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REV'DS. I. E. BILL & R. THOMSON,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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## THE MERCHANT.

The following lines were written by a contributor to the *The Casket*, a paper edited by the ladies of St. Anthony, Minnesota—away on the verge of civilization—and read each week during the winter months before the St. Anthony Lyceum. The piece needs but to be read in order that its aptness may be appreciated.

Tare and tret,  
Gross and net,  
Box and hogsheads, dry and wet,  
Ready made,  
Of every grade,  
Wholesale, retail; will you trade?

Goods for sale,  
Roll or bale,  
Ell or quarter, yard or nail;  
Every dye—  
Will you buy?  
None can sell as cheap as I.

Thus each day  
Wears away,  
And his hair is turning gray!  
O'er his books  
He nightly looks,  
Counts his gain and bolts his locks.

By and by  
He will die;  
But the ledger book on high  
Shall unfold  
How he sold,  
How he got and used his gold!

## The Coming Struggle among the Nations of the Earth;

Or, the Political Events of the next Fifteen Years, Described in accordance with the Prophecies of Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Apocalypse.

Never was there a time, in the past history of the world, when such excitement prevailed regarding political affairs as at this moment exists in the social mind.

That such an excitement should prevail at the present time is not at all wonderful. The position in which the powers of Europe and Asia are placed render it evident to every thinking mind—and in this age of boasted intelligence all should be thinkers—that we are on the very verge of a crisis, and a crisis unparalleled in the annals of the past. It is not at one part merely, or in one or two nations, that we discern the signs of an approaching storm; but from one end of Europe to the other the ominous cloud has gathered, and when it bursts, as soon it must, the deluge will be not only overwhelming, but universal. Such a prospect as this is entirely new. The shadows which preceded the advent even of the most devastating hurricanes that swept over the world in the ages that are gone, were not so gloomy or portentous as those which now hover above our whole horizon; and as the image must resemble the reality, that reality must be awful indeed. We are in the midst of that oppressive calm which reigns when the elements are fully charged with all the ingredients of a storm, and, like the mariner, we long for its inevitable outbreak, in order that we may escape from our suspense, and learn at once how we are likely to cope with it.

But while the painful anxiety every where visible is, in the circumstances, extremely natural, it is not at all necessary that the equally manifest uncertainty and ignorance regarding the extent and duration of the coming struggle should remain, and were the prophetic declarations of the Bible properly understood, the inhabitants of Britain and America would comprehend all that is about to take place. In that book—a book which some despise, many neglect, and nearly all misunderstand—is to be found a series of visions and prophecies under which is symbolized the political

history of the world from the Babylonian empire down to the millennium—that happy era to which the human family have long looked forward with delight.

The first intimation we have of the prophecy is in the second chapter of Daniel, where we are told that one morning, during the palmy days of the Babylonian empire, Nebuchadnezzar, its head, awoke from a troubled sleep, in which he had a strange and unaccountable dream. Being fully awake, he endeavored to call to mind the particulars of the vision which had passed across his sleeping spirit; but the "thing had gone from him," and do what he could, he was unable to recall it. Nevertheless his "spirit was troubled to know the dream," and this he demanded of his magicians, who, being of course unable to comply, Daniel, a young Hebrew captive, volunteered to make it known and interpret it. Having "desired the mercies of the God of heaven concerning the secret," Daniel had it revealed to him in a vision, and with a joyful countenance went with it to the king. He informed the monarch that in his sleep he had seen a great image standing before him. The head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet partly iron and partly clay. After the king had gazed on this giant of metal for some time, he beheld a stone, possessed in the air, unsupported by hands, slowly descending to the earth. Falling at length with a heavy crash upon the feet of the image, it "brake them to pieces," and the whole superstructure was hurled to the ground, where the wind carried it entirely away. The stone which smote it, however, grew into a great mountain, and filled the earth.

The interpretation given by Daniel to the king was to the effect that the golden head, silver arms, brazen thighs, and iron legs denoted a succession of four dynasties in the Babylonian empire. The iron kingdom, which was the last, was at first to be divided into two parts, and latterly into ten, and these were finally to be destroyed by the establishment of a kingdom of God upon the earth, a kingdom which should never be destroyed. This was a dim yet true outline of the future history of the great empire which was at that time aptly termed the whole earth; but it was only a rough sketch, and the purpose God had in view in disclosing it required that a more detailed representation should be given; accordingly, after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel was favored with a more extended view. In this second vision, the four dynasties were symbolized by four beasts, and an outline of each given. The fourth power, which in the first vision was described as iron, and divided into ten parts, is in the second shadowed forth by a beast with ten horns. The causes of the destruction of these ten powers by the God of heaven is in this vision also accounted for, and the time of duration determined. They were to be destroyed on account of their civil and spiritual despotism—crimes which can never in the moral government of Jehovah pass unpunished. After the ten horns had been for some time established, a little horn came up among them, in which were the "eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." After making room for itself by plucking up three of the large horns, this little horn waxed insolent and domineering, and continued so "till the beast was slain, and his body given to the burning flame." Daniel was extremely anxious to find out the meaning of this, and having asked "one of them that stood by," he was informed that the ten horns were ten kingdoms that should arise out of the fourth or last dynasty; that another should rise after them, diverse from all the others; that he would "subdue three of the first kings, speak great words against the Most High, wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to

change the times and laws;" but after continuing thus for "a time and times, and the dividing of time," his dominion would be taken away, and he would be utterly destroyed.

In future visions, a still more detailed representation of certain portions of this first vision was given to Daniel, and many of the prophecies of Ezekiel contain important developments of the same history; but God's determined measure of revelation was not yet full. Indeed, the chief part remained behind, and consisted of an ample view of the operations of the fourth beast and his ten horns, especially of that little horn which subsequently sprung up and became so prominent.—Many hundred years after Daniel's time, when the gold, silver, and brass of Nebuchadnezzar's image had given place to the iron power, there lived an aged man on one of the desert islands that dot the bosom of the Ægean Sea. To this place he had been banished for adhering to, and promulgating the doctrines of a new religion that had sprung up in the land of Judea, now called *Christianity*. In this lonely spot, and to this persecuted follower of the despised Nazarene, God gave his concluding revelation to man, and wound up the whole by shadowing forth the history of the beast, and the horn, under the emblems of seals, trumpets, and vials. The iron power of Nebuchadnezzar, or fourth beast of Daniel, is here represented by a dragon with seven crowned heads and ten crownless horns; and the little horn is at first called a beast, with seven uncrowned heads and ten crowned horns.—the one being thus exactly the reverse of the other,—and afterwards a two-horned beast. The same distinguishing features are apparent here as in Daniel's vision. The horn, or the beast, waxes great; the dragon gives him his power, and his seat, and great authority; he changes times and laws, and makes war against the saints for a time, and times, and half a time, till the judgment sits, and his dominion is taken away, and both himself and the dragon is cast into a pit of destruction.

Such, then, is a brief outline of this important prophecy—a prophecy which has occupied the attention, and engaged the interest, of Bible readers for many generations. The language in which it is couched has hitherto rendered it impossible for interpreters to agree concerning its fulfilment; and, indeed, in past times, the occurrence of the events it foretells was the only guide to its course.

All, however, are agreed as to the general meaning of the prophecy. The gold, silver, brass, and iron powers of the image, and the four beasts of the vision, are the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires. The seven heads and ten horns are the various forms of government and kingdoms of this latter power. The first beast of John is Romanism, and the second, or two-horned beast, is the Austro-Papacy. Thus far the history of the past has enabled our divines to expound and agree: but with regard to the time of the end, and the nature of the events which must take place previous to it, there exists an almost endless diversity of opinion, the greatest union lying in a universal misapprehension of both, particularly of the latter.

The great cause of misapprehension, besides that to which we formerly alluded,—viz., a premature interpretation,—is owing to the fondness of theologians for the allegorizing method of Origen. Following this early father, they assert that the events to take place at the time of the end are less physical than moral, and will consist of a series of spiritual changes, which will usher in the universal triumph of the church and the regeneration of the world. They do not understand, or rather they refuse to believe, that the Jews will be restored to their own land, and that the kingdom of Israel will once more be established, though not after its ancient model

or with its former splendor. With a very restricted partiality, they have construed all those glorious promises of a physical restoration which have lighted up with hope the heart of the wandering Jew, into nothing more and nothing else than a spiritual conversion, and they claim for the church all the glory of the latter day. This, we apprehend, is a fatal mistake. The restoration of the Jews to Palestine forms the very keystone to the whole political structure of the world, and is the principal object to be accomplished by the awful events of the coming years. It is the grand consummation of which the Hebrew prophets spake and Jewish bards sung; it is emphatically "the hope of Israel;" and the word of Judah's God is pledged to its accomplishment.

Having done away with a literal restoration, our interpreters have necessarily erred in deciding regarding the many minor parts of the prophecy. Hence the locality of the final conflict has been a matter of much dispute. The general notion is, that Italy will be the scene of the great battle of Armageddon; and one individual has actually measured a large valley in that country to see if it answer the inspired description. Another class, in the extremity of their fondness for spiritualism, say that at the moral destruction of Popery, wherever Protestantism encounters and overcomes Romanism, there will Armageddon be. In the sequel of this paper, we shall show how erroneous are both of these conjectures.

Another great error, and one which has led to a host of misconceptions, is the belief that Britain is one of the ten horns, and that consequently she will be involved in the destruction that overtakes the toes of the great metallic image. This is a complete mistake. Though once a part of the Roman dominion, she is not within the boundary of the image territory; and none of the countries beyond that territory will be overthrown with Papacy, except those who have continued to worship the beast, such as Austria and others. And this is just an evidence of the evil effects of a premature interpretation of the prophecy. At the period when many of our commentators wrote, it was actually necessary to include Britain in the toe kingdoms, in order to make up the number required. Up to the year 1820, there were only eight independent powers within the Roman empire; but in that year the Greeks rebelled against the Sultan, and, after several years' war, succeeded in establishing a new kingdom, which became the ninth horn. Still another was wanted to complete the prophetic symbol, and it did not come up till 1830, when the revolution of Paris divided the kingdom of the Netherlands into two, and Belgium became a separate power, to defeat the calculations of divines, and pluck Britain from the anomalous position in which they had placed her. We say anomalous; for how is it possible to reconcile the past history of Anglo-Saxon progression—of which she has been the mover and sustainer—with sudden and complete destruction? The very thought is a libel on the eternal law of development and the wisdom of the moral government; but it is false; and we will by and by show how different is the destiny of this country, and what a noble part has been assigned her in the last act of the mighty drama. The powers which really answer to the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image are Bavaria, Lombardy, Hungary, Greece, Sardinia, Naples, Portugal, Spain, France, and Belgium; and if we understand the prophecy aright, these kingdoms will be wholly destroyed, or at least completely shattered, within the next fifteen years.

[To be continued.]

Life  
That life is long which answers life's great end.  
The time that bears no fruit, deserves no name.  
The man of wisdom is the man of years.—Young.