ESSAYS
TOWARDS A RIGHT INTERPRETATION
OF
THE LAST PROPHECY OF OUR LORD
CONCERNING THE
DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM
AND
THE END OF THE PRESENT WORLD.

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OXFORD,
JOSEPH VINCENT;
AND HATCHARD AND SON, LONDON.
1841.
The following pages, being written during a short respite from absorbing occupations, will necessarily bear the marks of being written hastily, and without the opportunity of consulting many books of reference. The author will, however, feel fully satisfied, if they tend in but a small degree to the object which he had in view; namely, the more accurate and satisfactory understanding of the Scriptures of Truth.

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ESSAYS

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CHAPTER I.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

My object, in the present essays, is to give a simple and satisfactory explanation of the last prophecy of our Lord on these subjects. I should wish to make it, on the one hand, critically correct and satisfactory; and, on the other, intelligible and interesting to Christians in general, edifying to the true Church of Christ, and serviceable toward the interpretation of the other prophecies of Scripture. The prophecy in question is contained in Matt. xxiv, Mark xiii, and Luke xxi. 5—36. I shall subjoin also an explanation of that contained in Luke xvii.

I shall first try to shew, that the whole prophecy is not what it is frequently considered to be; viz. a
double prophecy, applicable *generally* to two events—the one, the destruction of Jerusalem; and the other, the coming of our Lord in glory—while it is represented as being *completely* applicable, in all its parts, to neither. On this view of it, the one of these events is considered to be the type of the other, and the words of our Lord are expanded or contracted so as to suit both and either.

My objections to this view of it, I shall state as briefly as possible.

This application of the prophecy we may compare to a man’s finding a garment, and wishing to discover to whom it belongs, and for whom it was fitted. He finds that part of it will fit one person, and part of it another, and therefore concludes that it was meant to fit both. Thus it has been with this prophecy. Parts of it have been found to apply to the end of the world, and parts to the destruction of Jerusalem; and the conclusion drawn from this is, that the whole prophecy was meant, in all its parts, to apply to both, the one being the type of the other; that such expressions as are too strong to apply to the destruction of Jerusalem, are to be referred exclusively to the coming of our Lord in his glory; and such as are too weak for this, or in other respects inapplicable to it, are to be considered as having been already fulfilled in the desolation of Jerusalem.

I will not attempt to deny that a prophecy may be
applicable to two or more events, but I will explain the principle on which, and on which alone, I believe such explanations to be admissible. It is this: Christ is, and is ever spoken of, as one with his people; in all their afflictions he is afflicted; whatever is done to the least of his little ones, is done to him. The contest also between Christ and the world is one great contest carried on from the beginning to the end of time; carried on between the same parties, on the same principles, and varying only, like other great and long-enduring contests, in its incidents, and the places, times, and other circumstances under which it is carried on. It will follow, therefore, that the language which speaks of the treatment of Christ and his people by the world, of their behaviour under their sufferings, and of the dealings of God with both, will be applicable to more periods than one, and may be used, more or less, of all periods during the continuance of this present state of things. Such I believe to be the only way in which a prophecy may be referred to more events than one; but that in general, prophecies are simple, straightforward, and distinct announcements of things to come, which we are only hindered from understanding by the darkness that is in us, and by the different manner in which we view times and things to that in which God looks at them.

But the destruction of Jerusalem is in but few
respects a type of the coming of Messiah in his glory; in many points of view it is just the opposite of a type. The one is the temporary desolation of Jerusalem; the other the eternal desolation of Babylon: the one is the dispersion of his peculiar people into all nations; the other the making a full end of all nations whither he has scattered them: the one is the time of vengeance on his chosen city and dwelling-place, the captivity of its inhabitants, the devastation of their promised land; the other the time of choosing his city again, of delivering its inhabitants out of their captivity, and the restoration of their land: the one is the time of wrath upon that people for their impenitence, that all things which have been written should be fulfilled; the other the time of their repentance and acceptance, the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and of the restitution of all things.—(Acts iii. 19. 21.)

But the best way of proving that this view of the prophecy is a false one, will be by giving a simple view of what I conceive to be its real explanation.

I apprehend, then, that the prophecy in question is meant to contain a continuous account of the state of things in the world and the Church, from the time when our Lord spoke, to the time of his coming again; containing, introduced into it, a particular mention of the destruction of Jerusalem, both as being the great and prominent visitation of God and fulfil-
ment of past prophecy, and also as having been made a particular matter of question by the disciples themselves to whom he spoke.

The whole prophecy was in answer to a question put to him by Peter, James, John, and Andrew. The disciples had been looking at, and pointing out to him the buildings of the temple, the size of the stones of which it was composed, and the general beauty and large extent of its buildings. In answer to this he had told them, that there should not be left one of those stones upon another that should not be thrown down. After this, as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, when these things should be, and what should be the sign of his coming? In reply, he addressed the prophecy, which we purpose to consider, either to these four alone, or to some few of the other disciples together with them. The question which they asked him, and in reply to which he uttered this prophecy, is thus expressed severally by the three Evangelists who have recorded the circumstance.
Matthew xxiv. 3.
And as he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be (or, is) the sign of thy coming, and of the close of the present age, (dispensation, or state of things)?

Mark xiii. 3, 4.
And as he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished, (or brought to an end)?

And they asked him, saying, Master, when then shall these things be, and what shall be the sign when these things are about to come to pass?
The answer to this question we have now to consider.

We shall for convenience sake divide the prophecy into three parts: first, the part before the mention of the destruction of Jerusalem is introduced; secondly, the part speaking of that and the state of dispersion of the Jews, and desolation of their city; and, thirdly, the immediate signs of our Lord's coming.
CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST PART OF THE PROPHECY BEFORE THE MENTION OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

The following is the account as contained severally in the three Evangelists.

**Matthew xxiv. 4—14.**
Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, (i.e. making use of my name, and pretending to my office and authority,) saying, I am (the) Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of (or, hear) wars and rumours of wars and rumours of wars, be not troubled; for these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places; but (or, and) all these things are the beginning of sorrows, (literally, of the pangs of

**Mark xiii. 5—13.**
Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am he; and shall deceive many. And when ye shall hear of wars and stories of wars, be not troubled; for they must needs be; but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles, (that is, commotions, disturbances, confusions.) These things are the beginnings of sorrows. But do ye take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils, (that is, Jewish councils,) and in synagogues

**Luke xxi. 8—19.**
Take heed that ye be not deceived; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am he; and, The time is near; go not therefore after them. And when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified; (lit. fluttered, that is, with fear and expectation;) for these things must needs first come to pass; but the end is not immediately. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be great earthquakes in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and there shall be great fearful sights and signs from heaven. And before all these things,
childbirth.) At that time shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name's sake. And at that time shall many be offended, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many; and because of the abounding of iniquity, the love of most (lit. the many) shall grow cold: but he that endureth unto the end, he shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached (proclaimed) in all the world, (that is, in the parts of the earth then commonly known and frequented,) and at that time shall the end come.

shall ye be beaten; (the Greek expresses, ye shall be brought into synagogues and beaten;) and ye shall be brought before rulers (military officers) and kings for my sake, for a testimony unto them: and the gospel must first be published among all the nations. But when they shall bring you (or, take you away) to deliver you up, be not troubled beforehand, what ye are to speak, neither premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour (or, at that season) that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against parents, and shall cause them to be put to death; (or, and shall put them to death;) and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth unto the end, he shall be saved.

they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up into synagogues and prisons, and ye shall be brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake; and it shall turn out to you for a testimony: settle it therefore in your hearts not to premeditate how to answer for yourselves: for even I will give unto you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be delivered up even by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and they shall cause some of you to be put to death; and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; and an hair of your head shall in no wise perish; by your endurance gain ye your souls.
I shall proceed, first, to state the general meaning and application of this part of the prophecy, and then go on to consider any such particular points as may seem to require notice.

It is a prediction of what should come to pass, from the time of his ascension into heaven to the destruction of Jerusalem. The disciples had asked him when Jerusalem should be destroyed, and what should be the sign of his coming. He therefore begins by warning them against being deceived and lifted up, as though he should come soon. He forewarns them, that many should first come professing that they were he, and that the time of his coming was near. He told them, there must be great wars and tumults; but these were not signs of his coming: that besides these there should be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, which should be the beginning of sorrows; and that after these things there should be great persecutions from without, and a great falling away within the church; and that the former of these things should be the means of making known the gospel to all nations. The apostle Paul afterwards warned the church at Thessalonica, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, as though the day of Christ were at hand, nor to let any man deceive them by any means, in almost the same words as our Lord uses in this place. Finally, our Lord warns them not to expect any immediate miraculous
deliverance from their troubles, but to endure patiently even to the end, (that is, perhaps, even to the last extremity,) and so to gain their souls; according to his saying in another place, “he that loseth his life shall gain it;” and “fear not them that kill the body and after that can do no more;” assuring them, at the same time, that not an hair of their head should perish. By the expression, “then shall the end come,” is meant the destruction of Jerusalem; this being the end of God’s long-suffering towards his chosen nation, and the final desolation of his city, and temple, and land, to the time of his appearing. By the Gospel’s being preached to all the world, and among all nations, we must understand its being published among all the nations to whom there was then an access, by means of their intercourse and connexion with the Romans. And indeed it is worthy of remark, that, putting out of the question the new world, the boundaries of the countries where the Gospel has been preached, are scarcely, if at all, more widely extended than they were before the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. We see by the account of Luke, that the persecutions of the Christian church were to begin before the rising of nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and the earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and the fearful sights and signs from heaven, as we know also that they did. For of these persecutions we read enough in the book of
the Acts and in the Epistles, though the wars and tumults and earthquakes had then not yet begun.

But I will go on now to illustrate particular points of the prophecy by reference to actual history.

The following translation from the second chapter of the Histories of Tacitus, speaking of the times immediately before the destruction of Jerusalem, will well illustrate the character of the period, as regards nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there being wars, and rumours of wars, troubles, &c. "I enter upon a work rich in extraordinary events, of a character blood-stained with battles, troublous with insurrections, even in peace itself cruel. Four emperors cut off with the sword. Three civil wars, more foreign ones, and generally both at the same time. Success in the East, misfortune in the West. Disturbances in Illyria; the Gauls wavering; Britain subdued, and immediately abandoned. Risings of the nations of the Sarmatae and Suevi against us; the Dacians distinguished by their slaughter of each other. Even the Parthians almost taking up arms, mocked by the pretensions of an impostor under the name of Nero. Besides all this, the desolation of Italy by disasters, either entirely new, or enacted over again after a long course of centuries. Cities (Pompeii and Herculanenum) swallowed up or overwhelmed, in the most fruitful part of the Campanian coast. . . . . Besides
the manifold incidents in human affairs, prodigies in
the heavens and on the earth, and warning signs of
thunderbolts, and presages of the future, of joyful, of
sorrowful, of doubtful, of manifest import. For there
was never a time when more bloody disasters of the
Roman people, or more plain intimations, proved the
fact, that the gods thought not of our safety, but of the
inflicting of vengeance upon us."—Tacit. Hist. i. 2.

The fearful sights and great signs from heaven
are mentioned by both Josephus and Tacitus.

"What shall we say to the comet that hung over
Jerusalem, for a whole year together, in the figure of
a sword?"—"Upon the feast of Pentecost, as the
priests were going to officiate in the inner temple,
according to custom, they heard at first a kind of a
confused murmur, and after that a voice, calling out
earnestly in articulate words, 'Let us be gone, let us
be gone.'"—Joseph. vi. 14. (Earl's translation.) The
same author mentions also a wonderful light that was
seen about the altar, at the feast of the Passover;
also a cow delivered of a lamb as she was being led
to sacrifice. Also the story of a man who for four
years before the destruction of the city never uttered
any other words but "Woe, woe, to Jerusalem;"
with which words he used to go about the streets,
and could be induced neither by threats nor punish-
ment, nor in any other way, to cease his ill-omened
exclamation.
The following is from Tacitus: "Prodigies had occurred, which that nation (the Jews) consider it unlawful to expiate by sacrifices or vows, prone as it is to superstition, but opposed to religious observances. There appeared armies rushing to the conflict throughout the heavens, and blazing armour, and the temple was filled on a sudden with the light of a fiery cloud. The gates of the temple were suddenly thrown open, and a voice was heard louder than the voice of man, that 'the Gods were taking their departure;' at the same time, a vast noise was heard of the movements as of persons departing from the place."—Tacit. Hist. v. 18.

I will go on now to take notice of some particular points which seem to require especial observation.

These things are the beginning of sorrows. The word in the original means, literally, the pangs of childbirth. The meaning seems to be this: That before the full and final accomplishment of God's purposes of wrath against his people, as declared in all the prophets, the world should, as it were, begin to heave with the pangs of travail in preparation for that mighty event; an event which holds so very high and prominent a place in the counsels of God. The outpouring of his wrath upon his people unto the end, in consequence of their rejection of his Christ, was to be preceded by wars, and tumults, and famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, and fearful sights,
and signs from heaven, by the convulsive heavings of the whole world, morally and physically, from the one end of it to the other. Should God lay his desolating hand on his chosen people, the sons of Abraham after the flesh, and leave the rest of the world altogether unpunished, in peace and quietness? The church also of those who believed, both Jews and Gentiles, admitted to the privilege of the sons of Abraham and grafted into the olive tree, was to share with the rest of the world in its tribulations.

To this may well be applied the words of the Lord to Baruch, (Jer. xlv. 4, 5.) "The Lord saith thus; behold that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted will I pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not; for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest."

Ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony unto them. This is translated in our version, for a testimony against them; but by comparing the words of Mark with those of Luke, its meaning seems plainly to be, that their being brought before kings and rulers, should be the means of making the Gospel known to them; and this would make them inexcusable in neglecting or refusing it, if it had no other effect.
Because of the abounding of iniquity, the love of most shall grow cold; but he that endureth unto the end, he shall be saved.

An hair of your head shall in no wise perish; by your endurance gain ye your souls.

The effect of the great persecutions and troubles of the Church from without and from within, our Lord declares should be to make the love of the greater part of it grow cold; but at the same time he promises salvation to those who should patiently endure all their trials, and should not suffer themselves to be robbed by them of their faith and love. He promises that not an hair of their heads should perish; and tells them, that by their patient endurance they were to gain the salvation of their souls. The translation in our version is, in your patience possess ye your souls; a phrase which is both without meaning, and not according to the sense of the Greek word. By the promise of salvation, and that not an hair of their head should in any wise perish, our Lord does not mean salvation, in this world; for it would be both contrary to facts and to prophecy: and our Lord himself, in the sentence immediately before, had said, They shall cause some of you to be put to death; but he speaks of the certainty of the resurrection; that all their tortures, and afflictions, and violent deaths, should not be able to destroy so much as a single hair of their heads, which were all
numbered, and should be raised up again with the rest of their changed and glorified bodies at the coming of their Lord. And by this patient endurance, and firmness of confession of their faith to the end, they were to obtain the salvation of their souls. It is scarcely necessary to say of what importance it is that we should rightly understand what it is that our Lord has really promised.

We proceed now to the consideration of the second part of the prophecy.
CHAPTER III.

THE PART OF THE PROPHECY REFERRING TO THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM AND
THE DISPERSION OF THE JEWS.

MATTH. xxiv. 15—28.
When ye therefore (or, now when ye) shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (let him that readeth understand:) then let them which be in Judæa flee unto the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: and let not him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! But pray that your flight be not in the winter nor on a sabbath: for then shall be great tribulation, such as

MARK xiii. 14—23.
But when ye see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand:) then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains: and let him which is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein to take any thing out of his house: and let not him which hath gone out into the field return back to take his garment. And woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! But pray that your flight be not in the winter: for those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not

LUKE xxi. 20—24.
But when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed about with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them which are in the countries (country places) enter thereinto: for these be the days of vengeance, that all things which have been written may be fulfilled. And woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress upon the earth, (or, the land,) and wrath upon this people: and they
hath not been since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days were shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if it were possible,(or,if they possibly can,) even the elect. Behold, I have told you before. Therefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be: for wheresoever the carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together. 

been the like from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord shortened those days, no flesh should be saved, but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. And then if any man say unto you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew signs and wonders, for the purpose of deceiving, if it be possible, even the elect. But do ye take heed: behold, I have foretold unto you all things.

shall fall by the edge of the sword, (lit. mouth of the sword,) and shall be led away captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be (continue to be) trodden down by the nations, (Gentiles,) until the times of the nations be fulfilled.
We will proceed with this portion as we did with the former, first giving the general explanation of it, and then going on to consider particular points.

Our Lord then, after having in the previous portion told his disciples what to expect between his ascension and the desolation of Jerusalem, goes on now to inform them what should be the immediate sign of that event. This was to be the appearance of the Roman armies compassing Jerusalem; when this should come to pass, they were to know for certain that the desolation of it was near. Accordingly, they were to escape from it in the utmost haste, and those who were out of the city were on no account to come into it; but all were to flee away. Then was to commence a season of great tribulation, to continue till near the time of our Lord's coming; a season of tribulation to the Jews, who meanwhile should be kept captive and scattered among all nations whither the Lord should drive them, during which the holy city should continue to be trodden down of the Gentiles; a season of tribulation also to the whole world and to the Christian Church. During this season of tribulation there should arise many false Christs and false prophets, unto whom he warned his disciples to give no heed, though they shewed great signs and wonders; because when he himself came, it should be with such power and great glory, that none could mistake it or be ignorant of it.
Such I conceive to be the general explanation of this portion of the prophecy.

I now proceed to notice particular points of it.

*When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place.* By the synonymous expression in Luke, it is plain, that by these words are meant, the Roman armies compassing about the holy city of Jerusalem. Our Lord adds, emphatically, *Let him that readeth understand.* We will therefore examine particularly the language of the prophet. The phrase "abomination" in connexion with "desolation" occurs in two places in the prophet Daniel, in ix. 27, and in xii. 11. The first of these passages is thus translated in our version: *In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.* In the margin, instead of, *for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate,* is substituted, *upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator.* The meaning of the former part of the sentence would be rather clearer, if we omitted the word *the,* before *sacrifice and oblation: thus; he shall cause sacrifice and oblation to cease;* that is, probably, by the destruction of the temple. With regard to the latter part of the sentence, when our
Lord speaks particularly of, the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, and emphatically adds, *Let him that readeth understand*, it would seem as though we should certainly in some way or other connect the words *abomination* and *desolation*, and not keep them distinct, as in our version. We may do this by adopting the marginal reading, *Upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator*; or else thus, *Upon the wing*, (that is, unto the utmost extremities of the city and land,) shall be the abominations of desolation; or, *upon the wing*, may mean, *upon the wing of the temple*, or, *over against the wing of the temple*. To confirm this view, we may quote Matth. iv. 5, which is literally translated thus: *Then the devil taketh him away into the holy city, and setteth him upon the wing of the temple*. The Septuagint evidently takes the passage in this sense, for according to one version it is translated, *and even unto the wing*, &c.; and according to another, *and upon (or, over-against) the temple shall be the abomination of desolations*. Erasmus also translates it in the same way. And this seems the preferable explanation: at any rate, our Lord would hardly quote Daniel in a false sense, while he added, *Let him that readeth understand*. We will add one or two other ways in which the passage might be translated. As thus, *upon the wing he shall*
lay it desolate with abominations; or, upon the wing of the abominations he shall lay it desolate; that is to say, upon the wing of the heathen armies he shall come riding to take vengeance on his people; by their instrumentality he shall accomplish his wrath by laying their city and land desolate. Beza translates it, by the legions of abominations causing desolation; taking wing in the sense of army. By the word abomination seems at any rate to be designated the heathen; as it is written in Psalm lxxix. 1. O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled: they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. We are confirmed in our view of the necessity of taking together, in some way or other, the words abomination and desolation, by the other place in Daniel (xii. 11.) in which this is referred to. That passage is as follows: 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. In which text, the taking away of the daily sacrifice plainly refers to what was before said of making sacrifice and oblation to cease; and the setting up of the abomination of desolation, to the other words of which we have been discussing the meaning.

Those days shall be tribulation, such as there hath not been the like, &c. Except that the Lord
shortened those days, &c. The greatest intensity of this tribulation may have been at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem; but the tribulation itself is spoken of as lasting till immediately before the actual coming of our Lord. This is plain from several considerations. First, by comparing Matthew and Mark with Luke; for the latter amplifies the account of the two former, by adding—They shall be led away captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem shall continue to be trodden down by the nations, until the times of the nations be fulfilled. Secondly, it is plain also from the 29th verse of Matthew, where he says, Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, &c. &c.; things which have not yet taken place. Thirdly, in all the prophets of the Old Testament, in fulfilment of whose prophecies our Lord expressly declares, in the account given by St. Luke, Jerusalem was to be trodden down by the Romans, we find the time of tribulation spoken of as lasting as long as Jerusalem was left desolate. We will quote as instances only the seventy-ninth and hundred and second psalms.

O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; Thy holy temple have they defiled; They have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given To be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, The flesh of thy saints
Unto the beasts of the earth.
Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem;
And there was none to bury them.
We are become a reproach to our neighbours,
A scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever?
Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?
Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee,
And upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.
For they have devoured Jacob,
And laid waste his dwelling place.

O remember not against us former iniquities:
Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us:
For we are brought very low.
Help us, O God of our salvation,
For the glory of thy name:
And deliver us, and purge away our sins,
For thy name's sake.
Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God?
Let him be known among the heathen in our sight
By the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.

Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee;
According to the greatness of thy power
Preserve thou those that are appointed to die;
And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom
Their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.
So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture
Will give thee thanks for ever:
We will show forth thy praise to all generations.

Psalm lxxix.

Hear my prayer, O Lord,
And let my cry come unto thee.
Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble;
Incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call
Answer me speedily.

For my days are consumed like smoke,
And my bones are burned as an hearth.
My heart is smitten, and withered like grass;
So that I forget to eat my bread.
By reason of the voice of my groaning
My bones cleave to my skin.
I am like a pelican of the wilderness:
I am like an owl of the desert.
I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.
Mine enemies reproach me all the day;
And they that are mad against me are sworn against me.
For I have eaten ashes like bread,
And mingled my drink with weeping,
Because of thine indignation and thy wrath:
For thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

My days are like a shadow that declineth;
And I am withered like grass.
But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever;
And thy remembrance unto all generations.
Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion:
For the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.
For thy servants take pleasure in her stones,
And favour the dust thereof.
So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord,
And all the kings of the earth thy glory.

When the Lord shall build up Zion,
He shall appear in his glory.
He will regard the prayer of the destitute,
And not despise their prayer.
This shall be written for the generation to come:
And the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.
For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary;
From heaven did the Lord behold the earth;
To hear the groaning of the prisoner;
To loose those that are appointed to death;
To declare the name of the Lord in Zion,
And his praise in Jerusalem;
When the people are gathered together,
And the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.

He weakened my strength in the way;
He shortened my days.
I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days:
Thy years are throughout all generations.
Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth:
And the heavens are the work of thy hands.
They shalt perish, but thou shalt endure:
Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;
As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:
But thou art the same,
And thy years shall have no end.
The children of thy servants shall continue,
And their seed shall be established before thee.

Psalm cii.

If we knew and felt more of our privileges as Christians, in being made the seed of Abraham, and joined to the people of the God of Abraham; if we considered that we bear not the root, but the root bears us; if we remembered more earnestly that we being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, but now are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, we should think more of the holy land, the promised land, the pleasant land, the holy city, the city of the Great King; we should believe more the promises
made to Abraham—All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.—(Gen. xiii. 15.) I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land of thy sojournings, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.—Gen. xvii. 8.

I know quite well that it seems a strange thing to men in general, and even to Christians in general, when men declare their belief, that when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, and our Lord shall come, that then Jerusalem shall be rebuilt; that then the land of promise, the land of Canaan, shall be given to the Israel of God; that is, believing Jews, and Gentiles united in one body to Jews; and that then our Lord shall reign over his people on the earth. I know well the charges that this declaration lays them open to; but without this supposition, which has lately been ably maintained by many distinguished men, I believe it to be impossible to explain and reconcile the Scriptures. I will here only bring forward a very few passages, which I will ask any one to explain on any other supposition, without compromising the faithfulness and truth of God, and making his promises mere specious deceits.

And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him.—Acts vii. 5.

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a
place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.—Heb. xi. 8—16.

And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.—Rev. ii. 26, 27.

Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.—Rev. v. 10.

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 for ever. Forasmuch as thou savest that the stone was cut out of
the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.—Dan. ii. 44, 45.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. 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. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.—Dan. vii. 9—14.

But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.—Dan. vii. 26, 27.

I purposely omit any detailed views on the subject, and will merely submit to any candid mind, whether
there is any other general supposition on which these passages can possibly be explained. Let them then take this supposition, and read all the Prophets, and all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and see whether the flood of light which it pours upon them all be not quite sufficient to manifest its truth.

Let any one who will examine the subject candidly read particularly the latter part of Leviticus xxvi, the first part of Deuteronomy xxx, Jeremiah xxx and xxxi, and Ezekiel xxxvi.

It may be worth while just to remark, that the Poet Milton appears to have been at least inclined to the same view; as will be seen from the following passages, in which Christ is the speaker.

Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit
On David’s throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth;
Or as a stone, that shall to pieces dash
All monarchies besides throughout the world;
And of my kingdom there shall be no end:
Means there shall be to this; but what the means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.


And with regard to the restoration of the ten tribes:
My brethren, as thou call’st them, those ten tribes,
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David’s true heir, and his full sceptre sway
To just extent over all Israel’s sons.

Yet he at length (time to himself best known)
Remembering Abraham, by some wond’rous call
May bring them back repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste,
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
When to their promised land their fathers pass’d:
To his due time and providence I leave them.

Book iii.

It is gratifying to observe, that at the present time, even while I am writing this, attention is being called to the subject by the publication of such works as “Bickersteth on the Restoration of the Jews;” in which the author shews also that this was the view generally taken anciently by the Church.

There shall arise false Christs and false prophets. We see from this, that during this time of tribulation, there should arise many false Christs and false prophets, as there did before the desolation of Jerusalem, shewing great signs and wonders. Many such false Christs and false prophets have risen already; probably many more are yet to come, shewing greater signs and wonders than we have ever yet seen performed by false Christs and prophets. Let us remember our Lord’s words. Do ye take heed: behold, I have told you before. The present time, when the interest of the whole world is so drawn forth toward the holy land, seems to be a time when such false Christs and false prophets are particularly likely to arise. Let us remember not to be soon troubled; when our Lord comes, his coming
shall be as the lightning which cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west.

Whereas ever the carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together. This is often explained as though it referred to the eagles of Rome coming to seize upon Jerusalem as their prey. But the expression seems to be a proverbial expression of obvious meaning; namely, that as wherever there is a carcase, there the eagles are sure to be guided by the instinct given them of God, so God shall take care, that whenever and wherever Christ comes, there his people shall be gathered; so that they need not trouble nor be anxious lest they should be left behind, or lest he should come and they know it not. This certainty of their being gathered together to him, is to prevent their going forth when any one says, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, there.
CHAPTER IV.

ON THE THIRD PART OF THE PROPHECY CONCERNING THE SIGNS OF THE IMMEDIATE COMING OF OUR LORD.

Matthew xxiv. 29—42.
And immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming upon the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together to him his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

But learn from the fig tree its parable; (the parable it teaches;) when its branch hath now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh:

Mark xiii. 24—37.
But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall be falling down, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken, (like the waves of the sea.) And then shall they see the Son of man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together to him his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

And there shall be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men’s hearts failing them for fear and expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.

And when these things begin to come to pass, look up (lift yourselves up from your stooping posture) and lift up your heads: because your redemption draweth nigh.

And he spake a parable unto them; Behold the fig tree and all the trees. When they now shoot forth, as soon as ye see it, ye know of your own selves that the summer is now
so likewise ye, when ye see all these things, know that he (or, it) is near at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall in no wise pass, till all these things be fulfilled. The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but my words shall in no wise pass away. But of that day and hour (or, season) knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as they were in the days that were before the flood, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one is taken away, the other left: two women grinding at the mill, one is taken away, one left. Watch therefore: for ye know not at what season your Lord cometh.

I say unto you, that this generation shall in no wise pass, till all these things be fulfilled. The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but my words shall in no wise pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels that are in the heaven, nor the Son, but the Father. Take heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. It is as a man taking a journey, that left his house, and gave to his servants their authority, and to each his (proper) work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch therefore: for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight; or at cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest when he cometh suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.
The general explanation of this part of the prophecy is very simple and obvious. Immediately after the days of tribulation which our Lord had spoken of before, the days of tribulation which should be during the desolation of the holy land and city, there should be signs in the heavens and upon the earth, announcing the coming of our Lord. When they began to come to pass, his disciples were to know that his coming was near, as certainly as they knew the approach of summer by the fig tree and other trees putting forth their leaves. They were to rejoice in his approach, because it was their redemption from their long state of persecution and tribulation. Of the time, when it should be, no man knew, not even he himself, nor the angels of heaven; but thus much was certain, that when he came, the world in general should be in the same state as before the flood, not thinking of his coming, but busied in their common occupations; even though their attention should be awakened by the signs in heaven and in earth, and their hearts should be failing with fear and expectation of what it was that should be coming. But they should expect any thing but this, namely, his coming. Probably having been often deceived before by false Christs and false prophets, they should have grown callous, and should be saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the
creation. Though his coming were long delayed, and the season of it uncertain even to himself, yet it should surely come; the world should not be suffered to go on for ever in its iniquity, and rejection of him in spirit and in truth, and persecution of his people, and to pass away unpunished, but he should come to take vengeance on the world and to deliver his people, coming upon a cloud with power and great glory, and should send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather together his elect unto him out of all nations. The world should be mixed up with the Church, as the iron and the clay were mixed together in the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, but should not be united together; his coming should be the time of their separation; then when two men were in the field together, or two women grinding at the mill, the one should be gathered by the angels to meet their Lord, while the other should be left. Having thus given the general meaning of this part of the prophecy, we proceed to discuss particular points.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days. This plainly proves that the time of tribulation is not yet over, because the signs following have not yet occurred. We have only to look at the sufferings of the people of God down to the present time, to see that this is the case. The persecutions from Pagan Rome till the reign of Constantine; the fierce disputes of the different sects; the cruelties inflicted on
the Albigenses and Waldenses, and on the Lollards in England; the almost incredible atrocities of the Inquisition; the bloody and devilish desolations of Alva and other popish generals; the massacre of Bartholomew's day, together with other innumerable afflictions upon those who have known and professed the simple truth of the gospel, sufficiently prove the point. True it is that in Protestant countries, since the Reformation, the lot of believers has been lightened; but what has taken place repeatedly in England and Scotland, and the Protestant countries of the continent, shew that this has been a difference only in degree. Among the marks of the days of tribulation may be reckoned also the exceeding great and grievous troubles of mind which the most eminent believers have suffered in these latter times. We need scarcely refer to the biographies of many of our most celebrated Christians within the last hundred or hundred and fifty years.

The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, &c. We can hardly give any other than a literal meaning to this, as well as to what is said of the sea and the waves roaring. The darkening of the sun and moon and stars, are signs spoken of by many of the prophets, as preceding the destruction of the heathen nations, and the deliverance of the Church of God at the coming of Christ. See Isa. xiii. 9, 10; Ezek. xxxii. 7; and
particularly, Joel ii. 31:—The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. The verses before this were fulfilled at the day of Pentecost and for many years afterwards, but this verse has not yet been fulfilled. Also Joel iii. 15:—The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the place of refuge of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holiness, and there shall be no strangers pass through her any more. This passage will serve strongly to confirm our previous remarks on the connexion of the coming of our Lord with the restoration of Jerusalem. With this language of our Lord and of the prophet Joel, we may compare Rev. vi. 12—17:—And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.
And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. This may either mean, the glorious appearance of our Lord himself in the heavens, or of some unequivocal sign betokening his near approach, like the star which guided the Magi to the stable where he lay at his coming in humiliation.

They shall gather together to him his elect from the four winds. Compare with this the whole of the seventh chapter of Revelations. The signs which our Lord had mentioned before this, are all described at the end of the sixth chapter of the same book, in the passage which we have already quoted.

This generation shall in no wise pass till all these things be fulfilled. By the word generation is plainly not meant here what we commonly call a generation of men. For that generation did pass away without those things being fulfilled. Our Lord did not come upon the clouds of heaven, nor did his angels gather together his elect from the four winds of heaven. By
the word *generation*, then, was meant the present state of things, the humiliation of his Church, the unbelief and persecutions of the world. That generation, that state of things, should last long, but it should not pass away before our Lord should fulfil all his promises and all his threatenings; his promises to his people, and his threatenings to the world. As another argument against his using the word generation as expressing a space of some thirty years or more, we may further add, that he himself said, Of that day and hour knew no one, not even the angels, or himself. For similar uses of the word generation, we may quote Gen. vi. 9. *These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations;*—Ps. xii. 7. *Thou shalt preserve him from this generation for ever;*—Ps. xiv. 5. *God is in the generation of the righteous;*—Ps. xxii. 30. *A seed shall serve him: it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation;*—Ps. xxiv. 6. *This is the generation of them that seek him;*—Ps. lxxiii. 15. *I should offend against the generation of thy children;*—Ps. cxii. 2. *The generation of the upright shall be blessed;*—Prov. xxx. 11, 12, &c. Matt. xxiii. 36—39, where the generation is spoken of as lasting to our Lord's coming. Mark viii. 38. Luke xvi. 8.

Perhaps it is the misunderstanding of this word which has been one of the great causes of the mis-

understanding of the prophecy; leading men to suppose, that all the things here spoken of must have been fulfilled in some sense or other at the desolation of Jerusalem; but as they plainly all the while saw that they had not been so, they were forced to the expedient of supposing a double fulfilment, each only partial, and to neither of which the whole prophecy can satisfactorily be referred. For some parts of it evidently refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, others as plainly to the coming of Christ; and we may add also, that some plainly do not refer to the former, and some plainly not to the latter.

The one is taken away. Probably taken away by the angels to meet their Lord at his coming. See 1 Thess. iv. 17:—We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.

Thus have we concluded our explanation of the last prophecy of our Lord spoken from the Mount of Olives, concerning what should come to pass from the time he spoke, down to the end of the world. The subject, however, will not be complete, except we examine a similar prophecy concerning his coming, spoken on another occasion, and recorded by Luke.
CHAPTER V.

ON THE PROPHECY OF OUR LORD CONCERNING HIS COMING,
RECORDED BY LUKE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.


And when he was asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, Lo, here! or, lo, there; go not forth, nor follow them. For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it came to pass in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They were eating, were drinking, were marrying, were being given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it came to pass in the days of Lot, they were eating, were drinking, were buying, were selling, were planting, were building; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all; after this manner shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be on the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away; and he that is in the field, let him in like manner not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life,
shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose it, shall preserve it. I say unto you, on that night there shall be two on one bed; the one shall be taken away, and the other shall be left: two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken away, and the other shall be left.

And they answer and say unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Where the body is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.

This was a prophecy spoken by our Lord at a time previous to the other prophecy recorded in the twenty-first chapter of the same Evangelist. It is very similar to that which he afterwards pronounced; and many things which are contained in this seem to have been omitted for that reason by Luke, in his twenty-first chapter, though they are recorded by Matthew and Mark, as having been also uttered on the Mount of Olives. The immediate occasion of it was a question from the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come. He told them that the kingdom of God was not coming with observation, neither should they say, Lo, here! or Lo, there! but the kingdom of God was within them. This must be understood as referring to that time, and those particular persons: as far as they were concerned, it was so; they were expecting the appearance of their promised Christ in his glory. But before that time, many generations should pass away. As far as they were concerned, the kingdom of God was within them. If they would hope ever to be partakers of his glorious kingdom,
the kingdom of God must first be set up within their own hearts, which it was not as yet. We must thus limit our Lord's words; else would they be quite inconsistent with what he said to his own disciples afterwards; for if it should never come with observation, how then should He be in his day as the lightning which lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, and shineth unto the other part? How, at his coming, should men haste to meet him, without going down from the housetop to take their stuff out of the house?

He then turns to his disciples, and instructs them concerning his coming. The prophecy relates to this, and to nothing else. Let us give an analysis and explanation of it.

He instructs them that he should be long absent from them; that those days should be days of great tribulation, so that they should long for his appearance to deliver them. That many should come, false Christs and false prophets, who should promise his speedy appearance, but he must first be rejected of that generation. That when he did come at last, none, or scarcely any, should be expecting him; that they should all be employed as usual about their daily tasks, thinking of any thing rather than of his appearing; that in this respect his vengeance on the world would be like his vengeance on the world before the flood, and on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.
That when he came and sent his angels to collect his people unto him, as he sent his angels to bring Lot and his family out of Sodom, they were to believe and come instantly, neglecting every thing else; they were to remember the fate of Lot’s wife, who cast a longing look behind to the city where she had dwelt; that at that time believers should be so mixed up with the world, that two in the same bed, man and wife, brothers, two women grinding at the same mill, should then be parted, the one taken away to meet their Lord, and the other left for destruction.

They then asked him where this should be. By his answer he shewed that this was a question which it did not concern them that he should answer now; for as certainly as God guided the eagles by their instinct to the dead carcase, so surely should he guide his people to the place where their Lord should appear.

This prophecy has plainly nothing to do with the destruction of Jerusalem, which is here taken no notice of, but corresponds with the third part of the other prophecy recorded by the three Evangelists. At the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, they were not taken thus suddenly by surprise. The war had lasted for a considerable time; the destruction of the city had plainly been long impending; at the taking of the city the believers were not mixed up with unbelievers; but the believers had departed
some time since, and separated themselves, having taken warning by the sign given them by their Lord, that when they saw Jerusalem compassed about with armies, they were to know that the desolation thereof drew nigh.

We now go on to take notice of a few particular points in this prophecy also.

First must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. Looking at what comes before and after these words, but more especially looking at the history of the world since the time these words were spoken, they seem to confirm the view which we took of the meaning of the word generation in the other prophecy, and to have the same meaning here. To persuade the world in general of this, is of course a hopeless task; if the Jews had believed Christ and the prophets that they had forsaken their God, then might we expect that the world and the Christian Church would believe that they had forsaken Christ and his truth. But the Jews believed not; they hated those who bore witness of them that their deeds were evil; and the world, and that which calls itself the Church, will still do the same.

When the Son of man is revealed. That is to say, When he appears in his glory; he is now taken out of the sight of his people; he is now hidden. When he comes upon a cloud with power and great glory, then shall he be revealed. At the
destruction of Jerusalem, the Son of man was not revealed.

*In that day, he which shall be on the housetop,* &c. It appears from this, that there shall be at the coming of our Lord a moral and spiritual test, by which the people of God shall be separated from the world; similar to the trial of Lot when he followed the angels in haste, believing the coming destruction of the city of Sodom; or to that of Noah, when he built the ark and entered into it; or to that of the Christians before the desolation of Jerusalem, when they left the city on seeing the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place.

*Where the body is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.* This proverb occurring here, confirms the view which we gave of it when occurring in the other prophecy.

Thus have we concluded our observations on this prophecy. If our views on the subject be correct, they will serve also as a key to the right understanding of many of the other prophecies of Scripture. Before we close the subject, let us briefly recapitulate some of the most important points which we have endeavoured to establish.

First, then, we have attempted to shew, that the prophecy is a clear, unambiguous, and straightforward statement of the things which should come to pass hereafter. That it is not a confused mixture of
an account of two different events, referring partly to one and partly to another, while it speaks of neither clearly, fully, and distinctly. We have also endeavoured to point out simply what parts refer to the one and what to the other.

Secondly, we have tried to shew that the days of tribulation, beginning with the persecuting of the Christians before the destruction of Jerusalem, and going on through that period, have lasted to the present time, and are to last with more or less intensity even to the actual coming of our Lord in person to accomplish their redemption. And also that the generation of those who reject Christ, has lasted even to the present time.

And, thirdly, we have maintained that the coming of our Lord, and the establishment of the kingdom of God, is to be also the period of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the promised land and holy city to a state of glory. All those who know Christ are of the seed of Abraham, and may sing with the prophet,

God will save Zion,
And will build the cities of Judah:
That they may dwell there,
And have it in possession.
The seed also of his servants shall inherit it:
And they that love his name shall dwell therein.

Ps. lxix. 35, 36.
Note, page 21.

In speaking of the "abomination of desolation," we should have mentioned a third passage in which the two words occur in connexion with each other in Daniel, namely, in xi. 31. The use of the phrase in this place confirms the view we took of it when speaking of it in ix. 37.

Note, page 24.

With regard to the time of continuance of the days of tribulation, spoken of in this prophecy, we may quote, in confirmation of our view, the opinion of bishop Horsley, who expresses himself on this subject in the following way.

"I apprehend, that the whole difficulty which the word 'immediately' is supposed to create, in that interpretation which refers the signs in the sun and moon to the last ages of the world, is founded on a mistake concerning the extent of that period of affliction which is intended by 'the tribulation of those days.' These words, I believe, have been always understood of those few years during which the Roman armies harassed Judea and besieged the holy city; whereas it is more agreeable to the general cast of the prophetic language, to understand them of the whole period of the tribulation of the Jewish nation,—that whole period during which Jerusalem is to be trodden down. This tribulation began indeed in those days of the Jewish war; but the period of it is at this day in its course, and will not end till the time shall come, predetermined in the counsels of God, for the restoration of that people to their ancient seats. This whole period will probably be a period of affliction, not to the Jews only, but also in some degree to the Christian Church; for not before the expiration of it will the true Church be secure from persecutions from without—from corruption, schism, and heresy within."