His throne of glory, and all the nations shall be gathered before Him; and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left” (v. 31-33).

It is evident that these words must be connected with chapter xxlv:30, 31. The scene takes place after His visible and glorious appearing as Son of Man and after His elect

(the remnant of His earthly people; that is, the "all Israel") have been gathered. Leaving out the central portion of the discourse, the three parables, relating to the Christian profession, we have in chapter xxiv:3-41 and chapter xxv:31-46 chronological events relating to the end of the Jewish age and the judgment which follows immediately after the Lord has come.

And will He occupy a literal throne? Some take it as being only a picture. But such a conception is totally wrong and dangerous. The angels will also appear with Him and will be seen by the inhabitants of the earth; what reason could be given that the throne, which He occupies, is a spiritual throne? No, the throne will be a literal throne, and it will be "His throne of Glory." To this same throne He referred when He answered Peter in chapter xix:28, "And Jesus said to them, Verily I say unto you, That ye who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit down upon His throne of Glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The "Regeneration," the "*Paligenesia*," of the coming age, begins with His second visible coming, and the first great event which takes place after He has sat down upon His own throne will

be the judgment, as described by Himself in this part of the discourse.

The church is not seen here in Matthew. He will bring His own with Him and the church will take part in the scene pictured here as well as in the government of the earth and the universe. "Do ye not know that the Saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi:2). The angels will have their definite work in this judgment scene (Matt. xiii:41-42). The question which arises now is who the persons are, who will be judged. What judgment is it, which the Lord here describes? There should be little difficulty in ascertaining this and the person who closely adheres to the text, without consulting the traditional views of the professing church will see at a glance who will be judged. The Lord says "*all nations*" will be gathered before Him. The persons judged must therefore be the nations, which are living in the day when the Lord appears in His Glory.

This excludes at once the true church. The church is with Him. No such judgment can be for the true church. The judgment seat of Christ (not of the Son of man) before which all true believers have to appear, either for approval or disapproval, is when this judgment of the nations takes place, a thing of the past. The judgment seat of Christ, before

which believers have to appear, is not upon the earth, but in the air, in the place to which the church had been caught up.

Generally the great scene our Lord unfolds here of this judgment of the living nations is applied to a universal judgment. Such a judgment in which Jews, Christians, saved and unsaved, every member of the human race, all the heathen will participate is often preached from this passage, and another judgment scene, which is recorded in Rev. xx:11-15 is strangely identified with this one. We say at once there is not a line of Scripture which teaches such a universal judgment and no line of Scripture which teaches a universal resurrection, which is also taught by those who teach a general judgment. We repeat, a general judgment and a general resurrection is nowhere taught in the Word of God. However, we do not want our readers to think that we deny judgment and resurrection. We fully believe that every person who ever lived will be judged at some time, and every person who lived on this earth and died will be raised from the dead; but there are different judgments and two distinct resurrections.

If we turn to Rev. xx:11-15, the passage which is so often quoted with Matt. xxv:31-46, we find it totally different from the judg-

ment scene which our Lord describes here in His Olivet discourse. In Rev. xx we do not behold a throne of Glory upon which the Son of Man sitteth, but it is a great white throne. Nor does that great white throne stand upon the earth as in Matt. xxv, but the earth and heaven fled away and there was no place found for them. The subjects of the great white throne judgment are not living nations, but "*the dead.*" As the context shows the nations, which were rebellious at the end of the thousand years were devoured by the fire from God out of heaven (verse 9). The great white throne judgment is that of the wicked dead and their eternal abiding place will be the lake of fire. This is the second resurrection or the resurrection of the unjust as our Lord calls it in John v.

There is a first resurrection in which all the saved have a share, which begins when the Lord comes for His Saints, and the dead in Christ rise first and we which are alive are caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv:15-17). To this first resurrection belong likewise the martyrs during the great tribulation. All this is made clear by a few verses in the 20th chapter of Revelation. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were

beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (Rev. xx:4, 5). This proves clearly that there are two resurrections, one of the just and the other of the unjust, and they occur not at the same time, but there is a space of a thousand years between them.

Again let us remember that it is said of all such who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ that they *have* everlasting life and shall *not* come into judgment. For the true believer there is no judgment, because the Lord Jesus passed on the cross through the judgment as his substitute. The judgment seat of Christ of which we read in 1 Cor. v and before which all have to appear who are Christ's, concerns works, service, rewards, etc., and not an eternal destiny.

In our passage here an entirely different judgment is described. Not a word or a hint is given about resurrection; in fact, there is no resurrection at all in connection with the event pictured by the Lord. When He comes in His Glory, His church with Him, attended

by the holy angels, He finds upon the earth His own earthly people Israel. The Israel which is left and passed through the fire and great tribulation has received Him as Redeemer and King and He turned ungodliness from Jacob. But He also finds living nations on the earth and these nations will be separated by the Son of Man sitting upon the throne of His glory. They will be parted by Him and the sheep put at His right hand and the goats at His left.

The place of the judgment of these living nations will no doubt be the land of Israel.

Zech. xiv:1-5 and Joel iii throws light upon this judgment scene. Let us then bear this clearly in mind. Matt. xxv:31-46 describes a judgment, which takes place immediately after the Lord's second coming in power and in glory. The persons concerned in it are not Jews, nor the church, nor the dead, but the nations which are living in that day. And now after the separation has taken place the King speaks: "Then shall the King say to those at His right hand, Come blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the world's foundation; for I hungered and you gave me to eat; I thirsted and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was ill and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came to

me. Then shall the righteous answer Him saying, Lord, when saw we Thee hungering, and nourished Thee; or thirsting and gave Thee to drink? and when saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in; or naked and clothed Thee? and when saw we Thee ill or in prison and came to Thee? And the King answering shall say to them, Verily, I say to you, inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it to me. Then shall He also say to those on the left, Go from me cursed into eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I hungered, and ye gave me not to eat; thirsted and ye gave me not to drink; I was a stranger and ye took me not in; naked and ye did not clothe me; ill and in prison and ye did not visit me. Then shall they also answer saying, Lord, when saw we Thee hungering, or thirsting, or a stranger or naked, or ill, or in prison, and have not ministered to Thee? Then shall He answer them saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have not done it to one of these least, neither have ye done it to me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment, and the righteous into eternal life."

And now in the first place, Who are the nations who are righteous and who figure here as sheep? That they do not represent

the church and are not church saints, members of the one body, we have already demonstrated. It can easily be proven from the text itself. These righteous nations are called "the blessed of the Father," believers who constitute the church are more than blessed of the Father, they are in fellowship with the Father and the Son. These nations inherit a kingdom which is prepared from the foundation of the world. The inheritance of the church is higher than that. Our inheritance is with Himself. We are the joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore of the church it is said that God has chosen us in Him "before the foundation of the world." Other proofs that these nations do not represent the church we pass by.

These nations are saved nations and their acts of righteousness are given here. They were merciful to the least of the King's brethren; they fed them, gave them to drink, clothed them and visited them. What they did to the Brethren of the King, they did unto Him.

How great the confusion is among Christians on the meaning of these words! Often the interpretation given strikes at the very fundamentals of the Gospel. Generally charitable acts, such as hospitals and prison work,

feeding the hungry and clothing the naked in connection with church work or philanthropic institutions, are thought to be meant by our Lord.

If any one does these things and is faithful in them the King will approve of them in the judgment and many a soul builds upon this foundation of sand. All this is absolutely wrong. The words have an entirely different meaning.

Who are the Brethren of the King whom these righteous nations treated with such kindness and mercy? They are the brethren of the Lord according to the flesh, in other words they are Jews. If this is grasped, the whole judgment, the righteousness of the nations at the King's right hand and the unrighteousness of the others, the goats, will be clear.

Let the reader turn back to the first part of this discourse. There we read, "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." What the Gospel of the Kingdom is, when this Gospel is to be preached (during the great tribulation), who is going to preach this last great witness we have shown at length in our exposition of the preceding chapter. The preaching of the

Gospel of the kingdom among all nations takes place during the end of the age. Up to this time this Gospel is not yet preached. The preachers of this Gospel during the ending years of the Jewish age will be the Jewish remnant. These are "Brethren" of our Lord according to the flesh. They will move among the nations of the world and give their startling witness in the proclamation of that Gospel, which will herald the nearness of the coming of the King and the Kingdom. How will they be received among the nations? Will their testimony be universally believed or will it be rejected? The words of our Lord here at the close of the discourse give us the answer.

Some of the nations will receive their testimony. They believe the Gospel of the Kingdom, this last great witness. They manifest the genuineness of their faith by works. The preachers who are going about are persecuted and hated by others, suffering, hungry, and some cast into prison. These nations who believe their testimony show their faith by giving them to eat, clothing them, visiting them in prison, and by showing love to them. The case of Rahab may be looked upon as a typical foreshadowing. She believed. It was at a time when the judgment was gathering

over Jericho (the type of the world). "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." And again it is written of her, "Likewise also was Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" She had faith and manifested it by works. And so these nations believe the messengers and treat them in kindness. Grace thus covers them because they believed.

They enter into the Kingdom and inherit the same; as righteous they go into eternal life. In other words, they remain throughout the kingdom age on the earth and pass on into the eternal state. That they will occupy with saved Israel a special position in the Kingdom we fully believe; nor can they share the revolt which takes place after the thousand years, when Satan is loosed for a little while.

The question may arise who these nations are, who will receive the Gospel of the Kingdom. This can hardly be answered now. One thing seems certain that the nations which heard the Gospel of Grace preached, who had a chance to believe *will not have another chance** to accept the Gospel of the Kingdom.

And now the other side. There are nations

in the presence of that throne of Glory who will be put at the left side of the King. The messengers came to them and they refused to believe their message and because they did not believe they did not treat the messengers in kindness and mercy. These nations continued in wickedness and unbelief; they rejected the last offer, and now their eternal destiny is to be forever settled. The King says unto them, "Go from Me, cursed, into eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." At the close the Lord says, "And these shall go away into eternal punishment." How solemn are these words! Awful words! Go from Me! And where to? Into eternal fire. He does not say "Cursed of my Father," but simply "Cursed." The Father does not "Curse;" He does not want any one to be in the place of eternal distance and darkness. Nor is the place, the eternal fire, prepared for these nations, but it is prepared for the devil and his angels. By rejecting God's love and mercy, by continuing in unbelief they sided with the devil and his angels and now there is no other remedy for them but to share for all eternity the place prepared for the devil

*We are sorry to find this unscriptural theory of a second chance spreading in our day among many good people. Beware of it!

and his angels. At the close of the thousand years the devil is put into the lake of fire (Rev. xx:10). Previously the beast and the false prophet were cast into that place before the millennium (Rev. xix:20). The order of punishment then is the following: 1. The beast and the false prophet. 2. The unrighteous nations. These go there before the millennial kingdom. 3. The devil with his angels. 4. The wicked dead from the great white throne judgment. This takes place after the thousand years. Oh! the folly which tries to explain away the eternity of punishment of the wicked. Yet this is done in our present day as never before. God is too good, too merciful to do that; and others claim that while there is punishment, it is not eternal, but only age abiding. All these fanciful, philosophical theories, so popular in our day, are completely answered by the solemn words of our Lord, "And these shall go away into *ETERNAL* punishment, and the righteous into *ETERNAL* life."

Thus ends the last great discourse of the King in this Gospel and ere long all that which He predicted, sitting upon the Mount of Olives, will be reality. Reader! Let us live in the light of these solemn truths,