

No.

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"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

Extracts From an Address Entitled:

"EARTH'S CRISES

IN THE LIGHT OF THE PROPHETIC
SCRIPTURES."

An Address (revised) at

Priory Schools, Acton Lane.

28th June, 1916.

by

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Scriptural literature for Believers

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EARTH'S CRISES IN THE LIGHT OF THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES.

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward
At Priory Schools, Acton Lane.
28th June, 1916.

If ever there was a time when children of God had their eyes directed to the coming of the Lord Jesus, it is surely now. We are fast approaching crises which have been brought into prominence in the Prophetic Scriptures, of which God has given the outline, and the foreshadowing seems almost present. God's dear people expect a fuller rising up and more terrible events upon this earth ere He reigns; though their eyes are not toward the events, but toward their Lord. What does the Scripture say about the PRESENT crisis? Can we say that the present crisis and the present war are prophesied in the Scriptures? Or must we rather say that the present events are the fore-shadowings of that which is prophesied. My own belief inclines definitely to this, that the present events show us what is about to happen to fulfil prophecy. Hence we can see the beginnings of the fulfilment of PROPHECY ~~XX~~ ~~XXX~~ in what is happening. There are three classes of people upon the world; First, there are those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, those who are children of God. Apart from these there is in one sense only another class - those who are dead in trespasses and sins. But we can, from 1 Cor. 10 divide such into two parts, - Jews and Gentiles. We can therefore speak of three classes. What has God said will happen as to these three classes in connection with the end of the age? I am not going to deal with believers just at present. Believers are to see the signs of the times, but they are to be always occupied with their Lord. I want to speak first of the Jews, and then of the nations. God has declared that just before the end of the age there will be a number of Jews in Palestine who will have great power in Palestine, not merely as Colonists;

who will, it would seem, own Palestine, at least to some extent. We have the fact brought before us in Daniel 9:27 that in the last seven years Antichrist will confirm the covenant with many, that he will make a covenant with many Jews for seven years. And we read, In the midst of the week, or these seven years, he will make the sacrifice to cease. Thus Israel will have a temple at Jerusalem and be in such a position they can make a covenant with the monarch of earth. There is no sign that God will accept this, or that they will be turning to Him. Many have thought that at the end of the age the people of Israel will, as a whole be brought into blessings, or a large number at least be blessed as Jews before the Lord Jesus comes back. There seems no Scripture for this, although it is probable that as at the beginning of the dispensation God saved a number of Jews into the church of God, so at the end, I believe, He will save a number of these into that heavenly position. But there seems to be no promise to Jews as Jews until the Lord Jesus has descended. He does not take up the earthly thread of Israel's history until then. But some may ask: - Have we any evidence they will NOT be pleasing God? See Isa. 66, "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool, where is the house that ye build unto Me, and where is the place of My rest? For all those things hath My hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol". Thus God will not accept the temple that they build, but will refuse their sacrifices. Jews as Jews will not be acknowledged by Him, and another Scripture reminds us God will gather many to the land of Palestine, and He will there blow upon them in His judgments and make manifest His hatred

against their sin. There is no thought of a prior turning to God. Ezekiel 22:21 - "Yea I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of My wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out My fury upon you". Ezekiel shows us further on in the 38th and 39th chapters that Israel will apparently possess the land of Palestine as a state apart from God, and apart from the special control of one nation or another. I am inclined to think that Palestine will be given to the Jews, and that its neutral position will be guaranteed by ALL around, for in Ezekiel 38:11 you are specially told how Gog says, "I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates". Apparently the people if Israel will dwell in the land of Israel without any fortresses, or military protection at all. But they have not turned to the Lord when this takes place, for in Ch. 39:22 when God judges the nations that at last go up against them, "the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from THAT DAY". The people of Israel will be in the land of Israel, i.e. many of them; they will possess it as the land of earth's peace, but not peace with God; will have a temple, be in a covenant with Antichrist; but God will refuse their sacrifices, and everything will be unsatisfactory before Him. But it is equally clear that many of the Jewish people will be found in Babylon. Jer. 50 - This chapter has never been FULFILLED as a whole in past history. Verse 4 "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go and seek the Lord their God; they shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward". Verse 8, "Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans". Verse 28, "The

voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon". There will be many Jews at Babylon, even as at Jerusalem. Jews have always sought Babylon as well as Jerusalem. We find that the invitation was given to go up from Babylon to Jerusalem. Very few availed themselves of it. They preferred to remain. Further, we find that in Babylon, when 1 Peter was written, there were a number of Jews who believed. Again, the greatest Jewish schools since the Lord Jesus came into this world, were found at Babylon where the greatest Jewish volumes were produced, i.e. the Babylonian Talmud. At the present time the Jews seem to have their eyes directed toward Mesopotamia, and I think it is fairly clear from Zech. 5, and other passages, many of Israel will go back to Babylon. Now, is the present crisis leading up to the fulfilment of these Jewish signs? I venture to say it is. At the beginning of the war we could not see things so clearly as we can now. Everything becomes clearer, even though we cannot help feeling that while on the one hand events move quickly, there are many other events which we are expecting to move yet more quickly. At the beginning of the war the position of Israel was a very strange one. Israel were found in all the armies, and in large numbers, but the largest numbers were to be found in the armies of Russia, But Israel are not loved by Russia, not have Israel a deep affection for Russia. In a period of war there is a binding together in view of any danger. This reminds of the Jewish nation at Jerusalem when besieged by Titus - laying aside internal strife because of mightier opposition without. Jews are often thought unpatriotic. This only increases their willingness to fight in any army in any nation where they are found; but Jew particularly hates killing Jew, and yet this is what they are doing and it is making the position of Israel unbearable to many of them. But, particularly they need to be dislodged from Russia where there is the greatest number of Jews, in the whole world. What part of Russia is par-

ticularly overrun with armies? Did you notice that when there was the pressing forward of German armies in Russia that the Jewish district was the district covered most, and when they had swept over most of the Jewish district the wave of aggression stopped. Today I noticed the statement that the last great German blow was Wilna, and what is Wilna? The Jewish BOOK center with 40% Jews. God permitted that which would still further remove Israel from settling down, that they might feel more earnestly their position away from their own land. What will be the result of this after the war? Together with man's peace there will be doubtless jealousies and strife. We can hardly anticipate that the Jewish question in Russia, for example, will be solved with ease. People in a time of strife anticipate that the nations opposed to one another will retain their animosity afterwards, and the united nations will retain their friendship afterwards. History is surely against such inferences. You cannot pledge nations years ahead. It is impossible. The people of Israel will feel themselves out of place in Russia after this conflict is over. Many of them have been driven from their Polish center. There is a most terrible upheaval. It would seem the only solution will be a great migration toward the land of Palestine and the district of Mesopotamia, and the nations will find room for Israel in another part. The children of Israel will not want to be engaged in any more warfare one against the other, and will welcome the open door. Further, if we see that Gentile commerce will go toward the East, it is almost certain that Israel will affect and be affected by commerce. We shall see in a few moments that there will be such a change in Gentile commerce. I want therefore to suggest that the present events are leading up to the going eastward of many of Israel, and the possession of their land. We cannot say Isaiah 66:1-4 is yet fulfilled, but everything points in that direction.

We come now to consider the Gentiles, the world, including the reli-

gious world. It is very solemn to see nominal Christian countries without Christ. Yet this is prophesied. There are only a few of the Lord's people everywhere. Yet most have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. How deeply important, beloved friends, that we should be able to truly see who are in Christ Jesus. The religious world must, according to prophecy, wax worse and worse, it will become more Laodicean. Men before the war were plainly lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, and ~~is~~ the inclination is still in that connection, and if one feels that THESE ~~ARE~~ ~~THE~~ are solemn times, I have looked forward and thought how awful will be the state of affairs when peace is declared. How awful will be the events that will take place in the utter carelessness, mer- riness, and wickedness to which men will give themselves up. We little know how solemn will be the times, but our Father knows the end from the beginning, and we can leave everything with Him. The religious world of Europe is particularly associated with the Roman earth. We can there- fore consider what God has said will take place in the Roman earth. I would suggest that two or three outward features should be noticed. First, God has declared in Dan. 2 and Dan. 7 that there will be a unity of the nations of the revived Roman earth, but not a federation to please Him; that there will be an inclusion of the eastern part of the Roman earth, and therefore a revival of Babylon and of Egypt and of other Asiatic dis- tricts. I do not mean a spiritual revival, but governmental revival, a wicked revival, a commercial revival moreover. We are clearly shown that in connection with this unity of the Roman earth under Antichrist there will be the rejection of the Lord and the rejection of the Lord's people. Are present events tending in this way? First, the Roman earth especially is engaged in the present struggle, nearly the whole of it has been brought in. You recollect how in Dan. 7 that we find everything centers round the Great Sea, and how clear it is that most of the countries around the

Great Sea are involved. And, I repeat, most of the countries of the Roman earth. It is not without remarkable suggestiveness that if the Roman earth is at present divided into two camps, - I am speaking now of the fact that Austria and Turkey are on the other side in the conflict albeit are part of the Roman earth and therefore those districts MUST all finally come into a federation, - it is remarkable that if parts of the Roman earth are now on the other side, there seem to be evidences that there will be a breaking up in these parts first, just what we should expect. Moreover, we notice how in this land the war is almost always connected primarily with "Germany". Austria and Turkey are not brought into prominence. There is not the same "feeling" with respect to Austria and Turkey. Why is God permitting this? The districts of Austria and Turkey are yet to be brought into federation with the allies. Again, it is somewhat remarkable that more than once during the present conflict the eyes of those who live in this country have been directed toward Ireland. You know that Ireland was not in the Roman earth. Personally I cannot think it was accidental, but to direct God's people in their prophetic studies, that God has permitted Ireland to come up several times. The omission of Ireland from conscription was certainly noticeable, and it would seem that at the present time difficulties are not finished with respect to Ireland. Men may seek to have a settlement, and seek to have an arrangement, but God is permitting all these difficulties to come up that we may see that, possibly, the next step is the re-arrangement of the Roman earth. If that be so, if events have already gone many steps toward this great change, may we not say the present war is leading up to the last crisis? Next, when speaking of the Roman earth we cannot forget the strange position occupied by some of the nations which are in it. I refer, for example, to the districts of Greece and the district of Spain. To me it was most momentous when Portugal was

brought into the struggle. I could not help viewing that as one of the somewhat unexpected, but Scripturally expected, indications that the whole Roman earth would be affected. Spain's position remains strange. While Greece is for a while out from the struggle, its land is very definitely brought into it. When we first gathered to speak on these subject Italy and Turkey were not involved. We spoke then about the rising up of the Roman earth, yet how much has happened since. How much became clearer when Turkey and Italy were brought in. Four of the most remarkable cities of history with respect to the Roman Empire were brought into prominence. Babylon and its site, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Rome itself. Till Turkey and Italy were brought in, those cities were out of the conflict. To me it is clear from Daniel 8 that Antichrist will arise from the eastern part of the Roman Empire, for we read in verse 21, * "The rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences shall stand up". Here is Antichrist, from the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. We must not think that from the expression "King of Grecia" Antichrist must arise from present Greece, or even from Europe. Daniel^{eleven} rather leads me to wonder if he will rise in the Asiatic part of the Grecian Empire. But the word "Grecian" is very noticeable, and we find particularly in the final struggle Israel will war against Grecians, (Zech. 9:13 is clear on this point). Is it accidental therefore that the place where the Grecian Empire started, Macedonia, and the name "Greece" have alike come into prominence? God is directing our minds and thoughts. The position of Russia, I cannot but feel is brought before us in Ezekiel

38. There we have Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, who is, we may conclude, the last mighty monarch. You will notice that he goes with a great company and is himself first in the ~~arm~~ company. We have in verse 5, Persia. This is important. Persia in the foreground. We compare these passages with other passages which speak of the king. I am inclined to suggest that Russia's influence must extend largely round about Babylon and Jerusalem. And current events ~~are~~ are pointing in that direction. Daniel 2 has reminded us that in the last days there will be a blending of governmental power and democracy. Verse 43 "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another even as iron is not mixed with clay." I think all along we have noticed the spread of democratic power. I mean for years. But what is ~~a~~ surprising or remarkable at the present time is this - we find a strange blending of governmental power with democratical power. The unity produced in this land in that connection is on the whole remarkable. Most remarkable. And it is equally clear in Germany, - there seems a temporary binding together even of socialistic influences to a large extent with iron sovereignty. But there will not be a cleaving, there will be a breaking apart. If this is to be the sign of the last days, are we not approaching the last days? My own belief is that the Scriptures suggest that when the Roman Empire is raised up and revived, the German district will not be brought into it. But as the Roman Empire will be the great power of the old world at least, it would be impossible that there should be another large Empire close to it. Hence it is almost necessary to fulfil prophecy that there should be the laying low of German power. I cannot but think that the present war is tending in that direction, more than anything else has tended. Commercial rivalry, if it had lasted 50 years more would never have brought this end. Only a war of the present destruc-

tive nature could lay a mighty nation low, so that it would cease to have great influence and large RESERVES of men. Scripture makes evident that the wars at the end of this age will mean the death of myriads and probably there is to be a bringing low of all nations numerically and this involves a considerable period, of comparatively small successes on either side, of see-saw variations. But the final issue would seem to be the utter laying low of German power, and this is, I think somewhat pointed out by the trend of events. All these thoughts may lead God's people to see that the present crisis is preparing for the future crisis, that terrible future crisis when the nations of the earth will fight against the Lord of Glory Himself. For, beloved friends, victory in the present war will not mean devotion to God. There is no setting forth in Scripture of national repentance at the end of the age. There will be a display of pride, and the persecution of the Lord's people. We can already see indications that the Lord's people will be more hated afterwards. They will need to suffer more afterwards, but this is what we are to expect. We have been living in abnormal times, when it has been easy to be a Christian, and to own the Lord. We shall go "back" to the normal times, when to profess the name of Christ will mean to risk death, trouble, persecution and strain. And this leads me to suggest, in closing, that our gracious God has declared that the Lord Jesus will come back and receive to Himself a revived and awakened people, a repentant people. We find children of God mixed up in sects and divisions. Those who bear the name of the Lord Jesus are often worldly, and we cannot say who are Christians and who are not, surely trials are needed to sift, and if our loving Lord is coming back to a revived people, a separated people, who have gone forth to meet the Bridegroom, may we not say that the present circumstances are tending in that direction in bringing trouble to God's people which will bring them, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into closer harmony with His will, and nearer "one another".
