Studies in Zechariah

Arno Clemens Gaebelein

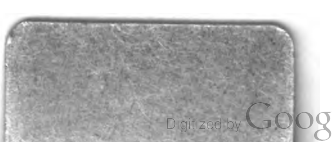
Digitized by Google

4785
Gaebelein
Harvard Divinity School

ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL
LIBRARY

MDCCCCX

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

STUDIES
IN
ZECHARIAH.

BY

A. C. GAEBELEIN.

EIGHTH EDITION.

PRINTING BY
FRANCIS E. FITCH, INC.,
47 BROAD ST., NEW YORK.

Digitized by Google

HARVARD
LIBRARY
H87.582
2.28.56

Copyright 1911, by A. C. Gaebelein.

478.5
Gaebelein

?
anonym
2.28.56

Digitized by Google

FOREWORD TO THE EIGHTH EDITION.

This little exposition of the Prophecies of Zechariah was written almost 15 years ago. We are thankful to God that it has been a help to so many. The sixth edition has been sold and a seventh has become necessary.

We were somewhat reluctant to print another edition. When this book was written the writer did not at all have a clear vision in the prophetic Word concerning the great predicted end events of the times of the Gentiles. Like so many others he did not distinguish between the personal Antichrist and the King of the North. He then held the view, which is still taught by many, that the first beast in Revelation xiii is the personal Antichrist. This belief led into incorrect views about that part of Revelation.

Since writing the book it has pleased the Lord to give the writer better light on these great prophetic unfoldings and for this reason some of the interpretations given, especially on pages 135, 136 and 137, are no longer looked upon by the author as being scripturally correct. In our later books **"The Harmony of the Prophetic Word"—"Joel,"** and especially **"Exposition of Daniel,"** the truth as revealed in Prophecy concerning the two beasts and the King of the North, is given. We therefore request the reader to consider this when studying this volume.

We are sure the Lord will continue to bless the simple unfolding of the greatest Postexile Prophet. So little is written on this great book that we feel that we should not withhold this imperfect exposition from the students of the Word of Prophecy. May the Lord continue to bless it.

A. C. GAEBELEIN.

Sept. 30, 1911.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

INTRODUCTION.

Zechariah, the name of the prophet whose visions and prophecies we desire to study, is not an uncommon name in divine history. Its meaning is *Jehovah remembers.* He is called the son of Berachiah, *Jehovah blesses,* the son of Iddo, *the appointed time.* There is here, as in many other instances in the Bible, a great significance in the Hebrew names. The name of the grandfather of Zechariah (who probably brought him up, as his father must have died early), his father's name and his own read in English translation, *the appointed time, Jehovah blesses, Jehovah remembers.* The Holy Spirit has inspired these very names; they are in themselves a commentary to the prophecies and visions God gave to Zechariah, for they speak of an appointed time of God's blessings for Jerusalem and of His loving remembrance.

Zechariah was born in Babylon in the captivity, for when he returned to the land of his fathers he was but a child. Like some other prophets he was a priest as well as a prophet. His work as a prophet was commenced by him when he was a young man, for thus he is called in one of the visions. The time of his opening address to the people is two months after Haggai had opened his lips in Jehovah's name. Haggai received the word of the Lord in the sixth month in the second year of Darius, and Zechariah

Digitized by Google

in the eighth month of the same year of the reign of that King, about 520 before Christ.

Both prophets had the same thought given, namely, to encourage the Jewish remnant in the blessed work of rebuilding the house of the Lord. This work had suffered an interruption; the Samaritans were the cause of it. They had applied to join in the work, but as the remnant considered them idolators and as not belonging to God's people, the application was rejected. These Samaritans tried after that in various ways to hinder the rebuilding, which had so blessedly begun. At last they succeeded in obtaining a decree which forbade the building of the Temple. All work had to be stopped and ceased for about fourteen years. But when the King who had forbidden the prosecution of the work had died and Darius became King, the building of the Temple was once more made possible. The leaders of the people in the enterprise were Serubbabel and the High Priest Joshua. But again they were hindered from the outside, while on the other hand the people themselves had lost much interest and possessed no longer that love and zeal for God's house, which was so prominent after their return. Thus Haggai said: *This people say, It is not the time for us to come, the time for the Lord's house to be built . . . It is a time for you to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste.* Haggai, chapter 1.

In that critical moment these two prophets made their appearance, and God gave them visions of comfort and glad tidings to encourage the disheartened, selfish and unbelieving people.

The visions and prophecies of Zechariah, however, do not only give an assurance that there could be no failure in the work the

Digitized by Google

remnant had taken up anew, but more than that in them the glorious future of Jerusalem and Zion is unfolded. They lead up to the grand finale of the history of God's ancient people, the time when Israel, redeemed and restored forever, will sing the grand and glorious Hallelujah.

It is, of course, true that Zechariah did a blessed work for the people who lived in his day; he had a special mission to perform and succeeded in it, but the Spirit of God in the message of comfort for that time gives the history of events then in a distant future. The Babylonian captivity of Israel foreshadows their greater dispersion in which they are to-day wanderers all over the earth, and the restoration which took place in the time of Zechariah is highly typical of that coming restoration for which we hope and pray.

Zechariah may therefore be fitly called the Prophet of the Restoration. Surely it is a deplorable blindness in some teachers of the Word, who see in the book of Zechariah nothing but past history, and who claim that all has been fulfilled in the return of the small Jewish remnant from the captivity, and whatever promises of mercy given to Jerusalem and the land of Judah find now their spiritual fulfilment in the church.

It will be our aim in a series of studies in Zechariah to consider mostly the relation of these visions to the end of this age, and the beginning of the next, the millennial glory. We shall find that instead of the book of Zechariah being all fulfilled prophecy, as some would have it, it is indeed mostly unfulfilled, and even some of the prophetic promises which on the surface seem to have been

Digitized by Google

seen a fulfilment, were only in part realized. And how important at this time to study the book of Zechariah! We are living in the time when that greater restoration with all its events forerunning and connected with it are about to come to pass. It is needless to say that we firmly believe that Zechariah wrote all of the book which bears his name.

Several of the Jewish commentators confess an inability to explain the book. The well-known Jewish commentator Solomon Ben Jarchi (generally known by the name Rashi), says: "The prophecy (of Zechariah) is very dark, for it contains visions much like dreams, which want interpreting, and we will never succeed in finding the true meaning until *the Teacher of righteousness arrives.*" Abarbanel makes a similar confession.

We praise God that the Teacher of righteousness has come, even the Spirit of Truth, who guides into all truth and reveals the things to come.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER I.

The Opening Address of the Prophet to His Nation. The Night Visions and Their Meaning. The First Night Vision.

The opening address of the prophet (chapter i : 1–6) forms an excellent introduction to the visions of comfort and warning which he had and revealed to the people. It is a very pointed and earnest call to repentance: *The Lord has been sore displeased with your fathers.* They were disobedient and stiff-necked. The former prophets, Jeremiah and Isaiah, had called them to turn from their evil ways, but they did not hear. And now, where are the fathers? They had passed away like the disobedient ones in the wilderness; God's judgment and displeasure had overtaken them. But the faithful God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whose gifts and calling are without repentance, comes once more to His chosen people, the seed of Abraham, and the Spirit, through Zechariah, speaks a direct message to return, and utters the promise that the Lord will also return unto them. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Return unto me saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will return unto you saith the Lord of Hosts.*

The name Jehovah appears three times in this short exhortation. Each time the name is in another connection. Jehovah speaks, they are to return to Jehovah, and Jehovah will return to them. Surely in profane literature such a repetition would be rejected as useless and superfluous, but in the Book where every word and phrase is God-given, we cannot pass it by as having no significance. Like in many other passages in

Digitized by Google

the Old Testament we have here a revelation of the one God as Father, Son and Spirit. This revelation was often made in divine history, and when the measure of Israel's apostacy was at last filled up, they had indeed rejected Jehovah in rejecting Jehovah-Jesus, and also Jehovah, the Spirit. And while this exhortation was one for Zechariah's contemporaries, it is the great exhortation to the Jewish remnant for all times. The nation having forsaken Jehovah in His revelations as Father, Son and Spirit, will have to return and listen to Jehovah who speaks, to Jehovah whom they rejected, and Jehovah in His merciful and loving manifestations will return to them as a nation and to their land.

This return of Israel to which Zechariah exhorts will take place in a set order clearly revealed throughout the word of God. We hear in Romans ii. that Paul speaks of a remnant according to the election of grace. That remnant is the remnant which turns to Jehovah now during this dispensation, and, of course, all Jews who are now turning to Jehovah-Jesus, and to whom Jehovah, the Spirit, also comes, are *members of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ.* As soon as the *church*, the witnessing body in the earth, is removed by that glorious event which is our blessed hope, another Jewish remnant is called, and that remnant will be Jewish throughout, "keeping the commandments and having the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ." Of course that remnant will have returned to Jehovah, and will be the witnessing and the *suffering* body in the great tribulation. The believing and longing cry of that remnant, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," will at last welcome Him, the Pierced One and King of Israel as well as King of Glory, to this earth, and then the remnant of the nation in all lands will turn to Him. This is the divine programme for Israel.

Digitized by Google

After these opening words, delivered probably to the assembled people, Zechariah received his wonderful night visions. They were not mere dreams, but the events which he describes passed before him in visions. He saw them all in one night. They are eight in number, and have not found many interpreters. They were not only given in one night, but just as one followed rapidly the other, so are they all closely connected, and giving events which are to follow one after the other. That we have here a revelation which may fitly be termed *the Apocalypse of Zechariah* is unquestionable. After all these visions had passed, Joshua, the High Priest, is crowned with two crowns foreshadowing Him who is to be a Priest upon His throne. This crowning is a climax in Zechariah's night visions which lead up to that coronation. Divine interference in behalf of Jerusalem and the land of Judah, God's displeasure upon the nations for their abominations, and the overthrow of Israel's enemies are clearly depicted in the first two night visions, while in the others we see the promised prosperity returning to the land, God's glory appearing once more, the nation once more inhabiting the land and cleansed from their guilt, filled with the Spirit, wickedness judged, Babylon set up and overthrown, and the chariots of God appearing.

The first night vision is especially suited for a close study for our times, for the events and conditions in that first vision are a true picture of the peculiarities of the times in which we live. Indeed we are rapidly nearing the fulfillment of this first night vision.

This is the vision: Zechariah sees a man riding upon a red horse and he halts in a valley among myrtle trees. He is surrounded by a large army of angels upon red, sorrel and white horses, and the man upon the red horse becomes the centre of

Digitized by Google

the hosts of heaven. The angels give their reports unto the man in the midst, who is also called the Angel of the Lord. These angels had walked to and fro through the earth (like the evil spirit and his demons, Job i., so the good angels walk to and fro through the earth), and they report to the Angel of the Lord, telling him that all the earth sitteth still and is at rest. Prosperity and peace seems to be what the angels saw, but over against this bright picture there is the dark scene—Jerusalem trodden down, the house of the Lord unfinished, a persecuted suffering remnant.

And now the Angel of the Lord becomes the intercessor for Jerusalem and turns to Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts sitting upon His throne. *O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah against which Thou hast had indignation these three score and ten years?* He receives an answer of comfortable words. God is once more jealous for Jerusalem, and very angry and sore displeased with the nations, the nations who are in greater part responsible for the condition of His inheritance—*they have helped forward their affliction.* God promises to return to the city with prosperity, and that the house shall be built in it, and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

The first question which arises in the interpretation of this vision is concerning the person who leads the angelic hosts. He is called a man riding upon a red horse. This does not mean that he was nothing but a man, but it means that he appeared in the vision to Zechariah as a man, he had a human body. Later he is called the Angel of the Lord, and as such, he acts as successful intercessor for Jerusalem, and receives a loving answer from Jehovah. The leader must have been a divine person incarnate. The name Angel of the Lord is one of the Old Testament names for the *Son of God*, and there

Digitized by Google

can be only one satisfactory interpretation of who the rider upon the red horse is, and that is, He must be the Son of God. There are three chief reasons for this interpretation. In the first place, the color of the horse which He rode was red ; this denotes blood, and is the color of the Son of God, for He is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, and He is the Lion from the tribe of Judah, who will arise and slay His enemies, coming to judge the nations (Isaiah lxiii). He is the Leader as well as the Centre of the heavenly hosts, for to Him all power is given in *Heaven* and in the earth, and all things are in His hands ; and in the third place, the intercession which the Angel of the Lord makes is the intercession which belongs to the Son of God. The heavenly company comes to a stop in a deep valley, and the Angel of the Lord stands there among the myrtle trees.

Jewish interpretation (in the Yalkut) says : He was staying among the myrtles which were in the *Metzullah* (depths). Now myrtles (Hadassim) mean nothing else than saints, as it is said (Esther ii : 7), and He was bringing up Hadassah (Esther), and the depths means nothing else than Babylon. We believe this as correct an interpretation as any. Myrtles denote lowliness and sweetness, and the dark, dreary valley stands for persecution, suffering, and being outcast. All this was true of the remnant, and it is true as well of the church. What a comfort it must have been to the patriotic prophet and to all true believers among the returned exiles, to learn that in that vision it was made so clear that Jehovah, the Angel of the Lord, was with them in all their lowliness and suffering. The Angel, who so wonderfully delivered their father Jacob, and whom he called the Angel the Redeemer, and who had so often appeared in the miraculous events of the past, this same Angel, with all the army of heaven at His

Digitized by Google

command, was still with them, though the cloud of glory was missing.

May we not forget that the Angel of the Lord, the Son of God, our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is still with His people Israel. He has indeed not cast them away, whom He foreknew. He is their King and their Priest, and for all we know, the mighty angels who are under His direction, may be assembled now as they were in Zechariah's vision, and He Himself ready to reveal His love and mercy to Jerusalem.

And what is the report of the angels to their leader? They have walked to and fro through the earth, they have found nothing but prosperity. All the earth sitteth still and is at rest, the nations at ease, a perfect picture of prosperity. The nations are seen in a flourishing state, but His nation is in trouble and His inheritance laid waste, the nations having like wild beasts trampled it into the dust. While the large cities of the nations are increased and have plenty, the city of a great King is forsaken. History shows that indeed at that time there was no war, but peace everywhere and prosperity enjoyed selfishly by the nations. Should not these nations have an interest in that land and in that people? But they were living for their own ease and comfort. What does it matter if there is yonder a poor and suffering people?

Prosperity, universal prosperity, and with it universal peace, is the cry at the close of another century, and will be more so as we advance towards the end of this age. Civilization, world conquest, commercial extension and a universal peace, seem to be the leading thoughts among the nations of our times. Truly it is realized by some that our boasted civilization, liberty and prosperity is nothing but a smouldering volcano which may burst open at any moment and make an end of all boasting, but the majority of the people even in

Digitized by Google

Christendom are sadly deluding themselves with idle dreams. And what of God's thoughts and His eternal purposes? What of His oath-bound covenant promises? They are being misinterpreted, set aside and forgotten. Thus it will continue till the climax is reached, so clearly foretold in the second Psalm,

"Why do the nations rage
And the peoples imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the Lord and against His anointed.
Let us break their bands asunder
And cast away from us their cords."

This is a true picture of the nations as the King of Kings at last will find them when He returns with and in His glory. The great sin of the nations, which is *Anti-Semitism*, will be considered later.

The nations at ease, prosperous and increased, and Jerusalem trodden down, the land waste and desolate, in the hands of the enemy, is the mark of this age up to its end.

But now comes the interference of Him who sitteth in the heavens. The angel of the Lord intercedes and cries to the Lord of Hosts, "How long?" It has been so much overlooked that He who is our Intercessor, the Great High Priest in the Heavens, is, according to the flesh, of the seed of Abraham, and He stands there in His place in His glorified humanity. If the High Priest in the Old Testament carried upon a breast-plate nearest to his heart the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, may we not assume that the true High Priest, who is the King of Israel as well, has them just as near to His loving heart? He loves His own, and longs for the time when they will crown Him Lord of all. And is it not very significant that the Spirit at this present time teaches

Digitized by Google

so many children of God to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, that He may establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth? The Spirit and the Bride say "Come," and surely the dearest thought in the Saviour's heart is being laid upon the hearts of His children, in whom the Spirit dwells, to pray and intercede with Him for the peace of Jerusalem. This prayer, heard from so many lips to-day in the church waiting for her Lord, is but an echo of His "How long?" and prayer for His people.

The interceding angel of the Lord is not left without an answer from the Lord of Hosts whom he has addressed in behalf of Jerusalem. It must be noticed that the answer is not the one which Jehovah gives to the angel of the Lord, but the answer is transmitted by the Lord through another angel who talked with the prophet. *So the angel that talked with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.* Then follows the message in its details. *And I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith the Lord: I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of Hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth over Jerusalem. Cry yet again, saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.* We desire to take up separately some of these comfortable words. We firmly believe that the time of their fulfillment is not only at hand, but that we are really living in the days when God once more remembers His suffering people and is about to rise in judgment upon His and their enemies, and turn in mercy to Zion.

First then stands the declaration that God is jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. The word used in the

Digitized by Google

original for jealous means burning, and is correctly translated with that word, for jealousy is a burning emotion. Men are jealous of that which is their own when it is in the hands of another or in danger of being taken away and misused. In this sense God is likewise jealous of His own. Jerusalem is His city, the city of a great king; Zion is His holy hill, and Israel His own people. All has fallen into the hands of the Gentiles and is injured by them. His people scattered and dispersed, the holy hill desecrated and Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentiles. True, God has permitted it all, prophets have spoken of it, and their prophecies concerning Jerusalem's desolation have all been literally fulfilled, but now God is seen to rise and to claim once more in great jealousy that which is His Own. We look away from the partial fulfillment of this prophecy in Zechariah's time. God looked down from heaven then, and His eyes beheld the sad picture of the desolate land, the unfinished temple and the disheartened and punished people. At the end of our dispensation, God looks down from heaven, and while the nations are prosperous and at ease, He sees His city controlled by His enemies. The holy hill of Zion, where Jehovah revealed Himself so often, has become the place of idolatry. His name is not honored but dishonored. Indeed, the Land and Jerusalem attracts once more the attention of the world. Nations are desirous of owning the Land and gaining a foothold there. The visit to Palestine of the German Emperor, the representative of Lutheranism and the avowed friend of one of the darkest characters of our times, the man whose throne seems almost unshakable, and who holds the Land in the grasp of his bloody hands, is highly significant. All the other nations have watched this visit, and Zionism especially rejoices in the fact of the friendship of the Protestant Emperor with the Sultan and hopes much from it for the realization of its well planned schemes. It is to be expected that as the end

Digitized by Google

draws nearer, Palestine will become the great centre around which the nations gather. Scheming nations, religious and political ambitions for world rule and world power, and connected with it Commercialism, which seems to become more and more the god of this world, are the programme for the near future, and upon the entire scene are the eyes of the covenant-keeping God of Abraham, and with His burning eyes He looks on with jealousy for Jerusalem and very great jealousy for Zion. (Joel ii : 18.)

These are only the opening words of the revelation which is given to Zechariah. It is God's attitude. Zechariah hears now a very plain and important statement from the lips of the interpreting angel. The statement is threefold.

1. *I was but a little displeased.* Jehovah is speaking concerning His inheritance that He was, on account of their apostasy and idolatry, but a little displeased. This was primarily true of the Babylonian captivity. It was but for a moment God was angry. It is so now, though the children of Israel have been in dispersion for well-nigh twenty centuries, but still it is true even now. *For a small moment have I forgotten thee. In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer.* His displeasure with His people is never final, it is only temporary. This is clearly seen in the entire Word of God. If it were final, if God would be displeased forever with Israel, we might just as well close the Bible, join the higher critics and end in unbelief, apostasy and perdition. *I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee with judgment and will in no wise leave thee unpunished.* (Jeremiah xxx : 11.)

2. *They have helped forward their affliction.* The Lord is now speaking of the nations who are at ease. He holds them responsible for a greater affliction than He really had designed to come upon His

Digitized by Google

people. By their attitude towards chastised Israel they have made their affliction much worse than God meant it to be. Of course, it was true during the seventy years God's people spent in Babylon, but how much more true is it in the dispersion which has been their lot for so many sad centuries.

Where shall we begin in treating the awful truth which is put here in such simple language? Where shall we find words earnest enough to picture the terrible facts in connection with it and sound a warning for our times? Some time ago a person said, "The Jews are to-day more stiff-necked and blinder than ever before." Who has made them thus? Surely judicial blindness and hardness of heart; ears which do not hear are given by God, but, alas, the nations, or so-called Christendom, have helped forward their affliction; they have made matters worse a thousand times, and Satan, who hates Israel, has been the author of all things calculated to increase the affliction of poor down-trodden Israel. Surely the increased stiff-neckedness and the increased blindness is one which is traceable to the nations. Every reader knows something of the history of the Jews, what it has been since they left the home land—a long, long tale of suffering, tears and blood. Most unjust outrages have been committed against them; torture upon torture; the stake and worse than that; and all in the name of Jesus. It is a shameful history. Many a time Jews, after hearing the Word preached, have stood up and opened in answer this awful book of history with its blood-stained pages, asking the question, "Can He be our Redeemer, whose followers have treated us thus in His name?" And not a few can tell us of their own sufferings in being banished from foreign lands. Hardly a month passes without some new outrage upon the generally harmless and innocent people in Eastern Europe. Cruelty, injustice, wickedness and crime are practiced against them, and thus their affliction has been increased.

Digitized by Google

The same is true of the counterfeits of the Christian religion. Is it a wonder that the Jew turns away in disgust from religions which demand worship of pictures, statues, holy places, etc.? Satan has used it all to keep Israel from a true knowledge of Him, who is the King of Israel. And in Protestant lands the Jew does so rarely see that pure and true love of Him who came to fulfil the law and in whom God as love has been manifested. Instead of treating the Jew as a brother, beloved for the Father's sake—nay, for Jesus' sake, who was a Jew according to the flesh —he has been despised, ridiculed, ostracized and treated as inferior to Gentiles. Still there are worse days coming yet. The nations of Christendom in the past have helped forward their affliction, but Satan, through these very nations, will once more afflict Israel—once more stretch out his hand to touch the nation of destiny. As never before in the history of the world, God's own chosen people—the Jews—make themselves felt, and correspondingly as never before the Gentile nations are getting ready to rise up against the Jew to down him if it were possible. The enemy, thus prophecy tells us, will try to exterminate the wonderful nation through nations who are doomed to destruction. This is still future. However, these coming events are rapidly approaching. Anti-Semitism is increasing all over the world, and only God's Spirit and the prayer of the Church keeps back the outbreak which will mark the beginning of Jacob's trouble. (Jeremiah xxx : 7.)

3.—*I am very sore displeased.* This is God's anger with the nations who have sinned against His people. The crowning sin of the nations is Anti-Semitism, which means anti-Bible, anti-Christ and anti-God. If Christendom would believe the Word of God it could never be the enemy of Israel. Our age will end in the judgment of nations, and that judgment will be on account of the sins committed against His people. For behold in those days

Digitized by Google

and in that time when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehosophat, and I will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage, Israel, whem they have scattered among the nations and parted my land. (Joel iii : 1-3.) Haste ye and come all ye nations round about and gather yourselves together thither ; cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord ; let the nations bestir themselves and come up to the valley of Jehosophat ; for there will I sit to judge all nations round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe ; come, get ye down, for the wine-press is full, the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision ! for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, the stars withdraw their shining, and the Lord shall roar from Zion and utter His voice from Jerusalem ; and the heavens and the earth shall shake ; but the Lord will be a refuge unto His people and a stronghold to the children of Israel. (Joel iii : 17, etc.) For behold the Lord will come with fire, and His chariots shall be like the whirlwind, to render His anger with fury and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire will the Lord plead and by His sword with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many. (Isaiah lxvi : 15.) This judgment of nations is likewise referred to in Matthew xxv. by the lips of our Lord. Generally the last part of that chapter is taken to mean the universal judgment, the great white throne. This is an error. *The Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the angels with Him.* Thus the passage reads : *Then shall He sit on the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all the nations, and He shall separate them one from another as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats.* The judgment takes place and nations are punished and rewarded according to their treatment of the brethren of the Son of Man, the King of Glory.

Digitized by Google

At that time, when the enemies of Israel are overcome and punished for their wickedness, Israel, once more miraculously saved, will break forth in praise of the Lord and sing the glorious psalms of victory which to-day are still prophetic. If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us up alive when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters would have overwhelmed us, a stream would have gone over our soul; then the proud waters would have gone over our soul. Praise to Jehovah! who has not given us as prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler! The snare is broken and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of Jehovah, who has made heaven and earth. (Psalm cxxiv.)

The words which follow, and which are really the good and comfortable words, contain the divine programme of the restoration of His people Israel. What is mentioned here in a few sentences is given in detail in the fourth and fifth night vision as well as in the closing chapters of the prophet. *I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies.* This does not mean a spiritual return or a return of God's mercies to Jerusalem only, but it means likewise His literal return when He appears the second time; and connected with this second appearing of the great Jehovah in Jesus Christ will be seen the Shekinah cloud as Israel had it in the wilderness and the first temple. This is seen in the second chapter. The Lord had withdrawn from His people. *I will go away and return to my place.* (Hosea v: 15.) *For behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* (Matthew xxiii: 38, 39.) The Lord being absent in His person from His people, Israel is forsaken, the land desolate. There can be no true restoration of Israel till He has come whose right it is.

So many good people think that the present Zionistic move-

Digitized by Google

ment of the Jews is that promised salvation for the scattered nation. This is not so. It is an attempted restoration. Here in the good and comfortable words Zechariah hears, the return of the Lord stands first. Then His house is to be built. While it meant in the prophet's time the building of the second temple, it means in connection with the coming restoration the building of that great millennial temple which Ezekiel saw in visions and describes in detail—the temple which will be indeed a house of prayer to all nations, and the glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former. The rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem is next in order. A line is to be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. The city is enlarged, for from henceforth Jerusalem is to be the centre of the earth. (Ezekiel xxxviii : 12.) *My cities in prosperity shall overflow.* The blessing will not be confined to the Temple and to Jerusalem, but there will be an overflow, and all the cities in the land will flow over with prosperity. *For the Lord shall comfort Zion ; He will comfort all her waste places, and He will make her wilderness like Eden and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.* (Isaiah li : 3.)

Oh, happy time! when wilt thou come? Even so come, Lord Jesus, our Lord and Israel's King! Other visions will show us that Jerusalem will then indeed be a praise in the earth, for many nations will then be joined to the Lord, and the streams of living waters will overflow and bring joy, salvation and healing to the nations around who join in the Hallelujah chorus of Jeshurun.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

The second night vision. The four horns and the four smiths. The third vision. The man measuring Jerusalem. Restoration and glory of Jerusalem foretold.

The second night vision of Zechariah is closely connected with the first. In the first vision the time is given when the Lord will turn in mercy to Jerusalem—the time when the nations are at ease, and, having helped forward the affliction of His people, are ripe for judgment. The scenes have passed away, and now the prophet lifts his eyes again and he sees *four horns.* The question he asks of the angel is answered by him, that *these are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.* Then *four smiths* appear, and the angel informs the prophet that *these are come to fray them* (the four horns), *to cast down the horns of the nations which lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it* (chapter i : 18-21.) The four horns are the powerful and proud enemies of the people of God. Why four horns? Some have said because the enemies of Israel have come against the land and Jerusalem from all four cardinal points of the compass, and have scattered the people east and west, north and south. Others mention different nations who were at Zechariah's time in existence and instrumental in scattering Israel. The horn is a symbol of power and pride, and in prophecy stands for a kingdom and for political world power. The ten horns which Daniel saw on the terrible fourth beast rising from the sea denote ten kingdoms, and in Revelation xvii : 12 we read, "The ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings." The four horns in this second vision must be therefore kingdoms—world

Digitized by Google

powers. The number four, as it is well known to every student of the prophetic Word, is found twice in the book of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar's great image was divided into four parts, each standing for a world power, namely: the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Græco-Macedonian and the Roman power. The latter is still in existence and will be till the stone smites the image at its feet and pulverizes it. Daniel's vision (chapter vii) brings before him four mighty beasts, the last having ten horns, just as the limbs of the image ended in feet with ten toes. With such a revelation in the book of Daniel it is very easy to understand that the four horns can mean nothing else than the same powers of Gentile rule and supremacy existing during the entire time when the kingdom has been taken from Israel. These four world powers are horns. They unite strength and pride, and are bent upon scattering Israel. They are the enemies of Israel, and therefore the enemies of God. And now the four smiths appear on the scene to fray them—to cast down the horns of the nations. Four horns are overcome and broken down completely by four smiths. It does not follow that the four smiths must be four other powers. The vision seems to teach two facts: first, the horns will be broken and cast down; and in the second place, God has for every hostile power which has sinned and sins against his people a corresponding greater power to overcome it, break it into pieces and cast it down. However, we believe the vision will have its fulfillment in the time of Jacob's trouble. The elements of all the four world powers will then in some way be concerned in the onslaught on Jerusalem—a confederacy of nations; representatives of many nations will come up against Jerusalem, and it will be then that the four horns are broken by the four smiths and the casting down will be done.

Digitized by Google

The third night vision is one of the most interesting and instructive. As the third one, it forms the climax of the good and comfortable words which were spoken concerning Jerusalem. The number three stands in the Word of God for resurrection, life from the dead. Thus in Hosea, concerning Israel, "After two days Thou wilt revive us, and on the third day Thou wilt raise us up" (Hosea vi : 2). In this third vision Zechariah sees the glorious restoration of Israel, which has been the burden of so many prophecies, and the glory which is connected with that restoration. In this night vision Zechariah hears of a restoration and of a glory which has never yet been fulfilled in the history of God's people. Those teachers of the Word who see in Zechariah's night visions nothing but fulfilled prophecy, cannot answer certain questions satisfactorily, and their only refuge must be a spiritualizing of this restoration. Another thought before we take up this third vision. The vision of restoration comes after the enemies of Israel have been cast down. That prophecy might be fulfilled ; prophecy about a believing, suffering Jewish remnant ; prophecy concerning Jacob's trouble, etc., a mock restoration, generally termed a restoration in unbelief, is to take place. There can be no doubt whatever that we are privileged to see the beginning of this restoration of part of the Jewish nation to the land of the fathers in unbelief. It is one of the signs of the nearness of that event for which the Church hopes, prays and waits—"our gathering together unto Him." The world and the lukewarm Christian does not see it, but he who loves the Word and lives in the Word, has eyes to see and a hearing ear and knows what is soon coming. The true restoration, however, will only come as it is seen so clearly in these night visions after the enemies have been overcome, the horns cast down, the image smashed—in other words, after the Lord has come.

Digitized by Google

We may divide the third night vision into two parts. In the first part a man is seen with a measuring line measuring Jerusalem, and the restoration of the city and its enlargement is promised ; and in the other part promises of blessings are given as well as glimpses of the glory which will attend the restoration.

Zechariah sees a man with a measuring line in his hand. The prophet asks him, Whither goest thou ? And he answers, *To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof and what is the length thereof.* There is nothing here which indicates that the man who starts out to measure the city is identical with the man on the red horse of the first vision. This man here seems to be only a person appearing to impress the coming enlargement of Jerusalem upon the prophet's mind. Similar visions where measuring takes place are found in Ezekiel xli, where the temple of the Millennium is measured, and in Revelation xi, where a reed is given to John to measure the temple of God, which is the temple standing in Jerusalem during the time of Jacob's trouble. Here in Zechariah's vision it is the measuring of Jerusalem. What Jerusalem is it ? Of course, the Jerusalem in Palestine, which will, in its restoration, become the centre of the earth. In the new earth, after the thousand years, there will be another Jerusalem in the earth, the new Jerusalem come down out of heaven from God (Rev. xxi : 2). Of this new Jerusalem we read, "And the city lieth four square, and the length thereof is as large as the breadth : and he measured the city with a reed twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal" (Rev. xxi : 16). Here is the measurement of the new Jerusalem : As long as it is broad and extending upward into the air. What a wonderful city that will be, the glorious centre of a new heaven and a new

Digitized by Google

earth, our home for all eternity! The man in Zechariah's third vision measures only the length and the breadth of the city because in the coming restoration of Jerusalem there is no height to be measured.

Now follows the appearing of another angel who meets with the one who had been speaking to Zechariah, and he brings from the throne of God a message for the prophet. He said, *Run, speak to this young man saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, by reason of the multitude of men and cattle therein.* The influx of men and cattle to Jerusalem will be so enormous that the city must be enlarged and it will spread out into the plain. Another prophet, the seer of Israel's glorious future, Isaiah, has spoken likewise of this enlargement in the following beautiful words: "As for thy waste and desolate places, and thy land which has been destroyed, surely now shalt thou be too strait for the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children of thy bereavement shall yet say in thine ears, The place is too strait for me, give place to me that I may dwell" (Isaiah xlix: 19, 20). Notice the city is to be inhabited as villages. This denotes the peace which Jerusalem will then enjoy. A blessed security for the city which for so long a time was trodden down by the Gentiles. There will be no walls. No need of walls to shelter men and cattle, for the enemies of Israel have been scattered and broken down, the warfare of Jerusalem is accomplished. At the end of the Millennium, which will have been a thousand years of unbroken peace for the land which for thousands of years knew no peace, Satan, with Gog and Magog, will come against the land and its inhabitants. This last final struggle the Holy Spirit revealed through the prophet Ezekiel (chapters xxxviii and xxxix). It is interesting to notice there the condition of the land and

Digitized by Google

the people as the enemy who comes up against the land finds them: Thus says the Lord God: It shall come to pass in that day, that things shall come into thy (enemy) mind, and thou shalt devise an evil device: and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages. I will go to them that are quiet, that dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates: to take the spoil and to take the prey: to turn thine hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and against the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the centre of the earth (Ezekiel xxxviii: 10-12). What a wonderful Word our God has given us! How everything is harmony! Zechariah's vision shows what Jerusalem will be in the beginning of the Millennium, and Ezekiel, by the Spirit of God, puts before us the same conditions at the end of the thousand years.

The reason of Jerusalem's peace, security and prosperity will be the glory of the Lord. This glory will be in the midst of the city, and will also form a wall of fire around the city. For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about the city, and I will be the glory in the midst of her. Glory and defence are here combined. They always go together. This has been in a degree already the happy lot of Israel in the past, for He guided them with His glory. It was a cloud by day and a fire at night by which the Lord had revealed Himself to His people, and out of that glory cloud He protected them and punished their enemies. How much greater will that glory and defence be in that time of fullness when Israel is no longer a disobedient, stiff-necked people, but the holy people, the kingly nation. What a glory that will be when the King comes back with His kingly glory, attended by the many, many brethren who have suffered with Him and

Digitized by Google

now share His glory! What a glory that will be when He, who is our life, will be manifested, and we with Him in His glory! It will be unspeakable glory. Cry aloud and shout thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. And it shall come to pass, that He that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the blast of judgment and burning. And the Lord will create over the whole habitation of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for over all the glory shall be spread a canopy. There shall be a pavilion for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain. (Isaiah iv.) This glory during the Millennium will no doubt not only hover over the land, but will be visible over the entire earth, and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters the sea.

It is interesting to see how Talmudical literature falls in with these thoughts. A few quotations from these old writings of the Jews will no doubt be acceptable to the reader. Rabbi Isaac Napcha says: The Holy One said, I kindled a fire in Jerusalem (in wrath) Lament. iv: 11, and I am going to build her up again with fire, as it is said, "I will be unto her, saith the Lord, a wall of fire round about. He that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution." The Pesikta Rabethi has this: What is this: "And for a Glory I am in the midst of her." Is it not the case that the glory of the Holy One is none other than on high, as it is said, "His glory is above the heavens." The glory is in order to show every creature in the universe

Digitized by Google

the superior excellence of Israel, since it is on their account that the Holy One brings down the Shekinah from the highest heaven and lets it dwell in the earth.

We have now in the vision a continued description of that happy condition of Jerusalem and all that is connected with it. First, we notice the summons for the Jews who are then still in dispersion. *Ho, ho, flee from the land of the North, saith the Lord, for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the Lord. Ho, Zion, escape that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.*

It is not to be expected that when the glory appears and the King of Glory comes again and His feet stand there on the Mount of Olives, that the entire Jewish nation will then live in the land. This will not be the case; only a part of the nation was restored in unbelief, and in the midst of them a believing remnant, whose faith, suffering and salvation we hope to describe later. Two-thirds of all the inhabitants of the land will be swept away in the great tribulation. After the Lord has come, the others will be restored. It is significant that the land of the North is mentioned here. Later, in the eighth chapter, we read: "I will save my people from the East country and from the West country," but those living in the land of the North come first. Of course, Babylon was meant as far as this vision had anything to do with the restoration which had taken place in part from the Babylonian captivity. The North country, which figures in the coming restoration, is not Babylon, but another land. Russia is directly north of Palestine, and in this northern land, the territory once inhabited by Gog and Magog, about one half of the Jews now living have their homes. About six millions of Jews are living to-day in European and Asiatic Russia. Their deplorable condition in that land of the North is well known, and there, likewise, the national

Digitized by Google

awakening has been the most marked and Zionism has its most ardent advocates. A large multitude is getting ready in the North country for a mighty exodus. Like their forefathers in Egypt, they will flee from the land of the North, and thus prophecy is literally to be fulfilled.

Zion is to separate from the daughter of Babylon. What is Babylon? We hope to answer this question and give a description of her when we come to consider the seventh night vision, the woman in the Ephah. In this third vision of restoration we hear next what is to take place after the glory. The expression "after the glory" means undoubtedly the glorious appearing of the Lord coming with all His saints, sitting upon the throne of His glory, and His glory thus manifested. *After the glory hath He sent Me to the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.* Who is the one who is being sent to the nations? It is without a question He, whom the Father sent. He sent Him once, the only begotten, into the world in the form of a servant, when He made Himself of no reputation, but Jehovah will send Him again. And when He again bringeth in the Firstborn into the inhabited earth He saith, And let all the angels worship Him. (Heb. i: 6, 7.) The Father sends Him again to establish His glory, and after the manifestation He is sent to the nations which spoiled Israel. All Scripture speaks of this. While He will in His coming overcome the armies of nations who are gathered in that day against Jerusalem, He will likewise continue, after His glory, to judge nations. He will rule in the midst of His enemies. He will do that among the nations what the second psalm declares, thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. *For, behold I will shake Mine hand over them, and they shall be a spoil to those that served them.* In this rule and judgment the Lord of glory will be assisted by the saints. Know ye not that the saints shall judge

Digitized by Google

the world? (1 Cor. vi : 2.) Israel will likewise be used in that judgment. While He is the lion of the tribe of Judah who now roars to the dismay of all His enemies, Israel, His people, becomes the lioness. "Behold the people riseth up as a lioness, and as a lion does he lift himself up. He shall not lie down till he eat the prey and drink the blood of the slain." (Numbers xxiii : 24.) Israel will then no longer be the tail but has become the head. The true form of government for the earth has been restored, a Theocracy through His chosen and restored people, the seed of Abraham. Things will then be changed completely. The nations shall take them (the children of Abraham) and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and for handmaids, and they shall take them captive whose captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors. (Isaiah xiv : 2.) Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks and aliens shall be your vine dressers. (Isaiah lxi : 5.)

We must not overlook the loving words concerning Israel, He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye. Israel is the apple of the eye of God. Through Moses God declared the same truth. He kept him as the apple of His eye. (Deut. xxxii : 10.) In Hebrew the pupil of the eye is called the gate, because through it enters the light. Thus Israel is the pupil, the gate, through which the light has come and comes, for salvation is of the Jews. And what is so sensitive, so delicate and easily injured as the apple of the eye? And against this apple of the eye of God the nations and Christendom have sinned. May we believing Gentiles understand more fully that Israel is the beloved one and may we be kept from doing harm to His people.

The overcoming of the enemies of Israel, the spoiling of these nations which spoiled Israel, and all that is connected with it by the sent One of God, the Son of God will be the evidence for

Digitized by Google

Israel that Jehovah has sent Him. *And ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts has sent Me.* The same statement is repeated in this vision, but we shall see in another connection. It is, so to speak, constitutional with the Jew that he wishes to see and then believe, and surely he will see and believe, or rather know, when the Lord comes.

In the tenth verse of the second chapter of Zechariah we read now that the daughter of Zion will sing and rejoice. The reason of her song and joy is, *For lo, I come and I will dwell in the midst of thee.* To-day orthodox Jews are chanting in Hebrew the magnificent psalms which speak of a coming deliverance and manifestation of God's glory, but it is only with their lips, and the heart is still hardened and the eye blinded. The dark night is rapidly approaching, the night in which a believing remnant of Jews will fulfill much of that suffering, waiting, and blessed assurance of salvation which is so clearly outlined in the psalms. And after that, the whole nation will break out in mighty songs of joy, and while there, in the Father's house, the blood-bought hosts will sing their hallelujah, a delivered, cleansed and spirit-filled nation in the earth will shout her hallelujah, in which nation after nation will join, till at last it has been done what seer after seer saw and heard, the earth as well as the heavens filled with His glory, the Kingdom come, and His will done in the earth as it is done in Heaven.

Again, the promise is given that the Lord will dwell in the midst of her. How is this to be understood? Will the Lord dwell continually in person, after his second coming, in Jerusalem? Will He be seen there in His Holy Temple by all who come up to Jerusalem? Some Scriptures indicate that He will be present in His blessed person at different seasons. The strongest statement in this direction is Zechariah xiv: 16. In this passage we have the fact of a yearly coming up to Jerusalem of nations (probably

Digitized by Google

representatives of nations) to worship the King, and that at the feast of tabernacles. His throne, no longer His Father's throne, upon which He sits now, but his own throne during the Millennium, will no doubt be in the New Jerusalem which, as a bright and glorious vision, will be seen then by all who live in the earth way up in the firmament, and the angels of God *ascending* and descending upon the Son of Man. A vice-regent, a Son of David, will occupy David's throne in Jerusalem. The Glory of the Lord will appear in the Holy City, and the new name of Jerusalem will be Jehovah Shamah, the Lord is there. It is impossible to give the details of these glories, for they are not clearly revealed. It is enough to know that the Church, His Body, shall truly be united with her glorified head, and meet her Beloved, her Bridegroom and her Lord. It is enough to know that Israel will surely see the King in His beauty and crown Him Lord of all. Even our brightest imaginations will not reach the glories of that day. Indeed, not half has been told.

The Lord cometh to dwell in Zion. *Many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day and shall be My people.* This promise is likewise followed that this will be evidence from which the people will know that the Lord of Hosts has sent Him. How often the orthodox Jew has come to us and told us that when Messiah comes all their enemies will be cast down—there will be peace for Jerusalem and the nation Israel; and then saying, Ah, where is that peace?—behold our enemies! When Messiah comes we shall know Him by what He does for us in overcoming our enemies. Likewise the orthodox Jew will say, Where are the many nations who join themselves to the Lord, the nations who worship the Lord of Hosts? When Messiah has come, he will say, We will know Him by the fact that nations shall join themselves unto the Lord. It will hardly do to tell the well informed Hebrew that there are now

Digitized by Google

Christian nations in existence. Thus the Jew waits for the fulfillment of these prophecies at some future time, and seeing them accomplished he hopes to know then his Messiah and King. Only the small remnant, according to the election of grace, sees Him now by the eyes of faith—Him who is altogether lovely, and in whom alone these prophecies can find their fulfillment. To-day individuals from Jews and Gentiles are joining themselves to the Lord, but in that day of His appearing and manifestation nations will be converted, and many nations shall go and say, "Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths." "Lift up thine eyes and see: they all gather themselves together—they come to Thee. Thy sons shall come from far and thy daughters shall be carried in the arms. Then thou shalt see and be lightened, and thine heart shalt tremble and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee. The wealth of the nations shall come unto thee, the multitudes of camels shall cover thee—the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah, they all shall come from Sheba; they shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praises of the Lord." (Isaiah lx: 4–7.) Only then will India and China, South America and Africa be won to Christ and the world converted to God. But the land of Judah is to be the portion of the Lord (verse 12).

This vision of restoration and the coming of glory ends with one of the sublimest exhortations in the Word of God. *Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is waked up out of His holy habitation.* The exhortation does not belong really to the restoration. It is an appeal to all flesh to be silent before the One who is raised up—the coming One. Now is the time when God is silent. He is silent to the wicked deeds of men. He is silent in regard to the nations who are treading down Jerusalem and who are scat-

Digitized by Google

tering Israel. The flesh speaks now and is not silent, and the language it speaks is rebellion against God and against His Anointed. And louder and louder speaks all flesh, and in the midst of a boasted civilization, at the dawn of a new century, the days of Noah and the days of Lot are at hand. Gain, pride, possession, expansion, is the universal cry—a mad hunt after Mammon is seen in individuals and in nations; and while the flesh speaks thus, and its language becomes more and more defiant, God keeps silence. But our God shall come and keep silence no longer. Rapidly His day—the terrible day of the Lord—is approaching; the day in which He will roar out of Zion. Oh, what a hush there will come upon those that dwell in the earth when the darkened sun and the falling stars will herald the approach of a God who will keep silence no longer. Oh, dear reader, Jew or Gentile, listen! The signs of the times truly tell us that the Lord who is to come must have already *risen* from His holy habitation. He is coming. Soon He will gather His saints unto Himself before the day of wrath breaks, when neither gold nor silver will deliver. Wilt thou not become silent before Him, the coming One? Will not every reader yield himself to that wooing spirit of Him, whose power does silence the flesh? Be silent all flesh! He is waked up out of His holy habitation!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

The fourth vision.—Joshua the high priest accused by Satan, but cleansed by the angel of the Lord.—The branch.—The stone and the seven eyes upon it.—The coming peace.

The fourth vision is like the first and second, closely connected with the foregoing one. It gives the crowning event of Israel's restoration. The prophet recognizes in the figure which is seen by him Joshua the high priest, who is standing before the angel of the Lord, while at his right hand stands Satan to oppose him. Joshua was not clothed with his clean, priestly robes, but he wears filthy garments. Jehovah rebukes Satan and terms Jerusalem a brand plucked from the fire. After the accuser is rebuked, the filthy garments of the high priest are removed, his iniquity is forgiven, and he is clothed with festal raiment. The prophet is so carried away with the vision that he asks that a clean mitre is to be put upon his head. And now, after the high priest is thus clothed, the angel of the Lord charges him with an important message: If thou wilt walk in My ways and keep My charge, thou shalt judge my house and also keep my courts. I will give thee access among those standing here, etc. The servant —the branch—is promised, and the stone which is laid before Joshua is to have seven eyes. The iniquity of this land is to be removed in one day, and the vision closes with the peaceful scene, every man inviting his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.

The authorized version has a superscription for this chapter. "Under the type of Joshua the restoration of the *church* is promised." This is not alone very misleading but also erroneous. No restoration of the church is necessary, and as far as fallen, apostate

Digitized by Google

Christendom is concerned, there is no promise of restoration, but the Lord will spew her out of His mouth. Others speak of this vision as a type of the justification of the sinner, but we need not spiritualize Old Testament visions to get assurance of our justification. The Epistle to the Romans is sufficient for that. The High Priest Joshua stands here for Jerusalem and for the sinful nation Israel. The calling of Israel to be a nation of priests is too well known, so we need not to enlarge on it. But it is a nation stiff-necked, disobedient, unclean and defiled. Disobedience and sin have been the cause of Israel's misfortune and Jerusalem's ruin. What would be a restoration of Israel to the land without a healing of their sins and a regeneration of the nation? It is this divine forgiveness and cleansing of the nation, which so many prophets uttered in Jehovah's name, which is here so wonderfully shown in this vision. Like the priests in the temple, standing before Jehovah, thus Joshua and Israel is before the Lord. Though Joshua is standing before the Lord in filthy garments, yet he is still the High Priest. The filthy garments do not change the office to which God had called him. Oh, wondrous truth, which we meet all through the Word! Israel, though in dispersion and in sin, is still the priest, called by Him who is a covenant-keeping God! And is it not a perfect picture of Israel as it is yet to-day? A priest, but defiled and unclean. In Isaiah lxiv we have part of that wonderful prayer which the remnant of Israel is yet to utter. It begins with that sublime prayer, Oh, that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence. And then follows the confession: We are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousness is as a polluted garment. Alas, how little Israel knows at this present time of such a confession. On the day of atonement the lips confess sin and unrighteousness in similar words, but it is still the lips and not the

Digitized by Google

heart. But at last Israel will confess her guilt and the blood-guiltiness like David did.

In the vision Satan is seen. This is not the enemy who at Zechariah's time tried to hinder the rebuilding of the temple, but it is Satan, the old serpent, the accuser of the brethren, the adversary. He is the enemy of Israel. He has tried in the past to hurt and to destroy the nation of destiny. He knows the purposes of God concerning Israel better than many a learned doctor of divinity, and therefore, he has opposed that people and opposes them still. His opposition has been mostly through nations. How much could be said on this topic! The end of this age will reveal the enemy of Israel, the adversary, as never before in the history of the world. There is to be war in heaven; Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred, and his angels, and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old Serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the Deceiver of the whole world, he was cast down to the earth and his angels were cast down with him. (Rev. xii: 7–9.) His wrath will be directed against Israel and Jerusalem. It is the time of which Daniel spoke. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time. (Daniel xii: 1.) Once more Satan will try to destroy the people, but the Lord shall rebuke him. Israel will be again, as so often before, like a brand plucked out of the fire. So it has been in the past. Way back when Israel was in Egypt and God was about to send the deliverer, He called Moses from out of the burning bush—Israel's true type, burning, but never consumed. Oh, how the fire of persecution and adversity has been raging, but again and again the hand of God snatched the burning brand out of the fire at the

Digitized by Google

right moment. The Lord who hath chosen Jerusalem will rebuke Satan. This has not yet come. The coming Lord will commission an angel out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he will lay hold on the dragon—the old Serpent which is the Devil and Satan—and bind him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss and shut it and seal it over him. (Rev. xx : 1, 2.) Then follows the cleansing of Israel and the new charge, all so clearly given in this vision.

The filthy garments are removed by those that stand before the angel of the Lord. The iniquity is taken away, and in place of the filthy garments there is the rich apparel and the fair mitre upon the head. How blessedly all this is waiting for its fulfillment in Israel's regeneration! When He appears after the times of overturning, He whose right it is, His people Israel will be found by Him in true penitence, acknowledging their offence. It will be a national repentance, a mourning on account of Him, which Zechariah describes in detail in the twelfth chapter.

This will be followed by national cleansing, forgiveness of sin for the entire remnant which is left, and the new birth of the nation by the outpouring of the Spirit. Israel is the nation to be born in a day (Isa. lxvi : 8). This great miracle of divine grace, the regeneration of Israel by the blood of the once rejected King, is spoken of again and again in the Word. The Church has taken it all for herself or spiritualized these promises. We can refer only to a few : "He will turn again and have compassion upon us ; He will tread our iniquities under foot ; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah vii : 19). "I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. (How *ridiculous* that teachers and preachers refer to this text in defence of *sprinkling* as a mode of baptism.) From all your filthiness and

Digitized by Google

from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. xxxvi: 24-26). "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins" (Isa. xliii: 25). "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto Me for I have redeemed thee. Sing, oh ye heavens, for the Lord has done it; shout ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing ye mountains, oh forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord has redeemed Jacob and will glorify Himself in Israel" (Isa. xliv: 22, 23). And this is Israel's triumphant song: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a priest decketh himself with a garland, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" (Isa. lxi: 10).

And now comes a very solemn charge. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: if thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou also shalt judge my house, and shalt also keep likewise my courts, I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.*

Israel was disobedient and did not keep the first charge. It is now repeated. It is likewise conditionally as was the first, but no apostasy can follow, for a complete healing has made that impossible. In analyzing this charge, we see clearly what Israel's earthly calling is and wherein Israel's millennial glory and work will consist: (1) *Judging* in the house of the Lord, and from there ruling and judging of nations, by Israel the head of the nations. The Church will be higher than this, sitting with Him in His throne, and likewise judging, being with the glorified Head over it all; (2) Israel will *keep His courts.* In the new millennial temple there will be ordinances, and that temple will be a house of prayer for all nations, while the Church will be in the temple above; (3)

Digitized by Google

Israel will have *places to walk* among these that stand by. This may have a double meaning—walking among the ministering angels which will ascend and descend upon the Son of Man, and places to walk among those that stand by—the nations. Israel's cleansing will take place not in heaven but in the earth, and nations as well as angels will be witnesses of it. Among these nations redeemed Israel will have places to walk. The Church will occupy the many mansions in the Father's house, and go in and out in blessed fellowship with the Lord of glory and all His saints; and, perhaps, for all we know, there may be places to walk for the Church in distant worlds.

The whole redeemed and restored nation will then be a miracle. *Hear now, O Joshua, the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee, for they are men which are a wonder: for behold I will bring forth my servant the Branch.*

The Jews are now God's standing miracle, but how much more will they be a wonder when the Spirit has filled them! They will heal the sick and do the same works Jesus their Elder Brother did. What will then come to this sin-cursed earth through Israel's fullness? A miracle—life from the dead. But never before He, whose name is the Branch, appears. Oh, how necessary it is for us to to be reminded that it will take place when He appears and the Branch is brought forth.

Next comes the *stone laid before Joshua*, and upon the stone seven eyes, and engraving is seen on it. Generally this stone is interpreted as meaning Christ. One of the names of Christ is—a stone, a rejected stone, corner stone, a precious stone, etc. The true believers are likewise termed stones, living stones. The stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, falling out of heaven, smashing the image and becoming a great mountain which filled the entire earth, is both Christ and His kingdom, which is not of this earth (it is and comes from above). However, it seems to us that the only correct interpretation of the stone upon which are the seven

Digitized by Google

eyes is that it means Israel restored, and as such, the nucleus of the kingdom of God and His Christ in this earth. The seven eyes speak of the sevenfold Spirit which will be upon Israel; the engraving of the stone stands for the beauty and glory with which God will bless His covenant people. That this interpretation is the only correct one becomes at once evident when we reach the closing sentence of the ninth verse, *and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.* What land? It is Israel's land, and therefore the whole vision must stand in vital connection with His people. The one day, of course, in the first line, must be that day when Christ died for our sins and Israel's sins as well, when the veil was rent. But alas, the Jews cried then, "His blood be upon us and upon our children!" How terribly this awful prayer has been answered! Truly the blood has been upon them and their children. But soon—oh may it be very soon—another day will come when the blood shall be once more upon them and their children—when the blood shall cleanse and wash away Israel's sin—one day when Calvary's blood, the blood of the Son of God, will remove the iniquity of that land and its inhabitants.

All is waiting for that. There can be no kingdom of God in the earth, no conversion of the world, no millennium before Israel has been cleansed, redeemed, restored, and the iniquity of the land is removed. This all-important truth is likewise mentioned in a few words at the close of this, the fourth night vision of the prophet: *In that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree.* This is the picture of prosperity, peace and love. No prosperity and peace till the millennium has come, no millennium until Israel is restored; no true restoration of Israel until the Lord comes with His saints. What Zechariah hears about that blessed time of peace Micah and other prophets received also from God, "Every man shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid" (Micah iv: 4).

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

The fifth vision.—The candlestick and the two olive trees.—The great mountain becoming a plain.—Zerubbabel the prince finishing the house of the Lord.

The first three chapters of Zechariah are the foundation of the entire book. The events in these chapters are again and again touched upon in the following visions and prophecies of Zechariah. For this reason have we paid special attention to these three chapters, which speak so clearly of the time of Israel's restoration, the restoration itself and the different events connected with it, and much which might be said on the visions of the prophet which now follow can be omitted, as the reader has the key to the situation in the studies made.

There was a rest for the prophet between the fourth and fifth night vision. He had fallen into a deep sleep. He may have been overcome by the grand and important visions, and is now awakened by the angel with the question, "What seest thou?" The new vision is a very striking one. A golden candlestick appears before the seer. An oil receiver is seen on top, from which the oil flows to the seven lamps of the candlestick through seven pipes. Two olive trees stand alongside of the candlestick and hang their fruit-laden branches over the golden bowl, filling it with oil, which flows through the seven pipes into the seven lamps. The question of the prophet, "What are these, my Lord?" is answered by the angel with this statement, "This is the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might and not by power but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, oh great mountain, before Zerubbabel? Be a plain! He shall bring forth the topstone with shoutings of grace, grace unto it.

Digitized by Google

The hands of Zerubbabel who have laid the foundation shall also finish it, and they shall rejoice and see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel—even the seven. The eyes of the Lord shall run to and fro through the entire earth." For the third time the prophet asks for information about the two olive trees and receives the answer: "These are the two sons of oil, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

The vision of the candlestick and the two olive trees is one of the most difficult in the Bible and needs prayerful and thoughtful study.

The general interpretation is that the golden candlestick represents the Church, that she is the golden light-bearer, so valuable and precious. She is the light in the dark world. The oil and the seven pipes are the Holy Spirit who fills the lamps of the candlestick; the two olive trees, Joshua and Zerubbabel, Priest and King. The victory which the Church is to gain is one not by power or might but by His Spirit, etc. This interpretation seems to fit in with a number of passages in the New Testament, the seven candlesticks in Revelation first chapter and the teaching of the New Testament about the Holy Spirit and His work. However, it is hardly a satisfactory explanation. We do not doubt for a moment that the Church is represented by a candlestick, especially the Churches; or rather, the Church in her seven periods. Of course the Holy Spirit's type is oil, and He is the one who accomplishes the work, etc. All this we do not and cannot doubt for a moment, but after considering it all it does not satisfy us, and we feel that we must look for a better and a deeper meaning of the fifth night vision. If its fullest meaning is the Church and the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, how could it be then harmonized with the first night visions of Israel's restoration? The above interpretation seems to us overlooks entirely the fact that the vision of the candlestick being given

Digitized by Google

with the others in one night, must be connected with them in some way. In other words, the vision of the golden candlestick must have some relation to the restoration of Israel.

We desire to call attention to the fact that the vision is one which speaks of perfection, completion, fullness. The perfect and divine number seven is found three times in the vision, seven lamps, seven pipes, and seven eyes. The seven lamps are united to one stem, this is union, and above it, is a golden bowl. The Spirit conquers, and not power or might does it, but His power. The great mountain becomes a plain. The topstone is brought forth and crowns the building which is finished by Zerubbabel. Shoutings, "Grace, grace, unto it," are heard, and the seven eyes run to and fro the whole earth. It is a vision of fullness and accomplishment. The candlestick shines and sheds its glorious light, its pure gold glitters and reflects the light of the seven lamps. The bowl is filled with oil, and the two olive trees give a continual supply. The high mountain removed, the temple finished, joy and victory abound. The candlestick in the vision is exactly like the one in the tabernacle, only the two olive trees are something new. The candlestick in the tabernacle represents Christ, the Light of the world, and is likewise a type of the Jewish theocracy. Theocracy, the government of this earth by the immediate direction of God, is once to be established, and when it is, it will be like a bright and glorious candlestick shedding light and dispersing the darkness. We think the *Yalkut* on Zechariah (a Hebrew commentary), is not so very far out of the way when it says, "The golden candlestick is Israel." It seems to us very clear that the vision represents the Jewish theocracy restored, Israel in their glorious inheritance as the light of the world. But what about the Church as a candlestick? The Lord is seen in Revelation to walk among *seven* candlesticks, which represent the

Digitized by Google

seven Churches and prophetically the seven periods of this dispensation, ending with Laodicea. The end of this age will not be a bright and glorious candlestick, filled with oil, conquest and glory, but it will be failure and the removal of the candlestick which failed in giving the light. The nominal Church is far from being the light of the world, and Christendom nears rapidly a dark and dreary night. The true believer, who is filled with the Spirit, of course, is the light of the world as an individual, he reflects the light and glory of His Master, and thus every child of God is a light. But the home of the true Church, the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not the earth, to remain here permanently, but her home is the Father's house, her destination, union with her glorified Head and sharing His glory. Israel and Gentiles will be left in the earth, while the Church is with her Lord. When He appears, the King of Israel and King of Glory, it will not be to re-establish the Church in the earth, for she is to sit with Him in heavenly places, but Israel, His beloved people, will become the light-bearer, the light which is to enlighten the Gentiles and fulfill its original calling. It is a true saying, whatever is spoken of Christ is also spoken of His Church, and it is just as true, whatever is spoken of Christ is also spoken of Israel. Of the coming Messiah, we read in Isaiah xlix., "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth," but this is likewise true of his brethren according to the flesh, Israel will be a light to the Gentiles.

The candlestick of pure gold, precious, and uniting seven lamps filled with oil, represents Israel's glorious fullness. All will be united under one Head, and no longer seven candlesticks and confusion of religious teachings, but there will be one Shepherd and one fold. This will be accomplished not by power or might but by His Spirit. He will accomplish God's blessed purpose in Israel by the wonderful outpouring which is promised through

Digitized by Google

Joel, and which was only partially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and never since. The Jew feels still in some degree his mission, and what else is this awakened national life as it is now known by the name of Zionism, than a reaching out for it. But there is still the blinding, money, political powers, in reality their enemies, different influences and combinations are looked upon by them as the means to bring about that which is born into every Jewish heart—supremacy and rule. It is not by power or might, but by the Spirit. He will come yet upon the nation and fill them with His blessed power as He filled once their own rejected Brother Jesus, and what He was Israel will be for the nations left in the earth. Zerubbabel, who is now mentioned, was Israel's prince at the time of Zechariah. A mountain is seen which is before him, a mighty obstacle, but it sinks and falls, becomes a plain. The Hebrew has it in the form of a command—"Be a plain!" The mountain represents a kingdom, a power, and seems to stand here for anti-Christ and His power. Zerubbabel as prince is the type of the Prince of Peace, Israel's King. His hands have laid the foundation, just as Zerubbabel had laid the foundation of the temple, and just as Zerubbabel finished it, bringing forth the headstone which crowns the new house of the Lord, thus Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, who has laid the foundation and who is the foundation, the precious stone, He will finish it. He is the Author and Finisher, and it is all grace. When the foundation of the temple was laid there were mighty shoutings, and likewise when it was finished. The priests and the Levites sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endureth forever toward Israel, and all the people shouted with a great shout (Ezra iii : 11). What shoutings there will be when at last the fullness of the Gentiles is come in and all Israel is saved, when the headstone will be brought forth, what

Digitized by Google

mighty hallelujahs will be heard in the heavens and in the earth, praising—grace—all of grace. Without pointing out the other details of this vision which are now easily understood, we desire to make a few remarks on the two olive trees standing at the right and at the left of the candlestick supplying the same with oil. There can be no doubt that these sons of oil, as they are called, represented Joshua and Zerubbabel, living at the time of Zechariah, the one the priest and the other the king. What deeper meaning is here? It is probably the easiest explanation to say that these two olive trees are types of Him who is a Priest upon His throne and whose blessed Person will supply the candlestick with the oil, His own Spirit!

These two olive trees are likewise seen in Revelation, the eleventh chapter. Here they are the two witnesses who give their testimony during the great tribulation in Jerusalem, and who stand in direct relation to that theocracy which is then about to be established in Israel. We believe that these two witnesses are Moses and Elijah, the same who appeared with our Lord upon the mountain of transfiguration.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

The vision of the flying roll—The vision of the woman in the Ephah.

The three remaining night visions are of a different character. The first visions the prophet had were visions of comfort for Jerusalem and the dispersed nation, the overthrow of Babylon and all their enemies, divine forgiveness and the theocracy restored. Now follow the last three visions, and these are visions of judgment. Judgment precedes Israel's restoration, and is very prominently connected with it.

The sixth night vision is the one of the flying roll. The prophet's eyes seem to have been closed after the fifth vision, for we read, "And I lifted up my eyes again." The flying roll he sees is twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad. The interpreting angel tells the prophet that it is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole land; for every one that stealeth shall be cut off on this side according to it, and every one that sweareth shall be cut off on that side according to it. The Lord of hosts has brought it forth and it is to enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth by His Name to a falsehood, and it shall lodge in the midst of His house and consume it, both its wood and its stone.

That this vision means judgment is evident at the first glance. Ezekiel had a similar vision. "And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe (Ezek. ii: 9, 10). Ezekiel was to eat that book. This reminds us at once of the books in Revelation (chapers v. and x.), which are likewise connected with God's judgments in the earth.

Digitized by Google

The flying roll is written on both sides, signifying the two tables of stone, the law of God. Stealing and swearing falsely are mentioned because the one is found on the one side of the two tables of stone, and the other on the other side. However, it is no longer "Thou shalt not," but on the flying roll are written the curses, the awful curses against the transgressors of God's law which are now about to be put into execution. The curse is found in its awful details, as it refers to an apostate people, in Deuteronomy xxvii. and xxviii. The roll is of immense size, and on it are the dreadful curses of an angry God. The vision must have been one of exceeding great terror. Imagine a roll, probably illumined at night with fire, moving over the heavens, and on it the curses of an eternal God—wherever it moves its awful message is seen; nothing is hid from its awe-inspiring presence. It reminds one of the fiery handwriting on the wall in the king's palace. Surely such an awful judgment is coming by and by, when our God will keep silence no longer. One of the sublimest judgment Psalms, the fiftieth, mentions something similar to this flying roll. "When thou sawest a *thief*, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speaketh against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes" (Psalm 1: 18–21). The flying roll stands undoubtedly in connection with wickedness, theft and false swearing, as it is found in so many forms in unbelieving Israel, but it finds also a large application in the judgment of wickedness throughout the earth in the glorious day of His appearing.

But the roll enters the house of the evil doer and remains there to punish not only the wicked persons but also to consume the

Digitized by Google

timber and the stone. This may stand for the two facts: the secret places will be entered in that judgment, and it will be a thorough judgment which will consume all that is connected with wickedness. In Leviticus xiv. we read of the cleansing of the leper, that the leper's house which was infected was completely destroyed. Elijah's sacrifice was consumed by fire, and not alone the sacrifice but also the wood and the stones and the very water. God's fire will again fall from heaven to consume the wood, hay, and stubble, nothing will be hid. Oh, what a burning day that day of the Lord will be when His well earned curses will be carried out, and none can escape.

Another application still of this vision of the flying roll may be made in connection with the established theocracy during the coming age. However, space forbids an enlargement.

The next vision is one of great interest and not a little difficulty. It claims our attention more than any of the other visions. In it we see again wickedness and judgment. The angel now calls the prophet's attention to some startling vision. He sees an ephah going forth. And he said, this is their aim (literally *aijn* eye) in all the land. And, behold, a round piece of lead was lifted up, and this is a woman sitting in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is wickedness; and he cast her in the midst of the ephah, and cast the weight of lead in its mouth. And I lifted up mine eyes and saw, and, behold, two women came forth, and the wind was in their wings, and they had wings like stork wings, and they lifted up the ephah between earth and heaven. And I said to the angel that talked with me, Whither are these taking the ephah? And he said to me, To build for her a house in the land of Shinar; and it shall be established and settled there upon its own base.

That we have here a most striking and intensely interesting vision is at once evident. Alas! that so few students of the Word

Digitized by Google

should pass it by without digging down to the depths and comparing scripture with scripture to find its true and final meaning! The vision is generally taken to mean wickedness in connection with Israel, and having its fulfilment in their captivity. Many other interpretations have been advanced which are, however, unsatisfactory. We have to look deeper and give this vision a very prayerful study. After much study and research we believe that the whole vision is identical with the final *Babylon*, the great harlot of Revelation, her fall and judgment, and all that is connected with it—wickedness put away, sealed up, the wicked one destroyed, and Satan chained.

What are the leading figures in the vision? An ephah—which is a Jewish measure standing here for commerce. The aim (eyes) of all the land (or earth) are upon it. Commercialism is very prominent in Revelation in connection with the full measure of wickedness, the climax of ungodliness. In Revelation xviii merchants are mentioned who have grown rich through the abundance of her delicacies. Then the merchants are seen weeping, for no man buys their merchandise any more. And then a long list follows, including *all the articles of modern commerce.* Compare this with the awful description of the last times in James v. Rich men are commanded to weep and howl, for miseries are come upon them. They heaped treasure together for the *last days*, and it was a heaping together by fraud, dishonesty in keeping back the hire of the laborers. They lived in pleasure (luxuriously) and been wanton. Indeed, here is that burning question of the day, capital and labor, and its final outcome, misery and judgment upon commercialism, riches heaped up, and all in wickedness. In Habakkuk ii : 12 the woe of judgment of that coming glory of the Lord is pronounced upon him that buildeth a town with blood and establisheth a city by iniquity! The people are seen laboring for the fire and wearying themselves for

Digitized by Google

vanity. Luxuries, increase, riches, etc., are mentioned in the second and third chapters of Isaiah, chapters of judgment. Other passages could be quoted, but these are sufficient for our purpose. They show us that the climax of wickedness as it is in the earth when judgment will come, and Israel's time commences once more, will be connected with commerce, riches and luxuries. The ephah points to this.

In the second place let us notice that in the *midst* of the ephah there is seen a *woman*. She is called wickedness. The Hebrew word wickedness is translated by the Septuagint with "ανομία" *anomia*. We find that the Holy Spirit uses the same word in 2 Thes. 2 : 8, and then shall be revealed the wicked one (ανομος) whom the Lord Jesus will slay with the Spirit of His mouth. The woman in the ephah personifies wickedness. She has surrounded herself with the ephah and sits in the midst of it. Have we not here the great whore having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication? Undoubtedly. This woman is the type of evil and wickedness in its highest form. Let us glance at that wonderful description of that woman in Revelation. She is the great whore sitting upon many waters. She sits upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet decked with gold, precious stones and pearls. Upon her forehead is seen her name, Mystery, BABYLON the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations in the earth. She is drunk with the blood of the saints. The woman in the ephah represents the same great whore, Babylon the great. This becomes at once clear when we take into consideration that the woman in the ephah is carried swiftly away and a house is built for her in the land of *Shinar*, and it shall be established, and set there upon her own *base*. Now the land of Shinar is *Babylonia*. There it is where the God-opposing power has its home and where it will end in final and total destruction.

Digitized by Google

But it is certainly worth the while to follow this up. The first city erected after the judgment of the first age was the city in the plain of Shinar. There they built a city and in it a tower, whose top was to reach into the heavens, to make themselves a name. Self, worship of the creature, had reached its climax, and confusion and judgment came swiftly. The Babylon of the Revelation is the very same attempt, only in its fullest development. It is Cain's city—human strength, human wisdom, stored in it. A number of the wicked generation, after the confusion of tongues, remained in the land of Shinar as inhabitants of Babylon. In it wickedness, idolatry, luxuries, earthly glory and commerce prospered. Only a few of the inspired descriptions of ancient Babylon may be mentioned here: The Golden City, Isaiah xiv: 4. The lady of Kingdoms, Isaiah xvii: 5. Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitudes of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast labored from thy youth, Isaiah xlvii: 12. The praise of the whole earth, li: 41. Babylon! a golden cup in the Lord's land, that made all the earth drunken, the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad, Jeremiah li: 7. It is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols, Jeremiah l: 38. O thou that dwellest in many waters, abundant in treasures, Jeremiah li: 13. Babylon was in splendor and outward glory for the kingdoms of the world, God opposing what Jerusalem was for the land. Jerusalem is the city of a great King and Babylon may be termed the city of the prince of this world. According to Herodotus, the walls of Babylon were 60 miles in circumference. They were 87 feet thick and 350 feet high. The city had 25 gates made of solid brass. The city contained 676 squares, beautifully and symetrically arranged. The river ran through the city, surrounded by high walls, and in it were brass gates and steps leading to the river banks. A wonderful bridge spanned the river. No such city ever stood in the

Digitized by Google

earth again. Even the great cities of our days—Paris, London, New York and Berlin—do not reach the splendor, luxury and wealth of ancient Babylon. The king's palace had a wall around it six miles long. The hanging gardens were considered the wonder of the world. The waterworks of Babylon, supplying the immense city and its hanging gardens from the river Euphrates, were more powerful and larger than any modern water supplies. A Roman historian gives a vivid description of the city. "Nothing could be more corrupt than its morals, nothing more fitted to excite and to allure to immoderate pleasures. The rites of hospitality were polluted by the grossest and most shameless lusts. *Money dissolved* every tie, whether of kindred, respect or esteem. Drunkeness and the grossest immoralities were practised in public."

The worship of Babylon was idolatry, and it is a fact that all idolatry can be traced to Babylon. She is the mother of all abominations. Babylon was destroyed, but has a promise of restoration and return of her glory before her final and total destruction comes.

Roman Catholicism is generally taken to be the Babylon of the Revelation. It is more correct to say Rome is an offspring of Babylon. Ancient Babylon had a religious ceremonial like the Rome of to-day. Indeed, the ancient Babylonian worship is revived in modern Rome. Babylon is the mother and Rome is the living daughter; while Rome again has her daughters—the "isms" of Christendom. Babylon means concentration and confusion. A boasting, high minded Christendom—Roman and so-called "Protestant"—is rapidly nearing its awful apostacy and judgment. The cry, so popular in our times—the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men and of a social Christianity—is really the cry of old, Let us make us a name; it is concentration. Money, riches and commercialism play a very important part in the popular

Digitized by Google

religious enterprises. All is getting ready for Laodicea—increase in riches and proud boastings. Influential men, money, etc., control the affairs of Christendom. Error and loose morals are spreading in every direction. Great schemes are planned; institutions of learning—in which infidelity, in the form of higher criticism, is taught—are erected and endowed by the "church" with millions of dollars, as if this earth were to be the home of the church for ever. The twentieth century is prophesied to become the most glorious, and one would not know where to stop if all the beautiful air castles and promises of would-be prophets were to be named. The supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race, its civilizing influences and power for good, etc., are harped upon at present as being a mighty factor in the final conversion of the world. But in the midst of this boasting Christendom, heaping their bricks together for their proud tower, blindness has already become greater than the blindness of the Jews. In the midst of Christendom, the sorceries and idolatries of ancient Babylon are being strangely revived and leading many astray. The luxuries of Babylon, fostered by modern inventions and commercialism, are seen on all hands. One only needs to study statistics to see what this "Christian nation" expends a year for luxuries and what for the preaching of the gospel, the only power for salvation. The near future will undoubtedly bring the long looked-for union of churches, concentration for reformation, lifting up of humanity, etc., etc., and when man in his own thoughts and making himself a name seems almost to have succeeded, He who sitteth in the heavens and who laughs at their foolish efforts will no longer laugh but will speak once more in His wrath, and Babylon will fall. Whoever has eyes opened by the Word and the Spirit, must see how well the *woman* has succeeded in putting the leaven of error and wickedness into the fine flour, and the leaven is doing its perfect work in leavening the whole lump.

Digitized by Google

But we must return to the vision. The ephah is carried, and in it the woman, by two women with wings of storks into the land of Shinar, and there a house is built and it is established on her own base. Babylon as it is described in the Revelation xvii and xviii can hardly mean exclusively corrupted ecclesiastical systems, apostate Christendom as it is seen to-day. The Babylon of the Revelation is still future, and its fullest development falls in the time when the body of the Lord Jesus Christ is no longer in the earth.

It is remarkable that certain prophecies concerning Babylon in Isaiah and Jeremiah have not yet been fulfilled. If we hold to a literal interpretation of the Scriptures then of necessity Babylon is to be rebuilt. The desolations of Babylon prophesied by these two prophets have not yet taken place. The destruction is to be suddenly by fire, and that destruction has never been. Still more startling is the fact that the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah concerning Babylon and its final destruction are identical with Revelation xvii and xviii. The vision of the ephah and the woman in it being swiftly carried to Shinar and housed there upon her own base, as well as other prophecies concerning Babylon, point to an actual rebuilding of ancient Babylon as a great commercial center and world power as well as religious centralization. There are many indications in this direction in our times. Railroads are planned to India. Russia is advancing in the same direction. Maybe the restoration of the Jews in *unbelief* as it has commenced will hasten such a project as it has been already mentioned by statesmen, an international center for commerce and arbitration in central Asia. It concerns the true believer very little what the final Babylon will be. He does not belong to it, neither to the present Babylon as it exists in Christendom ; nor will he see the future Babylon, for the Lord will then have gathered His saints. The removal of the church from the earth will bring about a great change, and all that is to be done will be done swiftly, in-

Digitized by Google

dicated by the stork's wings. What men in that gross darkness, when the light of God, His Spirit, and His praying church is removed, will do in their rebellion against God and His Anointed no human being can now estimate or imagine. Finally, the vision of the ephah and the woman, so to speak, sealed up in it, may denote also the overthrow and judgment of wickedness. Babylon fallen, cast down. Anti-Christ, the man of sin, slain by the brightness of His coming. Satan chained in the pit for a thousand years. The last vision of the prophet is likewise a vision of judgment, followed by the crowning of Joshua with the double crowns of silver and gold.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

The Last Night Vision of the Prophet.—The Vision of the Four Chariots Coming from Between the Mountains of Brass.—The Crowning of Joshua with Crowns.

The prophet lifts up his eyes again and sees four chariots which come out from between two mountains which were of brass. In the first chariot the horses are red, in the second they are black, in the third white, and in the fourth speckled bay. The angel explains that these are the four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. The black and the white horses go forth into the north country, the speckled go to the south country, and the bay went forth and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth, and so they did. The last verse of the vision reads: "And he called me and spake to me, saying, Behold, these that go forth in the land of the north have caused my spirit to rest upon the land of the north."

We notice first the similarity of the last vision with the first contained in the opening chapter of Zechariah. The visions opened with the hosts of heaven upon red, speckled and white horses, having walked to and fro through the earth. We learned from the first vision that its meaning was judgment; that God was displeased with the nations, and is once more jealous for Jerusalem and ready to turn in mercy to Zion, and the hosts of heaven are seen in that first vision preparing for judgment. In the last vision the chariots of judgment are seen coming forth to sweep over the earth, to be followed by the crowning with crowns of the high-priest. The riders of the first vision may be termed the advance guards of the judgment, but the chariots now put the divine

Digitized by Google

decrees into execution. The riders halted in a valley amidst a myrtle grove, but the chariots rush forth to execute their terrible work from between two mountains of brass. These mountains mean undoubtedly Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives. They rush through the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The brass is mentioned to denote the firmness and stability of these mountains, which shall never be moved. We do not think that in the four chariots there is an allusion to the four world-powers. The judgment of them is now come. The stone is falling and smiting the image at its feet and pulverizing it, putting it completely out of existence. The chariots are God's powers, agencies for judgment in the earth, which will pass swiftly along, shown by the fast running chariots. In Rev. vi the seven seals are opened, and there go forth the four terrible riders upon white, red, black and pale horses. The riders in the Apocalypse are the riders which go through the earth during the great tribulation, but in the eighth night vision of Zechariah we see the chariots of God's wrath. The vision falls in the time when heaven opens and He appears riding upon a white horse, His name Faithful and True, coming in righteousness to judge and to make war. Wonderful vision of Him who is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood! He is followed by the armies of heaven upon white horses, all clothed in fine linen white and clean. "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God" (Rev. xix). Immediately after the appearing of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords with all His saints, "An angel is seen standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying, to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of captains and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit

Digitized by Google

upon them, both free and bond, both small and great." How terrible that wrath will be, what awful work these chariots will work in slaying the ungodly, rebellious people, and spoiling the armies of military Christendom no human pen can describe. "Before Him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at His feet. He stood and measured the earth. He beheld and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow. The sun and the moon stood still in their habitation. Thou didst march through the land in indignation. Thou didst thresh the nations in anger" (Hab. iii). O how our hearts as believers should praise our God and our Lord Jesus Christ who has delivered us from that wrath to come. And while the tribulation is not yet, and wrath will come after the tribulation, how should we redeem the time and witness of that great salvation to Jew and Gentile, and teach in the words of the second Psalm, "Kiss the Son." His wrath shall soon be kindled. The time is short, and soon the scenes of terror, tribulation, and wrath will be enacted in the earth. The removal of the Church from the earth will be the signal for the beginning.

The angel interprets to the prophet that the chariots are the four spirits of the heavens which go forth from standing before the Lord of the earth. These agencies for wrath were with God standing before Him the Lord of all the earth, but now at His command they descend to scatter death and destruction. They go forth in sets, and the north country and south country both so prominent in the prophetic word are mentioned. The bay horses, however, are not confined to one direction, they go through the entire earth. At last in the judgment of the land of the north the Spirit is caused to rest. The overthrow of the enemies of Israel is complete and the Spirit is quieted. How long may the wrath last and for how long may the chariots do

Digitized by Google

their deadly work? Perhaps longer than we now think. The millennial reign of Christ, as foreshadowed in the bloody rule of David, followed by the peaceful reign of Solomon, may teach us lessons in this direction. The night visions have ended. They may be termed the Apocalypse of Zechariah. Daniel, Zechariah and Revelation go together in a wonderful harmony and explain each other. Alas! that just these three parts of the Bible should be so little studied and so little understood.

The long night of visions for the young prophet Zechariah had passed by and the noise of the speeding chariots had left his ears. The morning must have been when he opened his eyes after beholding such wonderful things, and now the Word of the Lord comes to him.

A command is given to the prophet, which has a sublime prophetic meaning. The command will surely be once more carried out by Israel on that glorious morning when the Sun of righteousness has risen after a dark and dreary night of sin and tribulation as well as wrath is past. What is the command? Take from the exiles, from Cheldai, from Tobiah, and from Jedaiah, and go thou on that day, go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, whither they have come from Babylon. Take silver and gold and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedek, the high priest, and speak to him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold a man whose name is Branch, and from his place he shall grow up and build the temple of Jehovah. Even He shall build the temple and bear majesty, and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and shall be a priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. And the crowns shall be to Chelem, and to Tobiah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen, the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of Jehovah. And they

Digitized by Google

that are afar off shall come and shall build in the temple of Jehovah, and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts has sent me to you, and it will come to pass if ye will hearken unto the voice of Jehovah your God.

Some consider this to be the ninth vision of the prophet. It is, however, the Word of the Lord which comes to the prophet. There can be no doubt but the command was actually carried out and Cheldai (robust), Tobiah (God's goodness), and Jedaiah (God knows), gave their silver and gold, and crowns were made out of it and placed upon the head of Joshua the high priest. But the action had a much deeper meaning. It was a highly typical one. It must have astonished Joshua and the people to hear such a command, for the royal crown did not belong to the high priest but to the descendant of David. He must have understood that the whole command had a symbolical bearing. Joshua hears it from the Word of the Lord that another person is only typified by him, "Behold the man whose name is the Branch." It is this man the Branch who will be a priest upon the throne. This, of course, is our Lord Jesus Christ. The name of the high priest Joshua is in itself very significant, for the meaning is, God is salvation, Saviour, Jesus. Pontius Pilate was fulfilling prophecy when he stood there leading out Jesus of Nazareth before that tumultuous multitude, and when he said "Behold the man." If the assembled Jews had known the Scriptures they would have recognized the phrase. But how did he then come forth? He wore a crown of thorns upon His meek and loving brow, and the people gazed into the blood-stained face of the Lamb of God now ready to be placed upon the altar and slain. But once again it will sound forth, "Behold the man," for when He appears it will be after He has gathered His saints, and then He will come as the Son of Man in the heavens, and the sign of the Son of Man will be seen there. He will be crowned again, too, but not with

Digitized by Google

the crown of suffering and shame, but with the crowns of glory. Thus he is seen in Revelation xix: 12 as wearing many crowns.

He comes to build the temple of Jehovah, bearing majesty, sitting and ruling upon His throne. He is now the builder of the spiritual temple which is composed of living stones (Eph. ii: 21; 1 Peter ii: 5). But when He comes again there will be the building of another temple. It is now no longer His Father's throne but His own, upon which He is a priest as well. The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords has now taken possession of His inheritance. The times of overturning are over and He whose right it is has come. There is a very instructive thought in the fact that the persons of the exile, as mentioned above, were to bring the silver and the gold out of which the crowns were to be made. The time will come when the whole exiled nation, so long scattered and peeled, though even in dispersion, the richest nation of the earth, will bring their silver and gold, their glory and their all and lay it at the feet of the King.

The CX Psalm will then find its fulfillment: "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Melchizedek united the offices of a king and a priest in one person. "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first, being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of Peace. Without father and without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually" (Heb. vii: 1–3). The whole will be realized in the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Perhaps the fourteenth verse will also find a literal fulfillment then after the crowning of the King by His own people who rejected Him once, and a memorial of that event will be seen in the temple throughout the millennium.

Digitized by Google

They that are afar off are now seen coming, and build not the temple of the Lord but in the temple. The Gentiles, of course, are they that are afar off and who are even now building in a certain sense in the temple of the Lord, but when He has returned and sits upon His throne this prophecy will find its final fulfillment. And when shall it all come to pass? An answer is given which refers us to the opening words of the first chapter. "And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God."

In the whole command of the crowning of the high priest, Israel's future glory is likewise seen. Their great and high calling will be realized in that day when the man the Branch comes forth and turns away ungodliness from Jacob. Israel will be as His earthly people like the Priest upon His throne, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. The kingdom has then come, and the will of God is being done in earth as it is done in heaven. And oh how blessedly for the believer's heart to think God's own thoughts and move in the purposes of God. Our own individual salvation eternally assured, we ought to cry continually "Even so, come Lord Jesus."—Amen, Amen!

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

The question put to the Prophet concerning the Fast.—The Rebuke given and their Failure shown.

The night visions had come to an end. In them, as we have seen, the whole future of Israel, their restoration to the land and regeneration, as well as the theocracy and the judgments connected with it, were revealed. Nearly two years had passed by since that memorable night of visions, and during these two years the people had, obedient to the heavenly visions and encouraged by them, built the house of the Lord. Soon the temple was to be completed and worship once more to be restored. A question rose then in the minds of some of the people about the keeping of certain fast days by which they commemorated events of judgments upon their nation and city. The principal day of fasting was the day set apart for remembering the destruction and burning of the city of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. This day was kept by the Jews on the tenth day of the fifth month. Messengers are sent with this question to the prophet, and this occasion is used by the Lord to give a new message to the nation through the prophet.

The seventh chapter is divided into three sections. 1. The occasion for the prophecy (verses 1–4). 2. The rebuke (verses 4–8). 3. Looking over the past (verses 8–14). But the seventh chapter does not answer the question put to the prophet. If a reader of the word stops reading with the seventh chapter, and does not continue to read the eighth, he will be much perplexed. The seventh and eighth chapters of Zechariah go together; in fact they should form only one chapter. The eighth chapter contains

Digitized by Google

two sections. 1. Promises of blessings again and teachings concerning their walk (verses 1–17). 2. The solemn fast days will be no more; instead of them there will be feast days. Whole nations will seek the Lord and be joined to Israel. Thus the end of chapter eight answers the question of the people concerning the fast days. At the first glance we notice that these two chapters, though starting from a desire of the people in the prophet's day, are yet awaiting their final and greatest fulfillment. Israel still fasts and is still the forsaken. Still there is mourning and weeping over the departed glory, and once a year is the solemn fast kept which reminds the seed of Abraham of the sad fate of Jerusalem and the Temple, twice destroyed on the same day.

But let us glance at these sections in these chapters, and make a short comment on them.

Chapter VII: 1–4. The question.—It comes from the people of Bethel. The two men who represent the people have Assyrian names—Sherezer, meaning prince of the treasury, and Regem-melech, the official of the King. Perhaps they were born in exile and received their names there, and may have held the position indicated by their names. Their concern for a human institution not at all commanded in the word of the Lord, as it was the case with the fast day in question, shows the lack of spirituality in them. They should have been more concerned about true obedience than with an insignificant ceremony. It has always been so with the people. When the Lord came He said to the leaders, "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel" (Matthew xxii: 24). And they are still concerned with ceremonials and know not the true obedience. But the same conditions, alas! exist too in Christendom. The question itself about weeping on that day for so many years shows that they were tired of it. It was a burden to them. If they had the true faith and in it obedience, they would not have come with that question

Digitized by Google

at all, but with joy and gladness would they have looked to the future, and known that the promised restoration as seen by the prophet was surely to come.

II. The reproof. Verses 4–7.—The word of the Lord comes now to the prophet. The message is for all the people and for the priests. The two fasts are mentioned. The one in the fifth month as already stated was the one in remembrance of the destruction of the city. The fast of the seventh month was kept on the anniversary of the murder of Gedaliah at Mizpah (Jeremiah xli). But why did they keep these fast days? Why do they keep these days indeed still? The Lord asks, "Is it unto me, unto me?" No, it was not for the honor and glory of God, but their own selfish interests were at the bottom of it. Indeed God had never asked them to fast. These institutions were man-made, and highly displeasing to Jehovah. And is it not so now, not alone with the Jews but with Christendom? Oh, the man-made institutions and outward observances which only dishonor God and are for the selfish interests of the people! The eating and drinking, the fast being over, was not unto the Lord, but unto themselves. It was obedience the Lord required. Had they listened to the words spoken by the prophets they would not have been in captivity, there would have been no need for a solemn fast. Unbelief was at the bottom of it all, and so it is still with the nation in dispersion.

III. The closing verses of the seventh chapter *look over past history.* In the first place the Lord says what he desires to see done by them: True judgment executed, mercy and truth shown by every man to his brother, oppress not the widow and the fatherless, the stranger nor the poor, let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. These precepts were spoken to them by the prophets before the captivity. "Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes;

Digitized by Google

cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isaiah i.) But they did the very opposite, and continued in an outward service without obedience of the heart.

This disobedience became their ruin and brought on the disaster. The description of their waywardness fits that people in their entire history. They refused to attend and offered a rebellious shoulder. They made their ears too heavy to hear, their heart they made an adamant that they might not hear the law and the words which Jehovah of hosts sent by His Spirit. These conditions prevailed in a still intenser form when our Lord Jesus Christ appeared among them. At last God Himself put judicial blindness upon them and still their heart is like adamant, but that heart of stone will be removed at last by the Spirit of God and a heart of flesh given in its place. (Ezek. xxxvi).

And now follows the manifestion of the wrath of Jehovah of hosts. He had cried and they did not hear, and now they called but He did not hear. The prayers of orthodox Judaism especially on their fast days are beyond description and pleading for mercy. Still there is no answer to the many prayers. "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood." (Is. i: 14, 15.) Alas! it is worship with the lips. The believing remnant alone in the future will be heard in their pleadings, and the Lord will send at last the salvation out of Zion, and the Deliverer will come who turns away ungodliness from Jacob. The fourteenth verse puts the dispersion and the judgment before us in a nutshell. They are whirled among all the nations whom they know not. The land itself becomes desolate behind them. As soon as the people leave whose land it is, the land flowing with milk and honey be-

Digitized by Google

comes a wilderness, and when they return it will be again the land of blessing.

What a testimony the land and the people is! Both speak of God's righteous judgment, and the truth of His word. A whole nation scattered among all the nations and still kept intact. Their land trodden down by the Gentiles, waste and desolate. The land mourneth, indeed. Prosperity will come to that land again, but not by human efforts and human wisdom. The attempts of unbelieving Israel now in transforming the wilderness may prove successful, and colonies after colonies will be established. The time of Jacob's trouble, however, will sweep it all away.

The question concerning the fast is answered in the next chapter. The great and wonderful future of the land, the people, and of Jerusalem, prosperity and blessing is clearly shown in it. No more mourning, but joy; no more shame, but honor; no desolation, but restoration and His people saved from the East and West, nations at last being converted through Israel's blessing and testimony. We will look at these promises and let them pass before us in our next chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

The Gracious Answer to their Question.—Promises of Blessing, Restoration, Prosperity and Salvation.—No more Fast Days.—Nations to be added to Jerusalem.

The eighth chapter contains the most blessed promises concerning the future of Jerusalem and the people Israel. Now the question concerning the fasts is answered in a way the petitioners never expected. The promises which are given in this chapter were only partially fulfilled in Zechariah's day in the returned and believing remnant, the actual fulfillment is still future. In the first night vision we heard the words, Cry yet saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad, and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion and shall yet choose Jerusalem. The eighth chapter gives the details of the promised prosperity. The perfect picture of Jerusalem's glorious future is unrolled before our eyes. Though still future, with the eyes of faith we can look at it and rejoice in the vision when at last the covenant keeping God of Abraham has established Jerusalem and made her a praise in the earth. It is a grand and glorious prophecy which is before us, and while we now consider it as believers and members of His heavenly people, we may well think of the time when He, who is our Lord and Israel's King, shall come and we with Him, and when in Him all these blessings will be carried out. Not long ago we saw teachings on this chapter consisting of entirely spiritual applications for believers' comfort, prosperity and increase, etc. The New Testament contains all the comfort and blessing for believers, and we need not rob Israel of promises belonging to them and connected with their future.

Digitized by Google

We divide the chapter into eight sections, which we will now briefly review:

1. *The Restoration Announced.* Verses 1–3. The jealousy of the Lord for Jerusalem is again stated, like in the first chapter, I am jealous for Jerusalem (14th verse). Here, however, is the word fury added. The Hebrew verb signifies, I have been and am still jealous of her with great fury. The fury denotes the wrath which fell upon the ungodly nations, the horns of the second night visions, which are now passed out of existence, broken to pieces. Now to Jerusalem, no longer trodden down by the Gentiles, the enemies being scattered, the Lord Himself has returned and His glory is seen there again. It had departed, but now the sign of his presence and favor is again given. The city becomes a new city, called The City of Truth. How different this name is from the others which Jerusalem bore and which so fittingly described her fallen condition and abomination. She was called the city which had grievously sinned, like an unclean woman (Lament. i: 8, 17), a harlot and a murderer (Isaiah i: 21) spiritually called Sodom and Egypt (Rev. xi), but now a new name is given her, The City of Truth. He who is the Truth has turned the lie and ungodliness from Jacob, and truth is the characteristic of the city. The mountain of the Lord of hosts becomes the holy mountain.

2. *Jerusalem will have Rest and be Largely Inhabited.* Verses 4 and 5. What a picture in comparison wtth the former desolation! Jerusalem was forsaken and a desolation, a city of heaps. It is even so now, few cities of the earth present such an awful misery as modern Jerusalem does. It will all be changed, and just as great as the misery and desolation was the blessing and the increase will be. Old men in the streets, bowed down by old age, and alongside of them boys and girls who run about in childish play. No more fear, they shall dwell safely and none shall make

Digitized by Google

them afraid. The increase in descendants is even now very great among the Jews and the city is rapidly becoming a Jewish city again, and thus everything is preparing for the final conflict. Only after Jerusalem's warfare is ended will there be peace.

3. *They are Brought back from the Captivity.* Verses 7, 8. When they heard of a restoration they thought this very marvelous. Had they not been scattered into the four winds? Could they ever be brought together again? Therefore the Lord says, Because it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this nation in those days, shall it be marvelous in My eyes also? saith the Lord of hosts. At this present time Jews and Gentiles doubt the promises of restoration, it is marvelous in their eyes. But He who scattered Israel will gather them again. He knows also where the so called Lost Tribes are, the house of Israel, and we need not try to help God to find them. When the time comes He will bring them all back. In the second chapter we noticed that the North Country is mentioned, and we called attention to the fact that the North Country, Russia, is inhabited by nearly one-half of the entire Jewish race. In that land the persecutions are the greatest and also the desire for a return to the land. The restoration in unbelief is one especially from the Jews in the North Country. Here in the eighth chapter the East and the West countries are mentioned, the far East, India, China, etc., and the West, our own country and the isles of the sea. The rich Jews may now be satisfied in the countries, away from the home-land, where they prospered, but at last they will return and the Lord will send fishers to fish them and hunters to hunt them out. (Jer. xvi : 16.) The Gentiles will bring them back to their own land (Isaiah lxvi : 20). All will then be His people and He will be their God.

4. *The Land is Blessed.—Fruitfulness and Plenty.—The Remnant to Possess all these Things.* Verses 9–12. What a contrast there

Digitized by Google

is now seen! For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast . . . Little fruit was had from the ground, there was nothing for man and beast . . . Neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in on account of the affliction . . . There was no rest, no peace, but uncertainty and affliction. Those that went out from the land had no peace, and they that came into the land found no peace. The curse said, No rest for the sole of their feet, and how literally it has been fulfilled. Again the people seek a resting place in the land without their God and their Saviour, all in the confidence of the flesh. They will succeed in their restoration plans only to find themselves at last in greater difficulties and facing worse afflictions than ever before. Then every one will be against his neighbor (verse 10). Money spent by the millions in building channels for irrigation, planting of trees and vines, building railroads, etc. (just what modern Zionism proposes and has undertaken to do), may succeed in transforming the land in spots into a fruitful garden, but the time of Jacob's trouble will sweep that all away. The Lord will be gracious to the very land in the day of His manifestation. There will be a seed of peace, the vine will give her fruit, the ground her increase, the heavens their dew. They shall build houses and inhabit them, they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them (Isaiah lxv: 21). For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace, the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the firtree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off (Isaiah lv: 12–13). The remnant of the people left after the great tribulation will inherit this all.

5. *The Curse Changed into Blessing.* Verses 13–15. They had

Digitized by Google

been a curse among the nations, but now at last the nations of the earth blest in the seed of Abraham. As He had punished them so He blesses them now. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, says your God, speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins (Isaiah xl : 1, 2). Literal were the curses threatened concerning Israel and Israel's land, literally they were all fulfilled. And are there not many more promises of blessing for the people and for the land spoken by the same true and faithful God who uttered the threatenings and carried them out to the very last? And will not the Lord fulfill these promises of blessing literally to the minutest details? Assuredly He will. It is remarkable that this simple truth is not seen and understood in Christendom of to-day. According to the popular idea God has punished the Jews and will continue to do so, and the church has taken Israel's place and inherited all the blessings. It is this false notion which is responsible in a great measure for the dreadful confusion existing in Christendom. The thing against which Paul warned is practiced in Christendom, Boast not against the branches . . . Be not highminded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches (Jews) take heed lest He also spare not thee (Gentiles). God is able to graft them (Israel) in again. (Romans xi.)

6. *Israel will be a Holy People.* Verses 16 and 17. These are the words ye are to do, speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor, execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates ; let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor and love no false oath, for all these are things which I hate, saith the Lord. Untruth, false oath, speaking one against the other are characteristic sins of Israel. But the character of the nation is now to be entirely changed. They are now indeed to be a holy

Digitized by Google

people, with hearts circumcised, loving God with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. (Ezekiel xxxvi: 26, 27.)

7. *No more Fast Days, but Feast Days.* Verses 18 and 19. The fast of the fourth month and the fast of the fifth and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and the peace. This is now the answer to their question. The fasts of the fifth and seventh month were the fasts commemorating the burning of the temple and the taking of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, and the other the anniversary of the murder of Gedeliah and his friends. The fast of the tenth month was kept in remembrance of the siege of Jerusalem which was commenced in that month and the fast of the fourth month was kept on account of the taking of Jerusalem. These fasts commemorated therefore all national calamities. A greater calamity happened of course later when at the same time Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies, the temple and the city burned to the ground and not a stone left upon another. The Jews are still keeping national fasts on account of these calamities. Not alone in Jerusalem are there Jews and Jewesses going to the small piece of ancient stone masonry, which is said to be all left of the magnificent temple in Jerusalem, to mourn there especially on the ninth day of Ab, but the mourning among the orthodox Jews on that day is world-wide. In the synagogues of Russia and New York, San Francisco and in South Africa, everywhere where there are orthodox Jews the Lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah are chanted in a mournful tone. But the time is coming when all will be

Digitized by Google

changed. With Jerusalem rebuilt and peacefully inhabited, a temple full of God's glory, and over it all the heavenly glory and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, there will be no more need of fasting and mourning, but all will be changed in gladness and joy. The Songs of praise which are found at the close of the book of Psalms will then undoubtedly be sung by restored Israel.

8. *The Conversion of the World and Conquest for the Lord will Follow Through Converted and Restored Israel.* Verses 20–23. These verses have often been spiritualized. How much harm there is done by taking such words and promises out of their connections and fitting them to a time and people for which they were never meant. Can God give His blessing to such teaching of His Word? We believe not. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet be that nations will come, the inhabitants of many cities. And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. And many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord. This the world has not yet seen. Individuals have turned to the Lord, and His own are gathered out of all nations and languages, but such a picture as it is seen here has not yet been seen. The conversion of peoples and strong nations is still future. It will not come by modern missionary efforts, consisting not alone of preaching, but as it is done to-day, by educational work in heathen countries, as well as other humanitarian institutions, such as hospital work, orphanages, etc. Nations can never be converted by these efforts, nor has God given His Church promises that nations and the world is to be converted by the preaching of the Gospel of grace. Individuals, of course, are converted and will be converted by the Word faithfully preached. A people is thus taken out for His name. And

Digitized by Google

to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down (Israel's time commencing again, in restoration and regeneration) and I will build again the ruins thereof and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the nations upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. (Acts xv: 14–17.) It is sad to think that Christendom ignores such a revelation of the divine purpose and order and goes on in entirely different lines. We are living now in the time of the outcalling of a people, the Church, the body of the Lord Jesus Christ is formed. When that body is completed, which does not mean the conversion of the world, the Lord will come for His outcalled saints and then with His saints in glory. This will be followed, according to the words of the prophets, as we have so clearly seen in these studies by the building again of the tabernacle of David and all that is connected with it, and then the residue of men, the nations, will seek the Lord. It is also to be noticed that these nations will seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and worship there before Him. This means that Jerusalem will become the great center of not alone world government but also of worship. The last chapter in this book of Zechariah shows nations coming up to Jerusalem on the feast of tabernacles.

The last verse of the eighth chapter is the grandest of all. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, in those days it shall be that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew saying, we will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. This shows clearly what so often is doubted, namely, that the Jew converted and filled with the Spirit will be the instrument for the conversion of the nations. At this present time when a poor Jew shows himself, even in a so-called Christian (?) land like ours, he will occasionally

Digitized by Google

be followed by ten men or more who will mock him and call him names and perhaps assault nim (by no means a rare occurrence). But it will all be changed in the day of Israel's glory. It will then be known that Israel is the blessed people, and ten men out of all languages will beseech the Jew to take him along to the most blessed spot in the earth, to Jerusalem.

Thus ends one of the most striking prophecies concerning the future of the Seed of Abraham and Abraham's land. How strange that so few Christian people care to study these sublime revelations, which tell us how true and faithful our God is and which make it so clear and plain that the Bible is divine, the Word of God. May He teach us, who love these truths, who love Him and His appearing, who is not only Our Hope but Israel's Hope as well, may He teach us more and more to know His thoughts and purposes and to find our delight in them.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

The Second Part of the Prophecies—The First Burden—Judgment upon Hadrach, Hamath, Tyre and Sidon—His People Kept—The King of Peace and Righteousness Announced—Victory over the Enemies.

With the ninth chapter begins the second part of the book. In it God shows through the prophet new and glorious visions of the Kingdom, the conflicts which His people Israel will have, their victories and final deliverance, ending with the sublime visions in the fourteenth chapter. The Deliverer, the King Messiah, is seen here likewise, suffering, rejected, pierced and slain, the Shepherd is smitten and rejected, false shepherds take charge of the flock, and calamities follow till the true Shepherd appears again and they look upon Him whom they pierced. The Gentiles are seen at last coming up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts. Like the first part of the book, we have in the second a series of prophecies which are progressive, leading up higher and higher till the whole purpose of God is made known, and the summit of Glory to God in the Highest, Peace on earth, is reached, in the establishment of the Throne of Jehovah in and over the earth. Oh, how blind man is! that he passes by the thoughts of his God and does not consider them, nor find delight and pleasure in them. The words of man are read and studied, and the Word of God is set aside. The great mass in Christendom is wise in their own conceits and hastens on to the great waking up, when it will be too late. It is for the few to look into these things and to know the secrets of our God. Let us do it faithfully and prayerfully.

Twice in this second part of Zechariah we meet with the phrase "The burden of the Word of Jehovah." The first time it stands in the beginning of the ninth chapter, and the second time

Digitized by Google

in the twelfth chapter. We may conclude from this that the ninth, tenth and the eleventh chapters were given as one prophecy, and the twelfth to the fourteenth were perhaps given some time later.

The land of Hadrach against which the first burden in chapter ix. commences cannot be correctly located. Its close connection with Damascus and Hamath show that the land of Hadrach must have been a province of the Syrian kingdom then in existence. The Phœnician cities Tyre and Sidon are next, and then mention is made of four Philistine cities. Against these, Syria, Phœnicia, and the cities of the Philistines, a great calamity and overthrow is prophesied by Zechariah. They are conquered by the hosts of an enemy, and the rich treasuries of Tyre are heaped together in the streets—silver as the dust and gold as the mire—the bulwarks are smitten, and she herself consumed by fire. From there the conquest goes on rapidly to the Philistinian cities, and the King of Gaza perishes. The question arises, What conquest and calamity is this? Is it accomplished or is it still future? History records one great conqueror who rapidly overthrew the countries and cities mentioned in this burden. Alexander the Great and his expedition so successfully carried on is undoubtedly meant here. All students of the prophetic Scriptures know how prominently he likewise stands out in the Book of Daniel. The young monarch, after the battle of Issus, besieged and quickly captured Damascus. Sidon was easily taken, but Tyre resisted him some seven months and was burned to the ground. Gaza and the other cities came next. Thus the burden of the Word of Jehovah as uttered here by Zechariah was literally fulfilled in the Syrian conquest of Alexander the Great. However, history tells us that the armies of the youthful monarch passed by Jerusalem a number of times without doing harm to the city. This is remarkable, and in accord with the prophecy of Zechariah, for we read in the eighth verse, "And I will encamp against mine house, against the

Digitized by Google

army, against him that passes through and returns, and no oppressor shall come over them any more, for now I have seen it with mine eyes."

The Jewish historian Josephus gives a very interesting account of the oppressor, and how Alexander the Great punished the Samaritans, and the reason why he did not besiege and conquer Jerusalem. The account which Josephus gives is so important that we have to quote from it.

"After the destruction of Tyre, the conqueror marched against Gaza, which was razed to the ground. While Alexander was at the siege of Tyre, he sent to demand the surrender of Jerusalem. The High Priest sent an answer in which he stated that Jerusalem had entered into an alliance with the Persian monarch. After taking Gaza, Alexander advanced suddenly against Jerusalem. Jaddua, the High Priest, and the entire city were much frightened. But in a vision God told the High Priest to be of good cheer, to decorate the city and open the gates wide, and to go forth in his priestly robes with all the priests in his train, and the people of the city clad in white garments. Jaddua obeyed and the doors were opened, and the astonished enemy beheld a startling spectacle. No sooner had Alexander seen the High Priest in his gold embroidered robes with the holy name engraved on the turban, then he fell upon his face and worshipped. His attendants were greatly astonished. The Syrian kings who stood around feared that Alexander had lost his reason. One at length asked why he, whom all the world worshipped, should do homage to the High Priest of the Jews. Alexander replied that he did not worship the High Priest but his God. In a vision in Macedonia that figure in that very dress appeared to me. He exhorted me to conquer Persia. Alexander entered with the priest into the city to offer sacrifices. The High Priest then acquainted him with the prophecies of Daniel, showing that a Greek was to overthrow the Persian

Digitized by Google

empire." The account is without doubt a correct one, and we relate it here because this prophecy of the Alexandrian conquest shows the wonderful escape of Jerusalem that the oppressor shall not come over it.

However, it is to be noticed that the eighth verse says that no oppressor shall come over them *any more*. This puts before us again the final deliverance of Jerusalem and Israel's land as it is seen in the last chapter. It is said that history repeats itself, but divine prophecy again and again announces events for the near future, and in it is seen a foreshadowing of other events, and the original prophecy awaits a greater and final fulfillment. The sentence quoted, that no oppressor shall come over them any more, brings the first burden of the word of Jehovah in connection with the coming final deliverance of Israel when they shall be planted upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up. A final destructive visitation will be upon the enemies of Israel and Jerusalem; in fact, many of the ancient foes of Israel are seen revived in prophecy in the latter days then to be swept away, while Jerusalem will again be miraculously saved. In our exposition of the fourteenth chapter we hope to show the details of this.

The second section of the ninth chapter, verses 9–11, which is so closely connected with the burden from verses 1–8, strengthens the above exegesis. Who would say that verses 9–11 have seen a complete fulfillment? The greater part of it is still future, and so it is likewise with the third section of the ninth chapter. Let us quote first verses 9–11:

> Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion,
> Shout aloud daughter of Jerusalem,
> Behold thy King cometh to thee,
> Just and having salvation,
> Meek and riding upon an ass,
> Even upon a colt, the she-ass's foal,

Digitized by Google

And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,
And the horse from Jerusalem,
And the battle bow shall be cut off,
And He shall speak peace unto the nations,
And His dominion shall be from sea to sea,
And from the river to the ends of the earth.
As for thee also, for the sake of thy covenant blood,
I send forth thy prisoners from the waterless pit,
Return to the stronghold—Prisoners of hope
Even to-day I declare I will render double unto thee.

This stands in contrast to the Grecian conqueror, and it needs no proofs that the coming King whom Zechariah beholds is the King Messiah. The Jews acknowledge it as such. One of the greatest Jewish commentators says (Rashi): It is impossible to interpret it of any other than King Messiah. An interesting fable is based upon this prophecy, and well known among orthodox Jews. Rabbi Eliezer says, commenting on the words lowly and riding upon an ass, "This is the ass, the foal of that she-ass which was created in the twilight. This is the ass which Abraham our father saddled for the binding of Isaac his son. This is the ass upon which Moses our teacher rode when he came to Egypt, as it is said, And he made them ride upon the ass (Ex. iv: 20). This is the ass upon which the Son of David shall ride." Other interesting quotations could be given from Jewish writings, but this is sufficient to show that the Jews believe it to be a Messianic prophecy. And what blindness that they do not see Him who is the Messiah; but is not the so-called "higher criticism" existing to-day in Christendom being taught in churches and schools, that there are no Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, much greater blindness? Alas! so it is, and the outcome can be nothing else in the end than the denial of the divinity of our Lord, or Unitarianism.

Digitized by Google

Every reader of the new Testament knows that this prophecy is quoted in the Gospels. Let us look to the Gospels and see its application. First, in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter xxi : 5 : All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, upon a colt the foal of an ass. The context shows a great multitude there crying, Hosanna to the Son of David : Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest. But soon the cry is changed into, This is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. Notice the Holy Spirit quoting from Zechariah leaves out the sentence, "He is just, having salvation." This is not an error, but it is the divine right of the Spirit who gave the prophecies in olden times to apply them correctly in the New Testament. In the Gospel of Mark in the eleventh chapter there is likewise the description of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, but Zechariah is not quoted. The same is true of the account given by Luke, chapter xix., and here He is mentioned as the King that cometh in the name of Jehovah, peace in heaven and glory in the highest. In the fourth Gospel, chapter xii : 15, the account of His coming to Jerusalem is much shorter than in the other Gospels. It says there, Fear not, daughter of Sion ; behold, thy King cometh, sitting upon an ass's colt.

We see from this that the four Gospels give each an account of the entry of the Lord into Jerusalem ; two of them quote from Zechariah and the other two do not. The quotations themselves are differing from the prophecy in Zechariah ix. in two respects. The first words, Rejoice greatly, is not at all used. In Matthew it is, Tell the daughter of Sion, and in John, Fear not daughter of Sion. The sentence, He is just and having salvation, is left out in both.

A superficial exposition of the Word claims that Zechariah's

Digitized by Google

prophecy was fulfilled in the event recorded by the Gospels. As far as His entry into Jerusalem is concerned, riding upon the colt the foal of an ass (and note in Matthew it is shown that both the colt and the ass are brought to Him. He could ride of course only upon one, but the she-ass had to go along in fulfillment of prophecy), and the way He came, meekly, in this respect the prophecy was fulfilled. This entry of the Son of Man into Jerusalem was His formal presentation to Jerusalem as its King, but, as stated above, the Messianic cry of welcome Blessed is He, soon changes into, Jesus the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee, and that again in the final cry of rejection, Crucify Him, crucify Him! There was no salvation for Israel then, and no kingdom for Him, hence no rejoicing is mentioned in the quotations.

It is His second coming to Jerusalem as the Son of Man in His glory which will bring the fulfillment of Zechariah ix: 9–11. True, the colt, the she ass's foal, will not be the animal He rides, but He will come upon a white horse followed by the armies of heaven. He comes then truly for Jerusalem, fulfilling the prophecy, Just is He having salvation (marginal reading, Victory). There will be again the welcome cry of the 118th Psalm, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah, preceded by the plea, Hosanna, save now.

The tenth and eleventh verses show clearly that the prophecy is yet to be fulfilled and can be only fulfilled in the coming of the Son of Man in His glory. One of the reasons why modern Judaism rejects Jesus of Nazareth, and does not believe Him to be the promised Redeemer, is in this prophecy. Rabbi F. De Sola Mendes, of New York, brings in a little book, "A Hebrew's Reply to the Missionaries," the following argument: "We reject Jesus of Nazareth as our Messiah on account of His deeds. He says of Himself: 'Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace but a sword,' etc. But we

Digitized by Google

find that our prophets ascribe to the true Messiah quite different actions. Zechariah says (ix : 10), He shall speak peace to the nations. Jesus says He came to send the sword on the earth; whereas, Isaiah says of the true Messianic time, 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more.'"

Of course the Jew is right in expecting the literal fulfillment of this prophecy, and it will be fulfilled when He comes again and the restoration of all things will follow, as spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets.

When He appears again, in like manner as He went into heaven, that is not for His saints but with His saints, there will be peace for Ephraim and for Jerusalem, and the kingdom is then restored to Israel, that is, to the house of Judah and the house of Israel. The chariot, the horse, and the battlebow will be cut off.

Not alone will He bring peace to the covenant people but to the nations. He will speak peace. "And He shall stand, and shall feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God, and they shall abide; for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be our peace" (Micah v : 4, 5). There will be abundance of peace (Ps. lxxii : 7). His dominion will be from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth.

The prisoners of hope to be released, by the blood of the covenant, from the pit wherein there is no water, is the nation whose captivity is now ended. How strange that people should take a passage like this and interpret it as meaning the restitution of the wicked and the ungodly from the pit. There is nothing taught in the Word like that which some people term a larger hope. The restitution (restoration) of all things is not left to the fanciful interpretation of the human mind, but is clearly defined by the

Digitized by Google

Word itself, as spoken by the prophets. In the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel xxxvii, Israel's complaint is, Our hope is lost. But when He is manifested, who is indeed the Hope of Israel, the prisoners (the captives), will be released and cleansed. Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears. . . . "There is hope for thy latter end, saith the Lord, and thy children shall come again to their own border" (Jer. xxxi : 17). The exhortation to return to the stronghold follows. Israel will then sing, "He brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (Ps. xl : 2). Double will be rendered unto them, as promised, "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Is. xl : 2). "For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them" (Is. lxi : 7).

And now we come to the third section of this chapter. The scene changes once more. The chapter commences with scenes of war, strife, battles and overthrow, and it ends with scenes of war and words of cheer for Zion. In the middle stands the King and His advent, the kingdom of peace, which He will establish.

Alexander's successor, Antiochus Epiphanes, and Zion's successful resistance, is undoubtedly the first fulfillment of the third section. The Prophet Daniel speaks likewise of this terrible man of sin, Antiochus Epiphanes (chap. viii). Not like Alexander, passing by Jerusalem, he invaded the land of Judah, and endeavored to force the idolatry of Greece upon the Jews. Entering Jerusalem, he slew 40,000 of the inhabitants, and a larger number were sold as slaves. He then entered the temple, seized the rich treasures stored there, and commanded a big swine to be sacrificed upon the altar of burnt-offering, and with the blood the

Digitized by Google

sacred place was defiled. A bitter struggle commenced, for Antiochus tried to exterminate the Jews and their religion as well. Every observance of the Jewish religion was forbidden, the Sabbath had to be profaned, and unclean food had to be eaten. Idols were set up in the temple. Instead of the Jewish feasts, the feasts of idols, with all their shocking abominations and immoralities, were introduced, and the Jews were forced to join in them. Thousands suffered martyrdom. But all at once a few people stood up against the abominations, the Maccabeans, and in a struggle lasting about twenty-five years, they fought successfully against the enemies. Miraculous victories were achieved, and thousands and tens of thousands of the idolators slain, and Jerusalem and the land freed from the abomination.

This terrible visitation of the land and the wonderful victory of the Maccabeans is foretold by the prophet in the closing verses of the ninth chapter. We will quote the passage :

"I bend for me Judah and fill the bow with Ephraim,
And I will stir up thy sons, Zion, against thy sons, Greece,
And make thee like the sword of a mighty man.
Jehovah shall be seen over them,
And His arrow shall go forth like lightning,
And the Lord Jehovah shall blow the trumpet.
He shall go with whirlwinds of the South.
The Lord of Hosts shall cover them ;
They shall devour and tread down slingstones,
And they drink and make a noise as from wine,
And they shall be filled like bowls, as the corners of the altar.
And Jehovah their God saves them in that day, as the flock of His people ;
For jewels of a crown shall they be, glittering over His land,
For how great is His goodness and how great His beauty !
Corn shall make the young men flourish, and new wine maidens."

Digitized by Google

But again we have to remark that this prophecy is only partially fulfilled. The terrible tribulation of the land of Judah when Antiochus Epiphanes invaded the land, is but a type of the great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble. Antiochus Epiphanes, in his awful fight against Jehovah and the Lord's people, is a type of the final Antichrist, and the Jewish saints slain by him are types of the Jewish saints which will be beheaded during the tribulation. Jehovah will fight then, as it is stated here, against those nations in that day (Zech. xiv). The remnant of Israel will then be victorious. Thus everything is seen in this chapter in a past fulfillment, but only partial, and in it a future fulfillment, which will be complete.

We cannot leave this chapter without calling attention to the blessed statement:

"For jewels of a crown they shall be, glittering over His land."

The slain who suffered martyrdom are meant, and all those who fought for Jehovah's name and honor. May not the statement in Hebrews xi. refer to this time? "Others had trials of mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins: being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated, of whom the world was not worthy, wandering in deserts and in mountains and caves and the holes of the earth" (Heb. xi: 36-39).

And all will find a repetition during the coming tribulation. But the time for reward has not yet come. The throne of glory is not yet revealed, and the jewels, the saints made up in a crown, glittering over the land, are not yet seen. But the assurance is given, "They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. iii: 17). "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal

Digitized by Google

diadem in the hand of thy God" (Isa. lxii : 3). "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." Revel. xx : 6. Oh, blessed hope of all the saints! To be with Christ in Glory, in His throne, and sharing His rule. In that day of manifestation, when Christ our life is manifested, and we shall be manifested with Him in glory—glory never ceasing, but ever increasing, in the countless ages to come, redeemed sinners will be the jewels of His crown, and He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

More Blessings promised to Judah and Israel.—The Nation Victorious.—Judah and Ephraim blessed, gathered and restored, and their enemies overcome.

The tenth chapter continues to unfold Israel's future blessings and restoration, and in it Ephraim, the house of Israel, is especially mentioned. The chapter begins with a contrast. In the first verse there is a call to prayer, and the assurance of an answer given; in the second verse the idols are mentioned which Israel worshipped and which give no comfort.

Ask of Jehovah rain in the time of the latter rain. The former rain and the latter rain are often spoken of in the Word. It is of course first to be understood of the natural rain coming from the clouds upon the land. The rain withheld and the land becomes a desert, the rain given and the land flows again with milk and honey. I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, thy wine and thine oil. . . . Take heed to yourselves that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; and the Lord's wrath will be kindled against you and He shut up the heavens, that there be no rain and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you. (Deut. xi: 14-17.)

The first rain came upon the seed placed into the ground, while the latter rain was necessary to ripen the fruit. Israel's sin, unbelief, disobedience and apostacy have shut the heavens and keep them shut so that there is no rain and the land is a wilderness, waste and desolate. An abundance of rain is promised to them when Jehovah appears again. Much of late has been said that

Digitized by Google

Palestine becomes fruitful once more. It is said that the statistics show that during the last years the rainfall has increased by so many inches. This statement is denied by others. Some believers make much of this rainfall and think that it is a sign of His coming, an indication that God's favor is being restored to the land. This is incorrect. The abundance of rain, the latter rain, is not promised for the land at this present time, but it will come after the great tribulation, and is closely connected with the manifestation of the Lord from heaven in the clouds. The fruitfulness as it is seen now in the land—by no means general, but only in spots—is brought about mostly by artificial means, such as irrigation. During the great tribulation there will be no rain. (Rev. xi : 6.) Modern Zionism, in its God-dishonoring unbelief, with its immense resources of wealth and influence, may succeed in transforming the land of the Fathers. Indeed this is their scheme—building railroads, channels for irrigation, factories, mines, institutions of learning, etc. But the great tribulation will sweep it all away once more, and disaster will come swiftly when the plan of a Jewish Kingdom, without Him who is the King of the Jews, seems to be realized. It is not for the believer to look now for the promised latter rain. All this looking for signs has a tendency to foster the idea that the church will pass through the tribulation. If that were the case we might well look to the signs around us and look (as some believers do) where Antichrist is to come from.

The latter rain stands in connection with the Lord's manifestaton for Israel. Let us know, follow on to know Jehovah : like the morning His coming is sure, and He shall come like the rain for us, like the latter rain watering the earth. (Hosea vi : 3.) O ye children of Zion, rejoice and be glad in Jehovah your God ; He gives you the former rain in a just measure, and sends you in showers the early and the latter rain as in times of old. (Joel ii : 23.) It is time to seek Jehovah, until He come to rain righteous-

Digitized by Google

ness upon you. (Hosea x: 12.) But the latter rain is also a type of spiritual blessings. It includes all the blessed promises in spiritual things, and especially does it stand for the full harvest which comes in after the heaven is opened and that great outpouring of the Spirit takes place. (Joel ii: 28.) It is unscriptural to expect now in this time such a latter rain, just as it is unscriptural to expect now the rain upon the land of Israel. How many prayers there are now in Christendom, well meant undoubtedly; prayers for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, prayers for a new Pentecost, even prayers for the outward manifestations; all these prayers have no scriptural foundation, and cannot be answered now in the dispensation in which we live. There will be the latter rain, the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh; but it stands in connection with the day of the Lord and with God's earthly people.

Truly, as the beginning of Zechariah x. has it, in the time of the latter rain there will be prayer for it, but the prayer does not come from the lips of church-saints, but it comes from the lips of the Jewish remnant. The assurance is given that Jehovah will send the showers of rain, and before they come He will create the lightning. The lightnings stand for His wrath and judgment, which will proceed before the showers of blessing. In His coming He will be like the lightning falling from the clouds.

The second verse puts before us another picture. The apostacy of the nation and their idolatry are now brought before us. The original word for idols is teraphim, and these were household gods, which were consulted by them. Spiritism (or as it is also called Spiritualism), this awful delusion so strong in the last times, is not a new thing. We can trace it to the remotest ages, and the nations which are still in the darkness of heathendom still practice it. It is very powerful in India and in China, and upheld by the father of lies from where it springs. Israel knew it likewise, and

Digitized by Google

was closely connected with its abominations. The teraphim were little figures which in some way by movements or mysterious noises gave an answer to questions. Men did then go about as sorcerers, and mediums had visions and dreams. Hearken not to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the King of Babylon. They prophesy a lie unto you. (Jer. xxvii : 9.) Let not your diviners that are in the midst of you deceive you. . . . I have not sent them, (Jer. xxix : 8, 9.) What an awful sin it was that Israel could thus join themselves to idols and practice the abominable things. Soon the punishment fell upon them and they were carried into captivity, as the second verse states. Therefore they have wandered like a flock, they are oppressed because there is no shepherd. Jehovah had been rejected by them, and in this rejection is seen the rejection which followed when they rejected the Son. Here Hosea iii : 4 is to be taken into consideration. The children of Israel shall abide many days (the dispersion in which they are now) without a king and without a prince, without a sacrifice and without an image, without an ephod and teraphim. The next verse speaks of their conversion in the latter days. During their dispersion they will have neither the old worship of Jehovah nor will they hold any longer to the teraphim and ask guidance of them. How truly it has all been fulfilled. However there is a word which the Lord spoke, which is here likewise to be mentioned. It is one of the many misunderstood passages in the New Testament. We find it in Matthew xii : 43-45. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none. Then he saith I will return to my house from whence I came out ; and when he has come he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in

Digitized by Google

and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be unto this wicked generation. The unclean spirit of idolatry had left the nation after the return from the captivity, but there is in that wicked generation at last a return of the same evil spirit with seven others worse than the spirit of idolatry, and the last of that man (unbelieving Israel) is worse than the first. This seems to us is the true application of this passage. Israel is rapidly nearing the time when unclean spirits with idols will have control over them. He who comes in his own name, the false Messiah, the devil's masterpiece with all his delusions and lying wonders, will be worshipped by them and the outcast demons will enter the house again. This is clearly seen in Zech. xiii: 2. It shall be in that day (after the nation has looked upon the pierced one), saith Jehovah of hosts, I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall be remenbered no more; and also the prophets and the spirits of uncleanness will I cause to pass out of the land. A return to teraphim, sorcery, divination, etc., is already noticeable in our day. The superstitions of talmudical Judaism are many, and the modern revival of the ancient teraphim, in Spiritism, through mediums, tables, etc., finds not a few followers among the Jews. What will it be when the man of sin is in the earth? All the world will wonder after the beast.

In verses 3-5 we see once more the events which belong to Israel's future. Mention is made first of the House of Judah. Against the shepherds His anger is kindled, and the he-goats will be punished (false leaders of the people and their enemies.) Then Jehovah visits His flock, the house of Judah, and He will make them like His goodly horse in war. Like heroes they are treading down the foes. They fight successfully against the enemies, for Jehovah is once more with them and the day of vengeance has come, and the riders on horses are put to shame by them. The

Digitized by Google

parables of Balaam tell us what Israel will be at last, and how like a young lion they will spring upon the prey. Even now in dispersion the Jew inspires terror and is feared by the nations. This fear, which produces anti-Semitism (so strong in our times), has a good reason, for they will soon be the head of the nations and no longer the tail.

The words in the fourth verse, From him (Judah) the cornerstone, from him the nail . . . have been differently interpreted. The nail is in the oriental house a large pin, often very beautifully ornamented, and the most costly things are hanged thereupon. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house. (Isaiah xxii : 23, 24.) The Shemeth rabbah, a Jewish interpretation, says on this verse, this is King David; as it is said, the stone which the builders rejected is become the chief cornerstone. Some say it is spoken concerning the Lord, that He is the cornerstone and the nail. It refers to Him no doubt, but what is spoken of Him finds also a fulfillment in restored Israel. Thus Israel is yet to be the cornerstone upon which everything rests in the earth, and the nail upon which hangs the glory.

The rest of the chapter speaks of restoration of the house of Judah and the house of Israel. The house of Judah will be strengthened, and the house of Joseph (the ten tribes) will be saved. Ephraim, standing likewise for the house of Israel, shall become like a hero, and their heart shall rejoice, and their sons shall see and rejoice, their heart shall exult in Jehovah. I will hiss to them and will gather them, for I have redeemed them, and they shall increase as they did increase. And I will sow them among many peoples, and in far countries they shall remember me, and with their children they shall live and return. (Verses 7-9.) Their bringing back will be from the land of

Digitized by Google

Egypt and from Assyria. With it is the judgment of the nations; they will be cast down and the restored people shall walk in His name.

The prophecy brings before us the old question concerning the ten tribes or the house of Israel. These tribes are generally called the "lost tribes," and as such they have been found perhaps a hundred times by as many diffierent persons. The North American Indians, the Afghans, the Nestorians, tribes in the interior of Africa as well as in China, and even the Hottentots of South Africa, have been declared to be the lost tribes. We believe that this looking for the lost tribes and to locate them is something against which the Holy Spirit warns when He declares, But avoid foolish questions and genealogies and contentions and striving about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain. (Titus iii : 9.) Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edyfing which is in faith. (1 Tim : 1-4.) We think it wrong to go into such speculations on matters which the Lord purposely has hid in His Word. We would have nothing else to say on this topic were it not for a very strange teaching which has fascinated many minds and which has become very popular both in England and in America. We have reference to the so-called Anglo-Israel theory. According to this theory the lost tribes have been found in the Anglo-Saxon race, and that God has kept His promises made to the house of Israel and fulfilled them and fulfills them now in the two nations, America and England. It is a theory, and the Word of God is used to prove it. This may be done with any theory, and scripture twisted out of its place can be made to prove almost anything. Anglo-Israel is a delusion, and it is strange that so many believers have become infatuated with it and suffer consequently from it. The theory is based upon a very serious mistake in the exposition of the prophetic Word. All through prophecy we find promises

Digitized by Google

which belong to the house of Israel (and to Judah likewise), the conflicts, the victories over their enemies, temporal blessings, etc. These promises are to be realized in the latter days. The phrase "latter days," however, is misunderstood, and believed to be the days in which we live; while in fact the latter days are still future and have not yet been reached. Prophecies which are spoken concerning the future are looked upon as already fulfilled.

In this way the ninth verse in our chapter is misunderstood, And I will sow them among the peoples, and in far countries they shall remember me, and with their children they shall live and return. This passage is often quoted in Anglo-Israel literature, and is always put down as being fulfilled in the Anglo-Saxon race. We claim that it has not yet been fulfilled, but will be fulfilled when the house of Judah has been restored, and they as well as the house of Israel are in the land and form one people, God's earthly kingdom people. This is true of all the promises which Anglo-Israelism claims to have found a fulfillment.

It is true they are now scattered among the nations and the Lord knows them and He knows where they are and in due time He will send hunters to hunt them out and fishers to fish them in (Jer. xvi: 16); and they will be brought back to the land upon horses and in chariots, etc. (Isaiah lxvi: 20.) After that they will be sown among the peoples. They are then in the far countries and increase as they did before and are a blessing to the nations and not a curse. Their seed shall be known among the Gentiles and their offspring among the people all that see them shall acknowledge them that they are the seed which the Lord has blessed. (Isaiah lxi: 9.) Judah's return will be from all directions, but according to the tenth verse Ephraim will be brought back from Egypt and Assyria. Anglo-

Digitized by Google

Israel is a very poor Ishmael attempt to help God to keep His promises.

When all this takes place the Lord will pass through the sea and there will be affliction. The Nile is mentioned, and in Assyria the pride will be brought down, no sceptre any longer in Egypt. Only then after this manifestation will they walk (Judah and Israel) in His name, and not before.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI.

Scenes of overthrow and slaughter.—The Shepherd with the two staves, Beauty and Bands.—He is rejected.—The thirty pieces of silver.—The foolish shepherd and his punishment.

The eleventh chapter presents a very dark scene. So far we have seen that the prophet saw in visions and heard from the Lord nothing but blessings and mercies for Israel, restoration both national and spiritual, overthrow of all their enemies, destruction of the world powers, establishment of the theocracy and world conquest; but now the scene changes completely. That which precedes all these blessed events, the events for which indeed the earth and groaning creation is waiting, is now unfolded in all the terrible details, Israel's apostacy and dreadful punishment on account of the rejection of the Shepherd, and instead of Him there is given a foolish shepherd.

We will briefly review the entire chapter before taking up the study of it in details. The first three verses contain a sublime description of the visitation which was to come upon the land of Israel. In the fourth verse the nation is seen as a flock of slaughter, and the buyers who slaughter them are not guilty, and their sellers are getting rich by it. The inhabitants of the land are not spared; all is waste and there is no deliverance. In the seventh verse the reason of all this judgment is seen. The Prophet does a symbolic act. As a shepherd he represents the good Shepherd of Israel, the Messiah. He comes to save them from the terrible calamity, but he is rejected. The shepherd has two staves, Beauty and Bands. He breaks one first and asks his price, and they offer him the price of a slave, thirty pieces of silver, which

Digitized by Google

he at the word of Jehovah casts from himself. The second staff is broken. Instead of the staves the Prophet takes the instruments of a foolish shepherd, undoubtedly weapons of destruction. They perish, they stray, they are wounded, they suffer and are devoured. At last the foolish shepherd is punished. This is a birdseye view of the chapter. We will consider the details under three divisions: The judgment upon the land and the slaughter of the flock; the cause of it. The Shepherd rejected and set aside. And in the third place the foolish shepherd.

I. The judgment upon the land, the temple, and the slaughter of the flock (*verses 1–6*).

Open thy doors, Lebanon;
Let the fire devour thy cedars.
Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen;
Because the lofty ones are spoiled.
Howl, oaks of Bashan,
For the high forest is come down.
A voice of the howling of the shepherds:
For their glory is spoiled.
A voice of the roaring of young lions,
For the pride of Jordan is spoiled.

What an awful picture these three verses present to us, and how sublime the language! Everything is swept away by a mighty conflagration. It starts among the lofty cedars of Lebanon; the fir tree is its prey, and the oaks of Bashan as well as the high forest come down, and it ends at the Jordan. In the midst of it is heard the howling of the shepherds and the roaring of the young lions. We have in these three verses a description of the terrible and complete judgment which was to fall and which has fallen upon the land of Israel on account of their disobedience and wickedness. The destruction of the temple by fire is of

Digitized by Google

course included in this scene of burning and devastation. Jewish interpretation sees especially in these verses the prophecy of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. The following is a quotation from the Talmudical tract Yoma. "Our Rabbis have learnt from tradition that forty years before the destruction of the temple the lot never used to fall to the right hand but to the left. The lamp of the evening light would not burn, and the doors of the temple used to open of their own accord, until Rabbi Yochanan, the son of Zakkai, rebuked them. He said to it, O Temple, Temple, why art thou terrifying thyself? I know well that thy end is to be destroyed, for already Zechariah, the son of Iddo, hath prophesied, *Open thy doors, O Lebanon, and let a fire consume thy cedars!*" As the time of Jerusalem's overthrow and the devastation of the land drew nearer, after the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles, strange signs in heaven and earth were seen in Jerusalem and throughout the land. They were signs of warning of the coming doom, and must have had a special significance for the remnant of Jewish-Christians who still were in the doomed city. Josephus mentions a series of these signs: "A comet which had the appearance of a huge sword hung over the city for a whole year. While the people were assembled at the feast of unleavened bread, at the sixth hour of the night, a sudden bright light shone about the temple. On Pentecost, when the priests entered by night into the temple they said that they heard many voices proclaim, Let us depart hence. A certain Jew, the son of Ananus, began suddenly to cry in the temple: 'A voice from the East and a voice from the West! A voice from the four winds! A voice against Jerusalem and against the Temple! A voice against the bridegrooms and the brides! A voice against the whole people!' Day and night in the narrow streets he repeated this cry in a loud voice. He was severely beaten. He uttered neither shriek nor pain nor prayer for mercy,

Digitized by Google

but raising his sad and broken voice he cried at every blow of the scourge, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' For four years the son of Ananus paid no attention to anyone, and never spake excepting the same words, Woe to Jerusalem! He neither cursed anyone who struck him nor thanked anyone who gave him food, but continued to cry, 'Woe, woe to the city and to the temple!'" (Milman's History of the Jews, Vol. II.) The above event spoken of in the tract Yoma, which the pious Rabbi Yochanan thought to be in fulfillment of Zechariah xi:1, is also mentioned by Josephus. He says, "The eastern gate of the inner temple, which was of brass and very heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, was seen to open by itself about the sixth hour of the night."

Once more Jerusalem is to be compassed about by armies and then there will be signs in earth and in the heavens. Earthquakes will shake the city, mountains will sink down and valleys will be exalted, the sun will be darkened and the moon turned into blood, fire and smoke will arise. The climax of it all will be the manifestation of the Lord who will overthrow Israel's enemies.

Other interpreters among the Jews declare that this prophecy speaks of the destruction of the temple.

The correct interpretation is that it includes all the devastation of the land, the burning of the temple, the slaughter of the flock, the spoiling of the shepherds, the Jewish leaders and the complete overthrow of the land and of the people. How awful the fulfillment of the prophecy has been! The Lord's voice full of tears cried, long after Zechariah's mournful vision, "If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee,

Digitized by Google

and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another." The measure was full. After terrible wars amongst themselves, the fire advanced in the direction from Lebanon, in the form of the Roman army full of vengeance, spreading ruin and misery wherever they went, till after a long and dreadful siege Jerusalem fell, the temple was burnt, and over a million human beings were slain. Not one stone was left upon another. Up to now this judgment has been the most appalling, the tribulation then, the greatest; but there is another tribulation coming of which the former destruction of Jerusalem is but a faint type, and that tribulation which is even now so close at hand will find a climax in the day of wrath, the day of vengeance of our God. The next three verses speak of the flock of slaughter and the last attempt divine love made to save the doomed nation. Zechariah is commanded to feed them.

Thus saith Jehovah my God;
Feed the flock of slaughter;
Their possessors slay them and are not guilty:
And they that sell them say,
Blessed be Jehovah, for I am getting rich;
Their own shepherds pity them not.
I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith Jehovah;
I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hands,
And into the hand of his king:
And they shall smite the land,
And out of their hand I will not deliver them.

What a dreadful condition of the sheep of His pasture, the lost sheep of the house of Israel, God's flock! Even so it was, strangers ruled over them, and they were their prey, getting rich on them and not guilty. Still worse their own shepherds, the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of the nation, spared them not. God had indeed given them up. Well may we stop and think for a

Digitized by Google

moment of the apostacy of Christendom and its final overthrow and judgment so clearly seen in the book of Revelation. Even now the flock of slaughter is seen and all getting ripe for the day of wrath!

The action of Zechariah by divine command, like the crowning of the high priest in the sixth chapter, is a typical one. Zechariah is a type of the good Shepherd of Israel, the Messiah. The disobedient nation, the flock of slaughter, had taken God's servants and beat one and killed another and stoned another. When He sent servants more than the first, they did unto them in like manner (Matt. xxi: 35). After this came the last attempt of divine love. God sent His Son as a Shepherd to seek and feed the lost sheep. He was not accepted, but they rejected Him. We will consider this now in the second section.

II. The Shepherd set aside and rejected (verses 7–14).

"So I fed the flock of slaughter, verily the most miserable sheep. And I took to myself two staves; the one I called Beauty, the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock. And I cut off the three shepherds in one month; for my soul became impatient with them, and their soul also abhorred me. And I said, I will not feed you: the dying, let it die; and the cut off, let it be cut off; and the left over, let them devour each the flesh of the other. And I took my staff, Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples. And it was broken in that day, and thus the wretched of the flock who gave heed to me knew that this was the word of Jehovah. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my wages; and if not, forbear. So they weighed as my wages thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said to me, Throw it unto the potter; the goodly price at which I am valued of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and threw them into the house of Jehovah, to the potter.

Digitized by Google

Then I broke my second staff, Bands, that I break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel."

Much has been written on this difficult passage. The very first sentence in the paragraph speaks of divine love. He came, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace, in the likeness of man, as a servant and a gentle shepherd to feed the miserable ones. Looking at the multitudes who followed Him when He had come, He was moved with compassion, for they were distressed and scattered as sheep having no shepherd (Matt. ix : 36). True shepherds indeed they had not. Prophets sent by Jehovah had long before ceased to come, and those who ruled them were miserable leaders of the blind, concerning whom Jehovah spoke through Ezekiel, "Woe unto the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves; should not the shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, ye kill the fatlings, but ye feed not the sheep. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost" (Ezekiel xxxiv : 3–5). But now Jehovah Himself has come to be their Shepherd, "Behold, I Myself, even I, will search for My sheep and find them out" (Ezekiel xxxiv : 11). And when He came and God was manifested in the flesh, He turned indeed to the most miserable of the sheep—the publicans and the outcasts, sinners and harlots, gathered around Him. The Prophet as the type of the good Shepherd has two staves. The one is called Beauty (marginal reading, graciousness). The second one is Bands. The Shepherd carries a staff to protect and guide His flock. In the second Psalm the returning Lord is seen shepherding the nations with a rod of iron, but here the two staves cannot mean instruments for correction, but they are the staves of comfort and love. God's mercy and favor are clearly

Digitized by Google

indicated in these two staves. The first one, Beauty, which is cut asunder first, and that before the wages of the Shepherd, the thirty pieces of silver, are given, stands no doubt for the gracious offer with which the King, preaching the kingdom, came among His people, to His own. He proclaimed that which prophets had spoken before, God's mercy and love, long promised, now to be carried out. He Himself had come to redeem His people and deliver them from their mighty enemies as well as from the false leaders. But the offer, the kingdom preaching, is rejected, the staff, Beauty, is cut asunder, the covenant with the peoples (Amim in Hebrew), His own, is now broken. The kingdom is to be taken away and given to another nation. After the breaking of the staff, Beauty, there comes the giving of the wages, the thirty pieces of silver. The Shepherd who broke the staff is treated like a slave.

The second staff in His hands, Bands, speaks of union, binding together, bringing into fellowship. It typifies the priestly side of the good Shepherd who died for the flock. This staff is broken after the thirty pieces were given for Him, and cast into the temple. They cried, Away with Him! we have no King save Cæsar! Crucify Him! His blood be upon us and upon our children! The cross bears the superscription, This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, and from the lips of the rejected King and Shepherd there came the prayer for His people, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. The doom came not at once upon the nation. Once more the love of the Shepherd is preached to the miserable sheep, and the remission of sins offered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it ends in rejection too; no bringing together into One followed. The foolish shepherd appears next, and after him the good Shepherd will appear again with His two staves, Beauty and Bands, kingdom and mercy, bringing and binding together. He will then be a Priest

Digitized by Google

upon His throne. This interpretation is the most satisfactory one, and in harmony with the entire scope of Zechariah's visions and prophecies.

Who are the three shepherds to be cut off in one month by the Shepherd? Are they persons or not? Many answers have been given to these questions, and many theories have been advanced to solve the difficulty. It is not necessary to mention any of them. The three shepherds are not persons, but they stand for the three classes of rulers which governed Israel, and were in that sense shepherds. We read of these shepherds in Jeremiah ii : 8, priests, rulers, and prophets. The Lord likewise mentions them in Matthew xvi : 21, elders, chief priests and scribes. When He came He was indeed weary with them, and denounced their hypocrisies and wickedness. They in turn hated and abhorred Him, and conspired to put Him to death. The Lord Himself cut them off. He pronounced His woes and judgments upon them, but the judgment was not at once carried out. When Jerusalem was taken their rule came to an end and they were cut off.

But there are mentioned the wretched of the flock that gave heed unto the Shepherd, and they knew that it was the word of Jehovah. These wretched ones are the faithful ones who followed the Shepherd, the small remnant. (Compare with chapter xiii : 7.) The others who rejected the King and the Shepherd were indeed not fed, but were dying and cut off.

The wages of the good Shepherd, thirty pieces of silver, and these thrown into the house of Jehovah to the potter is to be considered next. Thirty pieces of silver was the price of a slave who had been killed. If the ox gore a manservant or a maidservant, the owner shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver (Exodus xxi : 32). Oh, what unfathomable love! The Lord from heaven became like a slave. The love He looked for He found not. It was refused to Him, and instead He was insulted,

Digitized by Google

mocked, and treated like a miserable slave. There was one of the twelve who was called Judas Iscariot. He went to the chief priests and said, What are you willing to give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver (Matt. xxvi: 14). The money at the command of Jehovah is thrown away by the prophet with indignation, into the house of Jehovah, to the potter. Perhaps the prophet never knew the real significance of his act, but we know it from the New Testament. Then Judas which betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is this to us? See thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury since it is the price of blood. And they took counsel and bought with them the potters' field to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called the field of blood unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price, and they gave them for the potters' field, as the Lord appointed me (Matt. xxvii; 3–9). How striking the fulfillment. However, here is a difficulty. In Matthew it is stated that Jeremiah spoke the prophecy, and Zechariah's name is not mentioned at all. How can this be explained?

The prophecy certainly as it was fulfilled was not given by Jeremiah at all, but through Zechariah. There can be doubt that his name should appear here instead of Jeremiah, but that Jeremiah's name is quoted must have a meaning. Rotherham in his translation of the New Testament makes a foot note in which he says, "Zech. xi: 12, 13: Perhaps as included in a scroll headed by

Digitized by Google

Jeremiah." But this is not satisfactory. The question would be if there is anything in Jeremiah which could have a connection with the typical action of Zechariah. There is a similar action in Jeremiah, which, as a whole, speaks of the same event which Zech. xi : 13 has, and which is seen in fulfillment in Matt. xxvii. Read in Jeremiah the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters. The word "*Topheth*" in Jeremiah means an unclean place, a burial ground. It seems as if Jeremiah's name appears here so as to call attention to the fact that the prophet spoke of the event likewise, and that Zech. xi. and Jer. xviii. and xix. must be compared and read together.

III. The foolish shepherd (*verses 15–17*).

And Jehovah said to me, Take unto thee again the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For, behold, I raise up a shepherd in the land; the perishing he will not visit, the scattered ones he will not seek for, the wounded he will not heal, the strong he will not feed, but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and their hoofs he will break off. Woe to the worthless shepherd that leaveth the flock! The sword upon his arm and upon his right eye. His arm shall be utterly withered and his right eye completely blinded.

The prophet now impersonates another shepherd, one who is foolish and wicked, and in his hands he does no longer hold the staves of Beauty and Bands, but the instruments of the foolish shepherd to wound and to hurt are in his possession. This foolish shepherd is the opposite from the good shepherd. He came to heal, to seek, to save, and to feed, but the foolish shepherd scatters, does not heal, nor does he feed the flock; but he eats the flesh of the fat. The description of this false shepherd is like the description of the shepherds in Ezek. xxxiv., as quoted before. Ezekiel's prophecy concerning the gathering of the flock is future still, but before He gathers the lost and scattered sheep of Israel

Digitized by Google

and brings them back to their land and gives them the one Shepherd and David His servant, there will be false shepherds. The true One rejected, the nation becomes the prey of the foolish shepherds. Poor, blinded Israel! How many wicked shepherds they have had, and how often the prey of wicked leaders. False Messiahs appeared among them again and again to find strong and numerous following. Still the foolish shepherd, the last one, the very embodiment of Satan himself, the accuser, has not yet come. Forerunners there have been many. Herod was one of them, but not that man of sin, the son of perdition who will appear and be worshiped as God, right before the King of kings and the true Shepherd of His flock appears to slay that wicked one with the breath of His mouth and by the brightness of His coming (2 Thess. ii.). The Lord said, I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive (John v: 43). That one who comes in his own name has not yet come, and when at last he is here, it will be for Israel the time of greatest trouble and tribulation for all them that inhabit the earth. The third section of our chapter finds its complete fulfillment in the Antichrist, the false Messiah, the beast, the little horn, the leader of the enemy, the false prince of Israel; thus the foolish shepherd is called throughout the prophetic word. The dreadful punishment will be executed upon the foolish shepherd in the day of the Lord's coming with His saints for the salvation of His people Israel.

The eleventh chapter in Zechariah is the darkest in Israel's history. The night began with their apostacy and rejection of the Lord of Glory, their own brother, their loving Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. It ends in darkness greater still under the regime of the foolish shepherd. But the morning cometh after that dark night, and Israel's sun will never set again.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII.

The second burden, from Chapter xii.–xiv.—Jerusalem and the nations.—The conflict of the end.—The chiefs of Judah and the strength promised to the feeble.—Nations destroyed.—Outpouring of the Spirit and looking upon Jehovah, the pierced One.—The great national mourning.

We have before us the second burden, which begins with the eleventh chapter and closes with the fourteenth. The events seen in the first burden, that is in chapters ix., x. and xi., were in part fulfilled, but in the second burden we find prophecies which have seen no fulfillment whatever; they are all future. There is only one prophecy which is fulfilled, the one of the smitten shepherd at the end of the thirteenth chapter. The great future events which are recorded in the second burden are: The victory of Jerusalem over the hostile nations, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the appearing and beholding of the pierced One, the national repentance of Israel, the cleansing of the nation, the final conflict and the Lord coming with His saints, the complete overthrow of the enemies and the establishment of the kingdom in the earth, with Jerusalem as a center. These three chapters form indeed a glorious finale to the wonderful visions and prophecies which Jehovah gave to the prophet. The fourteenth chapter is the summit.

Not a few interpreters have committed the serious error and have tried to find a fulfillment of these chapters somewhere, and if no historical events could be made to suit the occasion, a spiritual application had to be made and a spiritual fulfillment in the

Digitized by Google

so-called "Israel of the New Testament," the church, invented, which of course never satisfies the prayerful student of the word.

In reading the twelfth chapter carefully, it will be seen at once that here we have prophecies which not alone refer to Jerusalem and Judah exclusively, but which cannot yet have seen a fulfillment. The end of the chapter shows Israel's conversion. The Spirit is poured out. They look upon the pierced One, Jehovah; repentance and cleansing follows throughout the land. This brings before us the hour of Israel's salvation, the same which the Holy Spirit unfolds through Paul, in Romans xi. It is an event which will take place after the fullness of the Gentiles will have come in (the church removed from the earth). And so all Israel shall be saved; even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion a Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: And this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins (Rom. xi: 25-27). There is no saved Israel now and there can be no national turning of Israel unto the Lord at this present time, but when the Lord comes and they shall look upon Him, that salvation will be at hand. This coming of the Lord to Israel when they shall see His glory will be preceded by nations rising against Jerusalem. Not one nation, but nations, will make war once more with Jerusalem; nor will Jerusalem in that future siege fall into the hands of the enemies, but the city and the people will be victorious. The period of the Maccabees is not meant, nor is there anything in the past which could even be a partial fulfillment of Zech. xii. It is all future.

Let us look now at the details of the chapter. Thus saith the Lord, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him (verse 1). The speaker is Jehovah, the Almighty One who created the heavens and the earth, and who formeth the spirit of man within him. Why such a beginning of this second burden? To show

Digitized by Google

that He who has given all these promises is able to do it. Men may fail and are powerless to give help. Indeed, Israel will be utterly helpless then when the enemy comes in like a flood, but in that hour of extremity Jehovah Himself, the Omnipotent One, the One through Whom and in Whom and for Whom heaven and earth were created, will come, and in His majestic appearing deliver Jerusalem and His people at last. But when He appears for their salvation and they look upon Him, they see Jehovah whom they pierced, Jehovah-Jesus, the One who was once rejected, but who now comes in power and in glory. This first verse shows the speaker in the entire chapter is Jehovah, and is one of the strongest Old Testament passages which show that the Redeemer, the One who came as an obedient servant to suffer and to die, is Jehovah.

Behold, I make Jerusalem a cup of reeling
To all the nations round about;
Upon Judah also shall it be,
In the siege against Jerusalem.
And it shall come in that day, I make Jerusalem
A burdensome stone for all the peoples:
All that are burdened with it shall be wounded;
All the nations of the earth shall gather against it.
(Verses 2 and 3.)

This brings us back to the first and second night visions concerning the nations that are at ease, and thus helped forward their affliction, the four horns which scattered Judah and Israel. The ending three chapters bring out much of the details of what we saw in the first three chapters in an outline. What an unfolding there is now! Jehovah remembers Jerusalem and is jealous for her, and Jerusalem is now to become a cup of reeling (like a drunken man) unto all the nations round about. Isaiah long before Zechariah saw the judgment coming. The cup of fury which

Digitized by Google

Jerusalem drank is now to be emptied by the enemies, and they will have to drink the cup of reeling. Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury; thou hast drunken the bowl of the cup of reeling and drained it. . . . Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of reeling, even the bowl of the cup of My fury; thou shalt no more drink it again. And I will put it in the hand of them that afflict thee, which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over; and thou hast laid thy back as the ground, and as the street to them that go over (Isaiah li: 17, 22, 23). What a wonderful harmony in the prophetic word! Jerusalem has been drinking all along the cup of reeling, the cup of His fury, even drained the cup; but while Jerusalem is thus drinking divine displeasure, the nations, and with them that awful monstrosity called Christendom, are getting ripe for the cup of wrath. A judgment is hastening rapidly, and Jerusalem will be for the nations the cup of reeling. We saw in the first night vision that the nations at ease were condemned by Jehovah. He is sore displeased with them. They have hurt His people and His inheritance. Terrible accusation against Christendom too, which has always been and is now the great stumbling block to the Jew, with its man-made institutions, creeds and self-exaltation. The reader will understand we do not mean the church, the one body; this is not applicable to true believers. Man-made Christendom is the enemy of Jerusalem, and hates God's loving thoughts for the peace of Jerusalem. If there is blindness in part upon Israel, it is equally true that blindness is upon the Gentiles. There is planning and scheming for expansion, world reformation and possession in Christendom, which leaves out and ignores completely God's purposes, and sets aside, as higher criticism does, the oracles of God. No thought in Christendom that Jehovah will ever make good His promises to the

Digitized by Google

seed of Abraham, therefore no thought of the Jew, no love for poor Israel; on the other hand they are despised and hated. It is startling, indeed, to see how Europe, the territory of the Roman Empire, which will form yet the confederacy of kingdoms under one head, is at present boiling over with antisemitism, and the heart of Europe, France, is the very hotbed of it. There was never a time when antisemitism was so strong and so universal as it is now at the end of the much boasted of nineteenth century. What will it be when the salt of the earth, the church, is removed? The restraint is then taken away and the outbreak will come. The Jew is the thorn in the flesh of the nations; he is hated and feared. However, the second and third verses of our chapter do not speak of the enemies of Israel, as they are away from the land of Israel, but the prophecies show the nations having come up against the city of Jerusalem. Before this can be fulfilled Jerusalem must be once more not alone inhabited by Jews, but be the city of the nation again as it was in the past, a partial return of the Jews to Palestine must have taken place, and great prosperity resting upon their endeavors for a time. Mighty armies are seen then coming up against the city and the land, and while in the land and in the city there will be tribulation, the reign of the false Messiah, outside the armies sent out by the confederacy of nations will be gathered. It is of this gathering of the nations before Jerusalem in the tribulation the great, the twelfth chapter speaks. In the exegesis of the fourteenth chapter we will have occasion to describe this coming siege of Jerusalem.

In speaking of these coming events it is necessary to bear in mind that they have nothing to do with the church. Believers sometimes are confused in this respect in not holding strictly to the coming of the Lord for His saints, and the absence of the church in the earth during the tribulation, and after this—His coming with His saints. Because the Jews are not yet in posses-

Digitized by Google

sion of the land and Jerusalem is not yet a Jewish city, some have reasoned that the coming of our Lord must be a good ways off yet, and on account of these events not being seen now, they say we cannot say that the Lord can come any moment for His church. There is not one scripture which teaches that before the Lord comes for His church the Jews must have returned or Jerusalem be a national headquarter for Israel once more, etc. It is true a partial restoration of the Jews in unbelief has commenced, and there is a remarkable national awakening such as has never been before, but the full development of this restoration will come after the church has left the earth and has been joined to her Lord in the air. An exodus of Jews will take place, the land will become theirs, and the well laid plans and schemes of the present time will be all carried out. Political combinations will be their chief hopes as well as others for success. As Pharaoh of olden times did hasten after the children of Israel when they had left his domain, so it seems the nations will come after them and besiege Jerusalem. Everything is getting ready for this. Let every believer rejoice in the blessed hope that no saint will be in the earth when at last these sad scenes of a passing dispensation are enacted.

In that day, saith Jehovah,
I will smite every horse with astonishment,
And his rider with madness:
I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah,
And every horse of the peoples I will smite with blindness,
And the chiefs of Judah shall say in their heart,
The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength,
In Jehovah of hosts their God.
In that day I will make the chiefs of Judah
Like a pan of fire among wood,
And as a torch of fire among sheaves;

Digitized by Google

And they shall devour all the peoples round about,
On the right hand and on the left;
And Jerusalem shall dwell in her own place, even in Jerusalem (verses 4–7).

These verses are descriptive of the calamity which will befall the enemies of Israel. Jehovah will smite them. The stone falling from heaven will smite the image at its feet and will pulverize it. The enemies of Israel will suffer as complete a defeat and destruction as Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea. In pride and blindness they had rushed on, and while pursuing Israel the face of the Lord looked out of the cloud and confused the Egyptian hosts, and the returning waters swept them all away, the horse and the rider and the chariots. It is but a faint type of what it will be when Jehovah will roar out of heaven, and His glory will appear. The slain of the Lord will then indeed be many. Judah and the chiefs will be used in that judgment. They shall be a devouring fire. The fourteenth chapter will lead us into a closer investigation.

The following two verses speak of the order how the coming of Jehovah will save His waiting people.

Jehovah shall save the tents of Judah first,
That the glory of the house of David
And the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem
May not lift itself up over Judah.
In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem;
And the feeble one among them in that day shall be as David;
And the house of David shall be as God (Elohim),
As the angel of Jehovah before them.
And it shall come to pass in that day,
That I will seek to destroy all the nations,
That came against Jerusalem (verses 7–9).

Judah will inhabit the land and many will dwell in tents, while

Digitized by Google

Jerusalem will be a strong and fortified city. The danger from the hostile armies will be the greatest with the dwellers in the tents. Accordingly, Jehovah will save the tents of Judah first. Jerusalem will come next. The purpose is that the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem may not lift themselves up over Judah. The house of David is especially mentioned. We have not had David brought before the prophet in the night visions nor in the prophecies which followed, but here in the twelfth chapter the house of David is mentioned not less than five times, which is very significant. We have the glory of the house of David in verse seven, the strength of David and the supremacy of it in verse eight. The spirit of grace and supplication is given to the house of David, and the family of the house of David will mourn. Jews have a tradition which states that the last descendant of the house of David died in Spain centuries ago. There are no genealogies at present to prove that the kingly house of David is extinct or not, but prophecies like the one we have in consideration, and many others which speak of the prominence of David and the house of David in the day when Jehovah will be manifested, make it very clear that among the wandering sons of Israel there are yet lineal descendants of the house of David. If they do not know it themselves, Jehovah knows it, and they will know it through Him. The feeble ones, literally the stumblers, among His people in that day of manifestation will be like David. What a hero David was! A man of war and strength conquering always and never conquered. And now the stumbler in Israel, the weakest one, will have strength and courage like David. And David shall be as God, as the angel of Jehovah before them. This is a startling promise. A similar word is found in Exodus vii: 1, And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. The house of David will during the millennium be

Digitized by Google

supreme in rule and in glory. A lineal descendant of David, a prince, will sit upon the throne of his father David and rule as a vice-regent of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose throne is then in the heavens over the earth. Thus in the earth the house of David will be as God and as the angel of Jehovah before them (Ezek. xxxiv : 23, 24 ; xlvi.).

The closing verses of the chapter claim our special attention, for in them we have a fundamental prophetic passage. The spiritual side of the salvation of Jerusalem is now brought out.

And I will pour out upon the house of David,
And upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
The spirit of grace and supplication ;
And they shall look upon Me whom they pierced,
And they shall mourn for Him as the mourning for an only son,
And be in bitterness for Him as one in bitterness for the firstborn.
In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem,
As the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon.

The mourning then is described as a universal one. All the families will mourn ; family by family apart, and their wives apart. Such a mourning and weeping has never before been seen in the earth nor will there be one like it again.

But why mourning and weeping? Should there not rather be joy and feasting, gladness and hallelujahs? The hallelujahs will come during the entire millennium, but the beginning will be mourning, national, by Israel. The mourning is on account of Him, Jehovah, who has appeared in His glory and whom they now behold. The long expected Messiah has at last appeared, and He is Jehovah. His coming for their salvation is as Daniel saw Him, after the last beast, the terrible one, the nondescript with its ten horns and the little horn between, had risen from the sea. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven, one like unto a Son of Man, and He came even

Digitized by Google

unto the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the people, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Daniel vii: 13, 14). A cloud appears in the heaven over Jerusalem. It is at once recognized as no common cloud, but as the divine glory cloud, (the Shekinah, which had been with Israel of old and was always the sign of Jehovah's presence with His people). We can imagine in some measure how this sign will be welcomed by the remnant of Israel in the hour of their extremity when there is and cannot be help from man. The cloud speaks as of old, of divine interference. Our Lord puts the whole scene before us when He said in His Olivet discourse, But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light (what an awful darkness that will be! well may then the rejecters of the Gospel seek death from the wrath which is now coming), 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 earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect (not the church) from the four winds, from one end of heaven unto the other (Matthew xxiv: 29–31). The sign of the Son of Man which is spoken of here will undoubtedly be the cloud of glory which will bring Him from heaven to the earth. Some believers in the coming of the Lord have mentioned the sign of the Son of Man to be seen in the heaven as if that sign stood in relation to the church and would be welcomed by believers, the saved ones, as the sign that their redemption is now at hand. We read not long

Digitized by Google

ago in a pamphlet in which certain coming signs in constellation of stars, etc., were mentioned, as being foretold in prophecy, and teaching the church that the coming of the Lord must be at hand. This is a mistake. There is nowhere in prophecy a sign mentioned appearing in the heaven to show the church that the Lord is at hand. The church, that is the one body, does not need such a sign. When the sign of the Son of Man appears in the heaven there will be no more church in the earth to see it. It will be "immediately after the tribulation of these days;" the church will not be in that tribulation. The sign is for Israel. Ezekiel beheld that glory which is then to be seen in the heavens. I looked, and, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud with a fire infolding itself, and a brightness round about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber out of the midst of the fire. And out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. . . . And above the firmament that was above their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it above. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire within it round about, from the appearance of his loins and upward, and from the appearance of his loins and downward, I saw as if it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about him. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord (Ezekiel i: 5, 26, 28). This vision will actually be seen by Israel in the day of the manifestation of the Lord. He will return in like manner upon a cloud as the glorified Son of Man as He went up into heaven. In Acts i: 11, where the promise of His return is given, it is likewise to be remarked that that promise does not present the Hope of the church, our blessed Hope, as believers.

Digitized by Google

It is very often used as speaking of that Hope which is so dear to every believer's heart. However, the promise given by the two men in white apparel, in Acts i., is a promise to Israel. It is the coming in like manner as He went into heaven, that is the coming of the Lord with His saints and not for His saints. There is still another passage which is in close connection with the appearing of Jehovah, the pierced One, in Zechariah xii., namely, Revelation i : 7, Behold He comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they which have pierced Him and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of Him. Yea. Amen. This passage corresponds with the one before us in Zechariah. The tribes in Revelation are the same as mentioned in Zechariah, and the wailing in Revelation stands for the mourning with which the twelfth chapter in Zechariah closes. What a scene that will be when at last Israel will look upon Him! When the signs of His coming, —the coming of the Redeemer—Jehovah increase, and His coming for their salvation draweth nigh, perhaps their hearts will be gladdened, and there will be rejoicing. They see the sign in the heavens and there will be the glad shout, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah, this is our God, we have waited for Him. And now they behold a person upon that cloud. He is a Son of Man. Again they look and they see that His hands and His feet and His side are pierced. Who can this be with pierced hands, feet and side, who cometh thus in power and glory from the heavens to save His people? The truth so long denied by them flashes upon them, This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, the rejected One, the One who suffered that shameful death on yonder hill, whose hands and feet were pierced, and from whose loving side and heart the Roman spear drew forth blood and water. Jehovah-Jesus, the pierced One, is seen again. There way up in the heavens He is seen! Sun and moon have been darkened, as we quoted above from Matthew xxiv., but

Digitized by Google

instead of their light there flashes another light over the heavens. The veil is lifted. God, Jehovah, has broken the long, long silence. He speaks again. The proud nations tremble, fear and trembling seize hold upon all the children of men. The day of vengeance, the day of wrath, the day of burning and recompense is at hand. All eyes are turned upward to behold that startling vision. The cloud, and in that cloud a throne, and upon the throne the Lamb of God, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Jehovah, the pierced One, the Lord Jesus Christ. Not alone are His eyes like a flaming fire, but according to Habakkuk's vision (Habukkuk iii.), His glory covereth the heavens, brightness is round about Him and rays (of glory) come out of His hands and His side, and there was the hiding of His power. Long, long ago David had by the Spirit of the Lord entered into the sufferings of his Son, whom he called Lord, and in the Psalm which begins with the cry of the forsaken One, My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me? he speaks of His hands and His feet pierced. It is true that the unbelieving Jews and all the enemies of a verbal inspiration of the word of God, higher critics, etc., with them, have tried to change the word "pierced" in the twenty-second Psalm, and make something else out of it. But it is pierced and will be so in all eternity. The One of whom David spoke came and was rejected, suffered, sacrificed Himself to put away sin, was nailed on the cross, and was pierced through. On the third day He was raised from the dead, and for forty days He showed Himself in His glorified body to His friends. In that body of the risen Lord the nailprints and the pierced side were seen. Thomas, unbelieving as he was, and as such a type of Israel abiding in unbelief still, would not believe the testimony of his brethren, and demanded the return of the Lord and to put his hands into His side and to see in His hands the prints of the nails. The second time the Lord appears, and Thomas is called

Digitized by Google

to His side to touch His body, to see the nailprints. Convinced because he sees he cries out, My Lord and my God! And when He took His own to the mountain where He gave them His command and His blessing, when His loving hands were spread out in blessing, they all saw the marks of His passion in His hands and there in His side. And thus He went into heaven, and while you read this, dear friend, He is there in the Holy of Holiest, appearing now in the presence of God for us, the all-sufficient One. Can then there be a doubt that when He does appear again, the second time, to build the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, that these marks of His suffering will not be seen? They will be the marks for Israel. They will know Him by the nailprints as the One so long rejected and hated without a cause.

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is a little sample of what is yet to be with the seed of Abraham. The light which shone around this blinded, self-righteous Pharisee on his way to Damascus, a light brighter than the Oriental noonday sun, will then shine out of heaven in the Lord's own glory. The Voice which spoke to him, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest, will speak again out of that light to the prostrated nation. It does likewise remind us of the rejected brother who became great and a saviour after his rejection by his own, and who in loving words said to his brethren, so guilty and conscience stricken, I am Joseph your brother. What a wonderful event that will be when at last they that pierced Him shall behold Him. Suspended somewhere in the air will be seen the vision of the Lord in His glory, and thus every eye shall see Him. It will be the day when a nation is born. The Spirit poured out, they will look upon Him, and the great national mourning follows.

This great mourning will be like the mourning in Hadad-rimmon in the valley Megiddon. To what events do these places refer? The second book of Chronicles, chapter xxxv., verses

Digitized by Google

22–27, give us the history of that great mourning. Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his face from him (the King of Egypt), but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Neco, from the mouth of God (these words are found in the twenty-first verse), and came to fight in the valley of Megiddon. And the archers shot at King Josiah; and the King said to his servants, Have me away, I am sore wounded. So his servants took him out of the chariot and put him into the second chariot that he had and brought him to Jerusalem; and he died and was buried in the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day; and they made them an ordinance in Israel, and behold they are written in the Lamentations. Likewise in 2 Kings xxiii: 29. In Josiah's days Pharaoh-Neco, King of Egypt, went up against the King of Assyria to the river Euphrates, and King Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddon when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddon and brought him to Jerusalem.

Hadad-rimmon was a village nearby in the valley of Megiddon. The pious King Josiah died, pierced by an arrow on account of the evil deeds of the nation. After his death there was a great mourning because he had been slain, and his death was soon followed by greater calamities, ending with the Babylonian captivity. The application to the Lord Jesus Christ and the coming national mourning of the nation every reader can make for himself.

It is interesting to read the Jewish interpretations of this important chapter. We quote from the Babylonian Talmud: That mourning, what was it about? Rabbi Yose and the Rabbis differ on the point. The one says it is for Messiah, the Son of Joseph, when He is killed; and the other says, It is for the *Yetzer Horo*

Digitized by Google

(evil desire, sin), when it is killed. All is clear in the case of him that says, It is for Messiah, the Son of Joseph, when He is killed, for then we can understand what is written, And they shall look upon Me whom they pierced, and they shall lament for Him (Zech. xii : 10). But in the case of him that says it is for sin when it is killed? Would it be mourning that is needed? Surely rejoicing would then be needed. Thus expounded, Rabbi Jehudah, of the Western house, in the Messianic times, the Holy One, blessed be He, is going to bring forth the evil desire and slay him in the presence of the righteous and the wicked. Unto the righteous the evil desire appears like a mountain, and unto the wicked he appears like a hair. The righteous weep and the wicked weep. The righteous say, How did we ever get the better of this high mountain? And the wicked say, How is it that we did not get the better of this hair? (Yalkut on Zechariah.)

The Jews have invented a double Messiah, one who is called the Son of Joseph and the other the Son of David. The Son of Joseph is pierced, and after He has been slain, Jehovah will send Messiah, Son of David. It is not denied that the Son of Joseph is a Messiah, an anointed One. This teaching is to solve the difficulties they have in explaining the suffering Messiah and the victorious Messiah. We have often talked with orthodox Jews for hours on the fact that there is only one Messiah, and He whom they expect as Son of David is truly the One who died and was pierced through for our sins. Human words cannot describe the great mourning when at last it is known by His appearing in the clouds, that Jesus, the Son of David, is the once rejected stone and now become the head of the corner. The first verse of the thirteenth chapter belongs to the twelfth. However, we will leave it for the next chapter.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII.

The founta. ' against sin and uncleanness opened—Idols and false prophets lestroyed—The smitten Shepherd and the sheep scattered —The Remnant saved—Two-thirds cut off and a third part refined by fire.

As mentioned in the closing sentence of the exposition of the last chapter, the first verse of the 13th chapter belongs to the 12th chapter. The division of the Bible into chapters is very often at fault and helps much to obscure the real meaning. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." That day will be the day when they have looked upon Him, Jehovah, the pierced One, and the fountain which is opened is the same blessed fountain of which the saints now sing:

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."

The fountain was indeed in existence throughout all the long centuries of Israel's dispersion. But Israel in blindness did not see it, only the remnant according to the election of grace did realize the precious blood of the Lamb of God, which has taken away the sins of the world. Now all is changed. Upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the house of David the Spirit is poured out. They have seen Him who is the first-born among many brethren, the second Adam, the One who is the Head of a new creation, and the blood of Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, is now cleansing them from all sin and uncleanness. Their guilt is par-

Digitized by Google

doned and all unrighteousness and impurity is completely removed. This great event is everywhere spoken of in the Old Testament. We had it under consideration in the third chapter, containing the night vision of the cleansing of Joshua, the High priest. In that vision the blood which cleanses was not mentioned. Now, however, it is seen, that the cleansing is by the blood of the Lamb. It is the same precious blood which cleansed and washed the glorified saints. The great multitude, which no man can number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues; the saints arrayed in white robes with palms in their hands, who washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and who appear with Him. And while they sing their song of praise, Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb, Israel will be washed by the same blood and join into the song of worship heard from the glorified lips of the saints of God. In the 103d Psalm we have a prophetic expression of what Israel will rejoice in when that fountain is opened. The cleansed nation will break forth and sing:

"Bless Jehovah, oh my soul,
And all that is within me bless His holy name;
Bless Jehovah, oh my soul, and forget not all His benefits.
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,
Who healeth all thy diseases,
Who reedeemeth thy life from destruction,
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies."

The cleansing and healing of Israel in that day will be complete and final. No more going back to sin and apostasy after that. Now they are indeed a holy people, a kingdom of priests. Perfect healing is theirs, not alone in spiritual things, but also healing from their diseases. Jehovah is their healer the moment He, as the Sun of Righteousness with healing under His wings, has risen

Digitized by Google

upon them. "And the inhabitant shall not say I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isa. xxxiii: 24). "Neither will I hide My face any more from them; for I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel xxxix: 29). "And the Redeemer shall come out of Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. And as for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever" (Isa. lix: 20, 21). "For behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy, and I will rejoice in Jerusalem and joy in My people, and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her nor the voice of crying" (Isa. lxv: 19).

The cleansing of His people is followed by the cutting off of the names of the idols from the land of Israel. The false prophets who were indwelt by the spirit of uncleanness are destroyed. It is the consequence of the outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel. The entire paragraph beginning the 13th chapter speaks of this:

"And it shall be in that day, saith the Lord of Hosts,
I will cut off the names of the idols from the land,
And they shall no more be remembered;
And also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits
To pass out of the land.
And it shall be if a man still prophesy,
His father and his mother who begat him shall say to him,
Thou shalt not live,
For thou hast spoken a lie in the name of Jehovah;
And his father and his mother who begat him
Shall pierce him through when he prophesieth.

Digitized by Google

And it shall be in that day the prophets shall be ashamed
Each of his vision when he prophesies;
And shall no more put on a hairy mantle to lie,
And shall say I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the ground,
For a man has sold me from my youth.
And one shall say to him
What are these wounds between thine hands?
And he shall answer, those with which I was wounded
In the house of my lovers" (verses 2 to 6).

We have seen before in the 10th chapter that Israel will return to idolatry in the last days. The unclean spirit of idolatry which was cast out will at last return with seven others and will find the house empty, swept and garnished. And the evil spirit, with the seven others more evil than himself, will enter in and dwell there, so that the last state of Israel becometh worse than the first. This will happen to this evil generation. This section of the 13th chapter makes it very clear that when the fountain is opened against sin and uncleanness, that idols will have been in the land, and false prophets prophesy there immediately before the manifestation of the Lord from heaven; for how could the names of the idols be cut off from the land if there were none there? Palestine may well be put down now as the great centre of false worship. Greek and Latin crosses are seen on all sides in Jerusalem and other places, while saints, holy houses and places are worshipped and adored. On the spot where the Lord's house stood, there stands to-day the mosque of the false prophet. All is idolatry. Of course when the Lord returns these false temples will be destroyed, and the Greek and Latin idolatries, as well as Islam, will forever pass out of existence. There will be a purging of the land from these abominations. This may be included in the prophecy here. Still, it is the people of Israel who are especially concerned in the prophecy before us. The land has often been the scene of idol

Digitized by Google

worship, and the people engaged in that which Jehovah despises. It will be so again, only in a much worse form, when false prophets who are inspired by the unclean spirit and demons themselves will be their guides.

We must look to Revelation for a key. It is well known to all students of the prophetic word that all which comes after the third chapter in the last book of the Bible is future still. We are yet in the things which are present. When the Lord has taken the Church to Himself then the great visions, tribulations, wrath and judgment will be fulfilled. Aside from the scenes in heaven we learn from Revelation the events in the earth during the great tribulation which ends with the wrath from heaven.

Now in the 9th chapter and the 20th verse of Revelation we read, And the rest of mankind which were not killed with these plagues repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship demons and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see nor hear nor walk. Scripture is to be explained by scripture. The Holy Spirit declares through Paul the very same when he writes in 1 Timothy iv: 1, "But the Spirit says expressly that in the latter times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron." For this cause God shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned which believed not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess. ii: 11, 12).

These words have not yet been fulfilled, nor has the time come. Truly there are many indications around us. Doctrines of demons are seen in more than one respect. Mysterious influences are felt in the earth. The hindering power, the Holy Spirit, is still present, and He is keeping back the full manifestation of

Digitized by Google

evil (2 Thess. ii : 7). But when at last He has gone, in the removal of the body, then darkness indeed will cover the earth. The unclean spirits, and who can count their numbers, will be thrown out of heaven into the earth and take possession of mankind. The voice from heaven declares, Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time (Rev. xii). When our Lord was in the earth preaching the kingdom of heaven He found many persons in the possession of demons, evil spirits, who had complete control of them, and He cast them out. Some cried out in terror, demanding to know if He had come to torment them before the time. They knew Him as the One who would at last send them to their final doom. But when He comes again in His glory from heaven, conditions will be a great deal worse. Satan and his hosts will be in the earth, having deceived the inhabitants of the earth, and seducing with lying wonders and strong delusions those who would not believe the truth, and lead them back to idol worship and to the carnal abominations connected with such a worship. Spiritualism, Christian Science, Buddhism in the very midst of Christendom, as well as the sect of devil worshipers in Paris, London, and Berlin, are but faint samples of the gross darkness which will be when the Church has been removed. There is no human mind which can imagine the condition of things during that time of tribulation, nor is there a pen which could describe the delusions and wickedness which will then flourish for a short time in this world.

What praises, then, should be in the hearts of the Saints for having escaped that tribulation and the wrath to come. No, the Lord will never leave His Church in the earth when Satan and his demons have control. The presence of the Church in the earth makes it impossible that these days can come. But while this will be true in the earth generally, the land of Israel will be the

Digitized by Google

center of that great storm, and there the false worship, idolatry, will be established. It is to be remembered that a part of the nation will have been restored to the land in unbelief, and will rebuild a temple, which is the fourth temple. Sacrifices are brought again, but they are an abomination, and the Lord hates them. The 66th chapter of Isaiah in its beginning speaks of this fact. We have to turn once more to the book of Revelation to find there a commentary. In the first quotation from the book we learned of the conditions in the earth in a general sense, but when we read the 13th chapter we find ourselves on Jewish ground, in Jerusalem. In that chapter we read of the worship of one who is termed the dragon, and this dragon gives power to a beast, who is likewise worshiped. And there was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given him authority to continue forty and two months (verse 5). . . . And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, everyone whose name hath not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world . . . (8th verse). After this we read in the 11th verse of a second beast. And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight, and he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire come down out of heaven upon the earth in sight of men. An image of the beast is made. And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which hath the stroke of the *sword* and lived. And it was given unto him to give breath to it, even to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and

Digitized by Google

cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed (14th and 15th verses). We see here a trinity revealed. The first is the dragon, the second the beast, and after that beast, which is called the first beast, the other, or the second beast. The dragon is the father of lies, the devil, the first beast is his son, the Antichrist, and the second beast is the evil spirit, which causes the dwellers in the earth to worship the beast. It is the trinity of evil as it is yet to be seen in the earth, and worshipped by those who rejected the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This beast is the false Messiah. The one of whom we read in 2 Thess. ii. The son of perdition, he that upholdeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. Now this is the great abomination of the great tribulation. The 13th chapter of Revelation speaks, as we have seen, of Antichrist having received a deadly wound by a sword, but he lived. It was a miracle that he lived. The dragon gave him power to overcome it. But not alone does he raise up the beast again from death, but he imparts life to the image of Antichrist, which is to be worshipped, so that it could speak, and all who refuse to worship the image are to be killed. Antichrist is a perfect counterfeit of the true Christ. The devil will then place him before the world as a substitute of Christ. The wound of the beast was made perhaps by those who pretended to love him. With the light from Rev. xiii, Zech. xiii becomes very plain, for the false prophets and idols mentioned in our chapter are connected with the winding up of this dispensation. The sixth verse does not speak of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is generally taken to be a Messianic prophecy and often quoted as such. The context, however, shows beyond a doubt that the person mentioned is the false prophet. And one shall say to him—the false prophet—What then are these wounds between thy hands? And he shall say,

Digitized by Google

Those for which I was wounded in the house of my lovers. Nowhere is this prophecy quoted in the New Testament as being Messianic. Surely if it had any reference to the Lord, the Holy Spirit would have quoted it somewhere in the New Testament. We have here the description of the false shepherd, the Antichrist, the beast with the deadly wound. Of course there will be many false Messiahs in that day when Antichrist reigns. False messengers, lying prophets, with their delusions will go throughout the land and to the nations likewise. But when He appears whose right it is, Antichrist, all false prophets, and all the idols will be forever cut off and the land will be thoroughly cleansed of all these abominations. If it were possible that a man after this manifestation should still prophesy (speaking falsely, a lie in the name of Jehovah), his own father and mother would slay him for it. The true Shepherd is now seen once more in the closing of this chapter, and with him mention is made of the remnant.

"Awake, O sword, against My shepherd,
And against a man, My fellow, saith Jehovah of Hosts;
Smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered,
And I will bring back My hand upon the little ones.
And it shall be in all the land, saith Jehovah,
Two parts therein shall be cut off and die,
And the third shall be left therein.
And I will bring the third part through the fire,
And I will refine them as silver is refined,
And will try them as gold is tried;
He shall call upon My name and I will answer;
I will say, It is My people,
And he shall say, Jehovah is my God."

The question comes to every student of the word, why is here an interruption in the events which we have followed and which

Digitized by Google

are given chronologically? Why is there no continuation bringing out other phases of Israel's salvation and the coming of the Lord? The change is very abrupt, and there is a going back to events which are the events of His first coming and His rejection. The solution of the difficulty would be almost impossible if we would interpret the sixth verse of the wounded one as referring to the Lord, the Messiah. But the fact that in the sixth verse we have the person of Antichrist answers the question which we have asked. The change and the interruption is made to show the contrast between the Good Shepherd and the false shepherd. The devil's masterpiece had been in the earth; perhaps he pointed to his wounds in his hands and to the fact that he was dead and became alive again, and mockingly he spoke of Jesus of Nazareth and His claim of having been dead and now living. The true Shepherd has appeared. He too is pierced, but He was pierced for their sins, and to make the whole complete a new thought is brought out which has not been seen so far in Zechariah. It is the same as in Isaiah liii, the suffering One, who is a man, and called My fellow, the fellow of Jehovah of Hosts, Jehovah Himself, who speaks here, and what does He speak? The sword is to work against His Shepherd and against His own Fellow. The blessed mystery of the atonement is thus brought out. Indeed it is the heart of the Gospel here. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have life eternal. The Lord, laid on Him the iniquity of us all. It speaks of Him, the forsaken One, the Son of God, forsaken in the hour of His agony, the sword upon Him and against Him. In the New Testament we find the passage quoted in the Gospel of Matthew, 26th chapter and 13th verse: Then saith Jesus unto them, all ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

Digitized by Google

In the last verses of the 13th chapter we have once more teachings concerning the remnant. These verses are not alone applicable to the remnant and the sheep in the time when our Lord was in the earth and immediately after he had suffered, they are not alone applicable to the remnant, which was in Jerusalem when the Roman armies came for destruction, but the application is to be made in connection with the people living in the land when Antichrist will reign, and the suffering of the remnant, the one-third, and the glorious privileges of that remnant are likewise future.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIV.

The last conflict—Jerusalem surrounded by armies and besieged and taken—Jehovah's intervention—The escape of the remnant—Living waters flowing out of Jerusalem—The enemies punished—The remnant of nations live as worshipers in Jerusalem—Jerusalem the holy city.

The last chapter in Zechariah is a very important one. It is a grand summing up and description of the events which stand at the close of the great tribulation, and as such it is one of the most striking chapters in the Old Testament. Post-millennialism surely fails here in trying to find some explanation for these prophecies. The chapter is unfulfilled throughout. Anyone who does not acknowledge this has only one other way of interpretation, and that is to spiritualize the whole and make out of it the development of the Church, the holiness of the Church, etc. This, of course, is a failure and cannot be done. The only true way of interpretation is the literal one, and that will teach us that the events seen in this chapter are future. This ought to be seen by any reader of the Word of God at the first glance. There is no siege and capture of Jerusalem in history which corresponds to the siege and capture which stands in the beginning of this chapter. The Lord never intervened in behalf of Jerusalem in the way that it is said here in going forth and fighting against those nations, nor did His feet stand upon the Mount of Olives for the purpose of completely destroying the enemies of His people. The whole chapter is of such significance that we have to take it verse by verse and illustrate it by many scriptures taken from different parts of the prophetic word.

Digitized by Google

Verse 1. "Behold a day cometh for Jehovah when thy spoils shall be divided in the midst of thee."

The time when this prophecy will be enacted is here given. A day is coming for Jehovah. Now it is man's day and God keeps silence, but His day, the day of Jehovah, is coming and will be a day of manifestation, glory, and power. "That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zeph. i : 15). "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants in the land tremble, for the day of Jehovah cometh, it is nigh at hand" (Joel ii : i). "There shall be a day of the Lord upon all that is proud and haughty" (Isa. ii : 4). The great tribulation is about past, and now when Jerusalem is not alone besieged but taken, the spoil being divided by the victors in the midst of the city, and when the enemy seems to have succeeded, then the day for Jehovah will come and He will roar out of the heavens.

Verse 2. "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem for battle,
And the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women shall be ravished,
And half of the city shall go forth into captivity,
And the residue of the people shall not be cut off."

This puts before us the last scenes of the times of the Gentiles, the great conflict which in Daniel and other prophecies is likewise described. There are difficulties, especially in regard to Antichrist. If he is then in Jerusalem, and sitting in the temple, worshipped as God, having complete control of Jerusalem, how can he be the leader of the hostile armies of the nations which come against Jerusalem? It is nowhere said that Antichrist is to have this place in the temple for any length of time. We likewise do

Digitized by Google

not know the exact time when he will thus be worshipped. He hears while away from the land of the appearing of the two witnesses in Jerusalem, their success in preaching, and that many Jews become believers in Him who is the Hope of Israel. He invades the land, takes the city, and slays the witnesses. The armies of the nations are associated with him. Daniel gives the history of these events. (Daniel xi.)

The armies which gather against Jerusalem in that day are the armies of the confederation of nations, sprung out of the territory of the old Roman Empire. It was stated not long ago from post-millennial sides that this in itself was beyond belief. How could it be possible that the progress of civilization could be arrested to such an extent, that the nations of Christendom would unite to march up against the Holy City? The Gospel leaven (?) was at work as never before, and it would be impossible that these nations who will become more and more thus leavened could be occupied with such a campaign. This indeed is the thought of man, but the word of God speaks in an entirely different language. True the leaven is at work, but truth is not leaven, but leaven is evil. We must not forget that Jehovah Himself says, I will gather all nations against Jerusalem.

Much reminds us here in chapter xiv of Egypt, and we shall have to refer a number of times to the story of Israel's deliverance from the house of bondage. Pharaoh, though he had witnessed the judgments of God upon his own land, tribulation and wrath, yet he rushed on in blindness to his doom. So it will be once more with the antisemitic nations. Blinded they will be, though they have also witnessed tribulation and wrath. Perhaps special commercial and financial as well as political interests are at stake, and will be the causes of the campaign against the land and the city. Joel iii speaks of this gathering of nations: "Proclaim ye this among the nations; prepare war; stir up the mighty

Digitized by Google

men; let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Haste ye, and come all ye nations round about, and gather yourselves together; thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehosaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the nations round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, tread ye; for the wine-press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. And the Lord shall roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be a refuge unto His people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel."

The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew is to be considered in connection with the last chapter in Zechariah, for it relates to the same events. Some take Matthew xxiv as having been in part fulfilled, others as being now fulfilled. Both are incorrect. The chapter will be fulfilled after the church is taken from the earth to be with the Lord in the air. "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled, for these things must needs come to pass; the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places. But all these things are the beginning of trouble. Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake." . . . All this is predictive of the great tribulation. The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew makes it clear that there will be a Jewish-Christian remnant—not church—in the land, and a testimony will be given by them. (See verse 14

Digitized by Google

and compare with Revelation xiv: 6, 7.) Neither Zechariah xiv nor Matthew xxiv has seen a fulfillment. Jerusalem has never been besieged by all nations, nor was only a part of the people destroyed in its last siege by Titus.

Verse 3. "Then shall Jehovah go forth and fight against those nations,
As when He fought in the day of battle."

The hour of their extremity has come and this brings the intervention. The great tribulation in its beginning found a good part of the Jewish people restored in unbelief in the land. Jerusalem had become again a Jewish city, and a temple stands in the city. The tribulation ends with Jerusulem taken, ruin once more, terrible slaughter and suffering, and in the midst a remnant hopeful, waiting for salvation from above. When there seems to be no escape Jehovah will appear and fight against those nations. The heavens will be opened and Jehovah's glory and power manifested. It will be as it was in the day of battle.

"And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, King of Egypt. and he pursued after the children of Israel; for the children of Israel went out with an high hand. And the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharoah and his horsemen, and his army overtook them encamping by the sea . . . And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord . . . And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you to-day . . . The Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace. . . And it came to pass in the morning watch that the Lord looked forth upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians. . . . The Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. . . . There remained not so much as one of them."

Digitized by Google

(Exodus xiv.) "Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou King Jehosaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Fear not ye, neither be ye dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. Ye shall not fight in this battle, set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you" (2 Chronicles xx: 15–17). These are only two samples of what Jehovah will do in His day and how He will save His people. In Matthew xxiv we find the intervention in the twenty-seventh verse, "For as the lightning cometh forth from the east and is seen even unto the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man."

Verse 4. "And His feet shall stand in that day upon
the Mount of Olives,
Which is before Jerusalem on the east;
And the Mount of Olives shall be parted in the middle,
Toward the east and toward the west, a great valley,
And half of the mountain shall be removed northward
And the other half southward."

The east, the place where the sun rises, is made prominent in this manifestation. From the east to the west the lightning flashes, thus shall be the coming of the Son of Man.

"God cometh from Teman,
And the holy One from Paran
His splendor covereth the heavens,
And the earth is full of His glory" (Habbak. iii).

Teman is the country of the sons of the east, and Paran the desert region extending from the frontiers of Judah to the borders of Sinai. But there towards the east from Jerusalem stands a mountain. It overlooks the whole city, and right in front, there is the valley of Jehosaphat, the valley where the nations are assembled (Joel iii). What a view from this mountain top! There is

Digitized by Google

the city, and its burning ruins are seen, their are the camps of the nations, with their banners and cannons gathered now in fear and in trembling, for the heavens declare the glory of the Lord. Immediately after the tribulation of these days, the sun shall be darkened and the moon . . . and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens. And now He Himself has descended from the heavens. His blessed feet stand again upon the Mount of Olives. He stands upon the mountain, and perhaps on the very spot where He stood centuries, many centuries, before, after His passion and His resurrection when He blest His disciples and had been removed from them with outstretched arms. There stood the two heavenly visitors in that day with their message, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here looking into heaven? This Jesus which was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven." A long, long time past. Has He forgotten His promise? No, the hour had not come. But men disbelieved the word of promise, I will come again. "And in the last days mockers came with mockery, walking after their own lusts, saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for from the days that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Peter ii : 3, 4). But now the Lord has come. He, the Son of Man, in His glory, is seen plainly from the city and from the valley, and with Him the heavenly company, His saints. The moment His feet touch the Mount of Olives there is an earthquake which splits the mountain into two halves, and a great valley is formed between these two parts. "The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt; and the earth is upheaved at His presence, yea, the world and all that dwell therein" (Nahum i : 5). As in the day of battle when the Egyptian hosts were destroyed and He divided the sea, thus will He divide the mountain and make a way for His trusting people

Digitized by Google

Verse 5. "And ye shall flee by the valley of My mountains,
For the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal;
Ye shall flee as you fled before the earthquake,
In the days of Uzziah, King of Judah:
And Jehovah my God shall come,
And all the saints with Thee!"

The valley is the way by which the remnant will flee from the city. The earthquake is mentioned only in another passage in the prophets. Amos received the words of the Lord and the visions two years before the earthquake. The details of the earthquake are not mentioned. Perhaps the pious in the city, the Messiah-expecting Jews, hoped then that the Promised One would appear, and they fled from the city. It was during the reign of Uzziah (Jehovah is strength) that it happened.

Jehovah who shall come refers us back to the fourth verse, where He stands upon the Mount. Here He is seen not alone in His manifestation, but His saints are with Him. It is an exclamation of joyous surprise, All the saints with Thee! There above the Mount of Olives a startling picture is seen. Countless human beings, glorified, gathered out of all languages, nations, tribes and countries, great and small, in white and shining robes, are seen flowing down from the opened heaven. What multitudes! No man can count them. What light and what glory! Brighter than the noonday sun. And, oh! what hallelujahs, what wonderful singing in joy and praise and adoration! When the shepherds were on the fields near Bethlehem they heard the angels' song, but when He comes again there will be singing and rejoicing grander still. Then it will be indeed, Glory to God in the highest, Peace on earth, good will towards men. The singing of the redeemed will be heard. The mighty angels will not be silent in their praise, and all the armies of heaven will escort the King of

Digitized by Google

kings and Lord of lords upon white horses. What a scene in view of the places where He once suffered and died, and beheld by the nations and Israel!

And every saint will share His glory then. Oh, wonderful grace for redeemed sinners, which lifts them up to such glory, to come with the Son of Man in His glory, and to share His throne. Why is there now so little praise with His own, His redeemed ones? Why so often coldness? Perhaps if we would gaze more into these visions of glory it would be different, and there would be not only praise but in all the wilderness experiences joy and patience, the patience of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus He, our Lord, the Leader and Perfecter of faith, went through this life. "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." And when the Lord comes with His saints the remnant of Israel leaving the city will not be silent. Their song will be, "Lo, He is our God; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation. For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest" (Isaiah xxv: 9).

Verses 6 and 7. "And it shall come to pass in that day
That the light shall not be with brightness and with gloom,
And the day shall be One.
It shall be known unto Jehovah.
Not day and not night.
And at evening time there shall be light."

Many different interpretations of these two verses have been attempted, most of them in spiritual teachings. The details of the coming manifestation can hardly be now all understood. This seems to be clear in regard to the above that we have a prophetic description of the phenomena in nature, in the heavens in that day. The Septuagint translates, There shall not be light,

Digitized by Google

but cold and ice. This translation is incorrect. That day will be a day of darkness, gloominess, followed by twilight and ending in the bursting forth of a new light. "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! Wherefore would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness and not light" (Amos v : 18). "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in a clear day" (Amos viii : 9). "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel ii : 31). It is the same as in Matthew xxiv, the darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars. It will be one day, a peculiar day, such as has never been before. In the hour of His agony upon the cross there prevailed a darkness over Jerusalem and the land; the same will be the case in His manifestation and will inspire terror. At evening time the light will shine, the Son of Righteousness, now fully risen, with healing under his wings.

Verse 8. "And it shall be in that day
That living waters shall go out from Jerusalem,
Half of them to the eastern sea
And half of them to the western sea.
In summer and in winter shall it be."

Living waters flowing out from Jerusalem speak of the blessings which the Lord will give through the city and the inhabitants to the nations of the earth. Jerusalem established will indeed be a praise in the earth. The Holy Spirit has been poured out and living waters flow from the place which is the center of the world. The living waters will never stop flowing. It will be for summer and winter. What a fruitfulness there will follow. The whole earth will be fruitful then, not alone in nature but in spiritual things. "For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the gar-

Digitized by Google

den causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations. Out of Zion there shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it; the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God" . . . (Isaiah xxxv). "And he brought me back unto the door of the house (the millennial temple); and behold waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward, for the forefront of the house was toward the east; and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, on the south of the altar. Then brought he me out by the way of the gate northward, and led me round by the way without unto the outer gate by the way of the gate that looketh toward the east; and behold there ran out waters on the right side. . . . Now when I had returned, behold upon the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue forth toward the eastern region, and shall go down into Arabah, and they shall go toward the sea; into the sea shall the waters go which were made to issue forth, and the waters shall be healed" (Ezekiel xlvii). The waters flowing from the threshold of the house empty into the sea . . . representing the nations of the earth, and they receive healing and life.

Verse 9. "And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth. In that day shall Jehovah be one and His name one."

The true form of government is established. Jehovah is King. His throne is then established over the earth, and from that place He rules over all the nations in righteousness. The shepherd

Digitized by Google

with the rod of iron and the saints share this rule, while in the earth Israel governs with a Prince of the house of David at their head. True unity has come. The shameful divisions of Christendom, the work of the enemy, the harvest of the flesh ended in a mock union of a Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. Man attempts now to bring about a unity of the race and unity in religions. He the glorified Head of His body and His blessed atonement is denied. True Christendom ends in a unity, under one head, but he is the Antichrist. In that day of His coming again in glory there will be His name One, and He will be known as the One God, and worshipped as such. Idolatry is abolished. The abominations connected with it have ceased. Satan, the seducer of the nations, is chained and seduces the nations no more. Confusion is forever ended. "Then will I return to the nations a pure language, that they may call upon the name of Jehovah, to serve Him with one consent (Zeph. iii : 9).

Verse 10. "All the land shall be changed like the plain
From Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem,
And she shall be lifted up and dwell in her place,
From Benjamin's gate unto the gate of the first place,
Unto the corner gate,
And from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine presses."

It is of little profit to understand the exact location of the places mentioned in this verse; there is some difficulty in doing that. The prophecy shows that in that day when the Lord has appeared there will be a great change in the surface of Palestine. Everything will become a plain. Now it is a land of mountains and hills. But then the hills and mountains will be lowered and become a plain. Jerusalem, however, is lifted up, and is seen shining in her earthly splendor and in it the magnificent temple. In the midst of the millennial Jerusalem in the earth will be another high

Digitized by Google

place, still higher than the city. It is the glorious Mount Zion. "But in the latter days it shall be that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills" (Micah iv : 1). Upon this high place the glory will rest. Thus it will be seen and cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. "And the Lord will create over the whole habitation of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of the flaming fire by night; for over all the glory shall be spread a canopy" (Isaiah iv : 5). From that high and glorious place in the earth the communications and intercourse between the heavenlies and the earth will perhaps take place, it will be the ladder upon which the angels of God ascend and descend upon the Son of Man.

Verse 11. "And they shall dwell therein,
And there shall be no more curse,
But Jerusalem shall dwell safely."

The happiness of the Jerusalem in the earth. The curse is entirely removed. While now Jerusalem is one of the most miserable places in the earth, desolate and forsaken, and during the tribulation it will be the place of misery, sin, and curse, it will become the most blessed place in the Millennium. The Lord will show forth there His great lovingkindness, and all the blessings we have reviewed in the visions of Zechariah will all be fulfilled. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old, and the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit thereof. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree shall be the days of My people, and My chosen people shall long enjoy the work of their hands

Digitized by Google

They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for calamity; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord (Isaiah lxv). But that wonderful city in the earth, the city of Jerusalem, in all her blessing, joy, peace, prosperity, praise, and worship, is but a faint type of that still more glorious Jerusalem which is then above. The new Jerusalem, our glorious home, dear reader (if you are in Christ), is then in the air, and at the end of the thousand years it will come down and find its eternal resting-place in the new earth.

Verses 12–15. "And this shall be the plague
With which Jehovah will smite all the nations
That have warred against Jerusalem:
His flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet,
And their eyes shall consume away in their sockets,
And their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.
And it shall be in that day
There shall be a great confusion among them from Jehovah,
And they shall lay hold everyone on his neighbor's hand,
And his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor,
And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem,
And the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered,
Gold, and silver and apparel in great abundance.
And so shall be the plague of the horse,
Of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass,
And of all the beasts that shall be in those camps as this plague.

Digitized by Google

This is the description of the dreadful punishment which will befall the enemies in that day. It is to be read in connection with the third verse, the Lord fighting against those nations, and the punishment will be upon them when He appears. Thus it is seen in Revelation xix. He appears, and after His appearing there is the scene of punishment of the enemies. "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond and small and great (Rev. xix: 17, 18). What an awful judgment it will be! In Ezekiel we have likewise a description of it. It is however to be remarked that the vision of Ezekiel xxxviii and xxxix speaks of the judgment which will fall upon the rebels of the last revolt at the end of the thousand years. Still that second punishment is foreshadowed in the first. "And thou, Son of man, thus saith the Lord God, Speak unto the birds of every sort, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves upon every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth. . . . And ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men and all men of war, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. xxxix: 17–23).

"And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (Isa. lxvi: 24).

How wonderful the prophetic Word is! What a harmony! How dare men who call themselves Christians deny its divinity

Digitized by Google

and infallibility? The wealth of the nations belongs then again to Israel. The nations spoiled them, and now all the riches of the Gentiles become theirs. Even so it is now during their dispersion. The nations who persecuted and robbed the Jews during the middle ages have become the most miserable and impoverished, while the Lord has given greater riches to the Jews, and often drawn from the very countries who stole their goods. From Egypt of old they came forth laden with silver and gold. It will find a repetition, only on a grander scale, in the day of their restoration. Now in unbelief and in dispersion they are the richest of all nations. Oh! that the nations would now understand it—the nations called Christendom—that "they are laboring for the fire, and wearing themselves with vanity" (Habak. ii : 12), and that the wealth and glory accumulated by them will fall a prey to the Jews. "Ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and to their glory shall ye succeed" (Isa. lxi : 6).

Verse 16. And it shall come to pass
All that is left of the nations which came against Jerusalem
Shall go up from year to year
To worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts,
And to keep the feast of Tabernacles.

Nations will be left after the tribulation and the wrath—this is clear from many passages of the Word. In the New Testament we have the statement made at the first council in Jerusalem. "Brethren, hearken unto me; Simeon hath rehearsed how God at first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men may

Digitized by Google

seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called," etc. (Acts xv : 15–18). Number one is the visitation of the Gentiles, a calling out of a people for His name, and we are still living in number one. Number two is His return, the building again and setting up of the tabernacle of David, which can only come after the calling out of a people is accomplished the fullness of the Gentiles come in; and number two and the events connected with it we have learned from the studies in Zechariah. Then follows number three, the residue of men seeking after the Lord. In verse 16, they that are left of the nations correspond with the residue of men in Acts xv. The temple will then stand in Jerusalem as the house of glory and a house of prayer for all nations. There will be a perfect worship, grand and glorious, and it will not be confined to Israel, but the nations will join in it. We may learn perhaps from this verse that the Lord will leave every year once His place on His throne over the earth and come down to Jerusalem and show Himself in His glory before the worshipping multitudes in the earth, as He is seen in the New Jerusasalem above. The occasion is the feast of Tabernacles. It is the millennial feast. It is a feast kept in remembrance of Israel's through the wilderness for forty years and all their subsequent wanderings. It stands also for the ingathering of the full harvest. A feast of joy, praise, and thanksgiving. The Jews keep it to the present day, though few know the full meaning of it. Every year when it comes again they read this 14th chapter of Zechariah. It is strange indeed. What a glorious feast that will be, kept there in Jerusalem, when the fullness at last has come! The fullness of the Gentiles has been gathered in, and is in the New Jerusalem; the fullness of Israel has come in the earth, and their receiving has been life from the dead, and the Gentiles know the glory of the Lord. Some find a difficulty here in the fact that it is stated that

Digitized by Google

the nations, the residue of men, are to come up to Jerusalem, and the difficulty is that it will be impossible for all of them to do that. It is not at all necessary that every individual must go up to Jerusalem once in a year. Perhaps every nation will send representatives to the feast of Tabernacles, and they come in the name of the different nations and bring their presents. This seems to be indicated in the visit of the wise men from the East, who came to Bethlehem to worship the new-born King (Matthew ii). They brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. In Isaiah lx : 6 we read of the coming of the Gentiles to Jerusalem when the Lord has come again. They shall come from Sheba ; they shall bring gold and frankincense (the myrrh is left out here, for it speaks of suffering), and shall proclaim the praises of the Lord. As the wise men who came to Bethlehem were representatives of nations, so during the Millennium the nations will send delegations to the feast of Tabernacles. What a scene that must be ! How crowded Jerusalem will be by those from Greenland and from the interior of Africa, from India and the islands of the sea, as well as from the nations which composed the Roman empire. The ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God, and now their praise is heard in the city and mingling with the psalms sung by His own redeemed people.

Verses 17-19. And it shall be that whoso of all the families of the earth
Shall not go up to Jerusalem
To worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts,
Upon them there shall be no rain.
And if the family of Egypt go not up and come not,
Upon them shall be none.
There shall be the plague
Wherewith Jehovah will smite the nations
Which go not up to keep the feast of Tabernacles.

Digitized by Google

This shall be the sin of Egypt,
And the sin of all the nations
Which go not up to keep the feast of Tabernacles.

This is the other side. All those who refuse will be punished, and the punishment will be very swift. From this and other prophecies it is seen that not everything will go so smoothly as it is generally believed during the Millennium. God's messengers in that day will be the Jews going forth to proclaim the truth of God, and what preachers they will make! Still some will be forced to submit. The end of the thousand years brings a revolt from the side of the nations, which is not a small matter. "And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (Rev. xx: 7, 8).

From this we see that many of the nations, Gog and Magog, are only too willing to side once more with the enemy, and to shake off, if it were possible, the yoke of the rule of Jehovah's earthly people.

The last two verses we have to consider make the whole prophecy perfect. It is the declaration that Jerusalem will be holy.

In that day there shall be on the bells of the horses
Holiness to Jehovah,
And the pots in the house of Jehovah
Shall be as the bowls before the altar.
Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah
Shall be holy unto Jehovah of Hosts.
And all they that sacrifice shall come
And take of them and sacrifice therein,
And there shall be no more Canaanite
In the house of Jehovah of Hosts in that day.

Digitized by Google

The most holy person in Israel, the high-priest, carried the inscription, "Holiness to Jehovah" around his mitre, but now even the little bells of the horses bear that inscription. In that temple which stands during the Millennium sacrifices will be brought, but there will be no difference in the vessels, which are used in Jerusalem, the meanest and smallest will be holy. In one word all will be holy, all will be consecrated to Jehovah. What a perfect service that will be of the people which are then, in truth, a holy people. Application can be made of this to believers now. Surely everything the saint has, and his whole life, must be thus consecrated to Jehovah, to the Lord. No Canaanite will be there, nothing unclean. The Vulgate translates the word Canaanite with merchant. It stands, however, with everything that is unclean and an abomination. The city will be completely purged from it.

And of the new Jerusalem it is written, "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie; but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life. . . . Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie (Rev. xxi : 27 and xxii : 15.

We have reached the end of the visions and burdens of Zechariah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, who, indeed, may be termed the Prophet of Glory. We praise our Lord for what He has taught us in these studies, and for His Spirit, who guides His children into all truth and shows us things to come. May he use this volume for the edification of the saints and for a better understanding of the words of prophecy. We are living on the very threshold of the fulfillment of all these visions and words. Soon He will come for His saints, and even now the Spirit groans within us. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

50¢

3 2044 016 979 478

~~APR 3~~

JUN 1 1980

MAY 29 '66

~~JUN 1~~

~~MAY 31 1983~~

~~1973~~

~~MAY 30 1973~~

~~JUN 1 1974~~

~~JAN 1975~~

~~FEB 12 75.~~

~~JUN 30 1982~~

Digitized by Google