

PART THIRD

THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD IN RELATION TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

CHAPTER I

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IMAGE.—THE HAND OF GOD IN HUMAN HISTORY.

The pandemonianism of the world—The Press its organ to a great extent—Its conductors greatly deficient in political prevision—A divine agency the real source of the world's revolutions—God hath revealed what shall come to pass—Nebuchadnezzar's Image explained—It represents an Autocracy to be manifested in these Latter Days—The Toe—Kingdoms enumerated—The Vision of the Four Beasts—Of the Saints and the two Witnesses.

HAVING laid before the reader in the former parts of this work “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ”, and, I trust, enabled him to be “ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him”, and also to know, without doubt, what he must do to be saved, I propose now to give an outline of the things set forth in “the sure word of prophecy” in relation to that crisis in human affairs which has come upon the world, and which is destined to be the occasion of the introduction of the kingdom of God.

The Lord hath truly said by the prophet, “I have a long time holden my peace; I have been still, and refrained myself”. It is now nearly nineteen hundred years since He spoke by His servant John to the seven congregations in Asia Minor; and so entirely hath He refrained Himself from further revelation of His will, that men have at length almost generally concluded that He hath ceased to take any interest in human affairs. They speculate upon passing events as though they thought that mankind were formed for no nobler destiny than to fret out a brief and crushing existence in a precarious competition for food and raiment; and to labour with asinine endurance for the behoof of those who, by violence, avarice, and fraud, have gained the ascendancy over them. God is not in their thoughts when they treat of the affairs of men. They deal only with secondary causes, while the agency of the great First Cause is supposed to be confined to the saving of “immortal souls” from purgatory, or from burning in liquid brimstone underneath. “Order” at any price is, with them, the chief good. They ascribe glory and honour to Satan, though he has established a despotism over the nations which rivals the mythic dominion of Pluto. Everything dear to truth, righteousness, and liberty must be suppressed by armed mercenaries, provided only that bank, stock-exchange, and commercial speculations, and the “vested interests” of public plunderers in church and state be protected and preserved intact.

Such is the pandemonianism of the world. Sin in its most heartless and hateful deformity reigns the

universal despot of the nations. It is enthroned, and decorated with crowns, tiaras, coronets, and mitres; and is gathering strength by fraud, hypocrisy, and murder, for a last and final effort to crush all future endeavours to cast it out unto the earth, and its angels with it. A corrupt and vicious press is the ignoble and servile apologist of its treachery and blood. It flatters the grim assassins of the people, the soul of whose institutions is the ignorant stolidity and cruel superstition of a dark and iron age. Its sympathies are with profligate kings, blasphemous priests, and savage generals; while no epithet is too vile or opprobrious for those who, having endured to the uttermost the debasing and ruinous oppression of their destroyers, seek to break their bonds, expel them from their thrones, and to diffuse truth and science among the people.

While a Christian would take no part in the armed *mêlée*, he is convinced that nothing but violence in the beginning, in order to punish and crush the tyrants, can prepare the way for the amelioration of society. This is the order, as I shall show, which God has ordained as preliminary to the setting up of His kingdom. But the conductors of the press do not understand this. It is not more corrupt and vicious than it is blind to the scriptural philosophy of the things of which it treats. It cannot see afar off, and the objects which are near, it cannot comprehend. How applicable to its scribes is the exclamation of the Lord, “O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but how is it ye cannot discern the signs of the times!”—signs, which are announcing to the nations with a voice of thunder that Jehovah hath aroused Himself in His holy habitation; that the time hath at length come when He will be still and refrain Himself no longer; but that He will make bare His holy arm, and “destroy them that destroy the earth”, or oppress mankind.

But, though the Lord hath a long time held His peace, He hath not been unmindful of His people, nor heedless of human affairs. The great incidents of history which have given rise to successive kingdoms and dominions, from the overturning of the kingdom and throne of God, and of David, His anointed, in Judea, by the Chaldeans, to the present time, are but events predetermined and arranged in the purpose of God, and revealed in the “sure word of prophecy”. Not a kingdom has been established, nor a king dethroned, but it has formed a move, which has contributed to the maturity of the present crisis, which will ultimate in the introduction of the kingdom of God. This truth is beautifully expressed in the words of the prophet, saying, “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his; and *he changeth the times and the seasons*; HE REMOVETH KINGS AND SETTETH UP KINGS: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: *he revealeth the deep and secret things*: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the fight dwelleth with him.” It is He to whom all things are subjected; “for he ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and *setteth up over it the basest of men*”. This is the reason why men and women with so little wisdom, or rather possessed of so much positive folly and imbecility, are able to rule the nations without “setting on fire the course of nature”. When their wickedness and stupidity become obstacles to His purpose, He removes them out of the way, and introduces other actors upon the stage. In this way, He controls and regulates the world’s affairs; but in every interference He shapes the course of events towards the consummation predetermined from the foundation of the world.

In ages past, God has had among the nations a people of His own. These are wise in the wisdom of God, and venerate His word above all things. Though not His counsellors, He has graciously condescended to inform them what He intends to do before it comes to pass. Hence, it is testified by the prophet that “the Lord God will surely do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the
Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.
Page 2.

prophets". This revelation is made that His people's faith may be confirmed and enlarged, and that in every generation they may know the times and seasons to which they stand related. Knowing the signs, they are enabled to discern the times; and while consternation and dismay cause men's hearts to fail they are courageous, and rejoice in perceiving the approach of the Kingdom of God.

This is the proper use of the prophetic word. It was thus that the ancients used it, and were enabled to give in advance of their contemporaries. This appears from the exhortation of the apostle, who says, "We have a sure word of prophecy whereunto you do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of one's own disclosure. For prophecy came not at any time by the will of man; but the holy men of God spake being moved by the holy spirit." Some were not unmindful of this exhortation, which is as applicable to us as to them; for the day has not yet dawned, nor has the day-star arisen. Were it not for the prophetic word, the "heirs of the kingdom" would be in as utter darkness as gaol-chaplains, who burn the flesh to cure the soul, or administer the "Sacrament" to gallows-thieves about to die! The sure prophetic word is itself a shining light, but, having been "put under a bushel", mankind are left enshrouded in Egyptian night. "Be mindful", saith the scripture, "of the words spoken before by the holy prophets"; and on the ground that this was the case, the apostle adds, "Therefore, beloved, *seeing ye know these things before*, beware lest ye, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." The words of the prophets to which he referred, related to the destruction of the Hebrew commonwealth. His brethren were acquainted with these prophecies and, therefore, knew what was about to happen, though not the day or the hour. Hence, this knowledge was to be their caution and security against being led away by the spiritualizers of the time, who wrested the scriptures to their own destruction.

From these premises we may conclude that, as the Lord has also revealed what is to come to pass in these latter days, it is both our duty and privilege to make ourselves acquainted with it, that our faith may grow and be strengthened; that our affections be detached from the fleeting present, and set more firmly on things to come; that our minds may be fortified against error; and that we may be prepared to meet the Lord as those who have kept their garments, and shall not be put to shame. It is our own fault if we are not "light in the Lord". He has plainly set before us what is happening in our day, and what is yet to occur. Hence, while the Priests of the State Church are drowsily exclaiming, while war and political murders abound, "Give peace in our time, O Lord!"—and while peace-societies are with infidel voices crying "Peace and safety", they who take heed to the prophetic word "know before" that the hour of God's judgment is come, and that destruction is at the door.

In pursuance, then, of the work before us, namely, that of unfolding the train of events which are to ultimate in the setting up of the kingdom of God, I shall proceed to show the things represented in

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S IMAGE.

This was a colossus in human form, which appeared to the king of Babylon in a dream. The head was of gold; the breast and the arms of silver; the belly and the thighs of brass; the legs of iron; and the feet part of iron and part of clay. While the king continued to behold it, a stone poised in the air, unsustained by hands, fell with great force upon the feet, and broke them to pieces. After they were smitten, the iron,

the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, were all broken to pieces together, and became like chaff, which the wind so completely swept away that no vestige of the image remained. The image being thus destroyed and abolished, the stone that smote it became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

The interpretation given to the king informed him that the head of gold represented the dominion of which he was the head; that the silver part symbolized the monarchy which would succeed his; the brazen part, a third power which should bear rule over all the earth; and the iron part, a fourth dominion strong as iron, that should subdue everything before it. This fourth kingdom, he was told, should be divided, inasmuch as there were two iron legs, and ten toes. But as *the toes* of the feet were part of them of iron and another part of clay, the dominion represented by the ten toes would be partly strong and partly broken. But as there was a mingling of iron and clay in the structure of the feet, while the toes constituted unitedly the iron dominion, they should not cleave to one another, but should be independent and antagonistic kingdoms.

Lastly, the king was given to understand that the smiting of the image by the stone on the feet represented the breaking in pieces and consumption of all the toe-kingdoms by the God of heaven, who should set up in their place a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor left to other people.

Such was the prophetic interpretation which was given with the dream about twenty-five centuries ago. I shall now briefly outline the *historical* interpretation, and then consider what yet remains to be accomplished.

The interpreter has determined the commencement of the image. It goes no further back than the time of Nebuchadnezzar, whose dynasty was superseded by a two-armed monarchy, in the reign of his son's son, Belshazzar, B.C. 542. This was the silver dominion of the Medes and Persians. After 208 years, this was overturned by Alexander of Macedon, B.C. 334. His dominion exceeded that of Babylon and Persia, extending from the remote confines of Macedonia to the Indus, or as it is expressed, "bearing rule over all the earth". This was the dominion of "the brazen-coated Greeks", answering to the brazen parts of the image. After a few years the empire of brass was divided into four kingdoms, *two* of which had especial relations with the land of Canaan upon which the kingdom of the Stone is to be established. These two, therefore, are alone represented in the image. They answer to the two brazen thighs; and are known in history as the Syro-Macedonian kingdom of the north, that is, from Jerusalem; and the Greco-Egyptian kingdom of the south. The northern kingdom continued till B.C. 67, when it became attached to the iron leg; the southern kingdom, however, "continued more years than the king of the north", even thirty-seven, when it also merged into the iron dominion.

From this epoch, the iron monarchy prevailed over all antagonists. It is known in history as the Roman. In the fourth century after Christ it was finally divided into the Eastern Roman, and the Western Roman, empires, answering to the two legs of iron. Though divided thus, the Roman majesty was considered as one. The date of the decision was A.D. 396.

In about ninety-seven years from this epoch ten kingdoms appeared upon the Western Roman territory answering to the ten toes. They were not all strong kingdoms. Part of them were absorbed into a new dominion, which arose after them beyond the limits of the Roman territory. These strong and broken toe-kingdoms have existed upwards of thirteen centuries. They are still in being; but not as originally established. This the prophecy does not require. All that is necessary, is that there should be ten kingdoms

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

at the time the image is smitten by the stone. And these kingdoms, I am satisfied, should be on “*the earth*”, and not upon “*the sea*”; that is to say, they should be found upon the Roman continent, and not upon the islands; and that the enumeration of them belongs to the time of the end, rather than to the period of their foundation. With this view, then, I enumerate the toe-kingdoms as follows:

1, Belgium; 2, France; 3, Spain; 4, Portugal; 5, Naples; 6, Sardinia; 7, Greece; 8, Hungary; 9, Lombardy; 10, Bavaria.

I have not named Britain, although the island was a part of the Roman dominion. It is, however, no more imperative that she should be included in the ten than Egypt, which is also on the Roman territory. Existing theories require Britain to be counted in; but I have nothing to do with them; I propose to show a more consistent interpretation that shall harmonize with other important and interesting parts of the prophetic word.

The ten kingdoms enumerated above are all within the Roman limits. There are many other kingdoms beyond its frontiers, resting upon territory that never belonged to Rome, or the iron dominion; therefore they must not be named in the same category. Nebuchadnezzar’s image has to do only with powers occupying the area of the golden, silver, brazen, and iron dominions; other prophecies survey the rest.

Thus far, then, history runs parallel with the prophetic interpretation. We are not informed in this vision how many of the toes were weak. It simply affirms the fact and defers further details for illustration by other symbols. What, then, remains to be accomplished? The testimony informs us that the ten kingdoms are all to be broken to pieces; and *after* they are smitten that the whole image in all its different metals is to be “broken to pieces *together*”. But how can this be? Where are the dominions represented by the gold, the silver the brass, and the iron? How can they be broken to pieces together, seeing that they have been broken to pieces *one after the other* many centuries ago? The answer to this question is important, and must be given; for without it no interpretation can be received as satisfactory. And here I would remark, that the image was presented to the mind of the King of Babylon, not so much to represent *a succession of empires*, as to exhibit the catastrophe which should usher in the Kingdom of God. The idea I would convey is well expressed by the prophet, saying, “The God in heaven, who revealeth secrets, maketh known to the king *what shall be in the latter days*”. That is, there will be in the latter days a dominion, ruling over all the countries mainly comprehended in the limits of the successive empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome: and represented by the image as a whole; and which will be broken by a power from heaven, which will utterly destroy it, and set up an empire which will cover all the territory it possessed.

Now, there has never yet existed a single dominion, contemporary with the toe-kingdoms, and of course comprehending them in its jurisdiction, which could claim to be represented by Nebuchadnezzar’s image. In order, then, to prepare for the catastrophe, the image which is now in antagonistic parts, *must be confederated*; in other words, a dominion must arise before the setting up of the kingdom of God, which shall rule over the toe-kingdoms, and the Turkish and Persian territories, till it meets the British Power in the East. The description of the dream says that the feet were smitten; and “*then* was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces *together*”; thereby intimating that the breaking of the power of the ten kingdoms would precede that of the conjoint destruction of all the other parts. That when they are conquered, the dominion of the conqueror will be overturned by the revelation of power from

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

above.

I shall be able to show, from other parts of the prophetic word, that the power destined to play the conspicuous part indicated above is RUSSIA. That it will dominate all the ten kingdoms, subdue Turkey, and incorporate Persia into its empire; but that when it has reached its zenith, it will in turn be precipitated into the abyss, and its dominion suppressed for a thousand years. When I come to unfold these things, the reader will see why Britain is not included in the ten toes. She is reserved of God to antagonize Russia, as she did France, when all Europe was prostrate at the feet of “Napoleon le Grand”. The ten toes belong to the image as a united dominion; hence Britain cannot be included among them unless it is first conquered by the overshadowing power, which it will not be, as is clearly demonstrable from many parts of the divine testimony. Russia will command the land, and Britain rule the sea. *They will contend for the dominion of the East; but neither will obtain it.* It is not for mortal man to rule the world, and grasp the sole dominion of the globe. This is an inheritance, the divine legacy of Omnipotence, to Abraham, Shiloh, and the saints.

It is evident that the dominion of the Image is not broken by a human power. The stone which destroys it is represented as not in hands; that is, it symbolizes a supernatural power. If the stone had been poised in a man’s hands ready to smite the image, we might look for an earthly conqueror to overthrow the dominion of the Autocrat, as he will overthrow the rest. But the power that wields the stone is plainly declared in the interpretation. It is the God of heaven Who pulverizes the image, and sweeps its chaffy dust away by the whirling tempest which wrecks the kingdoms of the world and transfers them to His saints. The kingdom of the stone grinds to powder whatsoever it falls upon, and then becomes a great mountain, or empire of nations, and fills the whole earth.

THE VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS.

There were certain important particulars to be revealed in connection with the empires and kingdoms of the Metallic Image, which could not be suitably expressed through a symbol of the human form. It became necessary, therefore, to introduce other representations, that would admit of appendages more in harmony with them. Wild beasts were selected to represent dominions instead of parts of a metallic figure; and as there were four different metals, four different animals were selected, according to the following order:

1. The *head of gold*, was illustrated by a LION:
2. The *breast and arms of silver*, by a BEAR;
3. The *belly and thighs of brass*, by a LEOPARD; and,
4. The *legs, feet, and toes of iron*, by a FOURTH BEAST WITH TEN HORNS.

OF THE LION.

The beasts being substituted for the metals represent of course the same dominions. The lion was a very appropriate symbol for the Assyrian dynasty; as was well understood in the days of the prophets. Hence, speaking of the overthrow coming upon Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah says, "I will bring evil *from the north*, and a great destruction. The *Lion* is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way. He is gone forth to make thy land desolate; and thy cities shall be laid waste without an inhabitant."

But in Daniel, the Assyrian lion appears under different aspect. He is represented first, as a lion with eagle's wings, crouching; and, secondly, as a lion without wings, standing erect.

The lion in these two aspects represents the Assyrian monarchy in two phases; first, while Nineveh was its capital; and secondly, when by conquest the seat of government was transferred to Babylon. Esarhaddon was king of Assyria while Merodach-Baladan was king of Babylon, and both were contemporary with Hezekiah, king of Judah; Baladan, the father of Merodach-Baladan, was probably the founder of Nebuchadnezzar's dynasty. Merodach was doubtless an important member of the family; for Nebuchadnezzar named his son Evil-Merodach, after him. About 106 years elapsed from the embassy of Merodach-Baladan to inquire after the health of Hezekiah, and concerning the bringing back of the shadow ten degrees by which it had gone down on the dial, to the first year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign; which was equivalent to the third of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. It was by the Merodach-Baladan dynasty, that "the wings of the Assyrian lion were plucked"; that is, the Esarhaddon dynasty of Assyria was superseded by the king of Babylon, as the destroyer of the Gentiles.

Before this revolution was effected, the Assyrian dominion was represented by a winged lion, having the form of a man down to the waist, and furnished with arms. This is satisfactorily demonstrated by Mr. Layard in his "Nineveh and its Remains" In his excavations at Nineveh he laid bare sculptured lions, twelve feet high and twelve feet long. In one hand, a goat was held; and in the other, hanging down by the side, a branch with three flowers. From the shoulder sprang forth expanded wings which spread over the back. The body was that of a lion with five legs, two on the fore-end, and three on the side. The head, breast, and arms were human, and as low down as the waist. A knotted girdle ending in tassels, encircled the loins.

But when Nineveh's dominion was transferred to Babylon by a conqueror, a change came over the Assyrian lion. Daniel says, "I beheld till its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth." In consequence of its eagle's wings being plucked—that is, of Armenia and Persia being subdued—the Assyrian dominion was prostrated to the earth; completely overthrown, but not destroyed; for Daniel says furthermore, that "the lion was made to stand upon the feet as a man". Nebuchadnezzar was at once the conqueror and rebuilder of the Assyrian Monarchy. He made it stand erect, and gave it a more civilized constitution. Shalmaneser had destroyed the kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel, and Sennacherib had blasphemed Jehovah, and the posterity of his son Esarhaddon had become effete: this was a dynasty which had become a pest, a plague spot upon the nations; but Nebuchadnezzar, though an idolater, was a man better suited to the purposes of God. There was more of the man, and less of the wild beast, in him than in the kings of the dynasty he had overthrown. Therefore, when the Assyrian lion was made to stand erect upon its hind feet like a man, Daniel says, that "a man's heart was given to it". Its golden, or imperial lion-head, was responsive to divine impressions, and gave utterance to sentiments which were entirely alien from the heart of the kings of Nineveh. "I blessed the Most High", said Nebuchadnezzar,

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

“and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth 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 thou? I praise, and extol, and honour the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth and his ways judgment; and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”

But this “*man’s heart*” was not the disposition of Belshazzar, his son’s son. Instead of praising, and extolling, and honouring the God of Israel, he defied Him; and “lifted himself up against the Lord of heaven; and out of the holy vessels of His temple he, and his lords, his wives, and his concubines, drank wine; and he praised the gods of silver and gold, and of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand his breath was, and whose were all his ways, *he had not glorified*”. This was his offence, on account of which the Lord of heaven passed this sentence upon him: “God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. And thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” Nor was the execution of the decree long delayed, for “on that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom.”

OF THE BEAR.

The Lion dominion being overthrown, the dynasty of the Bear took its place when “Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans”, in 542 before Christ. It was a dominion to be extended by the sword, a particular expressed in the words addressed to the Bear, “Arise, devour much flesh.”

In the symbology, or description of the symbol, the prophet saith, that “it raised up itself on one side”. Hence, one side was “higher than the other”; but before it raised itself up the higher side was the lower; therefore, the higher side acquired its more elevated position last. Compare this characteristic of the Bear with what is said of the horns of the Ram? The inequality of the sides of the Bear represents the historical fact that the dynasty of the Bear-dominion was mixed; that is, it was first Median and then Persian. Darius was a Mede, and his successor Cyrus, a Persian. They were allies in the overthrow of the Chaldean kingdom. When the crown was to be assumed, the Mede preceded the Persian; but when Darius died, instead of the crown descending to a Mede, it passed to a Persian, whose race continued to wear it until the dominion of the Bear was superseded by the Leopard. Thus the Persian side of the Bear was raised up last.

But the Bear had also “three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it”. This indicates that in devouring much flesh, the result was that its prey was reduced to “three ribs”, which had become firmly fixed to its head. In other words, that the Medes and Persians had made extensive conquests, which were reduced to three divisions for the better administration of public affairs. A rib of the dominion, then, represents an imperial presidency, or as we should say, vice-royalty; each satrapy comprehending a number of principalities. This organization of the Bear is thus expressed by the prophet: “It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and *over these THREE PRESIDENTS*; of whom Daniel was first; that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king (or Bear’s head) should have no damage.” By the reign of Ahasuerus, or Artaxerxes Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

the second, the dominion of the Bear extended “from India to Ethiopia over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces”. Though the principalities may have been increased in number, or extent, the presidencies remained the same. A dominion represented by the Bear, its dynastic branch by the higher side, and its three presidencies by the three ribs, were the principal points which distinguished the realm of the Chaldeans, under the Medo-Persian sovereignty, from that of the Lion, or the Head of Gold. And it is worthy of remark here, with reference to the image at the crisis of its fate, that the Power which shall possess Persia *in the latter days* will be the Bear, and consequently answer to the breast of silver. We have already in the heraldry of nations an intimation of the Power destined to act the part of the Bear, when the Four Beasts have “their dominion taken away”. This Power is the Russian, whose symbol is a Bear. This is so well-known that the phrase “the Russian Bear” is as familiar as household words. Russia, which already comprehends some of the Persian territory in its bounds, is destined to conquer Persia, and to possess it from India to Ethiopia. This is not conjecture but an absolute certainty; for God has declared by Ezekiel that Persia in the latter days shall be a constituent of the dominion of Gog; and that Gog is the autocratic dynasty of Russia will be seen when we come to treat of that prophecy in its proper place. We proceed now to the consideration of the Third Beast, or

FOUR-HEADED AND FOUR-WINGED LEOPARD

This beast represents the Macedonian dominion which superseded that of the Bear, as the belly and thighs of brass did the breast and arms of silver. The Leopard-dominion was more extended than its predecessors; for it embraced all that belonged to the Lion and the Bear, with the addition of that which had been established by Philip of Macedon, the predecessor of Alexander “the Great”. It bore rule “over all the earth”, or Image-territory, thus far subjugated to “civilization”, such as it was at that era of the world.

In the year 301 before Christ, the Macedonian dominion in its divisions, and their relative position, is illustrated by the Four Wings of a fowl, and the four Leopard-heads. Alexander ruled his conquests for the short space of six years, when he died in Babylon of intoxication. After a long period of war, his unwieldy empire was resolved into several kingdoms of which the four principal ones are represented by the Four Heads of the Leopard. These were its mighty Powers to which the others looked up as the lesser States do now to the great military potentates of the age.

The four great Powers, or heads, of the Grecian Leopard were: 1.

The kingdom of the South, which comprehended Egypt, Libya, Arabia, Cœle-Syria, and Palestine, under the Greco-Egyptian dynasty;

2. The kingdom of the North-west, including Thrace, Bithynia, etc.; or the Thracio-Macedonian;

3. The kingdom of the North-east, comprehending the rest of Asia, and beyond the Euphrates to the Indus; India beyond the river, though allotted to this dominion, revolted; so that the Indus became its boundary: this was the Assyro-Macedonian; and,

4. The kingdom of the West, which embraced Macedonia and Greece.

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

Such were the heads. But how was it to be determined that they should stand related to these four points of the compass? This was indicated by the wings of the Leopard—an interpretation made evident from the words of the prophet, saying, “The Lord shall gather Judah from the four corners (in Heb., *the four wings*) of the earth”. The addition of the wings, then, to this beast, signifies that the kingdoms represented by the heads would be towards the east, west, north and south, of Judea.

A Leopard is sometimes used to indicate the British power. During the war in the Peninsula, Napoleon and his generals often threatened to “drive the leopard into the sea”; by which they meant, that they would drive the British out of Spain and Portugal. Now, in Daniel the dominion of Alexander, which extended into British India, is represented by a Unicorn—that is, a goat with one horn. Hence, the Leopard, without additional heads, and without wings, represents the same dominion as the Unicorn. Now it occurs to me, that the British Unicorn is a symbol representing a similar thing to the Ægean Unicorn of Alexander; and, therefore, identifies the British power with the Grecian Leopard. I do not say that the mind which designed the heraldry of the British power had the part predestined for Britain to enact in the latter days before it when it inserted the leopard Unicorn. But divine wisdom sometimes impels men to do things the import of which they very imperfectly understand; and the insertion of the Unicorn may have been an act of this nature. Be this as it may, there are indications which make the idea more than probable. In the first place, the British power is the constitutional protector of the Ionian Islands contiguous to the Morea and ancient Macedonia; and secondly, it possesses a part of Alexander the Great’s dominion in India, and is absorbing more and more of it every war it wages in the Far East. When the Bear pushes for Constantinople, it is not unlikely that the British Unicorn will make extensive seizures of the islands in the Mediterranean as an antagonistic compensation for the continental territory acquired by the Autocrat in European Turkey. Britain is bound to maintain a maritime ascendancy in the Mediterranean; not because she has any continental territory washed by its waters, but because of her vast interests in India, which would be greatly endangered by an uncontrolled military power in Anatolia and Egypt. When the power of the British Unicorn shall be fully developed in maritime Greece, Egypt, Palestine, the Red Sea, and India, a leopard dominion will again appear upon the stage of action, and be prepared for the catastrophe of the latter days.

OF THE FOURTH BEAST, OR TEN-HORNED DRAGON.

This beast was to arise out of the Mediterranean territory as well as the others. The belligerent tempests on every side were to give rise to it; for, says Daniel, “the four winds of the heaven strove upon the Great Sea. And Four Great Beasts came *up from the sea*, diverse one from another”; and, when he has finished the description of them, he states that “they are four kings (kings being used in scripture oftentimes for their kingdoms and *vice versa*) which shall arise *out of the earth*”; which explains, that when he says “up from the sea”, he means the countries of the Mediterranean, which in scripture geography is styled the Great Sea.

That this beast is identical in signification with the iron part of the image, and incorporates within its dominion the territory of the kingdoms of the brazen thighs, is indicated by “its teeth of iron and claws of *brass*”. A beast of prey destroys with its teeth and claws. Like the iron kingdom of the image, this iron-toothed dominion was to devour and break in pieces all that came in its way, and to stamp the

undevoured residue with its brazen-clawed feet. It was “exceeding dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly”; and, though not named by the prophet, may, by the aid of history and the Apocalypse, be correctly termed the GRECOROMAN DRAGON.

This Fourth Beast was shown to Daniel for the purpose of representing certain things predestined to come to pass in connection with the ten toes of the image, which could not be suitably displayed in symbolic feet. The things to be illustrated were:

1. The eradication of the power of *three toe*-dynasties: or royalties; and the subjection of their territories to an imperial dominion;
2. The peculiar character and constitution of this imperality;
3. The part this militant power was to play in relation to the saints;
4. The time the image’s feet were to continue before they should be smitten by the stone:
5. The *consumption* of the militant power which was to precede the destruction of the image;
6. The personage through whom the destructive power of the stone should be manifested;
7. The giving of the kingdom to Him, and the saints; and,
8. The nature of the mountain which should fill the whole earth.

These eight points constitute a summary of the things designed to be represented by the Eleven Horns which made their appearance on the head of the Fourth Beast. The first point is symbolized by the coming up of a Little Horn among the Ten Horns, which “*subdues* Three Horns”, so as to “pluck up by the roots” the regal dynasties they represent; and in this way leaving only seven independent royalties, besides its imperial self.

The second and third points are presented by this Little Horn having inserted into it Human Eyes and Mouth; and described as having a more audacious look than his fellow horns, or contemporary dynasties; and “speaking very great things”, or blasphemies, “against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle (or saints, styled the temple of God in the scripture), and them that dwell in heaven”. Its character is also further illustrated by its “making war upon the saints and prevailing against them”, and changing God’s times and laws.

The fourth and fifth points are set forth by the slaying and burning of the Fourth Beast with his appendages at the end of “a time, times, and the dividing of time”.

And the sixth, *seventh and eighth*, points, are revealed by the verbal declaration, that “the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and there was given him dominion, 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 one which shall not be destroyed”. Again, “the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever”; and again, “*the time came* that the saints possessed the kingdom”; “and the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the
Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and ALL DOMINIONS SHALL SERVE AND OBEY HIM.” This is the dominion of “the great Mountain that fills the whole earth”.

There is nothing said about the *heads of this* Fourth Beast, whether there was one or more. Hence, the chronology of the symbol must be restricted to the Horns. The dynasties of the leopard-heads were all superseded by the Fourth Beast before the birth of Christ; but the ten horns, answering to the ten toes of the image, did not make their appearance till the fifth century after Christ. The life of the Beast is measured by the continuance of the horns; and the duration of these by the time allotted for the Little Horn to prevail against the saints. It is to prevail “until a time, times, and the dividing of time” shall have elapsed from some determinate epoch. Nothing is more obvious to one of these saints than that these “times” have not yet run out; because the power still exists and prevails against them. Upwards of 1,260 years have elapsed since the Horns established themselves on the western Roman territory; so that the chronology of the symbol is not to be calculated from the rise or growth of the horns out of the Dragon’s head. Indeed, if we had no other data than what are furnished us in the vision of the Fourth Beast, we could not tell when “the time, times, and dividing of time” should commence. The vision only informs us when it shall end, namely, with the casting down of the thrones, or Horn-dynasties; and the destruction of the Beast’s dominion in all its parts by the “burning flame”; a process which has been steadily approaching since February, 1848, and thereby indicating that the consummation is at hand.

The fall of three horns before the Little Horn which overthrows them, by which it becomes an eighth power on the Dragon’s territory, suggests its identity with “the eighth which goeth into perdition” treated of in the Apocalypse. Speaking of the signification of the Seven Heads of the Roman Beast, it is stated that they have a double interpretation; that is, they represent the seven mountains on which Rome is situated; and seven heads of government which have prevailed there. The seventh dynasty had not appeared when John saw the vision. When it was manifested, it was to continue in the seven-killed city only “*a short space*”. After this had passed away, and, as history shows, 246 years after its entire destruction, an eighth head appeared in Rome. This was an outlying dynasty, thrusting itself in among the horns from a country lying beyond the geographical limits of the old Roman territory. It was a dynasty growing out of a foreign country, and, therefore, styled “another Beast”. Hence, the reason why it is written in the text referred to, “the Beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition”. This is also affirmed of the Ten-horned Beast, as well as of the Two-horned Beast, or Eighth Head; because there is the same intimate connection between these two Beasts, or dominions, as that which exists between the Little Horn and Seven Horns of the Greco-Roman Dragon.

John was favoured with a vision of “*the wilderness*”, or territory of “the Holy Roman Empire” as it is styled. He saw it as it was in the first century after Christ. Then, the dominion which now exists there had no being. In spirit he viewed it as it would appear several centuries after when the dominion had arisen. It was then “*the Beast that IS*”; again, he saw the wilderness after the power had passed away; he then speaks of the dominion as “*the Beast that WAS*”, and “*the Beast that IS NOT*”, because it will then have gone into perdition. We can now say of the holy Roman Beast “*it is*”; and from present appearances, shall be able to say in a few years, “*it was and is not*”, because it is destroyed by “the burning flame.”

The Little Horn’s character has been more obvious to interpreters than its constitution. In certain respects it is like the other Ten Horns. These were all SECULAR *dynasties*. If they had individually possessed “eyes and a mouth”, they would all have been episcopal and speaking Horns, like the Little

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

Horn. But they possessed neither. They were simple horns, evincing power, secular and not spiritual, in their operations. When eyes look more stout than existences around them, and their mouth speaks blasphemies against God, angels, and the saints, they become symbolical of ecclesiastical power; and inserted into a horn, they present a symbol which represents a CONJUNCT DYNASTY; that is, a dominion whose executive is imperial, and which is constituted, either of an imperial pontiff and a secular emperor, or of one Head in whom is vested the imperial administration both of secular and ecclesiastical affairs, as was the case with the pagan Roman emperors.

The Little Horn of the Greco-Roman Dragon, or fourth beast, is a two-fold dynasty or dominion. Its eyes and mouth represent one horn; and *the rest of the horn*, another. The former is the over-seeing and blaspheming horn; the latter, the secular, or military horn, which co-operates with it, and does all the fighting. Hence, when we find the little horn fully developed, we may expect to discover TWO PERSONAGES, who, through subsequent ages, are conspicuous as imperial chiefs of the western world. These, it is almost needless to add, are the Pope and the Emperor.

OF THE SAINTS AND TWO WITNESSES.

When the little horn appeared among the ten horns, Daniel was particularly struck by his blasphemous talking, and enmity against the saints of the Most High. The mouth of this horn is evidently the same as the mouth of the ten-horned, and two-horned, beasts of the Apocalypse. It was the mouth of a lion, because of its roaring for prey, seeking whom it might devour; as well as for its Babylonish affinities. "It spake as a dragon", with the ferocity of the old pagan emperors against the saints. Describing this mouth, John says, "It spake great things and blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." These blasphemies Daniel styles "great words against the Most High", which, of course, were very offensive to the servants of God, and aroused their indignation. They "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" against its blasphemies; and advocated the liberty of the truth, the equality of the faithful, and the fraternity of the children of God. This brought down upon them the hatred and revenge of the Popes, who stirred up all the horns of the beast against them, as it is written, "He made war upon them, and overcame them, and killed them."

Daniel speaks of "*the saints*" and of "*the PEOPLE of the saints*". I apprehend that there is the same distinction to be drawn here as between "*a Jew inwardly*" and "*a Jew outwardly*". "The saints" is a term which includes them both; even as "Israel" includes both the natural and the believing seed of Abraham.

Because a person is one of the saints it does not therefore follow that he is a righteous man. This is clear from the fact that the twelve tribes as a company of nations are termed "the Lord's witnesses"; concerning whom He says, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise". They are styled "a holy nation", or a nation separated from all other nations by a divine constitution, by which they are made the people of God. Now this "holy nation" has proved itself to be "a stiffnecked and perverse race"; nevertheless, it is "holy", or separate, on the same principle that the temple, Jerusalem, the land, etc., are holy.

But pagan nations are sometimes termed holy, or sanctified. Hence, the Lord says, "I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, etc. They come from a
Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.
Page 13.

far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord and the weapons of his indignation to destroy the whole land.” This is from a prophecy against Chaldea. These saints are declared to be the Medes and Persians, who were pagan nations associated together in the overthrow of the Babylonian dynasty. “I will stir up the Medes against them, who shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.”

A class of persons separated in the providence of God to execute any work for Him are His sanctified ones, irrespective of their moral relations to the gospel. They are designated in scripture by various names. They are styled witnesses, prophets, olive trees, candlesticks, as well as saints; because they are exercised in these several capacities. They may have to bear witness for civil and religious liberty; to preach against the lion-mouth and his clergy; to stand forth as a lamp before God to enlighten the nations of the earth, etc.; they may discharge all these functions, and yet be neither believers of the gospel of the kingdom, nor even “pious” as the term is. This class of people may be found figuring largely in the history of all European nations. They are the hostile party to the beast in all “religious wars”, and wars for liberty against the despotism of popes, emperors, kings, and priests. In these sanguinary wars their uniform has been sackcloth; yet they have devoured their enemies with fire and sword, and smitten the earth with all the plagues of war as often as they pleased. With various fortune they have combated with the tyrants of the world. Cromwell “tormented them (the Royalists) who dwelt in” England, and who drew the sword for the “right divine of kings to govern wrong”; he struck terror into those in Ireland who worshipped the beast, and devoured them with fire and brimstone from the cannon’s mouth. In France, the Huguenots did good service against the beast. They shut up the political heaven, and suffered not the rain of peace to descend upon Piedmont, and the south, where the blood of Albigenes, and Waldenses, was crying out from the ground, like Abel’s, for vengeance upon those who dwelt upon the earth. But, however successful for a season, they were destined to succumb for a while; as it is written, in Daniel, “The little horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them: UNTIL the ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High: and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.”

Now, it must not be forgotten that, by reason of the Little Horn’s empire comprehending the three subjugated horns, it is a part of the ten-horned apocalyptic beast as well as the independent horns; therefore what is affirmed of it, is also affirmed of the beast as a whole, including its mouth and horns. Hence, John writes the same thing of the ten-horned beast, and of the two-horned beast, and the image of the former beast’s imperial head, that Daniel does of the Little Horn, saying, “The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit”, or sea, “shall make war upon them, and shall overcome them, and kill them”; and in another place, the ten-horned beast “shall make war with the saints, and overcome them”; and again, the two-horned beast “causeth them that dwell in the earth to do homage to the (imperial head of the) first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he causeth those that dwell upon the earth to err through the deeds it was given him to do against the beast; saying to them that dwelt on the earth that they should make an Image of the Beast, which had the wound by a sword and did live. And it was given to him to give breath (πνεῦμα) to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both *speak*, and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast *that they should be killed*. And he caused all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the free and the bond, that a sign (χάραγμα, mark or sign) should be made upon them on their right hand, or upon their forehead: and that no man might be qualified

(δύνηται, *be able*, in a moral sense) to buy or sell, except he have the sign, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name”.

Now it is the saints who refuse to adore the imperial Roman image, or Eyes and Mouth of the Little Horn; and who have not the sign ✠ upon their foreheads, or in their right hands. These are the parties whom the image has caused war to be made upon, and who have been prevailed against, and killed with all the attendant enormities of promiscuous massacre. The slaughter of the Albigenses in Languedoc; of the Vaudois in the valley of the Piedmontese mountains, in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries; and of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's, and at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; the dragonnades, drownings, etc., are instances of the cruelties inflicted upon the saints by the roaring lion of the “eternal city”. In the face of these teeming testimonies of history, the special pleaders of the Papacy have the hardihood and effrontery to declare that the Head of their church has put none to death; that their church is the pure, sinless spouse of Christ! But the spirit denounces it as “drunk with the blood of the saints”, because, in stirring up the secular powers to murder and massacre the opponents of Romanism and the advocates of human rights, it has “*caused the saints to be killed*”; and become so dyed in wickedness, and steeped in crime, that its iniquity hath at last reached unto heaven, and the burning flame of war is consuming and destroying it unto the end.

But, says the apostle, “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual”. In his letter to the Ephesians, he enumerates them as the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, the preparation of the gospel of peace for sandals, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. This is the “whole armour of God” which “the *people* of the holies” are permitted to use. The two-edged sword of the spirit is the only offensive weapon they are allowed to wield in combat with the Beast. The impulses of the flesh would lead them to crush the tyrants who have drenched the earth with their blood, and to bruise their heads like serpents, but their Captain has said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay”. It is the impulse of the flesh, hostile to the truth of God, which urges the Beast to war against those who adhere to that truth. The people of the holies are forbidden to act under such an impulse, but to imitate Jesus, who resisted not, but committed his cause to God. Unresisting suffering is the law of their spiritual warfare. If persecuted they must fly; if smitten, they must not smite again; if reviled, they must bless; but withal “fight the good fight of faith” with the word of God, without favour, affection, or compromise, with any thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

But this may be thought to be a contradiction of what has been said of the witnesses inflicting the plagues of war as often as they pleased. How can they do this unless they contend in battle against the Beast? The answer is, that the Anti-Papal instrumentality of God in the earth consists of *three classes of persons*; two of these classes are political, but the third is that class spoken of by the apostle as his brethren. The prophecy of the two witnesses is concerning *two great parties* in the ten-horned beast's dominion, which antagonize it in its civil and ecclesiastical policy. One party is purely secular, and styled “*the earth*”, or democracy; the other party is “*religious*”, and termed “*the woman*”. The mission of these is to make war upon tyranny, and to take vengeance upon it, and finally to be the means, or occasion, of breaking it up in its ten-horned and Papal constitution. “The earth”, or secular witness, is the helper of “the woman”, or religious witness. They have co-operated since the reign of Constantine more or less intimately until the present time; their co-operation consisting in a determined hostility to State-Churchism, and to its monarchical allies. They are both more or less Republican in their principles. “The earth” especially is animated by a hatred of oppressors. Its spirit in all ages has shown itself in a

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

Page 15.

terrible form. It is ferocious as the tiger, but it is a ferocity which is required by the nature of the work assigned it. The civil and ecclesiastical tyranny it has to combat, which is itself horribly terrific and blasphemous against God and His truth, must be encountered by a spirit as fierce. In history, we see it exhibited in the Circumcellions of the first century of its operations, in the men of *Mnster* of the sixteenth, the Camisards of the seventeenth, the Terrorists of the eighteenth, and the Red Republicans, Socialists, etc., of the nineteenth. Like God's "sanctified ones, the Medes", the heart of "*the earth*" is steel, and its eye un pitying. It is ready to dash out the brains of sucklings, to spoil the property of the rich, and to reduce the social fabric of the Beast to its elemental chaos. Its political representative in Europe was "THE MOUNTAIN" in the French legislature—a body of men who were the abomination and terror of the Jesuit-priest-party throughout the world.

"The woman" is constituted of heterogeneous sects. "*Dissent*" and "*Non-conformity*" are terms which define the religious witness in this country. In France she is styled "*Calvinist*". Her tendencies are Republican, as illustrated in the Cromwellian commonwealth, and in the constitution of the United States of America, which was the conjoint work of "*the earth*" and "*the woman*". This great religious witness is made up of an infinite variety of factions, whose contempt of popes, emperors, kings, priests, and aristocrats is profound; yet, with all their hatred, they conscientiously repudiate the excesses of "*the earth*", or secular witness. These two witnessing parties, however, are of one theory, which is *death to tyranny*, if not to tyrants; and, in some sense or other, rally around the standard of "liberty, equality, and fraternity"—three principles which are utterly destructive of the dominion of the Little Horn, and its audacious fellows of the Roman Beast.

But there is a *third party* which, although it has the deep-rooted enmity of truth against every form of Satanism in Church and State, Papal and Protestant; and wishes success to the Two Witnesses in their war with civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, yet it is distinct from them both. It is that party described by the apostle in the passage above quoted. It is composed of the saints of God in the highest sense of the word. It is the One Body of Christ, having the one faith, the one hope, one Lord, one spirit, one baptism, and one God and Father. It is styled "*the holy city*" in the Apocalypse; and is trodden under foot of the Gentiles for forty-two months of years till the Ancient of Days appears. It is by this class that "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" is preserved from being entirely lost. In the twelfth of Revelation they are termed "the *remnant* of the Woman's seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ". They are a people who believe the gospel of the kingdom of God and the things of Christ's name as set forth in "the law and the testimony"; for "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of the prophecy". They are also an immersed people; for they keep the commandments of God as well as believe His word. It is their mission to "contend earnestly for the faith". Hence they come into collision with all parties; being antagonistic to "every high thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God", whether entertained by the enemy, or by witnesses, who torment him with their insurrections, or with prophesyings in behalf of civil and religious liberty.

Such, then, is the antagonism ordained of God to keep the Beast, or European governments, in check, and to preserve the light of truth and liberty from extinction among the nations. It is to this agency the world is indebted for the little liberty it rejoices in. This has been conquered from the Beast at a great cost of human life. The United States of America is a specimen of its handiwork; and but for the incurable condition of society in the old world by human efforts, as happy a state of things would ere this have been established on the European continent, as in some degree hath been in this island. The Roundheads,

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

Page 16.

Puritans, and Lollards, or Bible-men, laid the foundation of American institutions on the soil of Britain. They successfully resisted the encroachments of an Act-of-Parliament-religion on the rights of men; and by contending for the Bible (without very well understanding it themselves) in opposition to human authority in religion, gave an impulse to the minds of men which all the powers emanating from the “bottomless pit” can no longer prevail against or control.

But while the liberty provided by the constitution of the United States, and practically enjoyed in England, is much to be appreciated by the people of these respective countries, there are but few of them who have tasted the sweets of that liberty which dwells in “the Holy City”. “If the truth shall make you free”, says Christ, “ye shall be free indeed.” So long as a people practically venerate a professional ministry, whether in the pay of the State, or of the people, to preach what pleases them more than “the law and the testimony”; so long as they are ignorant and faithless of “the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ”, and glorify themselves in religious systems, which nowhere on the sacred page meet the eye of the unbiased student of God’s word; so long as their pulpits are closed against men who would reason with the people out of the scriptures “concerning righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come”, *irrespective of party shibboleths and decrees*,—so long are they strangers to the liberty, equality, and fraternity which belong to the truth of God alone.

The eye of faith sees the fairest spots of earth veiled in thick darkness. Its hope is not in “the earth”; for man can neither regenerate himself, nor society. Any organization of the world fabricated by human wisdom, must perish; for men have neither knowledge, wisdom, nor virtue enough to build a social fabric conducive to the honour and glory of God, or to the general happiness of mankind in their several relations of life. Our hope is in the Ancient of Days. “The earth” may “help the Woman”, and consume the dominions of the Horns; but the Son of Man can alone deliver the holy city, crush the Dragon’s head, and reconstitute society to the glory of God, and the happiness of all the families of mankind.

When the remnant ceased to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints”, “the earth” began to fail in its efforts to establish civil and religious liberty in the countries where “the remnant of the woman’s seed” had witnessed for the truth so long. The reactionists on the side of arbitrary power began to prevail against both classes of witnesses, and the holy city; and to succeed in re-establishing what they call “ORDER”; that is, such a state of society as existed in France from A.D. 1685 to 1789, or in England under Charles II; or of which we have more recent illustrations in the case of France under Louis XVIII and Charles X; and of Italy under Austria and the Pope, etc., in 1815! It is the “order” established by Satan, when he triumphs over the rights of men, and the truth and righteousness of the untraditionized gospel of the kingdom of God. Satan’s adherents sigh for that “order” in Church and State which will enable them to increase their power, augment their earthly treasures for the gratification of their lusts, and perpetuate their grinding and debasing tyranny over the nations. For a time they appear to triumph. Indeed, their ascendancy is permitted in the wisdom of God; but its *limited* continuance is expressly revealed. The champions of “order” are destined to preserve their ascendancy until, not “the earth”, but the Lord Jesus Christ shall appear in power, and gloriously accomplish what “the saints” have hitherto been unable to effect.

It is because of this permitted ascendancy of the dynasties of the world for 1,260 years, that the popular insurrections in the territories of the Beasts and their image, have been invariably superseded by reactions which have re-established the reign of tyranny, hypocrisy, and superstition. Even the torment

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

with fire and brimstone in war inflicted by Napoleon on the guilty dynasties which had murdered the saints in past ages, at length receded before the resuscitation of the old order of things, which this MAN OF THE EARTH had so signally demolished. But what Napoleon failed *permanently* to accomplish will as assuredly come to pass as there is a God in heaven who punishes the guilty.

Of the witnesses and holy city, without discriminating them, REINERUS, the Inquisitor-General, who shed their blood, writes thus concerning them as a whole: “Among all the sects which are or have been, there is not any more pernicious to the Church (*i.e.*, of Rome) than that of the Leonists. And this for three reasons. The first is, because it is *older*; for some say that it hath endured from the time of Pope Sylvester (fourth century), others from the time of the apostles. The second, because it is more general, for there is scarce any country wherein the sect is not. The third, because when all other sects beget horror in the hearers by the outrageousness of their blasphemies against God, this of the Leonists have a great show of piety; because they live justly before men, and believe all things rightly concerning God and all the articles which are contained in the Creed; only *they blaspheme the Church of Rome and the clergy*, whom the multitude of the laity is easy to believe.”

“The causes of their estrangement”, says Acland, “from the Roman Church are thus stated: ‘It is because the men and women, the young and old, the labourer and the learned man, do not cease to *instruct themselves*; because they have translated the Old and New Testaments into the vulgar tongue, and *learn these books by heart, and teach them*; because, if scandal be committed by anyone, it inspires them with horror, so that when they see anyone leading an irregular life, they say unto him, The apostles did not live so, nor shall we who would imitate the apostles: in short, they looked upon all that a teacher advances, *unsupported by the New Testament*, as fabulous.’”

It is with such people as these my sympathies are found: and it is to multiply such in the world that I write this book. If the reader would be numbered with this class of witnesses, he must “instruct himself” by the study of the word; he must cease to surrender himself to the clergy of Church or Dissent; but treat all their hypotheses “as fabulous”, unsupported by the law and the testimony: for “the scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” What more do we want than to be saved in the kingdom of God? Ask the clergy, “What must you do to be saved?” They will repeat like parrots, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved”; but ask them, “What does believing on the Lord Jesus for salvation consist in?” and I hesitate not to say—indeed, with the preceding pages as my premises, which I firmly believe to be the only scriptural exegesis of the gospel, I am necessitated to say—*they cannot tell*.

Then, like the Leonists of old, away with the clergy, the “blind leaders of the blind”, “dumb dogs that cannot bark”, “who neither enter into the kingdom themselves, and them who would they hinder”. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: *that the man of God may be perfect*, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Here Paul teaches that the scriptures can make a man perfect in all these things; how perverse, then, of mankind to neglect this instrument of perfection, and lean upon such broken reeds. The Leonists, Paulicians, Albigenses, Waldenses, etc., had more wisdom than this. They drank from the fountain head of truth; and it was only in later times, when their minds were diverted from this by the dazzling demonstrations of the protesting Romanists, who, under their early leaders, were rebelling against the Pope, and laying the foundation of State religions in Germany, England, etc., that they were ensnared in

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

the toils of mercenaries. They merged into Protestantism, and thus an extinguisher was placed upon their lamp, which for 1,260 years had illuminated the darkness around.

A writer on prophecy has well remarked, that “there is no nation existing which, first and last, has produced such a number of faithful witnesses against Papal corruptions, and tyrannies, as France. No people have so long a list of martyrs and confessors to show as the Huguenots of that country; and there is no royal family in Europe which has shed, in the support of Popery, half the blood which the Capets have shed. Who deluged the earth with the blood of the Waldenses and Albigenses that inhabited the southern parts of France, and bore testimony against the corruptions and usurpations of Rome? The cruel kings of France slew above a million of them. Who set on foot, and headed, the executioners of the massacre of Bartholomew in 1572, which lasted seven days, and in which, some say, near 50,000 Huguenots were murdered in Paris, and 25,000 more in the provinces? The royal monsters of France. A massacre this, in which neither age nor sex, nor even women with child, were spared; for the butchers had received orders to slaughter all, even babes at the breast, if they belonged to the Huguenots. The king himself stood at the windows of the palace, endeavouring to shoot those who fled, and crying to their pursuers, ‘Kill them, kill them!’ For this massacre public rejoicings were made at Rome, and in other Papal countries. A medal was struck at Rome commemorative of this tragical event. In the words of the Apocalypse, ‘They that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented those who dwelt on the earth.’”

This dreadful massacre was 1,260 years from the separation established between State-church Christians, and the remnant of the Woman’s seed. In 312–3, the man child was born of the Woman as the military chieftain destined to cast the pagan dragon out of the Roman heaven. A great revolution was consummated. The world’s religion was changed; and the foundation laid for that awful despotism in Church and State, which has made all the families of the earth to wail. Constantine and his successors “ruled the nations with a rod of iron”; and united in adulterous alliance, an apostasy from apostolic Christianity to the kingdom of the world. Thus, a Satanic system was established, which persecuted all “who kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ”. The troubles of the witnesses commenced with the institution of State Christianity, and they will not cease until every State Religion is abolished from the earth.

This Bartholomew massacre of 1572 marks the epoch of the terminating of the testimony of the two witnesses. From 1572 till 1685 was a period of war, during which unnumbered thousands fell in defence of their civil and religious rights. The war was waged with various fortune on both sides. At first, the Huguenots were so far successful, that their valour and devotedness raised their leader, Henry of Navarre, to the throne of France. Though a Huguenot, he could not withstand the temptation of an earthly crown, for which he changed sides, and professed himself a Papist. He could not, however, forget his companions in arms, but granted them in 1598 the celebrated Edict of Nantes. This charter accorded to them the right to celebrate their worship in every place in which they were resident previous to the year 1597. It permitted them to publish books in certain towns, to convene their synods, to open academies and schools for the education of youth, and to fill public offices. It also gave to them a number of cities as cautionary towns, or pledges of security, with the privilege of keeping them garrisoned, and levying taxes on their own account. Thus there was a little State within the State. The Romanists and Huguenots were like two armies, or two nations, in view of each other. They had concluded a treaty of peace, in which the king himself was the mediator; and it was necessary that each of the contracting parties should obtain their

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

Page 19.

guarantees for the future. This singular state of things resulted from the violation of their engagements by the Papists, and from the priests inculcating the treacherous policy of not keeping faith with heretics.

Henry IV was assassinated in 1610, by Ravailiac, a fanatic of the Jesuit order. Upon this troubles immediately recommenced between the warlike Huguenots and Papists. The former were conquered; they lost all their strongholds; and in 1628, Rochelle, their last bulwark, fell into the hands of Cardinal Richelieu. Thus disappeared in this kingdom of the Beast their power to “devour their enemies by fire proceeding out of their (cannon) mouth”. They had no longer “power to shut heaven that it should not rain”; nor could they any more turn the waters of Piedmont, and the departments of France, into blood, and smite the earth with the plague of war “as often as they willed”. Their political power was gone, and their affairs grew worse and worse, until their total wreck in the reign of Louis XIV.

“Soon after he came to the crown”, says Mr. Claude, “there arose in the kingdom a civil war, which proved so sharp and desperate, as brought the State within a hair’s breadth of utter ruin. Those of the reformed religion still kept their loyalty so inviolable, and accompanied it with such a zeal, and with a favour so extraordinary, and so successful, the king found himself obliged to give public marks of it by a declaration made at St. Germain in the year 1652. Then as well at Court as in the armies, each strove to proclaim loudest the merits of the reformed.” Now, however commendable Mr. Claude and others may deem them on account of this loyalty, the simple import of the matter is, that their devotion to Louis XIV proved that their *testimony was finished*. Instead of standing aloof, and testifying against the despotism of Church and State, and “contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints”, their pastors and congregations had sunk down into the formalism of Calvinism; and actually drew the sword for a horn, or dynasty, of the very Beast which had “made war against the saints”, with all the attendant cruelty of massacre, rapine and ravishment; and which was destined finally to “kill them”. Calvinists in the imperio-papal, and royal, armies, of the Beasts and their horns, have forfeited all claims to divine favour as His witnesses of either class. Their mission is ended, and the sentence of death rests upon them. In about thirty years after this fatal demonstration of loyalty to the monster of the sea, God permitted their enemies to destroy them.

Moved by the Jesuits, who flattered his pride by persuading him that for him was reserved the glory of re-establishing religious unity in his dominions, Louis XIV determined to accomplish the suppression of Huguenotism in France. The plan was arranged in the spirit of Jesuitism, and pursued with dreadful perseverance. Referring to their new-born zeal for the Bourbon dynasty, their enemies said, “If on this occasion the Huguonots could preserve the State, this shows likewise that they could have overthrown it; this party must therefore by all means be crushed.” Hence, Louis, and the abettors of the tyranny, immediately set about it. “A thousand dreadful blows”, says M. Saurin, “were struck at our afflicted churches before that which destroyed them: for our enemies, if I may use such an expression, not content with seeing our ruin, endeavoured to taste it.” They were persecuted in every imaginable way. They were excluded from the king’s household; from all employments of honour and profit; all the courts of justice, erected by virtue of the Edict of Nantes, were abolished, so that in all trials their enemies only were their judges, and in all the courts of justice the cry was, “*I plead against a heretic*”; “I have to do with a man of a religion odious to the State, and which the king is resolved to extirpate.”

“Orders were printed at Parris, and sent from thence to all the cities and parishes of the kingdom, which empowered the parochial priests, churchwardens, and others, to make an exact inquiry into

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

whatever any of the reformed might have done, or said, for twenty years past, as well on the subject of religion as otherwise; to make information of this before the justices of the peace, and punish them to the utmost extremity. Thus the prisons and dungeons were everywhere filled with these pretended criminals; orders were issued, which deprived them in general of all sorts of offices and employments, from the greatest to the smallest, in the farms and revenues; they were declared incapable of exercising any employ in the custom-houses, guards, treasury, or postoffice, or even to be messengers, stage coachmen, or waggons. Now a college was suppressed, and then a church shut up, and at length they were forbidden to worship in public at all by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Rude Popish missionaries, without learning, or decency, went from house to house, for the purpose of inducing them to abjure their religion; they interrupted the preachers; and, if, the congregation forcibly ejected them, they complained to the magistrate, who seized the opportunity thus presented to suppress the meeting-house.

“Consciences were bought up like articles of merchandise Pastors were forbidden to preach beyond the place in which they resided, under penalty of several years’ imprisonment. Children of tender age were authorized to embrace Popery in spite of the opposition of their parents; who, without regard to rank, condition, or merit, were declared unworthy to serve the State.

“The great majority continued steadfast. Promises of wealth and honours, seductions, artifices, threats, failed to shake their constancy: so that their persecutors resorted to the still more energetic measures, commonly known as THE DRAGONNADES.

“These were a species of punishment unthought of by the Inquisition. Profligate and merciless soldiers were sent into the houses of the Huguenots. They had orders to resort to every method except assassination to convert their victims to Papalism! They laid waste their property, destroyed their household goods, treated mothers, wives, and maidens, in an infamous manner, brutally struck the men; and, by a refinement of cruelty, hindered them from taking an hour’s rest until they had signed a derisive abjuration. Some, crushed beneath such accumulated sufferings, lost their reason: others, led away by despair, suffered death by their own hands. The Dragonnades still live in the memory of Frenchmen, as a fearful and horrible memento of by-gone days. But even these atrocities were insufficient to consummate the conversion of the Huguenots to Romanism.

“In 1685, as we have said, Louis the Fourteenth signed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The preamble of this ordinance made the king say, ‘We now see, with the gratitude we owe to God, that our endeavours have had the result which we proposed, since the best and greatest portion of our subjects of the pretended reformed religion have embraced the Catholic faith.’ But this did not express the math. Hundreds of thousands emigrated from France, to seek asylums in foreign lands; into every part of Europe, and from the Cape of Good Hope to the American wilderness, they carried their faith, industry, laborious habits, and their example; and besides these, two millions remained in the land of their birth, who persevered in their opinions beneath the sword of the executioner, and in the sight of the fires of martyrdom.

“Those who had not quitted France were in the most deplorable condition. Deprived of their leaders, and having no regular means of religious instruction, pursued like rebels, they met at distant intervals, in some wild retreat. When they were surprised, the soldiers fired on them, as if they had been ferocious animals. Thousands of poor victims were condemned to the galleys, and were there confounded with the

Thomas, D. J. (1990). *Elpis Israel: an exposition of the Kingdom of God* (electronic ed.). Part Third Chapter 1. Birmingham, UK: The Christadelphian.

vilest wretches. Others were hung, beheaded, or burned. If a dying man, moved to remorse, disavowed in his last moments the Popish religion, to which he had conformed during his life, his dead body was dragged through the streets by the hangman, and was afterwards cast into a receptacle for filth, like the carcase of an unclean beast.”—*A bridg. of G. De Felice.*

Speaking of the Revocation, M. Saurin says, “Now we were banished, then we were forbidden to quit the kingdom, on pain of death. Here we saw the glorious rewards of those who betrayed their religion; and there we beheld those who had the courage to confess it, haled to a dungeon, a scaffold, or a galley. Here, we saw our persecutors drawing on a sledge the dead bodies of those who had expired on the rack; there we beheld a false friar tormenting a dying man, who was terrified on the one hand with the fear of hell if he apostatized; and on the other, with the fear of leaving his children without bread, if he should continue in the faith.” “They cast some”, says M. Claude, “into large fires, and took them out when they were half roasted; they hanged others with ropes under their armpits, and plunged them several times into wells till they promised to renounce their religion; they tied them like criminals on the rack, and poured wine with a funnel into their mouths till, being intoxicated, they promised to turn Catholics. Some they slashed and cut with pen-knives; some they took by the nose with red-hot tongs, and led them up and down the rooms till they agreed to turn Catholics. These cruel proceedings made 800,000 persons quit the kingdom.”

Thus, Oct. 18th, 1685, became the epoch of the death of the witnesses. The war had been long, but the Beast had subdued them at last. The voice of testimony against Papalism in Church and State was silenced. The stillness of death pervaded not France only, but Europe likewise; and if I were called upon to point out the darkest period of BIBLE CHRISTIANITY from the time of Constantine to the present time, I should point to the interval from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes to the breaking out of the French Revolution in 1789. During this time the holy city was laid low, and the symbolic witnesses lay dead, though unburied. Their lamps were extinguished, and “before the God of the earth” there was no light; no Illuminati; none to torment them that dwelt upon the earth with a faithful testimony against tyranny and State religion. Everything was sunk into cold formality, and the Beasts and their Images were triumphant everywhere.