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it as “that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:13. And Peter exhorts: “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.” 2 Peter 3:12. And Paul again, after speaking of the descent of the Lord from heaven, the resurrection of the dead in Christ, and their ascent with the living righteous to meet the Lord in the air, says, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

08. The Next Universal Empire

Its Establishment, Nature, and Endurance Foretold by Prophecy

By George Teasdale

THE stream of time flows on. Its past is carefully explored by man in search of treasures of wisdom with which to enrich the present. The present is diligently exploited that nothing may pass unperceived or unappreciated. But who can proceed into the mysterious future and reveal that which is to be?

Only the present belongs to man. With the past he is slightly acquainted. The future is known to Him alone with whom time is not a stream, but an ocean, all the shores of which lie within the compass of His vision.

False Gods and the True

Addressing the idols of the heathen, Isaiah says, “Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods.” The sacred books of the great heathen systems contain no such wonderful and copious prophecies as are found in the Scriptures.

Of Jehovah there is abundant evidence that He knows the end from the beginning. With Him, “That which has been is now; and that which is to be has already been.” Ecclesiastes 3:15. Only divine omniscience can link the past with the future, and read them both in the present. God alone can foretell the events, great and small, that mark the history of this world, and affect the interests of the Church.

The Future Illuminated

Confidence in God’s predictive declarations concerning events still future in fact, confidence in the Bible is engendered and developed by a knowledge of prophecies already fulfilled. For this reason their study serves an important purpose in Christian growth. The “more sure word of prophecy” more sure than the evidence of the senses-is a “light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.” It is a light that illuminates the darkness of the future-a darkness which no human eye can penetrate-revealing to the Christian events that would otherwise remain unknown. For this reason Inspiration declares to the Christian, “But you, brethren, are not in darkness [as to the future], that that .day [the day of Christ’s coming] should overtake you-as a thief. You are all children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”

Neither the Old Testament nor the New is wanting in numerous prophecies, of still future import, or in prophecies that have been} only partially, and are now being wholly, fulfilled. The second chapter of Daniel contains a wonderful prediction that reaches down to our day, and also into the future, revealing international events soon to take place, which are of the greatest import to man. Prophecy penetrates the present cloud hanging over Europe and the world, portraying in beautiful and inspiring vision the nature of the next universal empire that is to control the destiny of the human race. Past the din and smoke of strife and battle, and the ebb and flow of human misery and woe, prophecy describes a land of peace and everlasting joy, for which the weary sojourner is urged and encouraged to diligently prepare.

Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel

When Nebuchadnezzar first besieged Jerusalem, in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, 607 BC, he carried to Babylon some of the vessels of the temple of God in Jerusalem, and put them in the temple of his own god in Babylon. Also he took “certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes” with him to Babylon. These were carefully selected and taken that they

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might be taught the “learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans,” to fit them to “wait upon the king,” to be members of his council.

Among the young men were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, whom the king re-named, respectively, Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. These were given three years special instruction, at the end of which time they were examined personally by the king, “and in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.” “And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.”

Because of the excellence of the learning and ability of the youthful Daniel and his three companions, they were brought into immediate connection with the king “they stood before the king.”

The King’s Dream of Daniel Chapter 2

In the fourth year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (the second of his sole reign) the king “dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.” These dreams much impressed him, but he could not recall them. Therefore, he “commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.” Nebuchadnezzar required these men to reveal to him the dream that he had forgotten. They replied by asking the king to tell them the dream, and they would interpret it for him. He had not demanded this, but now he required both the dream and the interpretation. His suspicions concerning the genuineness of their pretensions to reveal secret things had been aroused. He said to them: “Tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me the interpretation thereof.” They admitted their inability by declaring, “There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king’s matter.”

Then, in order to clear themselves, they cast reflection upon the king by saying, “There is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.” Also they admitted the fraudulent nature of their own pretensions by stating that it was “a rare thing” that the king required, and that none could show it before the king “except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.” Heretofore they had always claimed to have such relationship with the supernatural that it was their prerogative to discover the will of the gods, and communicate it both to the king and to the people.

When Nebuchadnezzar fully realized that he and his subjects and also their ancestors had been deceived by these men, he was “angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon.” Among these were “counted Daniel and his companions, who, for some unstated reason, were not aware of all that had taken place. Nevertheless they were sought and apprehended by the captain who had been commanded to execute the king’s decree.

“Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation “This reasonable request was granted. Together with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, Daniel went to his house, and desired “mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret.” “Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision.”

A Great Image

After giving grateful thanks to God for having made known to them the “king’s matter,” Daniel went before the king and said, “The secret which the king has demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known to the King Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.” Having thus directed the king’s attention to the true God, the source of all wisdom, Daniel continued:

“Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these: You, O king, saw, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. You saw till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and broke them to pieces. Then was the iron; the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the King. Daniel 2:31-36.

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Babylon the Great

Nebuchadnezzar was a wise ruler and a mighty conqueror, and also one of the greatest builders of antiquity. To him Babylon owed her greatness and her fame. In Holy Writ the city is described as “the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellence,” “the golden city,” and the “lady of kingdoms.” Her great buildings, her wonderful hanging gardens, her massive walls, her brazen gates, made her the wonder of the world. Into her coffers flowed the wealth of all nations. She sat a queen in peerless grandeur with the whole Earth prostrate at her feet. Never before had the world seen such a city, and never since has it seen her equal.

Such was Babylon when Daniel and his companions were held captives within her walls, with Nebuchadnezzar, bold, vigorous, and accomplished, seated upon her throne. Under him Babylon had attained to this proud position of pre-eminence, a position that he desired she should forever retain. The night on which he had his wonderful dream his thoughts were concerning her future, for, said the prophet, “As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and He that reveals secrets makes known to thee, what shall come to pass.”

The Lord desired to show the king that Babylon should continue only a little while; that other kingdoms would follow; and that the kingdom which would continue forever would be established by the Most High Himself. To accomplish this purpose God gave to Nebuchadnezzar the dream, which must be regarded as an act of divine favor toward the king. Yet God would not work for him independently of His own people; hence, though He gave the dream to the king, He permitted him to forget it, that the revelation and interpretation might come through Daniel, one of God’s own acknowledged servants. Also by this means no room was left for the king, nor any other person, to doubt the genuineness of the prophecy, for the ability to reveal the dream was full proof of ability to interpret it.

The king was an idolater. An image would at once command his attention and respect. Also earthly kingdoms, which were represented by this image; were objects of esteem and value in his eyes. ‘How admirably adapted was this representation to convey a great and needful truth to the mind of Nebuchadnezzar, and to all mankind who should live after him?’

The Interpretation-The Head of Gold

Having described to the king his dream, which he would, of course, immediately recognize, the prophet Daniel continued with the interpretation, as he had promised: “This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. You, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven has given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And where so ever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls, of the heaven has He given into, 4hine hand, and has made thee ruler over them all. You art this head of gold.” Verses 36-38.

Well did this precious metal represent the kingdom over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled. It was “a golden, kingdom of a golden age.” But the king was not satisfied that the head only should represent his kingdom, and that it should be superseded by other kingdoms inferior to his. He determined that his kingdom should continue forever; and to establish his purpose he made a great image, about one hundred feet tall and ten feet broad, all of gold, and set it up in the plain of Dura, and commanded all the world to worship it. Daniel 3.

In this way Nebuchadnezzar challenged the prophecy, asserting that his plans for the ruler ship of the earth should be carried out instead of the Lord’s. Yet the Lord used even this to instruct, not only the king, but all nations forever after, “that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomsoever He will.” Finally the king was led to declare concerning Jehovah, “He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest You?” Thus should all men know that one word of prophecy is mightier than the martial pomp and power of earth’s most noted chieftains. The decree had, gone forth; Babylon was to be superseded, despite the hope and determination of its mighty ruler that it should continue forever. Said the prophet, “After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.” Daniel 2:39. Thus did prophecy sound the death-knell of Babylon.

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The Breast and Arms of Silver

Within the comparatively brief period of less than half a century after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, the empire and city of Babylon fell into the hands of the Medes and Persians. Wealth, with its accompanying luxuries, brought physical and mental decay and effeminacy, for which, in the strife of nations, massive embattlements and coats of mail cannot compensate. In the year 538 BC, the Persian King Cyrus took the city by strategy, and the King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, was slain. Darius, the uncle of Cyrus and King of the Medes, with whom the Persians were allied, was placed upon the throne of Babylon, which he occupied until his death two years afterward. Darius was succeeded by his nephew Cyrus, who once again welded the greater part of the known world into one mighty empire, in exact accordance with the terms of the prophecy.

As silver is inferior to gold, so was the Medo-Persian Empire inferior in richness and grandeur to the Babylonian Empire. "But still it was exceedingly powerful, and its magnificence was indicated by the silver of which the breast and arms of the image were composed. For two centuries the rulers of this empire held lordly sway, over the civilized portions of the earth, exacting tribute and homage from the most distant tribes.

But the same causes produced the same effect in the Medo-Persian Empire as in the Babylonian. Wealth and luxury brought individual inefficiency and national weakness. When Alexander the Great took the field at the head of his stalwart and abstemious Greek soldiers, the Persian armies were defeated in three great battles, their king was slain, and his empire passed into the hands of the Grecians, 331 BC, fulfilling the prediction: "Another third kingdom of brass shall bear rule over all the earth."

The Thighs of Brass

As the metals of the image decreased in value, and increased in strength and durability, so with the nations they represented. They decreased in magnificence and splendor, and increased in strength and virility. The successors of Alexander ruled over more people and territory than had preceding emperors, and with a rigor and authority never before known. The Grecian era continued from the year 331 until about the first half of the second century before Christ, when another race of men began to make itself felt, which, in a comparatively few years, wrested the ruler ship of the world from the Greeks. This fourth empire was represented in the image by the interpretation of which is given as follows:

The Legs Of Iron

And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and subdues all things: and as iron that breaks all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas you saw the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly-strong, and partly broken. Verses 40-42.

The fourth succeeding world-empire was Rome. From about the beginning of the first century before Christ it became the dominant power, and for many centuries "Rome ruled the world with an iron hand. At the time of Christ's birth, Caesar Augustus taxed the whole world, and Augustus was Roman Emperor. Imperious, irresistible, implacable, Rome broke in pieces and subdued every nation that would not own its sway. Says the historian Gibbon: "The arms of the Republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the, nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome." "Decline and Fall," Chapter 38, Paragraph 43.

"The empire of the Romans filled the world. And when that empire fell into the hands of a single person, the world became a safe and dreary prison for his enemies. To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly." – "Decline and Fall," chapter 3, paragraph 37.

The Feet and Toes of Iron and Clay

It will be noticed that at first this fourth kingdom is described unqualifiedly as "strong as iron." Until the middle of the fourth century of the Christian era Rome remained without a peer. But the iron tenacity which it possessed in a superlative degree during the first centuries of its career was not to

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continue. The iron of the feet and toes was mixed with miry clay. Luxury, that destroyer of nations as well as of individuals, began to corrode and weaken the iron sinews of the empire, and thus prepare the way for its subsequent disruption into ten kingdoms.

To the toes of the image, of which there were of course just ten, attention is called by their explicit mention in the prophecy: and the kingdom represented by that portion of the image to which the toes belonged was finally divided into ten parts. The era of this dissolution covered the latter half of the fourth century and the greater part of the fifth. During that period ten kingdoms arose within the boundaries of: Western Rome (that portion of the empire not included in any of the preceding empires), and the prophecy, spoken and written more than a thousand years before, was literally fulfilled.

Divided And Not To Be United

When Rome fell, the last universal empire belonging to this world in its present state forever passed away. Crushed beneath the weight of its own proportions, it gradually crumbled to pieces. The iron was mixed with miry clay. Its elements lost the power of cohesion, and the parts are not to be consolidated again. According to the prophecy, efforts will be made to do this, but they shall not succeed:

“And whereas you saw iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. Verse, 43.

For more than fourteen hundred years this divided condition has continued. During that time many revolutions and territorial changes have occurred in Europe, but ifs divided state still remains. Time and again men have dreamed of rearing on these dominions one mighty kingdom.

Of Charlemagne, the son of Pepin, the historian records, “From the first his object seems to have been to unite all German peoples in one great empire, and then to make that empire so strong that it would last forever.” So near succeeding did he come that on Christmas day in the year 800 AD he was crowned, emperor by Pope Leo III. “This act was regarded as the restoration of the Roman Empire, and Charlemagne was hailed as the successor of the Caesars.” – “Outlines of General History” (Colby), page 225. But his efforts were not lasting; after his death the tendency towards separation and, division was too; strong to be controlled, and Europe quickly reverted to its divided condition:

Charles of Spain and Louis of France

That which Charlemagne failed to accomplish by force of arms in the ninth century was almost accomplished for Charles V in the sixteenth century by diplomatic marriages.

“Charles V ruled over wider dominions than any European sovereign since Charlemagne. He belonged to the famous house of Hapsburg, from which he inherited Austria. It is said of Austria that, while other nations extended their power by conquest, it was her good fortune to gain territory by political marriages: This is well illustrated’ by the inheritances of Charles V. On his father’s side his grandmother was the heiress of Burgundy and the Netherlands, and his grandfather was the Emperor Maximilian, the mother of Charles V was the daughter, of Ferdinand and Isabella. Besides Austria, Charles possessed Spain, the kingdom of Naples, the Netherlands, and their dependencies, together with the vast regions newly discovered in America. All these lands he held by right of inheritance. To these Germany was added by his election to the imperial throne. “Outlines of General History,” page 341.

In the earlier part of his reign Charles was successful in hrs wars with France, Italy, and the Turks. But all his great plans finally failed. Thoroughly discouraged, he abdicated his throne, in 1556, and retired to a monastery. Says the historian, “It was too late for a universal monarchy, and any attempt to unite all Europe under the rule of one man was doomed to failure.” - Id., page 349.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, Louis XIV endeavored to establish an over lordship in Europe. But he too was unsuccessful. In his most important projects he failed, and even where he succeeded, the results did not pay for all that it had cost to accomplish them.

Napoleon’s Ambition

Early in the nineteenth century Napoleon Bonaparte rose to supreme power in France, and by his skill and genius raised his country to the position of mistress of nations in Europe. After the battle of

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Austerlitz (1805), all-Europe was at his feet, with the exception of England, which country alone was able to thwart his ambition. At first the people of Europe had looked upon Napoleon as a deliverer from the despotism of their sovereigns. They were soon undeceived, for they saw that he aimed, not at bringing to the world universal liberty, but at founding a universal monarchy.

“But,” records history, “there were certain elements of weakness in his empire.”-Id., page 495. This the prophecy also had noted two thousand years before, for it says, the iron of the feet and toes was mixed with clay. Just as Napoleon had almost succeeded in welding the portions of the iron monarchy together again, a few blunders paralyzed his army, and the empire fell apart, as incohesive as ever. The prophecy says, “They shall not cleave one to another.”

The Kaiser’s Day-Dream

Once again, in 1914, Europe witnessed a mighty effort to reunite its severed members. History continues to repeat itself. Under the guiding hand of Bismarck, the German States were united in 1870, and in 1871 King William of Prussia was proclaimed Emperor of Germany. Since that time it has been the determination of the rulers of Germany to accomplish that which Charlemagne so nearly realized one thousand years before. For half a century the work of educating and drilling the Teuton for this great pan Germanic project has been diligently pursued. In 1914 the opportunity came. Success seemed certain. The opposing nations were unprepared. The shout of victory was on the lips of the mighty hosts of the German army. Paris was almost within their reach. But the sure word of prophecy was against them: “They (the nations of Western Europe) shall not cleave one to another.” Neither can any power, nor combination of powers, succeed in uniting again that which prophecy says shall not be united.

The German military leaders made the same mistake that caused the downfall of Napoleon, of whom it is recorded, “He showed too little regard for the spirit of nationality in other States, and while he knocked kings and princes about at-will, he did not reckon with the people.” Id page 495.

Diplomatic Marriages

In order to accomplish by policy that which cannot be forced by war, the reigning houses of Europe, for, more than a thousand years, have persistently intermarried. Many of the rulers are bound together by the closest ties of kinship. King George, the Czar, and the Kaiser are first cousins. The Queen of Spain, the Queen of Rumania, the Czarina, and the Emperor of Germany, are all grandchildren of the late Queen Victoria. Albert of Belgium is German by descent. The ruling houses of Holland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark are all inter-related and also related with other ruling houses.

Arid yet despite this time-honored policy of inter marriage, the confederation of Europe was never more remote. All attempts to re-unite the divided Empire of Rome have proved abortive. The prophecy is true: “They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men but they shall not cleave one to another.” Daniel 2:43. How wonderfully does history emphasize the prophetic declarations of the Word of God. All this evidence goes to establish the reliability of the prophecy concerning the future.

Events Yet Future

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. Verses 44, 45.

Now we have reached the climax of this wonderful prophecy. The next universal empire is to be established by God Himself. He alone can accomplish His designs by word of mouth, without the help of men’s hands. Of His power we read, “He spoke and it was.” Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, and the Caesars established their empires by force of arms in physical combat.

Of the Lord it is declared, “Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations.” All that it will be necessary for Him to do will be to speak the word, “And the slain of the Lord

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shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth.” “The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.”

The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, represents the next universal empire, over which the Lord will rule as King. This stone smites the image upon its feet, breaks it in pieces, and utterly destroys it; and the stone becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth.

A Glorious Kingdom

Finally the earth will be restored to its pristine condition, and will become the everlasting home of the redeemed. No more will man be required to earn his living by the sweat of his face, for the curse will be removed, and the wilderness and the desert will rejoice and blossom as the rose; and “instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.”

Glimpses of the glory of that delightful land are given to the diligent student of the Scriptures. Its inhabitants “shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” All that heart can wish will be theirs, for the Lord has promised, “And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”

In that land of delights there will be no infirmities of the flesh. “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.” Sorrow, sickness, and death will be experiences of the past, for it is written, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

The Way

Many things indicate that the time is nigh at hand when the God of heaven will establish His kingdom as He has promised. The question arises, By what means can an entrance be obtained into that desirable country? Which is the way? Readers that country is open to all who will by faith accept the righteousness of Him who died for sinful man. To that delectable land there is “a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it.” Christ is the way. With intense earnestness the God of heaven endeavors to distract man’s attention from this earth with its-disappointments, its sorrows its bereavements and lead him to make preparations for the world to come, of which it is written, “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered-into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.”

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” COME!

09. The Millennium

THE word millennium literally signifies a thousand years. As used in theology, it has come to have a specific meaning which is attached to a period of one thousand years brought to view in the Scriptures, and located at the close of the present dispensation. As a distinct period, the millennium is first and only mentioned in the Bible in the 20th chapter of Revelation. This period occupies a most interesting place in the history of God’s people. It covers the events connected with the transition from the present sinful, mortal state, to that of everlasting life and glorious righteousness. It is the great antitypical jubilee, when the down-trodden children of God go free. It is a period full of events having eternal significance both to the just and to the unjust. It has been the subject of much study, and is now more than ever worthy of careful thought.

The millennium of Revelation 20 opens with the revelation of the Son of God from heaven, the destruction of the living wicked, the resurrection of the just, and the change of the living righteous to immortal life. It is a period in which Christ will reign with the just of all ages who have suffered with Him. This period is bounded at each end with a resurrection. Christ declares that “all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:28, 29. And Paul testifies “that there shall be a