

Lesson 27

Times And Signs: Or The Evidence That The End Is Near

THERE ARE many signs abroad indicative of the near approach of that interference of God in the affairs of men, which will result in changing the kingdoms of this world into " the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ " (Rev. xi, 15). To discern them, history and prophecy must be known and understood to some considerable extent. These are the two great lights which reveal the bearing of current events. Without them, a man will neither recognise nor be interested in " the signs of the times. "

Our first inquiry must be in reference to " times and seasons. " This is the key to the whole subject, for if we have no clue to our whereabouts in the Gentile era, and no knowledge of the length to which that era will run, it is obvious we have no reason for believing ourselves in the neighbourhood of the end, and nothing to justify us in seeking to find in contemporaneous events the signs that attend and usher in that end. On one point there can be no difference of opinion, and that is, that whether understood or not, there are in the Scriptures distinct specifications of time in relation to the events of the future. The best proof of this is to be found in the following quotations:

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" Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea THE SET TIME is come " (Psa. cii, 13).

" The vision is yet for an APPOINTED time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie " (Hab. ii, 3).

" AT THE TIME APPOINTED the end shall be " (Dan. viii, 19).

" He (the little horn) shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times, and the dividing of time " (Dan. vii, 25).

" How long shall be the vision? . . . And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed " (Dan. viii, 13, 14).

" From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days " (Dan. xii, 11).

" The holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months "

(Rev. xi, 2).

" To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place where she is nourished, for a time and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent " (Rev. xii, 14).

These passages prove two things: first, that " a set time " exists in the mind of the Deity for the consummation of His purpose--a conclusion which must commend itself to every mind realising the fact that God knows all things from the end to the beginning; and, second, that He has given a revelation of " times and seasons. " This revelation may at first sight be obscure, but the fact of its having been given cannot be denied in view of the before-cited quotations. This being so, there arises the presumption that they are capable of being understood, since, as a matter of revelation, they could be given for no other purpose.

We have, however, to notice the qualifications with which this conclusion is divinely associated. We refer to the words addressed to Daniel: " None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand " (Dan. xii, 10). This would imply not only that uprightness is necessary, but also that the matter is not communicated in such a form as to be apprehended on the surface of it, but requires the qualification of " wisdom " to elucidate the hidden meaning.

We would also quote words of similar purport occurring in the Apocalypse: " Here is wisdom; let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast " ; showing that the matter as presented was an enigma requiring to be unlocked by the keys of knowledge. In view of this, we need not be surprised at the mistakes that have from time to time been made in the interpretation of the times and seasons. Numberless and outrageously absurd theories have, in all ages of the world, been put forward on the strength of what is written on times and seasons. Dates have been fixed, and events predicted which time has falsified. This fact has staggered weak minds, and induced contempt and scepticism in reference to the whole subject. Even many of the devout have become disgusted, and refuse to give credence to anything advanced on the subject; but this must surely be admitted to be evidence of short-sightedness rather than of wisdom.

There is a great difference between incompetent interpretation and essential absurdity in the nature of the matter interpreted. No devout mind, receiving the word of God in all sincerity, as the manifestation of His mind for the enlightenment of His servants, will be content

to accept -the fooleries of the past as a disproof of the intelligibility of what God has made known; but under the conviction that underneath the misunderstood enigmas of His word, there lie important facts which He would have us understand, will anxiously endeavour to penetrate the obscurity which has baffled others, and get at the mind of God in a matter so important in its bearings on our mental relation to the purposes of God.

Some people imagine that the New Testament bars the way against all enquiry on the subject of times and seasons; but on examination this will appear to be a mistake. It is true that Jesus said to his disciples, " It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power " (Acts i, 7); but this had a special bearing on the time and the persons in reference to whom the words were uttered, in no way conflicting with the present enquiry.

They were spoken to the disciples on the eve of his ascension at a time when they needed such words. Their minds were filled with solicitude for the manifestation of the kingdom. They had asked, " Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? " They did not know that the time for the kingdom was yet afar off. They were apparently ignorant that a great interval had to elapse, even " the times of the Gentiles. " They did not know that the hard work of preaching the Gospel had to be done; and the harder work of developing a people for God by the faith preached involving much suffering for His name, much long and weary waiting through a long night of centuries, for his coming.

The idea that the kingdom was then to be established was an obstacle in the way of the work on which they were about to enter, and therefore Jesus dispels it by telling them it was not for them in their circumstances, to be thinking of times and seasons, but to return to Jerusalem, and there await the effusion of the Spirit which was to qualify them to give testimony for him as his witnesses throughout all Judea and Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. This was reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances; but to construe what was said appropriately to the time and circumstances, into a discountenance and prohibition of all subsequent research on the subject would evince a short-sighted judgment, and introduce an element of discord into the Word, which would thus be made to discourage in one place the study of that which it revealed in another.

Reliance is also placed on I Thess. v, 1, by those who disparage the study of prophetic times. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:--

" Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day. We are not of the night, nor of darkness " (I Thess. v, 1-5).

But so far from answering the intended purpose, these words of Paul show that the subject of " the times and seasons " was not a proscribed one. Paul intimates that he would have written on the subject to them, but he says, " YE HAVE NO NEED that I do so, and the reason is yourselves know that when the day comes, it will come as a thief--unexpected and undesired --upon the world, but not upon you, for ye are all the children of the light and of the day. " The sense in which they were the children of light may be understood in two ways. It may mean " You, Thessalonians, are ready for the day of the Lord; therefore it does not matter when the day comes; it is needless to speak of times and seasons when you are prepared for the event. "

This is, evidently, the view the Thessalonians took of it; for Paul's second letter to them found them expecting the immediate manifestation of Christ. But that this was the wrong construction of his words, appears in what he said in his second letter to the same church. He says (ch. ii, 1), " We beseech you. brethren... that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: FOR THAT DAY SHALL NOT COME, EXCEPT THERE COME A FALLING AWAY FIRST. " From this it is evident that the second way of construing Paul's words, in the 1st Epistle, is the correct one, viz., " It is not necessary for me to write about times and seasons, for ye are the children of the light, and ought to know about them. " Why should Paul assume they knew all about it? He gives us his reason in the 2nd Epistle: " Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I TOLD YOU THESE THINGS? " (verse 5). If they were ignorant, it was because they had forgotten what Paul told them; for Paul had told them that Christ could not be manifested until certain events foretold in the prophets had transpired.

At the same time, it cannot be denied, that their ideas of the times and seasons would, necessarily, be more imperfect and confused than ours: first because of the great distance of time which divided them from the end; and, second, because of the then impending visitation of divine judgment upon Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, foretold

by Jesus, which had the effect of concentrating their interest to some extent upon their own generation, and in many cases, of creating the expectation that as God was about to come on the scene in judgment, He would not leave it without effecting their deliverance, the more especially as Jesus associated the latter with the former, as regards the succession of events, though, as time has shown, not as regards chronological sequence.

A statement in Daniel (xii, 4), seems to indicate that it is in our own times more particularly that the prophetic visions are to be understood, both as regards their events and times: " But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. " There is a reason why the words may be understood at the time of the end. In " the words " are prophetically delineated historical events extending over centuries, and at the time of the end, we have the facts of accomplished history as the infallible interpreters of these words. By the aid of those facts, we are enabled to comprehend the prophetic scheme, both as regards its events and times, and so to gauge our position as to determine where we stand in relation to the wonderful consummation of the end itself.

Coming to the question of " How long? " it will be observed that in the passages quoted, the times defined are measured for the most part by " days. " The first question to be considered therefore, is, what are we to understand by the word so used? Are we to read it as a representative of so many days of 24 hours' duration? A class has arisen and multiplied considerably, who say " Yes, " with all confidence. But we ask them if that is so, how it is that Daniel did not understand; " I heard, but understood not " (Dan. xii, 8), when informed of the duration of the vision in days. And how is it that the wise alone are to understand? If it mean literal days, there is no wisdom required. To read it as literal days is a simple method of interpretation, which may be accepted with relief by minds incapable from disuse of going below the surface of things, and of rising to heights of knowledge through stepping-stone indications on the level; but the fallacy of the principle becomes apparent on the merest attempt to interpret the statements in question in accordance with it.

For instance, Daniel saw a vision (chap. viii,) in which the following events are comprehended; the beginning and rise of the Persian empire, its overthrow by Alexander the Great, the partition of the Grecian empire, at that monarch's death, into four parts, and the appearance of the Roman power in the southern section of the divided empire, resulting in the death of Jesus, the disruption of the Jewish commonwealth,

and the final casting down of the destroying enemy. The vision having passed before Daniel, he hears the question asked, " How LONG shall be the vision? " in. answer to which, the statement was made, " Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed (or avenged). "

Now, if we interpret this to mean that the events represented in the vision should only occupy 2,300 natural days, we turn the vision into absurdity. We make it compress into little more than six years, events, the first of which, viz., the rise and development of the Persian empire alone took nearly 250 years! The literal-day theorists attempt to get out of the difficulty by applying the period mentioned in the vision to the ravages of Antiochus Epiphanes, who suppressed the daily sacrifice for something like seven years, at the end of which it was restored by the Maccabees; but this suggestion is entirely set aside by the statement of the angel (verse 17), that " AT THE TIME OF THE END shall be the vision. " Even if we had not this distinct intimation, the suggestion would be negatived by the improbability of such a minor event being made the subject of prophecy for the wise of all time; but it is effectually precluded by the scope of the events, represented in the vision to which the statement of time applies, and by the further declaration of the angel that the vision should be " for many days " (verse 26).

In the 11th chap. we have a prophetic message angelically communicated to Daniel, " in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. " This message commences with the date given, and, bridging all subsequent history, goes down to the destruction of " the king of the north, " on the mountains of Israel, at the manifestation of Jesus when the resurrection takes place. As in the other case, Daniel hears the question asked, " How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? " The answer is, " For a time, times, and an half. " Daniel says, " I heard, but I understood not. " A time was a Jewish period made up of 360 days. " Time, times, and an half " were, therefore, equivalent to " one time, two times, and half a time, " or " three times and a half, " or 1,260 days. It was, therefore, no wonder that Daniel failed to understand, because the events he had witnessed in vision were on such a scale as required centuries for development. The measure of such events by days might well baffle his understanding.

This mode of measurement is repeated in answer to Daniel's beseeching question, " O, my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? " (Dan. xii, 8). " From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth,

and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days (45 days more). But go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. " It is evident that literal days are not meant in these expressions. Centuries have elapsed since the events to which they apply commenced to transpire; and the period defined, taken literally, has multiplied itself hundreds of times, and yet there is no arrival of the end foretold.

The question then is, what is meant by these prophetic days? We affirm, on the strength of the following evidence, that each day represents a year.

Moses sent spies to search the land of Canaan, in the second year after the children of Israel came out of Egypt. The spies were away forty days, and returned, at the end of that time, with a discouraging report as to the probabilities of a successful invasion of the country, and advised a rejection of Moses, and a return of the whole congregation into Egypt. The people, ever prone to distrust God, hearkened to the counsel of the spies, and were about to put it into execution, when God interfered, and vindicating Moses, gave sentence against the whole congregation, in the following words:--

" Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upwards, which have murmured against me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land... and your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, EACH DAY FOR A YEAR, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years " (Numbers xiv, 29, 30, 33, 34).

This is an historical transaction, in which a literal day was made the basis of a literal year. We now cite a case of prophecy.

Ezekiel was commanded to make a miniature representation of Jerusalem, and conduct a mimic siege against it, for the purpose of signifying to the people of Jerusalem that God intended to punish them for their iniquity. He was then instructed to signify the times in relation to the events represented:--

" Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it; according to the number of days that thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt bear their iniquity; for I have laid upon thee THE YEARS of their inquiry ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF THE DAYS, 390 days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when

thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed these EACH DAY FOR A YEAR " (Ezek. iv, 4-6).

Here was a symbolical transaction, in which " times and seasons " were to be represented; and it is expressly directed that the symbolisation of time should be on the scale of a day for a year.

That this is the scale on which the prophetic periods of Daniel are fixed, is evident from a well-known case in which his prediction of time has been historically verified. " Seventy weeks " are employed to define the period that was to elapse from the issue of the final Persian edict for the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem, to the accomplishment of the following objects in the death of Messiah: 1st, to finish the transgression; 2nd, to make an end of sin; 3rd, to make reconciliation for iniquity; 4th, to bring in everlasting righteousness; 5th, to seal up the vision and the prophecy; and 6th, to anoint the Most Holy. Seventy weeks are 490 days: hence, " seventy weeks " is but another way of expressing 490 days. In view of this, how significant is the fact that from the edict in question (Artaxerxes, B.C. 456), to the crucifixion of Christ, there elapsed a period of exactly 490 years. A dispute among chronologists, as to whether the period reached exactly to the 490th year, does not detract from the weight of the evidence furnished in the fulfilment of this prophecy of the truth of the day-for-a-year principle, as applied to the solution of the prophetic periods; the fact that there is a dispute, only illustrates the obscurity of ancient history where precise dates are involved. Adopting the year-day principle, we shall proceed to point out the evidences which show that we have now reached nearly the utmost limit of the times of the Gentiles, and stand upon the verge of the future foretold by the prophets. There are four or five distinct methods of demonstrating this conclusion; four or five independent modes of computation, which lead to an identical result; four or five separate chronological lines which converge on a single epoch in the world's history, uniting to tell us the grand and awful tidings that the moment is nearly on us when the Most High, inhabiting eternity, having long holden His peace, is, in the person of Jesus, about to stir Himself up like a mighty man of war, and to enter into controversy with the nations of the earth, breaking their ungodly power, bringing down their strength to the earth, teaching them righteousness by angry judgments, and subduing them to the sceptre of the kingdom of David, under the yoke of which they will taste the blessedness that all the generations of Adam for a weary 6,000 years, have yearned and sighed after, but which they cannot have and never will realise until " that man whom God hath ordained " is manifested in the earth as a " hiding

place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land " (Isa. xxxii, 1).

The first is not in itself a conclusive mode of reckoning; but its coincidence with those that are certain, shows there is truth in it. We refer to the tradition, which is of very ancient origin, that as God effected the reorganisation of the world physical in six natural days, and consecrated the seventh as a day of rest and blessing, so will he occupy six days, of a thousand years each, in setting in order the political heaven and earth of human affairs, and set apart the seventh millennium, or period of a thousand years, as a Sabbatical era, in which righteousness and peace will prevail, as the waters cover the sea.

This theory is not expressly affirmed in the Word, but it is not altogether without countenance. The duration of the kingdom, for instance, happens to be the exact length of the supposed Sabbatical era; and this period--the kingdom prepared of God for them that love Him--is expressly spoken of by Paul as a Sabbatical rest, and, therefore, in some sense a seventh period (Heb. iv, 9). Peter's expression, " One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day " (II Pet. iii, 8)--is quoted by some writers in favour of the tradition in question, but much stress cannot be laid on it. The theory rests on other grounds; and the strongest of these is its chronological agreement with the minor prophetic periods.

Assuming it to be a correct method of reckoning, how far are we on this principle from the end of the human era? The answer to this question depends upon the age of the world (not geologically, but since the Adamic creation). The process by which this point is ascertained, is necessarily a long and laborious one. We must refer to the results achieved by those who have gone through the process, and who have demonstrated every link in the chronological chain. We rely particularly on the deductions of Dr. Thomas, who has given a great deal of attention to the subject, and who has placed the results of his research in such a form before the general reader--(see Chronikon Hebraikon)--that the process which has cost him much time and labour can, in a moment, be verified or impugned.

The general result is to show that the world was 4,090 years old at the birth of Christ, instead of 4,004, as commonly supposed. Add to 4,090 the present A.D. 1905, and we get 5,995 as the real age of the world at the present time. If this be so, there wants only about five years to complete the 6,000 years of the great world-week, and therefore

we are that number of years from the time when the blessing of Abraham shall prevail over the whole world through Christ. But we are not, therefore, that number of years > from the advent. The coming of Christ is one event; the setting up of > the kingdom another. The former event must necessarily precede the latter by a considerable period. The constitution of human society cannot be broken up in judgment and reorganised in righteousness in a day. This is a work which will take time. It is natural to suppose that there must be years of divine operation in the earth before the final inauguration of the Sabbatical millennium, and this, therefore, admits of Christ coming before the end of the 6,000 years.

The next period is the one known as " The Seven Times of Daniel, " which arises in connection with a brief and familiar history recorded in Daniel iv. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, saw in a dream a stately tree affording shelter to the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven; and while he beheld, an angel descended, and gave orders that the tree should be hewn down, but that the stump should be left in the earth and banded with iron and brass, and that seven times should pass over it. Daniel interpreted this to mean that Nebuchadnezzar should be driven from his kingdom, and should herd with the beasts of the field, for a literal period of seven times, or nearly seven years, in accordance with which, it came so to pass, and at the end of the period, Nebuchadnezzar's reason returned, and he blessed the Most High.

On a superficial view of the case, it would appear as if there was nothing but the literal in this narrative, and as if the import of the vision terminated with the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar, at the end of seven literal times; but a deeper insight will reveal a splendid political allegory on the face of the literal narrative. In political symbolism, a tree represents a kingdom (see Ezek. xxxi, and Matt. xiii, 32). The tree of Nebuchadnezzar's dream would, therefore, represent Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, though standing primarily for himself. On this principle, we can understand the banding of the tree stump with iron and brass; because when the Babylonian dominion was shorn away, the kingdoms that succeeded it were but a political bandaging of the power of Babylon with the brazen and iron or Greek and Roman elements. Furthermore, in standing for Nebuchadnezzar personally, the tree necessarily stood for the kingdom of Babylon, for Nebuchadnezzar was himself but the representative of the kingdom. This is apparent from the second chapter. Nebuchadnezzar is there addressed by Daniel (verse 38) as the dynastic representative of the golden dominion. " Thou art this head of gold; and after thee shall arise ANOTHER kingdom, " as if Nebuchadnezzar were a kingdom. So he was, representatively, in the

second chapter; and so we may presume he was in the fourth chapter, and went through the transactions therein narrated, as the dramatic personator of the fortunes of his kingdom.

At any rate, the narrative bears an extraordinary allegorical correspondence to the historical sequel. The seven times allegorically computed would commence with Nebuchadnezzar's ascension to the throne of Babylon. This was in 610 B.C. Now, by adding seven times of years 360×7 ---- 2,520 years to that date, we come to the ending of the 6,000 years of the world's age. Thus:--

SEVEN TIMES---commencing Nebuchadnezzar's reign, 610 B.C. 2,520. To find the conclusion of this period, A.D., deduct the years that elapsed before Christ 610.

Giving as the expiry of the seven times 1910.

World, 6,000 years old A.D. 1910.

has shown this calculation to be incorrect]

This result is remarkable, and confirms the supposition arising on a close consideration of Dan. iv, viz., that the seven times that literally measured Nebuchadnezzar's banishment from the empire, are also intended symbolically to measure the era of the world's alienation from God, from the time of the vision. At the end of the seven literal times, Nebuchadnezzar says, " Mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever. " How strikingly this represents the change that will come over the kingdoms of the world at the close of the symbolic seven times, when:--

" The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit " (Jer. xvi, 19).

" All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy name " (Psa. lxxxvi, 9).

" Neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart " (Jer. iii, 17).

" Many people 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 of His ways, and we will walk in His paths " (Isa. ii, 3).

" When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord " (Psa. cii, 22).

" From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles " (Mal. i, 11).

" So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun " (Isa. lix, 19).

The next period is one mentioned in connection with a vision recorded in Dan. viii. The vision was communicated in symbol, and the features of it were these:--A ram with two unequal horns was seen prevailing in a western, northern, and southern direction, when having " become great, " its career was interrupted by the advent of a he-goat from the west, with a great horn between its eyes. A collision between the two symbolic animals resulted in the utter discomfiture and down-trampling of the ram, and the aggrandisement of the goat. The goat's notable horn, however was broken immediately afterwards, and in its place, there sprang four horns, out of one of which came a fifth horn, which prospered to the destroying of all things Jewish.

The interpretation is supplied along with the vision itself, so that the symbols become highly interesting. The ram with two horns is stated (verse 20), to be the joint dynasty of Media and Persia; and the goat the kingdom of Greece, under the leadership of its " first (imperial) king " or Alexander the Great. This being so, the fight between the animals represents the war between the two powers, which resulted in the subjugation of the Persian empire, and the establishment of Grecian rule over the civilised habitable. The breaking of the notable horn is the death of Alexander, just as he completed his military triumphs; and the up-growth of four horns, the division of Alexander's empire among his four generals Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander, and Lysimachus. Out of one of these was to appear a power which should " destroy the mighty and the holy people, " or the Jews. This identifies it as the Roman power, which, in relation to the Jewish state, made its first appearance in the territory allotted to Seleucus, and afterwards completely uprooted the Jewish power in a series of campaigns culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the nearly total extermination of the race of Jews. The vision closes with this triumph, and leaves the future in darkness, with the exception of a general intimation that the power thus destroying the mighty and the holy people should be " broken without hand. "

In the vision itself, there was nothing to represent to Daniel the length of time during which this little-horn power of the goat (described

as of fierce countenance) should prevail over the kingdom of Jehovah. In a word, the length of " the times of the Gentiles " was not indicated in the symbols. This defect, however, was supplied before the vision finally closed:--

" Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot? And he said unto me, UNTO TWO THOUSAND AND THREE HUNDRED DAYS; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (verses 13, 14).

Now it happens that the Vatican MS. of the Septuagint reads, " 2,400 days, " which, it is said, agrees with certain MSS in possession of the Jews of Bokhara. And it is to be noticed that an " evening morning " is 24 and not 23 hours, which seems to favour the " 2,400. " We have, therefore, to choose between the two. Five hundred years ago, it would have been difficult to make an election, except in so far as other (con-terminous) dates, with which this must have been made to agree, might have assisted us in the choice. Now, however, we are enabled to decide, for the simple reason that the first reading is negatived by historic failure in the date. " 2,300 " days expired over 100 years ago, and no avenging of the sanctuary took place. But it may be said, How do you know that " 2,300 " ended over a hundred years ago? The answer is very simple. Find the commencement of any term of years, and the termination follows of itself.

Now the commencement of the period in question, is identical with the commencement of the vision itself. The question is " How long shall be THE VISION, " etc., that is, over what time will the vision just witnessed extend? This being so, we have only to ascertain the date of the first event seen in the vision, and from that date reckon the currency of the period defined as the duration of the events represented. By consulting the vision, the reader will perceive that the first event is the appearance of the Medo-Persian empire, in that particular aspect of it signified by the greater altitude of one horn of the ram over the other. The two horns are expressly declared to be representative of the two elements of the ram kingdom--the Median and the Persian. This being so, it follows that the increase of the second horn over the first in size (for it is said " the higher came up last ") represents the more prolonged ascendancy of the Persian element, which was the last to come to the throne. Darius, the Mede, reigned two years, and, dying without issue, he was succeeded by his nephew, Cyrus, the Persian, whose family retained power till the empire was overthrown by Greece 200 years later.

When Daniel saw the ram, it would appear at first, that both horns were on its head, from which it might be argued that the date of the vision's commencement would be indefinitely somewhere at the beginning of the Persian monarchy; but the supplementary statement that " the higher came up last " would suggest that Daniel was a witness of the first shooting out of the second or over-topping horn. If this is a correct deduction, " the times of the vision " would commence with the ascension of Cyrus to the throne; he being the inception of the higher horn that came up last. This would be 540 B.C. as the beginning of the days. Certainly the days did not begin earlier. They may have begun later. If the statement " the higher came up last " is an explanation, and not a description of what Daniel actually saw, the date of commencement would have to be sought for at the time when Cyrus had reigned long enough to constitute the Persian horn, as a matter of fact, the higher of the two.

Adopting 540 B.C. as the date of commencement, the erroneousness of the 2,300 reading is at once apparent; for it would give A.D. 1760 as the termination of the vision, and the time for the avenging of the sanctuary. Adopting 2,400 we get 1860 as the date of the expiry. Some may think that this must be equally a mistake with the other, as no steps, such as are contemplated in the predicted " avengement, " have yet been taken. To this it can only be remarked that supposing this to be the case, it does not show the " 2,400 days " to be wrong, but only that they have been commenced too early in fixing upon the first year of Cyrus's sole reign as the commencement, which would favour the suggestion already thrown out, that the commencement ought to be dated later on in Persian annals, when the second horn had, as a matter of history, waxed greater than the Median horn, with which the Empire commenced.

But it is not certain that nothing marks the epoch commencing 1860, as affecting the land and interests of " the holy people. " On the contrary, it is a fact of the greatest notoriety, that this is a period of great activity in connection with Palestine and the Jews.

In France, in 1860, was established " The Universal Alliance of Israelites, " a society now numbering many thousands of subscribers. In England, in 1871, " The Anglo-Jewish Association " was established in connection with the older society. And in Vienna another branch was established. Thus began that international strengthening of the bonds of brotherhood in Israel that is so notable a phenomenon of our times.

These things arose out of the earlier necessities of the Jews. In Damascus, in 1840, there was considerable robbery and persecution

of the Jews by the Turkish officials, culminating in massacre. Sir Moses Montefiore went out to the East in connection with this, and received the personal thanks of Queen Victoria and a knighthood for so doing.

There are other evidences of revival in relation to Jewish affairs, which it would occupy much space to notice. Whether 1860 or a later date be the true termination of the 2,400 period, there is no doubt about the epochal ending of the period falling in the lifetime of the present generation. This is the broad fact to which we desire special attention. The period must end on this side of the marginal period already mentioned, for the simple reason that that period witnesses the process by which the result mentioned in the 2,400 vision is accomplished, viz., the cleansing or avengement of the sanctuary.

The next period can be demonstrated with greater certainty and exactitude, and coincides with the result to which the 2,400 vision leads us, thereby affording powerful collateral evidence of the correctness of the millenary-week theory, and the " seven times " method of computing the duration of the kingdom of men, and, at the same tune, establishing, with a strength that is almost irresistible, the general conclusion that in 1905 we stand in close proximity to that wonder of historic wonders, the advent of Jesus in power and great glory, to destroy them that destroy the earth, and establish " glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will toward men. "

We refer to the four-beasts vision of Daniel. The four beasts, like the four-metals of the image, are explained to mean the four great imperial dynasties, under which mankind should successively be ruled with something like universal dominion (Dan. vii, 17, 23). Attention is specially directed to the fourth beast, as it is in connection with it more particularly that the chronological considerations of the vision arise. This is universally admitted to be representative of the Roman empire, which, in relation to the Babylonish, was " the fourth kingdom " (verse 23).

On the head of the fourth beast were ten horns. This number was augmented by the appearance of an eleventh, which, however, by its aggressive acts, speedily diminished the whole number to eight. The eleventh horn was distinguished from its neighbours in having eyes and mouth, a " stout look, " and a hostile propensity about it, which displaced three of the first horns to make way for itself. It employed its mouth in " speaking great words against the Most High " and used its power against the Almighty, ultimately bringing about the perdition of the whole body corporate of which it formed a part. This, however, was

not an instantaneous result; the horn prevailed for a period before retribution came. The testimony is:--

" He shall speak great words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand UNTIL A TIME AND TIMES, AND THE DIVIDING OF TIME " (Dan. vii, 25).

The conclusion of this period is marked by an event as follows:--

" I beheld, then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame " (verse 11). " The same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom " (verses 21, 22). " The Judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end " (verse 26).

Now the import of this symbolism is evident enough. The body of the beast being the Roman empire, it follows that the Roman empire (notwithstanding historical vicissitudes) was in some form to continue till the arrival of " the Ancient of Days " to destroy it, an event still in the future: but as an undivided kingdom it was not to continue: the ten horns on the head of the beast show this. The interpretation is: " the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise. " Kings represent dominions, and hence the appearance of ten kings in the head of the beast shows that, ultimately, the Roman empire of undivided magnitude, instead of continuing to be controlled by a single imperial will, as the body of a beast is by its head, was to be broken up into ten separate royalties or kingdoms, obeying so many separate political wills, and sustaining independent political existence, though forming part and parcel of the Roman system of nations.

This fact is not less clearly apparent in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image. The legs of iron represent the autonomy of the empire in its prosperous days; the feet, a mixture of iron and clay, and divided into ten toes, symbolise the later stage of Roman history--a stage embracing the " modern " era up to the present time, and a little beyond--a stage in which the power and territory of the Roman empire are distributed among rival states and monarchs who have sprung out of her political embers.

The chronology of the fourth-beast symbol is determinable by the career of the little horn. The fourth-beast system was to continue, at least, a time, times, and a half, from the time the little horn made its

appearance, after the end of which, it was to be destroyed by divine judgment, and the dominion transferred to the saints. Hence, if we can identify the little horn in history, and fix the date of its appearance, we shall be enabled to arrive at a correct conclusion as to the arrival of the time of the fourth-beast destroying judgment to take effect in the coming of the Ancient of Days, in the person of Jesus to put an end to the arrogant blasphemies which prevail for time, times, and a half. To do this, we must give a little attention to the appearance of the ten horns of the fourth beast, as the ten horns precede the advent of the little horn power. This takes us back to what is called " the fall of the Roman empire, " when " the fourth kingdom " passed from its imperial to its divided and multiregal phase.

Here we contemplate a protracted period of bloody revolution. The Roman arms, after centuries of resistless prowess, had lost their terror through the effeminacy of a race accustomed to victory and luxury, and the misgovernment of emperors, who ruled for private advantage instead of the public weal. The consequence was, that the rapacious hordes of Northern Europe and Asia, attracted to the tottering empire, like birds of prey to a rotting carcass, came down in clouds upon the fertile and cultivated countries of the south, and though held back for a time, ultimately broke through every barrier, and defeating the Roman armies, capturing the Roman fortresses, and ultimately sacking the proud empire City herself, put an end to the mightiest dominion that ever ruled the civilised habitable. This, however (which took more than a century to accomplish), though a destruction of what was considered the Roman empire, was but the introduction of the clay amongst the iron, not the displacing of the iron by the clay.

The northern nations were too lacking in genius, either social or political, to substitute a new order of society for that which they found among the civilised peoples of Rome. They were a vigorous, but an uncivilised race, and substantially fell in with the Roman order of things. True, there was an attempt by the Vandals, to abolish everything Roman and assimilate the conquered empire to the institutions of its barbarian conquerors; but this movement soon gave way before a reaction, which demanded and hastened the restoration of Roman civilisation. The clay intermingled itself with the iron, and was, ultimately moulded into shape by the stronger element. This is the time at which we are to look for the ten horns; for the ten horns in the beast vision represent the same aspect of the fourth kingdom, as the clay and iron ten-toed feet of the image vision. It is reasonable to assume that as soon as the Roman beast ceased to be controlled by its own head it passed into the ten-horned state of government; that is, as soon as imperial Rome fell, as soon as the central government of the empire was destroyed,

the empire passed into the dismembered state represented by the ten horns. If this be a reasonable assumption, we ought to find in her dismemberment a number of political divisions answering to the number of the horns.

In considering this matter, we are met with the fact that the barbarian nations, on overturning the Roman Empire, did not unite themselves under one government, and set up a new empire. They scattered themselves among the provinces of Roman Europe, and settled in such countries as were according to their liking, each nation setting up its own government independently of all the rest. In this way there sprang up a number of separate kingdoms in the territory formerly ruled by the undivided Roman sceptre; that is, several distinct horns sprang out of the head of the beast. The question is how many? Daniel says ten, and history says ten.

Sir Isaac Newton gives the following enumeration of the states that sprang up under the barbarian nations after the overthrow of Rome: 1--Vandals and Alans (under one government, occupying Spain and Africa); 2--Suevians (another part of Spain); 3--Visigoths; 4--Alans (France); 5--Burgundians; 6--Franks (separate from the Alans); 7--Britons; 8--Huns; 9--Lombards; 10--Ravenna. This enumeration is broadly taken and confined to Roman territory. It takes no account of minor divisions, such as the dukedoms (dignified by the name of kingdoms) into which Britain was divided, or the petty factions that were here and there to be found in connection with other States. It only takes note of the conspicuous and great divisions of political power, properly considered " kingdoms, " that followed the downfall of Rome, in Roman territory. It takes no cognisance of Asiatic dominion, or of any political phenomenon beyond the limits of the fourth-beast territory; and in this the discerning reader will say Sir Isaac Newton only adhered to the necessities imposed upon all interpreters of the vision itself.

Dr. Brewster, in his " Life of Sir Isaac Newton " (pp. 227, 228), paraphrasing Sir Isaac's views on the subject, observes: " Some of these kingdoms at length fell, and new ones sprang up; but, whatever was their subsequent number, they still retain the name of the ten kings from their first number. "

Machiavelli, in his history of Florence, enumerates ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was dismembered by the incursions of the northern nations. This list* is as follows: 1--Ostrogoths (in Moesia); 2--the Visigoths (in Pannonia); 3--Suevis and Alans (in Gascoigne and Spain); 4--The Vandals (in Africa); 5--the Franks (in France); 6--the Burgundians (in Burgundy); 7--the Herlui and Turingi (in Italy);

8--the Saxons and Angles (in Britain); 9--the Huns (in Hungary); 10--the Lombards (at first upon the Danube, and afterwards in Italy). This enumeration appears to differ a little from that adopted by Sir Isaac Newton, but a close comparison will reveal a resemblance between the two, amounting to identity.

* This list does not appear as a list in Machiavelli's book, but has the form of an account, extending over several pages, of which this is a condensation.--Author.

The only substantial difference is the exclusion of the Ostro-goths in Moesia (answering to the southern border of the empire of Austria) from the list of Sir Isaac Newton; but this difference is more a difference in the way of reckoning than in the actual enumeration of the ten kingdoms. Machiavelli's may be the true list, and Newton's may be reconcilable with it, by reckoning the nations of the Alans one kingdom instead of two, as Sir Isaac counts them, which would make room for the Ostrogoths as one of the ten. On the other hand, it is possible, though less likely, that the Ostrogoths may have been part and parcel of the adjoining Visigoth state of Pannonia, on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, answering to the Mediterranean seaboard of Austria. In any case, the identification of the ten horns is complete. The process is not circumvented by minor difficulties, arising from the obscurities of ancient records, which can never overthrow the broad fact that the territory of the Roman empire, after the overthrow of the Roman Imperial power, was divided into a number of political sections, more or less answering to the number ten. The diversity of race and tribe existing in Europe at the time, in no way interferes with the fact of a decimal division of political power. There were, no doubt, many more nationalities than ten; but this no more disproves their political division into ten parts, than does the existence of the English, Scotch, and Irish in Great Britain disprove the political unity of the three kingdoms.

The vision predicts the uprising of ten kingdoms in the territory of the Roman Empire. We would, therefore, argue a priori, that there must have been that number in the States that made their appearance when the unity of the empire was dissolved, whatever the obscurity of history might indicate to the contrary. But, fortunately, we do no violence to history in believing that the vision was realised. History shows us a number of kingdoms, so nearly approximating to the prophetic number, that two independent historical writers give us the exact number; and it must be remembered that one of these two--Machiavelli--was not writing for the illustration of prophecy--of which there is no reason to believe he knew anything--but simply in exercise of his

function as an impartial recorder of historical facts.

The ten horns appeared about the fifth and sixth centuries, but were afterwards reduced and multiplied in number by the revolutions of war. It is evident, however, that they reappear at the time that the fourth-beast system as a whole is destroyed by divine judgment. This is apparent by the later visions, seen by John in the Isle of Patmos, in which the fourth beast of Daniel is divided up into several beasts, for the purpose of illustrating subordinate and internal features of the system represented. According to these, we find that ten horns figure conspicuously at the end, as well as the beginning, of the little horn (time, times, and a half) era (Rev. xvii, 12, 14). " The ten horns which thou sawest (on the head of the scarlet-coloured beast, verse 3) are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them. "

Here there is no mention of an eleventh horn plucking up three of the ten by the roots, because it refers to an entirely different period of history from that represented by the ten horns on the head of Daniel's fourth beast. It shows us the constitution and attitude of the beast at the time the Lamb, as the Ancient of Days, comes to give its body to the burning flame of destroying war, from which it appears that the original ten-horned phase of Daniel's fourth beast is to be resuscitated, at the era of its destruction, and not only resuscitated, but established on the basis of corporate unity. That is to say the ten kingdoms into which the fourth beast system is to be divided at the end, are to unite in a unanimous policy, under a single head. They are to give their power and strength to the little horn blaspheming power (separately symbolised as a scarlet-coloured beast), for the purpose of carrying on war against Jesus when he has manifested himself in the earth as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The beast will thus act once more as a living unity, but this time, a ten-horned unity--a confederacy of the kings of the Roman territory, formed for the purpose of mutual self-defence against the power which will have threateningly appeared in the east, and of whose real nature they will be entirely ignorant, until overwhelmed in the fearful whirlwind of His destroying anger (Jer. xxx, 23, 24).

These facts enable us not only to reconcile Daniel's fourth beast with the visions of John, but to make use of all together, in forming a complete picture of the purpose of God, as unfolded in the past, and yet remaining to be fulfilled in " the end afore determined. "

They teach us that the ten-horned phase of the Roman system of nations has relation to two epochs in its existence; first, when its imperial unity disappeared in the " fall of the Roman Empire, " and the second, when that unity is restored, for the purpose of a united effort against " that determined, " which is to be " poured upon the desolate. "

We have now to enquire if history affords any parallel to the uprising of an eleventh political power in the Roman system, subsequent to the appearance of the ten, and of the uprooting by it of three of its predecessors, and the assumption by it of an arrogant dictatorial attitude toward the other powers, as symbolised by the eleventh horn, having a stout look and a mouth speaking great words of blasphemy. The merest retrospective glance affords the answer. The eye falls upon a power answering all the requirements of the prophecy; and the eye has not to search for it. It is not a second-rate object in the historical retrospect. It looms up in the past with over-shadowing breadth; it fills the whole picture with its imposing figure; which though no longer a recognised power in the political system of Europe, by reason of the termination of its allotted " time, times, and an half, " is still conspicuous as a religious element. Do we require to mention the power to which these remarks apply? Its name will instinctively spring to the reader's lips--THE PAPACY.

The Papacy appeared in the territory of the Roman or fourth beast, after the division of the empire by the barbarians of the north--that is (symbolically), after the ten horns had appeared. It was not till the beginning of the seventh century, that the Bishop of Rome--till that time a mere diocesan, an ecclesiastic among other ecclesiastics--was constituted by imperial edict, universal bishop or pope--the supreme pontiff of the State religion. The decree which finally elevated him to this position was issued by the emperor Phocas, from Constantinople (the mouth of the Dragon which gave the Papistical beast his power, and his seat, and his great authority: Rev. xiii, 2).

The date of the decree is given by one as A.D. 606, and another A.D. 608, which gives two years' uncertainty as to the beginning, and, therefore, ending of the period. But the date is sufficiently definite and exact for all practical purposes. The appearance of the eleventh horn is, doubtless, to be reckoned from the date of the edict which constituted it a power in Europe. It is true it was at first merely an ecclesiastical power, but history shows that it very soon became a political power, exercising secular authority in the territory provided for it by the displacement of three of the original ten horns, and, in addition to that, claiming and exercising imperial jurisdiction over contemporary " crowned heads. "

The plucking up of the three horns did not precede the advent of the eleventh horn, but followed as the consequence of it. An interval would elapse between the one thing and the other. The eleventh horn would be some time erect before the three fell: how long is not stated. It would necessarily be very short in the symbol; but then the events and times represented by the symbol were on the historical scale; and, therefore, a momentary interval on the head of the beast, would represent an interval of years in the course of history. It is not stated that the three horns were plucked up before the commencement of the time, times and a half; it is stated the eleventh horn prevailed for that time; but this does not exclude the self-evident conclusion that the plucking up of the three horns would be within the period of the eleventh horn's prevalence. The plucking up of the three horns was, in fact, part of its "prevalence" and, therefore, would necessarily transpire within the period of its ascendancy. Hence, we do not find that three kingdoms were given to the Pope the moment he appeared, but we do find that he received them about a century afterwards.

In a work published in 1782 entitled, "The History of Modern Europe, with an account of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and a view of the progress of Society, from the rise of the Modern Kingdoms to the Peace of Paris, in 1763," there occurs the following statement, on page 47: --

"Before Pepin returned to France, he renewed his donation to St. Peter, yielding to Stephen and his successors the Exarchate; AEmelia, now Romagna; and Pentapolis, now Marca d'Ancona, with all the cities therein, to be held by them for ever; the kings of France, as patricians, retaining only an ideal superiority, which was soon forgotten. THUS WAS THE SCEPTRE ADDED TO THE

KEYS, THE SOVEREIGNTY TO THE PRIESTHOOD, AND THE POPES ENRICHED WITH THE SPOILS OF THE LOMBARD KINGS AND THE ROMAN EMPERORS. In the three states here mentioned, the reader will recognise three of the ten kingdoms that appeared on the declension of the empire, viz.:--1--Ravenna (the Exarchate); 2--Heruli and Turingi (AEmelia, now Romagna); and 3--Lombardy (Pentapolis). "

Dr. Keith's version of the matter is as follows: --

" The Exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the State of Rome, were subject to the secular dominion of the church of Rome, and mainly form, to this hour, 'the States of the Church,' over which the Pope, as a temporal sovereign, exercises sovereignty, and wears the 'TRIPLE CROWN,' as if in obvious token that three of the first kingdoms were rooted up before him. " ---Signs of the Times, page 22.

The eleventh horn had eyes: it could, therefore, see the other horns; while the other horns being without eyes, could not see it. What political peculiarity of the Papacy corresponds with this symbol? Obviously its priesthood. The institution exists in the territory of all the other horns, and by means of it Rome is made privy to the concerns of every power in Europe; while these powers are unable to penetrate the secrets of Rome, on account of the fidelity which the priesthood have always maintained to their ecclesiastical chief. History affords perpetually-recurring illustrations of the political power which Papal Rome was enabled to exert in all the realms of Europe, through this system of espionage, which she was enabled to maintain through her priests. It is remarkable that the Papal Power should be known in diplomatic language as " The HOLY SEE. "

The eleventh king was to be " diverse from the first (ten) " (Dan. vii, 24). It required no ingenuity to make out the diversity between the Pope and the crowned heads of Europe. The Pope does not belong to the order of kings. His appearance in Europe was a new political phenomenon. Such a personage had never appeared before as a sacerdotal imperial despot, claiming not only the actual sovereignty of the three territories transferred to his secular dominion, but divinely-conferred jurisdiction over every sovereign in Europe. This character was not assumed by the Roman Pontiffs all at once, but it had grown to full development before the Papacy was more than two centuries old.

In the days of Pope Gregory VII it ripened to maturity. Of this Pope it is recorded that " he engaged the Church in an open war with the sovereigns of all nations. " He formed a purpose to " engage in the

bond of fidelity and allegiance, to the Vicar of Christ, as king of kings, and lord of lords, all the potentates of the earth, and to establish at Rome an annual assembly of bishops, by whom the contests which might arise between kingdoms and sovereign states were to be decided--the pretensions of princes to be examined, and the fate of nations and empires to be determined. " So far did he succeed in his scheme of supremacy, that Henry IV., Emperor of Germany whom he had summoned to his presence as a delinquent, applied for absolution at the Gates of Canosa, a fortress in the Appenines, where Gregory happened to be resident at the time, " and being stripped of his robes, and, wrapt in sackcloth, he was obliged to remain in an outer court three days, in the month of January, bare-footed and fasting, before he was permitted to kiss the feet of His Holiness. The haughty pontiff condescended to grant him absolution, after he had sworn obedience to His Holiness in all things. "

Gregory, elated by his triumph, and now looking upon himself, not altogether without reason, as the lord and master of all the crowned heads in Christendom, said in several of his letters which were written at the time, that it was his duty to " pull down the pride of kings. " In accordance with this sentiment, he wrote to Solomon, a refractory king of Hungary, " You ought to know the kingdom of Hungary belongs to the Roman Church; and learn that you will incur the indignation of the Holy See, if you do not acknowledge that you hold your dominions of the Pope, and not of the Emperor. " He subsequently deposed Henry IV., in the words " In the name of Almighty God, and by your (the council's) authority, I prohibit Henry, the son of our Emperor Henry, from governing the Teutonic

Kingdom, and Italy; I release all Christians from their oath of allegiance to him, and I strictly forbid all persons from serving or attending him as king. "

He appointed a successor to Henry, one Rodolph, and sent him a golden crown, with an address, in which, after depriving Henry of strength in combat, and condemning him never to be victorious, he delivers himself of the following apostrophe to Peter and Paul, in which the nature of his pretensions as their pretended successor becomes apparent: " Make all men sensible that as you can bind and loose everything in heaven, you can also upon earth TAKE > FROM OR GIVE to every one, according to his deserts, empires, kingdoms, principalities. Let the kings and princes of the age then instantly feel your power, that they may not dare to despise the orders of your church. "

These sentiments Gregory VII left as an heritage to his successors,

and they have continued to be the animating spirit of the Roman See to the present day, illustrating the statement of the vision that the eleventh horn, with eyes, should be " diverse from the first (ten), " and should have a " look more stout than his fellows. "

The horn had a mouth. This indicates that it would in some sense presume to speak to the others, and the speaking could not be for the purpose of mutual deliberation, because the others had no mouths, and, therefore, no conversation could take place; the speaking, therefore, could only take the form of legislative dictation: the eleventh horn would presume to make law to the others. The applicability of this to the Papacy is abundantly manifested in the last paragraph.

The words it spoke were " great words against the Most High, " not words in the verbal sense: " words " here has a more comprehensive signification than the dictionary meaning. It imports the policy of the power spoken of, as represented and expressed by its utterances .over the whole period of its existence. These are " the words " by which the indignation that destroys the beast is evoked. Now these words, in order to be " against the Most High, " need not to be verbally directed against Him. They need not take the form of denunciations of the Almighty.

In the Scriptural sense, everything uttered against the truth is uttered against the Almighty, though it may be couched in the language of allegiance. Hence, for the Papacy to " speak great words against the Most High, " it is not necessary for her to have formally fulminated her denunciations against the Deity. If her ecclesiastical creed and her ecclesiastical policy have practically involved the repudiation of His truth, and His people, her " words " have been none the less, but all the more, " against the most High " for being framed in the language of sanctimonious pretence.

We have only to enquire whether the policy of Rome has or has not been one of arrogant presumption and destructive opposition to everything in which the name and honour of God are involved; and we have not to go far for the answer. No one having any knowledge of history, and any understanding of the truth, can be ignorant that Papal Rome has, from the beginning of its days, " spoken great words against the Most High, " and " made war with, and prevailed against, the saints. " Her career, since the day her bishop was crowned universal Dictator-ecclesiastical,

has been an unbroken chapter of enormities perpetrated against God and man. During the long period of her ascendancy, she has well merited the designation bestowed upon her by the Spirit in vision to John, in the Isle of Patmos. She has been the sum of all abomination--the

hold of every foul spirit--the " MOTHER of harlots and ABOMINATIONS of the EARTH " (Rev. xvii, 5).

She is well-styled " MYSTERY, " and more appropriately still, the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY " (2 Thess, ii, 7). She has been iniquity mystified--iniquity veiled--iniquity dressed in a robe of religious pretence--iniquity tricked out in the splendid paraphernalia of regal pomp and civil authority--iniquity of the deepest dye, draped in holy garments--a whited sepulchre of mystified iniquity, showing a beautiful exterior, and inviting all nations to worship at its cursed shrine of " rottenness and dead men's bones " ; and all nations have gone and bowed the knee, and garnished this grave of the saints with costly things, proving themselves the seed of the accursed rejecters of Jesus, who honoured the tombs of the prophets, and thereby were held by Jesus to be proved accomplices of those who killed them, and put them in their graves. The LITTLE HORN imposture--this proud, wilful, stout-looking pretentious, audacious, blasphemous, saint-killing power, which has prevailed against all divine things for twelve centuries, in accordance with the words of Daniel--this depraved, hypocritical, corrupt, iniquitous, tyrannical, and murderous Church of Rome, with which it is now becoming fashionable at religious meetings to bandy compliments, and speak respectfully of, and which blinded and becrazed " charity " would make room for, and deal liberally with, as an institution " doing good " in its own way, and " advancing the cause of Christ under the banners of the Catholic religion " ; this execrable mistress of witchery, whose cunning arts of simulated kindness, and ornaments of learning and fascinations of venerable pedigree, are, in England, entrapping thousands upon thousands into the bondage which it was the boast of this country to have escaped three hundred years ago--this system of unmixd iniquity is further introduced to our notice in Rev. xvii, 3, 4, as a gaudy, betrinketed, whorish woman, drunk with the blood of saints, and having in her hand a cup of abominable liquor, with which she intoxicates kings.

The appropriateness of this figure will be seen at a glance. The Church of Rome pretends to be the faithful spouse of the absent bridegroom; whereas she acts the part of a prostitute of the most profligate and abandoned type. She coquets with the kings of the earth, and administers to them free libations of her bemuddling doctrines, with which " all nations are drunk. " She commits fornication with them, for her loves and her aims are confined to the worldly objects she can accomplish in her ecclesiastical dealings with them. She revels in lust and lucre, and is drenched in all her garments with the reeking blood of the righteous slain, whom she has put to death for their testimony.

This LITTLE-HORN blaspheming prevailing power, is further spoken of as a " king doing according to his will " (Dan. xi, 36), exalting and magnifying himself above every power (Heb., ail), and speaking marvellous things against the God of gods; which is an exact description of the Pope's presumption, as historically illustrated. It is said he should not regard the God of his fathers nor the desire of women. This is also descriptive of him. The emperors of Rome--the " fathers " or predecessors of the Pope--were Pagans, and worshipped the deities of Pagan mythology. The Pope disregarded these, and set up a god which the emperors " knew not, " viz., the triune God of their superstition, and the Virgin Mary, whom they " honoured with gold and silver, and precious stones, " in erecting begemmed and garnished temples to their worship. He was to " disregard the desire of women. " He should be a celibate, " forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats. " (1 Tim. iv, 3). How signally this has been fulfilled, history testifies. The whole hierarchy of Rome, from the Pope in " the chair of St. Peter " to the mendicant friar, are under a bond to remain in bachelorhood, and thus they set at naught the " desire of women, " and fulfil the prophecy. " He shall magnify himself above every God, " and " shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished. " His existence and supremacy will, therefore, continue till the return of Christ; for the indignation is not accomplished until he come to " tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God " (Rev. xix, 15), and to pour out the wine of HIS wrath into the cup of His indignation, without mixture (Rev. xiv, 10).

These prophecies are reproduced by Paul in 2 Thess. ii, 3-10. The church at Thessalonica had been agitated with ideas of the imminence of Christ's appearing. Paul writes to quiet their apprehensions on the subject, and reminds them of what he had told them while he was with them (verse 5), namely, that before that day of Christ would come, there should be a widespread departure from the truth, and a subsequent and consequent development of " that Man of Sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and EXALTETH HIMSELF ABOVE ALL THAT IS CALLED GOD, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. "

These words of Paul amount to a paraphrase of the words of Daniel. There is, however, a feature in them which is lacking in Daniel's representation of the matter. Paul connects the development of the " Man of Sin " with the " falling away " that was to come, and intimates by the concatenation of his words, that the one was to result from the other--that the revelation of the " Man of Sin " was to be the result of the falling away from the truth. This is an important addition to the information communicated by Daniel, without which, the identification

of the power represented would not have been so complete as it is. There is nothing in Daniel to indicate that the appearance of the little horn of the fourth beast was to be connected with God's operations among men by the truth. For anything there is in Daniel to the contrary, the little horn might have represented a heathen power, like Babylon, or like the original ten horns, having no germinal connection with anything pertaining to God; but, by Paul's words, we are enabled to see that this little horn was to be the political offspring of an apostasy which was to take place among those professing the truth of Christ.

This leads us straight to the Papacy, for the fact is notorious that the Papacy which has ruled the political and ecclesiastical destinies of Europe for twelve centuries, is nothing more nor less than the political incorporation of the principles developed as the result of a departure from the truth on the part of the early professing Christians. In the Papacy, therefore, we behold the MAN OF SIN predicted by Paul, and the system which is to be "consumed with the spirit of his (Christ's) mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming." So long as the brethren, as a whole, were faithful to the truth, it was impossible for this Man of Sin to be revealed, and, therefore, it was impossible for Christ's coming to take place, because the coming of Christ was to occur for the destruction of the Man of Sin.

There was another obstacle in the way at the time that Paul wrote. "Ye know," says he, "what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time." The "Man of Sin" was to be the supreme power in the state. Before this could be accomplished, Paganism in high places had to be abolished. The Pope, as the professed "Vicar of Jesus Christ," claiming to be "King of Kings and Lords of Lords," could never be politically developed in Europe until the Roman empire was revolutionised, and changed from a Pagan to a professed Christian power. The paganism of Rome was, therefore, an obstruction. It was that "withholding" the revelation of "the Man of Sin." But the hindrance was to be "taken out of the way," and "THEN shall that Wicked be revealed," etc. We know, as a matter of history, that Paganism, in due time, was taken out of the way, and that the way was thereby opened for the uprise of the Little Horn on the head of the fourth or Roman (symbolic) beast, which, as "a Man of Sin," should prevail against the saints for 1,260 years, and exalt himself in the earth above every object of worship.

There are some who hold that this "Man of Sin" is a particular person--an individual of extraordinary audacity and impiety, who has yet to appear

and theoretically abjure the existence of the Almighty, and offer himself to all the world as the object of worship. But such take an extremely narrow and utterly untenable view of the matter. All they rely upon is the phrase " Man of Sin " ; but this no more proves the personality of the power referred to, than do Paul's other words, " THE OLD MAN, " prove that he meant a literal octogenarian, whose company we were to avoid, in " putting off the old man with his deeds. " If the " he " applied to the Man of Sin, prove the personality of the power referred to, what is to be made of the " he " applied to the " what withholdeth " ? " HE who now letteth (or hindereth) will let (or hinder) until HE be taken out of the way. " There was a " HE " existing in Paul's days, obstructing the development of the " Man of Sin, " and who was in due time to be removed to make way for his impious successor. Who was this? Let the individualists answer. Was there a particular man living in Paul's day, whose death or deposition was necessary to the appearance of the " Man of Sin " ? If the answer is " Yea, " who was it? and how is it that eighteen hundred years have elapsed since his death, and yet the " Man of Sin " of the individualist has never made his appearance? A full confrontation of this difficulty will demolish the individual theory.

The obstruction in the way of Paul's Man of Sin was the faithfulness of the brotherhood, and the political supremacy of Paganism. Both these barriers vanished in course of time, and up rose, in the historical arena, that monstrosity which has overshadowed the historic page with records of transcendent cruelty and iniquity. Historically, the Pope is absolutely THE MAN OF SIN; for throughout all the generations of the Papacy, the Pope has been the only man in the earth in his position. The system of the Papacy is essentially a ONE-MAN system. The theory of the system does not admit of more than a single head. It has happened once or twice that there have been rival Popes, but this was an anomaly never sanctioned by the system. Politically the Pope is the " MAN OF SIN, " whoever the Pope may happen to be. The individuality of the man is entirely absorbed in the position. No individual man is essential to constitute the Popeship. The Popeship has always found a man to fill it, whoever has lived or died, which shows that it is the office or position which Paul contemplated when he spoke of the revelation of the " Man of Sin. " One man filled the " MAN-OF-SIN " OFFICE when that which hindered was taken out of the way; and another entirely different man will be in it when Jesus is manifested to destroy the whole system.

Those who individualise and futurise the " Man of Sin " are in the habit of literalising the period of the Little Horn's prevalence. " Time, times, and an half, " to them are literal three-and-a-half

years, at some undiscoverable time in the future, during which " the ANTI-CHRIST " of their theory will appear on the scene, rise to the summit of universal power, and come to his end by divine interposition. How this theory can be entertained by an intelligent mind on a full review of the bearings of the case, it is difficult to conceive. It involves several anomalies of the most palpable kind. In the first place, if the time, times, and a half of Daniel's fourth beast are literal and future, of course the little horn represents a power yet to appear; and, in that case, the political visions shown to Daniel and John take no notice of the greatest political phenomenon of the fourth-beast period of the world's history. Daniel is shown the fourth-beast, and told about the fourth-beast kingdom, and put in possession of details respecting it, but is withheld all information of the most prominent, extraordinary, and longest-lived feature of the system, viz., the PAPACY. The most astounding phase of the fourth-beast history is left out of the symbolism of the fourth-beast period! He receives no information of a persecuting regal imposture, which should lift its head and voice over all the kings of the Continent, for more than 1,260 years, and trample under foot the truth and the friends of the truth all that time; but he is particularly enlightened with reference to an insignificant three-years-and-a-half, during which a daring man is only to equal (for he could not surpass) the impiety and cruelty exhibited by the Roman Pontiffs for more than a half-score centuries! The suggestion has only to be stated to be condemned. How utterly incongruous, that in a symbol, confessedly extending over a chronological period of 2,000 years, an incident of only three-and-a-half literal years' duration should receive a place as its most conspicuous feature--a period of utter insignificance as history goes. Again, such an assumption would make the vision teach that the saints were not to be prevailed against in the course of history, EXCEPT DURING THREE-AND-A-HALF YEARS AT ITS CLOSE, and would place in a curious position the fact, that as a matter of history, the Papacy has spoken great words against the Most High, and prevailed against the saints for a PERIOD OF UPWARDS OF 1,200 YEARS. Besides, of what service would the vision be, if its applicability were confined to a single oppressor, and a period of three-years-and-a-half at the close of history? Especially as it is denied by those who maintain this theory, that there is any clue to the time when the Man of Sin may be expected to appear. As it could in that case only interest those contemporary with that epoch, it would throw the vision into the corner, as a thing destitute of spiritual utility for all time, and only possessing the kind of interest attaching to any prodigy--a view of the matter eminently derogatory to God, in view of the fact that it was communicated by Him for enlightenment, encouragement, and guidance.

The literal theory is puerile and untenable. It is utterly unworthy of consideration, and can never be entertained where a broad and competent view of the facts is taken. The historical view of the matter, which is " the truth of the matter, " gives utility and importance to the vision. We read in it the consoling assurance that " the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, " and that the " practising and prospering " of human wickedness and presumption in the earth, has a determined end--that the triumphing of the wicked, like the waves of the sea, has an appointed bound that it cannot pass--that the times of the Gentiles are fixed and defined, and that standing where we are, we can look forward with intelligent expectation to their early expiry, and the glorious manifestation of the Ancient of Days, in righteousness to judge and make war, and destroy them that destroy the earth.

With righteous triumph may we hail the day of Rome's perdition. Her history shows a dark and dreadful retrospect. No language can adequately depict the enormity of her crimes. The Pagan murderer of the apostles, the Papal blasphemer of the truth, and destroyer of the saints, " Great Babylon, " has heaped to herself wrath against the day of wrath. Her crimes are without number and without measure. For a long period of centuries, she has prevailed against everything divine. She has waged open war against the word of God. She has done her utmost to extirpate it from-among mankind. She has made the study of it a crime, and the possession of it a capital offence. She has trampled the truth under her feet, and drenched the earth with the blood of unresisting victims, who loved it, and counted not their lives dear unto them in defence of it. She has invented and established every kind of abomination in doctrine and practice. For ages, she has held up a mortal man as an object of universal adoration, above all on earth called God, or worshipped. To this living idol, she has commanded the ascription of more than mortal honours, and ordered all who would not bow down to the image to be cast into the furnace of fiery affliction, of persecution, bonds, imprisonments and death.

She has deified the ghost of a dead woman, and commanded the world to worship " the Queen of heaven, " under the blasphemous title of " the Mother of God. " She has burlesqued and brought to mockery the truth of the miraculous conception. She has enjoined prayer to dead men, and taught men to look to them for guardianship. The world, drunk with the wine of her abomination, has responded to the injunction, and elected their " patron saints, " to whom they address their ignorant devotions, and whose guardianship they invoke upon the temples of their superstition by calling them after their names.

She has changed the memorials of Christ's death into objects of worship,

telling her dupes that the touch of her lying priests transmutes the emblematic bread and wine into the veritable essence of Christ's nature; and she has degraded the intelligent observance of the institution, commanded for the affectionate participation of all the members of Christ's household, into a scene of superstitious and meaningless mummary, enacted by her foul-handed priests. She holds up as objects of faith and acts of obedience, dead men's bones, musty relics, crosses, genuflexions, bodily penances; and exacts money from the pockets of her dupes on the iniquitous pretence of imparting spiritual benefit. She has descended to the unutterable infamy of selling licentiousness for gain--pretending to give liberty to sin with impunity, for money--blasphemously professing to avert the course of eternal justice for a consideration in cash! She has invented the chimera of purgatory, and befooled the deluded masses of mankind into the belief that she had power, for money, to liberate " departed souls " from its custody.

There is no religious folly of which she has not been guilty. She has arrogated the power to forgive sins, and by her priests in " the Confessional, " has enforced the most execrable inquisition into the private affairs of her devotees, especially women, in whose " spiritual interests " her celibate scoundrels have professed a solicitude which has only been the cloak of their lust. She has established nests of infamy throughout the world, in the name of spiritual purity and seclusion; and in convents and nunneries, carries on secret abominations and cruelties, of which the unutterable heinousness will only be fully known .when " Great Babylon comes into remembrance before God, " and the time arrives to give unto her " double for all her sins. " She has decreed the heathen fiction of the immortality of the soul to be the cardinal point of the Christian faith, and has exalted the Pagan dreams of Hell and Elysian Fields, to the same eminence. She has turned away from the truth, and given heed to fables. She has made lies her refuge.

From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, she is one mass of spiritual putrefaction; and when to this is added her great swelling words of vanity, her proud looks, and rapacious deeds, her wicked principles and cruel acts, her malignant hostility to the truth in every shape and form, and her implacable persecution by rack torture, fire and death, of all who professed it, whom she could get into her power, the picture of her enormities is complete. Yet, like the adulterous woman, " she wipeth her mouth, and saith, I am innocent. " In the language imputed to her in the Apocalypse, she says, " I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow " (Rev. xviii, 7).

Well might the servants of God be represented as crying, " How long,

O Lord, holy and true? " Such a triumph of iniquity in the earth is well-nigh beyond the capacity of human forbearance; but our patience is strengthened by the word which God has sent, " that His servants might know the things which must shortly come to pass. " Through it, as through a telescope, we see the coming retribution, and we hear the murmuring echoes of that mighty paean of triumph, which will ascend from countless tongues, like the noise of a tumult of waters: " Alleluia! Salvation, and glory and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. " (Rev. xix, 1, 2). The sound of this song of triumph is very near, even at the door. In all probability, another generation will not pass before its joyous peals will burst upon the world. " Time, times, and a half " of years are up. 1866-70 (a margin covered by the French occupation of Rome) saw the end of the 1,260 years which commenced in 606-8, and with the end of her allotted time comes the swift and decisive sword of divine justice. " Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. . . Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her " (Rev. xviii, 5-8). " The Lord shall consume her with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy her with the brightness of HIS COMING " (2 Thess. ii, 8). CONFIRMATORY SIGNS

Being at the end of the prophetic periods, are there any events extant in the world at the present moment indicative of the fact? In answering this question, we desire to draw attention to what has been revealed in reference to the events attendant upon " the latter days. " We begin by quoting Rev. xvi, 12, 16, where this matter is the subject of symbol:-

" And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet; for they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Behold, I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.) And he gathered them together into a place called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. "

The main feature of this testimony is a predicted gathering of nations

to a war in which God Almighty (through the Lord Jesus Christ, who arrives on earth like a thief, before the conflict commences), is to take a part.

There are, however, certain signs preceding the gathering, which demand our attention. There is, first the drying up of the river Euphrates, " that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. " Now, we cannot take this to mean the literal evaporation of the river known by that name; because there would be no connection between such an event and the preparation of " the way of the kings of the east, " or sunrising, whoever we take these to be.

There are only two classes that answer to the designation. viz.-- the saints and the Jews: the first being the kings of a future age--having their origin and constitution in Christ, the great rising sun of righteousness, who is to reappear in the east, and subjugate the world from that quarter; and the second, being the royal eastern nation, or lords of the east. If we suppose that " the kings of the east " of the testimony are the saints, we are at once precluded from the literal view of " the river Euphrates, " for how should the drying up of a river be necessary to make way for those who shall be caught (or snatched) away to meet the Lord in the air? If, on the other hand, we assume that it is the Jews who are meant (and the truth is, it means both, for they are part and parcel of the same system of things), the idea of literality of the river is equally untenable; because the Jews are principally scattered in Europe and America, and in their restoration will come in " the ships of Tarshish first " (Isaiah lx, 9), and be brought " on horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts: for an offering, to the holy mountain of the Lord at Jerusalem " (Isaiah lxvi, 20).

The question is, what does the statement of the prophecy mean? Turning to the prophets, we find rivers frequently chosen to represent nations, powers, armies, etc. We read in Isaiah viii, 7, for instance:-- " Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, EVEN THE KING OF ASSYRIA, AND ALL HIS GLORY. " In this case, the Assyrian power is figuratively represented by the river which irrigated the territory on which it was established, viz., the Euphrates, which was designated " the river. " Again, in Isaiah xviii, where the Jews are the subject of discourse, we find the following phrase, " whose land the rivers have spoiled, " referring to the repeated military invasions of Palestine; for we never heard of watery inundations in that part of the world. Hence also, " many waters " are explained to mean " peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues " (Rev. xvii, 15).

Now, in view of these considerations, it is legitimate to argue that " the river Euphrates " dried up by the sixth vial, is intended to signify that power which is located on the territory to which it pertains, at the time contemporary with the pouring out of the sixth vial. If this is admitted, the interpretation would at once fix upon Turkey as the power represented; because she occupies the territory in question at the present time, when the events of the prophecy are near their fulfilment. If so, the meaning of the symbol is that the political life of the Turkish empire will die out as a necessary preparation for the way of the kings of the east. The fitness of this interpretation is at once apparent, when we remember that Turkey had held the land of the Jew in servile possession, precluding him from possessing soil in his own land, and refusing to guarantee him the ordinary privileges of his heathen denizens; because, until the Turkish power is removed out of the way--until this political Euphrates is dried up, the restoration of the Jews, in the complete sense required by other parts of the prophetic word, is not possible. Hence, the necessity for its evaporation predicted in the vision.

The next sign connected with the development of the end, was seen by John in the issuing of " three unclean spirits like frogs out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. " The three sources of issue first demand attention. The beast is said to have had " seven heads and ten horns, and ten crowns upon his horns " (Rev. xiii, 1). This is interpreted in chapter xvii, 9, as follows: " The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth (the woman being explained as that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth--verse 18), and there are seven kings . . . And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, " etc. (verse 12).

Here it is evident that " the beast " is representative of a political organisation, and not descriptive of the reptilious monstrosity suggested by a literal construction of the symbol. This being so, " the mouth of the beast " must also be political; and we must seek for its equivalent in the beast-system, as politically manifested. By this rule, we select the capital city as being the mouth of the state, both as to the exposition of its policy, and as to its corporate nourishment. Now on this principle of interpretation, which is suggested by the explanation contained in the vision itself, the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet signify the capital cities of the political systems severally represented by these symbols; and all that is necessary to identify them is, to ascertain what systems are symbolised by " the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. "

This cannot be done without going largely into history, which is impossible within the short limits of a lecture. The dragon is demonstrably the Eastern Roman Empire, having Constantinople as its capital: the beast, the Holy Roman Empire of the middle ages, having Vienna as its representative mouth; and the false prophet, that absurdity in Christendom, the ecclesiastical tyrant of Rome, from which, as " his mouth, " he fulminates his blasphemous " bulls " and gives forth his false pretensions to spiritual unction and infallibility.

The mouths, then, from which the unclean spirits issue, are Constantinople, Vienna and Rome. What are those spirits? They are like frogs. This cannot mean a resemblance to the little mud reptiles which inhabit marshes; because these creatures are devoid of intelligent quality; hence, a policy issuing > from a political mouth could never be said to resemble them. The mouths being political, the frog-likeness must have a political significance likewise; but where shall we seek for anything political connected with three frogs?

Well, it is a fact that the original arms of France consisted of three frogs, of which anyone may satisfy himself by consulting early French history. Here is a clue. If the Spirit has selected the dragon--the first heraldic symbol of the Eastern Roman Empire--to represent the modern phase of that empire, does it not seem appropriate that the original national symbol of France should be selected to represent her, when the occasion occurred to introduce her into the scene? Only one answer can be given, and that answer brings a moral certainty with it, that France is brought before us in the three frogs seen by John. This being so, the explanation of the phenomenon seen by John is this--that a French inspired policy should issue > from Constantinople, Vienna, and Rome, causing a gathering of nations > to the final war of the great day of God Almighty.

Here, then, are two notable signs to be looked for, as indicative of the approach of the end. First--The decadence of the Turkish Empire, and second--the predominance of French influence at the great political council board of Europe. Who can fail to see that these two signs have been conspicuous for many years on the Continent? Turkey is rapidly falling to pieces; and Louis Napoleon, the French Emperor, was next to all-powerful during the principal part of his reign. He was instrumental in bringing about the wars that have led to the present development of the military system of Europe.

In the confidence inspired by French assurance of support, the Sultan of Turkey declared war against Russia; thus the unclean frog-like spirit proceeded out of the mouth of the dragon. Provoked by the belligerent

attitude of the French Government as the instigator of Sardinia, Austria declared war against the latter; and thus the unclean spirit was caused to issue from the mouth of the beast. Supported by the French Emperor, the Pope made war upon the Revolutionists, who rose against him under Garibaldi, in 1866-7, when the French evacuated Rome, under the Franco-Italian Convention, and thus the unclean spirit went out of the mouth of the False Prophet. The general effect of all three operations has been to give politics an eastern direction. The Holy Land is now the centre of interest, and will become more and more so as the time for the gathering at Armageddon draws near. Russia must appear upon the scene as conqueror of Turkey. This appears from Daniel xi, 40, 41, 44, 45: xii, 1:--

" At the time of the end... the king of the north shall come against him (viz., against the power mentioned in the previous verse, as occupying and dividing the Holy Land for gain, which is Turkey), like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships, and He shall enter into the COUNTRIES, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and MANY COUNTRIES shall be overthrown... He shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to take away many. He shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him: (for) 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. "

In proof that the victorious invading power described in this testimony as " the king of the north, " is Russia, let it be observed that it comes against another power that is in occupation of the Holy Land. That power is Turkey, as must be obvious to everyone from the facts of the case. Now the king of the north, in relation to Turkey, and to every other country in the world, is the Emperor of Russia. In a peculiar and absolute sense, that potentate answers to the description of the prophecy; for his empire girdles the northern zone, almost of both hemispheres, constituting him, in an exclusive sense, " the king of the north. " This is still more evident from Ezekiel xxxviii, where we read, commencing first verse:-

" And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of Man, set they face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws; and I will bring thee forth and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all

of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarmah, of the north quarters, and all his bands; and MANY PEOPLE with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself thou and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them.

" After many days thou shalt be visited: IN THE LATTER YEARS thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people AGAINST THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely, all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands and many people with thee (verse 9)... In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it. And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses--a great company and a mighty army; and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land: IT SHALL BE IN THE LATTER DAYS; and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. "

The evidence that the potentate addressed in this prophecy is the Emperor of Russia is overwhelming. First, there is something in the use of the phrase, " Gog, the land of Magog. " If you turn to any map of the ancient world you will find that the land of Magog--taking its name from Magog, the son of Japheth, who was the first settler--lies in the northern part of Europe, and is now embraced in the modern Russian Empire. Secondly, the phrase, " the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal " ; you will find those ancient territorial names to be descriptive of countries now incorporated with Russia, and now modified in the names Muscovy and Tobolski. Thirdly, the remark, " Thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, " shows that the land of Magog, and the provinces of Meshech and Tubal, are geographically situated in the realms of the Emperor of Russia.

The points of coincidence between Ezekiel's " Gog, the land of Magog, " and Daniel's " king of the north, " are striking. The one appears " at the time of the end " ; the other " in the latter days. " The one is " the king of the north " ; the other comes out of his place " in the north parts. " The one " overflows many countries, and enters into the glorious land " ; the other, " with many people at his steps, comes against the mountains of Israel like a cloud to cover the land " ; the one " comes to his end with none to help him " : the other

meets with retribution described in the following words:--

" I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains: saith the Lord God; every man's sword shall be against his brother, and I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him and upon his bands and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone " (Ezek. xxxviii, 21, 22).

In both cases, the contemporary supremacy of Russia is foretold; in both, is the smiting of her power supernatural. She is to vanquish many countries, and hold a protectorate over them, as indicated by the words, " Be thou a guard unto them. " Those countries include all the nations of the Continent. " Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, " will be found, on reference to ancient geography, to embrace nearly every country in Europe; and, in addition to these, there are " Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them, " showing that at the time, Russia will have attained to something like universal dominion.

Previous to this full development of her power, the Jews will have been the subjects of partial restoration. They are represented as having been " brought forth out of the nations, " and as having gotten cattle and goods and " dwelling safely all of them without bars and gates. " This is a state of things existing before the coming of Christ. Consequently it is to be brought about by natural means. What those natural means are may be inferred > from the allusion, in verse 13, to " the merchants of Tarshish, with > all the young lions thereof, " and from Isaiah xviii. The probability is that the beginning of the return of Jewish prosperity is connected with British efforts to checkmate Russia in her designs upon India.

By establishing a Jewish colony in Palestine, the British Government will secure her communications with India--always vital to her safety. The motive of this northern Caesar, in his advance upon the " mountains of Israel, which have been always waste, " is apparent. In the attempt to sever British communications, he goes forth, " with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many " (Dan. xi, 44). He comes " like a cloud to cover the land, " with nations at his steps. But his course is suddenly interrupted. While his forces are encamped at Bozrah, in Edom, the lion of the tribe of Judah breaks in upon them, and a great carnage takes place. The event is described in Isaiah lxiii, 3, 4, 6:--

" I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and

their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment; for the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come... I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth. "

The complete discomfiture of Gog is predicted by Zechariah in the following language:-

" Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle; AND HIS FEET SHALL STAND IN THAT DAY UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof " (Zech. xiv, 3, 4).

Ezekiel describes what follows (chapter xxxviii, 18-22):--

" And it shall come to pass, at the same time... that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath, have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my PRESENCE; and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground; and I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains; saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood, and I will rain upon him and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. "

Zechariah adds to this:--

" This shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem. Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet; their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth; and it shall come to pass in that day that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour " (Zech. xiv, 12, 13).

The result of the conflict is the destruction of the assembled armies. A remnant escapes in flight (Ezek. xxxix, 2), and carries the report

of the supernatural defeat to the nations that " have not heard of His fame, nor seen His glory " (Isa. lxvi, 19).

At this juncture, a manifesto, or imperial summons, issues from Jerusalem, calling upon the nations to submit to the God-appointed king of all the earth. This is represented in Rev. xiv, 6, as " an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel " (or glad tidings of the age), to preach unto them that dwell on the earth . . . saying " Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come. " The summons is unheeded; " the beast of the earth and his armies assemble to make war with the Lamb, " and them " who are with him, " who are called, and chosen, and faithful. The Lamb allows the gathering hosts to proceed to conflict. He could disperse them with a word, but there is a purpose to be served by their attempts to overthrow him. In the war that ensues, " The Lamb shall overcome, " and afterwards the world will see the following prediction fulfilled:--

" And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies... Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel; . . . 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 " (Ezek. xxxix, 21, 23, 25, 29).

Current events indicate the proximity of the crisis. The Papacy has wonderfully lost its power. Felled from its position of supremacy by the shock of the French Revolution, over seventy years ago, it has been steadily declining ever since that time. It was deprived of its last prop by the defeat of the Austrian forces, in the Austro-Prussian war, and the incorporation of the greater part of the States of the Church by the young kingdom of Italy. With the overthrow of France by Germany, the Pope's temporal dominion crumbled to the ground, and the Pope now complains on every suitable occasion that he is a prisoner in the Vatican, and that in the loss of the temporal power he has lost the dignity and independence necessary for the exercise of the Pontificate. Doubtless the final scene is at the door.

The attitude of Russia points to an early probable attainment to the position assigned to her by the prophets in the time of the end. Her recovery from the disasters of the Crimean War is notorious to all

the world. Her territorial extension has never for a moment been suspended. During the last twenty years she has added large provinces in Central Asia, and conquered the great barrier that lay between her and Asia Minor, in the Caucasus, while as the result of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8, she has penetrated to the heart of the Turkish empire. Her dark shadow is now looming ominously behind the Eastern question. As to Turkey, as already said, she is rapidly falling to pieces. Herzegovina and Bosnia are annexed to Austria. Servia, Roumania, and Montenegro have been erected into independent kingdoms. Bulgaria is all but a Russian province. East Roumelia has become an autonomous province, ruled by a Christian governor. Egypt is in English occupation. The Christian populations throughout the whole of the dominions of the Sultan are in a seething ferment of rebellion, preparing to rise against him and throw off his yoke. The " sick man " is given up by the diplomatic doctors as incurable, and the papers are teeming with prognostications of the early downfall of the Turkish empire.

In the scramble for the spoil, Russia will come in for the lion's share; Britain will doubtless lay her hand on Syria, to protect the highway to her Eastern possessions. This will be the time for the Jews to realise the partial restoration which takes place before the invasion of the land by Gog. They have already begun to carry it out to a partial extent. Schemes for the colonisation of the land are in vogue among the Jews, and are received with increasing favour. Several societies exist to promote their return, and several colonies have actually been formed and are now in operation in the Holy Land. They have sprung into existence within the last twenty years, and have received a powerful impetus from the sentiment of nationality, which now prevails on the Continent, and regulates European politics:- Italy for the Italians; Palestine for the Jews; these are political corollaries, and are on the eve of being placed side by side on the same basis of accomplished fact. The land of Palestine has come much under notice of late; and, as is well known, a society, with the Prince of Wales at its head, has made a complete ordnance survey of the country. This helps to pave the way for the political sequel, in which Britain, mistress and protector of the Jews, not from any love of them, but from her own political exigencies having reference to India, will be the enemy of Russia when she comes like a cloud to cover the land. England once in possession of the country, the restoration of the Jews will be the development of a day. The Jews are ready, in great wealth, and with prompt disposition, to return to the land of their fathers when the political obstacle presented by Turkey is finally removed.

As to the state of the world generally, the temper of the nations

is highly significant of the predicted crisis. The Scriptures inform us that in the epoch of the end, the word will become highly belligerent. This is intimated in such statements as the following: --

" Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong " (Joel iii, 9-10).

" Evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth " (Jer. xxv, 32).
" Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear " (Luke xxi, 25, 26).

" The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come " (Rev. xi, 18).

Now, it is notorious that the present state of the world is one of preparation for war. Never was there a time of such military preparation. Universal military service by conscription has become the order of the day. Europe, in the language of a British statesman, has been turned into a vast entrenched camp. The war fever is universal. Peace is on the lips of rulers, but war in their hearts. The war-cloud that darkens will spread over all the sky and burst in terrible violence. A time of trouble, such as never was, is in store for the world. The worst experiences of antiquity, when blood ran like water, and famine waited in the train of war, to kill its millions, will be repeated on a scale of magnitude that will strike the world with terror, and thin down its over-stocked and corrupt population to a purified remnant in sympathy with Christ. The storm of divine vengeance will relieve the atmosphere of the foetid and oppressive elements with which it is charged. The relentless arm of righteous retribution--for " in righteousness he doth judge and make war, " will lay the foundation for peace on earth, and goodwill to men.

When the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of Jehovah and of His Christ, His glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The smoke and carnage of judgment will pass, and the peaceful morning of righteousness and happiness will open with a smile upon the world. Jerusalem, at first the scene of destroying judgment, will become the centre of blessing for all nations. The king will reign, who shall " come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. " The sun will break through the quick-dispersing clouds of judgment storm, and fill the world with healing and gladness. After the thunderstorm of judgment, the sun

of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. Earth's troubles will be hushed in the calm of universal peace. There will be glory to God in the highest heaven, over the earth peace and good-will among men.