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1922.

643rd ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B,

THE CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W., on Monday
May 15th, 1922, at 4.30 p.m.

LIEUT.-COLONEL F. A. MOLONY, O.B.E., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed and the HON. SECRETARY announced the Election of the following: As Member, from Associate, Major H. Pelham Burn, and as Associates, the Rev. Tydeman Chilvers, and the Honourable Mrs. Francis Bridgeman.

The Chairman then introduced the Rev. E. L. Langston, M.A., and invited him to read his paper on "The Times of the Gentiles in relation to the End of the Age."

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES.

IN RELATION TO THE END OF THE AGE.

BY THE REV. E. L. LANGSTON, M.A.

"The times of the Gentiles" is a definite period in the history of the world, and to understand its main features we must for a moment see it in its right setting. God has a plan for the world, and that plan is world redemption; therefore, when writing a paper on "the times of the Gentiles in relation to the End of the Age," we must first briefly see it in relation to other Ages.

The history of the world may be broken up into seven distinct Ages, and it must be remembered that the immediate purpose and calling of God is not the same in all ages. He has not dealt with men on one line alone, but in various methods and manners has He tested man, and each dispensation is characteristic, being the special dealing of God in that age, and a change in the mode of God's dealing makes change in the dispensation, and this fact, if lost sight of, will make many words in Scripture seem contradictory; but, to use the words of St. Augustine, "distinguish the dispensations and the words will agree."

The First Age

being the period when Adam and Eve, our first parents, were created, and lived in the Garden of Eden, they were not sinful, neither were they holy, for they had not the knowledge of sin and evil, but they were innocent. In the form of a serpent is

seen the personification of evil, and as a result of the Fall came the consciousness of good and evil: Adam and Eve were no longer innocent, but they had a conscience, and that conscience convicted them of shame and guilt. The guilty one in the form of a serpent and the man and the woman are arraigned before God: the serpent is dealt with first. His doom is sealed. He will bruise the seed of the woman (not of the man), and whose Seed he shall bruise shall in turn bruise his head. Thus is given the great promise of deliverance from the power of sin and evil. No sooner does man fall than God sets Himself to rescue man from the doom under which he has placed himself. But man has to learn several lessons before world redemption is effected.

1. The holiness of God.
2. The sinfulness of sin.
3. The utter helpless and hopeless condition of man in himself to save himself: and throughout succeeding ages these lessons in various ways are consistently taught. There is only one way of salvation, and that is through the Seed of the woman, "the Second Adam." Each succeeding age reveals these great truths in one form or another.

The Second Age.

The first trial of man ended in utter failure, and judgment closes the dispensation of innocence. Man is now without law and without government; there is no law from God and no law between men—conscience is his only mentor. There was no law from Adam to Moses, "yet sin was in the world." Consequently death reigned, and this age was pre-eminently an age of murders, violence, and unrestrained sin. Gen. vi. 5, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth . . . and it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth." Man left to himself goes from bad to worse. Gen. vi. 12, "God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Thus this age had to be terminated by God through the Flood.

The Third Age.

This dispensation extended from the Flood to the call of Abraham. Man had been tested, first in innocence, then by conscience without government or law, and in each case had lamentably failed, and judgment ended those dispensations. Government is now put into man's hands. God said to Noah, "The fear of you . . . and the dread of you shall be upon all; into your hands are they delivered." Gen. ix. 6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Capital punishment for murder is instituted; a law of government amongst

men that has never since been abrogated. Thus we see the sword put into man's hands for the punishment of evildoers and the subjugation of brute creation. Evil will abound, but let those in power keep it down as best they can. Every soul was in this way subject to higher powers. For the first time the principle of magisterial rule is introduced. In spite of all this provision, this age, like all the preceding ages, ended in failure; evil developed, and man endeavoured to build a city and a tower with the proud boast, Gen. xi. 4, "Let us make us a name," and thus came into being Babel, the city of revolt against God, which God judged.

The Fourth Age.

Hitherto in preceding ages individuals were prominent, but now with the division of the world as a result of the dispersion of men from Babel, God now chooses a man from amongst men, and here is the commencement of that people who were destined to hold so prominent and important a place in God's dealings with men, and with the earth. For the first time an entirely new feature is introduced: a nation now becomes the central object of God's blessing and care, from whom is to spring the world Redeemer, the Seed of the woman, and also the seed of Abraham. It is of the utmost importance to note this momentous epoch, and the place which the descendants of Abraham have in God's plans for world redemption. This great change occurs chronologically just half-way between the Creation and the predicted birth of the Messiah, the Seed of the woman. So that, speaking in round figures, God dealt for 2,000 years with mankind in general; then for 2,000 years with the seed of Abraham, the children of Israel, and possibly for about another 2,000 years with the Church. Thus ends the age of Abraham, also in failure; for even in this age the patriarchs from Abraham to Moses nearly all of them failed. But in spite of their failure, God's unconditional covenants remain the same; their failure did not affect the purposes of God. God promised to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. xv. 18, And the centre of world blessing shall be from "the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." All the promises of this period converge upon the coming Messiah, the seed of Abraham, the seed of the woman.

The Fifth Age.

The age of Moses or of the Law. Throughout this age God reveals to man details, through type and prophecy, of the coming of world redemption and the establishment of His kingdom upon the earth. But Israel has to learn by the giving of the Law, owing to the holiness of God and the sinfulness of sin, that in themselves

they cannot keep the law of God; and in a very peculiar sense God tested them throughout this age, by the Law. But in spite of the fact that they had many privileges and glorious manifestations of God and His power, Israel failed; and one great feature is brought out in God's dealings with them, and that is, God's ideal kingdom is an absolute monarchy, its King a despotic ruler, responsible to Him alone. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3-4, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth; even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." Where was such a ruler to be found? Saul, David, Solomon, all failed. Israel was being taught through that age that God's ideal king is the coming Messiah, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and now the seed of David, and as son of David, He is to sit upon David's throne to manifest an ideal kingship. Solomon was endued with gifts of wisdom and statesmanship above the ordinary, and yet, in spite of that fact, he sinned as man always does, even under most privileged circumstances. Consequently, after Solomon's death the kingdom was divided, and the kings of both Judah and Israel failed miserably, and there developed national apostasy, and God's purposes for Israel for the time were thwarted, and had to be postponed.

The Sixth Age.

Now we come to the "times of the Gentiles," and it is essential that we should realise the peculiar features of this period. It was God's purpose that Israel the nation should be first, and the Gentile nations second; but now for a period that it is important to notice Israel becomes second and the Gentile nations first; and we see the domination of the Gentiles during the setting aside of Israel.

It began with Nebuchadnezzar and the captivity of Judah, and has continued ever since, and will terminate only with the Second Advent of Christ, the King of Israel. When the domination was transferred to the Gentiles, it was God's purpose that one nation should have the supremacy over the rest. This was first delegated to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon; then to Cyrus, the Medo-Persian, then to Alexander the Grecian; and then to the Cæsars of Rome. The details of the four preceding empires do not concern us at present; we want now to confine our attention to the last stages of Gentile domination. The details of this fourth world empire are given to us in Daniel ii. and vii. Daniel ii. 40 says this great empire shall be "strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things; and as iron breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise."

Here we see a foreshadowing of the vast superiority of the

Empire of Rome over either Greece, Medo-Persian, or the Babylonian Empires, but we note that in the last stages of this strong mighty empire there is to be an element of instability and weakness, and we are not left in doubt as to what that weakness really is, for Daniel ii. 41 reveals the cause of the trouble.

Dan. ii. 41, "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes part of potter's clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. 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."

What is this clay? What does it typify? The gold representing Babylon stands for absolute sovereignty residing in the absolute will of the monarch. The silver and the brass showed the limitations of the monarchy; first, by the hereditary aristocracy, and then by the great men of the kingdom and the military party. The further descent in iron showed the further limitations of the monarchy by the power of the people. Therefore the brittle clay must be something which lessens the power of government still more. Now what can this clay mean but the "demos," the power of the people seen in the democracy? The type is a very expressive one, for what is more brittle than burned clay? And what is more fickle than *Vox Populi*? Another evidence of this is seen in the time of the appearance of the clay; it is not in evidence until it appears in the feet period of the vision of "the times of the Gentiles." Now this is exactly in accord with the solid facts of history. The first appearance of the clay principle possibly coincided with the great French revolution, at the close of the eighteenth century. There had been many a revolution in preceding centuries, but they had been merely movements on the part of the people to dethrone a wicked or tyrannical king, with a view to enthroning a much better man, which, of course, they did not always succeed in doing. But the French revolution had characteristics about it that no preceding revolution ever had. It was a deliberate attempt by the people to dethrone monarchy and seize the sovereignty for themselves. The monarch claimed to rule by Divine right, which had been the attitude of the Gentile kings ever since the days of Nebuchadnezzar till the overthrow of German and Russian monarchies; our King to-day claims to rule by Divine right. Not only did the French revolution seek to dethrone monarchy; but it had a more far-reaching, ambitious policy, and that was to dethrone Deity. It was a revolt against the Divine Ruler as well as against the earthly ruler. They denied the existence of God and refused to worship Him,

but set up a goddess of Reason, and placed as her representative an evil-living woman on the altar of Notre Dame. They endeavoured to do away with one day's rest in seven, and substituted in its place one day in ten. The French revolutionists naturally sought to destroy the Bible; Voltaire, who fiercely attacked the Scriptures, boasted that in a hundred years time the Bible would be a forgotten Book; but the very house in which Voltaire passed away has been used as a publishing house from which the Bible has been sent forth to bring light and joy into many a French home.

Ever since the days of the French revolution these characteristics which were so strong then have been working like leaven through the masses of the people who live in the area, or have sprung from the area of the Old Roman Empire, viz., the Middle and South of Europe, and the Near East. But let us not forget, as we study the "Times of the Gentiles." In Daniel ii. we are distinctly taught that the iron and the clay will be manifested and exist side by side right up to the end, and will not mix. So there will be the iron of monarchy and authority alongside of democratic principles—the one always opposed to the other, to the very end of the Gentile period.

Revival of the Roman Empire and the Last Days.

A few years ago such a possibility seemed improbable; but the recent War has changed the whole political outlook of Europe and the Near East; and there has come into being a League of Nations which may easily become the beginning of the revival of the ancient Roman Empire.

Prophecy foreshadows that a remarkable personality must come to the fore, a leader of nations and men, and take the position of Chairman or President of the future League of Nations. Both the books of Daniel and Revelation predict such a personality to rise in the last days.

Nebuchadnezzar had the vision of the whole of the Gentile world-powers in the form of an image of man, made of gold, silver, brass and iron, and whose feet consisted of iron and clay. Daniel vii. is an enlargement of Daniel ii., and a close study of these two chapters, with Daniel xi., is most important in the light of modern politics in connection with the League of Nations, the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, and the new kingdoms of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Every politician, whether Christian or not, should make a close study of these chapters. I would now draw attention to some statements in Daniel vii. concerning the last of these four Gentile empires. Daniel vii. 2, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold the four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea diverse one from another." The prophet saw a great storm at sea, and he also saw what caused that storm.

“ The sea ” in prophecy is always a type of the nations of the world, and the storm on the sea shows that there are various disturbing influences, overruled by God, for the accomplishing of His purposes. You will want to know what evidence I have for interpreting “ the sea ” in this way.

We are told in Revelation xvii. 25, “ The waters which thou sawest . . . are peoples and nations and tongues,” and in Isaiah xvii. 12, “ Woe to the multitude of many people which make a noise like the noise of the seas.” So Daniel saw the waters stirred to a mighty storm. Rising out of the chaos he saw four beasts, apparently one following the other. The first three beasts—the lion representing Babylon, the bear representing Medo-Persia, the leopard representing Greece; and we want to give our special attention to the fourth beast, for that refers to the Roman Empire and corresponds with the legs of iron in the vision of Daniel vii. 7, 8, “ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold there came a little horn before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots, and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.”

All students of the Roman Empire will recognise this as an exact image of Rome, resistless in strength, relentless, pitiless, respecting nothing and appropriating everything. Before explaining what these horns and the little horn signify, let us read on, and remember that the words we are about to consider deal with the last days of the Gentile period, the very days in which we are now living (Daniel vii. 9-12). “ I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from him, thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand stood before him, the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the great words which the horn spake. I beheld even till the beast was slain and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.” Then what happens? The judgment was set, and the books were opened. Now what judgment is this? And who is to be judged? It is living kings and nations that are judged. Notice the beast with its horns, and the little horn was not slain till after the thrones were set. A close study of this vision is most important, for it contains an outline of events

that happen right up to the end of the Age. These ten horns are only seen in the latter stage of the Beast's history. What follows the slaying of the beast? Daniel vii. 13, 14, "I saw in the night visions, and behold One like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Here, then, we have a picture of the investiture of Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords. Thus sin and evil are judged, punished and dethroned, and Christ reigns. Now Daniel, when this vision was revealed, was perfectly mystified as to its meaning. So in verses 16-22 he asks for an explanation. "I came near unto one of them that stood by and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me to know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron and of brass which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet. And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same 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." His curiosity was aroused especially with regard to the fourth beast and his horn. And he is told in verse 23, "Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns are ten kings, that shall arise; and another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." Now these ten horns on the beast correspond to the ten toes of Daniel ii.; they are ten kings. The Roman Empire must, therefore, one day be revived politically and become a great world power, in which will be manifested ten kings.

But some may say, "Surely it is impossible for the ancient

Roman Empire to be revived; for did not Gibbon say that the Roman Empire came to an end in A.D. 476? What! after all these years shall it be revived? Rev. xvii. 8 is rather interesting in the light of this question, and may help us to understand what to some is a great difficulty. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." The beast here is generally thought to refer to the Roman Empire that "was, and is not." That is to say, came to an end in A.D. 476; and here is a distinct prediction that it shall ascend out of the bottomless pit. In other words, the coming into being of the Roman Empire again will be overruled and directed by powers of evil, rather than by powers of good; and it may be that all the conferences held in connection with the League of Nations are under the powers of darkness, and "the god of this Age" is directing, to bring his plans and purposes to a head. Thus we may see, coming to the front in connection with the League of Nations very shortly, a remarkable and unique personality: he which is typified in Daniel vii., and whose remarkable personality is described in Revelation xiii., who is evidently a great world-ruler. In Rev. xiii. 1, "I . . . saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." This, therefore, is a remarkable king, or ruler over some confederated kingdom or empire within the sphere of the ancient Roman Empire.

In symbolical language we are told that this coming king, or president, is to have all the inherent and dominant qualities that were manifested in Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. Prophecy reveals to us the fact that this world leader will enter into a covenant with the Jews, and after a period of three and a half years will break that covenant, and for a further three and a half years will persecute the Jews badly. Daniel ix. 27, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate"; and during that period of the second of the three and a half years both the Jews and Jerusalem will be the objects of persecution and hatred. These predictions are all the more remarkable in view of the fact that the League of Nations has already entered into a covenant with regard to the Jews and Palestine, and that covenant is already a cause of trouble and anxiety, and may have to be either modified or altered in the near future; the coming leader of the League of Nations may therefore have to enter into another covenant with the Jews and Palestine which may be the very covenant referred to in Daniel ix.

At any rate it is certain that the Jews are to play a very important part in the politics of the world; and throughout the whole of Christendom we see Jews coming to the front as never before in their history—in every phase of life, whether it is in the realm of law, politics, art, science, the Press, banking, the world of diplomacy, wherever intellect is in demand there the Jew excels, and is exerting an influence far out of proportion to their numbers in the world. The Jewish question right up to the Second Advent of Christ is to be at the bottom of all world unrest, and will eventually lead to the last great war—Armageddon.

Is there to be another War?

That there must be another war, all devout students of prophecy will agree. The question is, how is it to arise, and when and where will the war be waged?

The Bible leaves us in no doubt with regard to these matters. There are very definite signs and indications in the world to-day which seem to prepare the way for such an awful catastrophe. None of us can say the world is anything like at rest; we are only just settling down after the great war of 1914-1918. That war changed the whole map of Europe and the Near East, and has altered the politics of the world. That war, if we read prophecy aright is only a preparation for tremendous developments. The Scriptures tell us that there are likely to be two Leagues of Nations. One comprising the countries existing north of Palestine, and the other comprising the nations of the old Roman empire.

The predictions we are about to consider are of the utmost importance in the light of modern political developments. I would very respectfully urge that when we read the following chapters we shall remember the prophetic axiom that the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy is to be guided by the manner of the fulfilment of fulfilled prophecy. The Bible contains predictions of events that happened hundreds and thousands of years after they were predicted, and in each case they were fulfilled literally and minutely, e.g., the scattering of Israel as recorded in Leviticus xxvi. and Deut. xxviii., the prophecies concerning the first Advent of Christ, His birth, life, ministry, and death. All these prophecies were fulfilled in every detail: therefore we are to expect just as literal a fulfilment with regard to the prophecies concerning the Second Advent of Christ and the Great War, that is to end the "times of the Gentiles" and usher in the Messiah, which are predicted in such remarkable detail.

This study is all the more thrilling in the light of the entente between Germany and Russia recently signed and sealed at Genoa. *Bible Predictions with regard to the next Great War.*

1. There are to be two Leagues of Nations. One comprising nations of the north of Europe, with Persia and Abyssinia; the other comprising nations of the middle and south of Europe, within the area of the ancient Roman Empire.

2. The cause of the next war will be Palestine and the Jews.

3. The scene of the next great war will be Palestine and Jerusalem.

4. The war will be called Armageddon.

When is the Northern League of Nations to come into being? A study of Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix. leaves us in no doubt on this point. Ezekiel xxxviii. 8, "After many day . . . in the latter years" v. 16, "In the latter days." N.B.—These are unfulfilled prophecies. *What is the Northern League of Nations going to do?* Ezekiel xxxviii. v. 10, "Thus saith the Lord God: It shall come to pass in that day that things shall come into thy mind, and thou shalt devise an evil device. And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at quiet, that dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates. To take the spoil and to take the prey; to turn thine hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and against the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods that dwell in the middle of the earth."

What does *Scripture predict with regard to the plan of campaign of the Northern League of Nations?* Ezekiel xxxviii. 1 and following, "And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him. And say, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. And I will turn thee about and put hooks into thy jaws and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armour, a great company, with shield and buckler, all of them handling swords: Persia, Cush and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer and all his hordes, the house of Togarmah in the uttermost parts of the north, and all his hordes: even many people with thee." Who are these two latter? Genesis x. tells us that Gomer is the son of Japheth, and probably the forefather of the Teutonic races. Hebrew words have no vowels, and in Hebrew, G.M.R. being the root letters of both Germany as well as Gomer (vide Rev. C. H. Titterton's book on "Armageddon"). Togarmah is the son of Gomer, geographically connected with Armenia, possibly the forefather of the Turcoman, or Turk. The Northern League of Nations is to comprise, therefore, of Russia, Germany, Turkey, Persia, Abyssinia, and part of the Sudan. Ezekiel xxxviii. 14 reveals how the northern nations will act. "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and

say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God, In that day when my people Israel dwelleth securely shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the uttermost part of the north, thou, and many peoples with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army. And thou shalt come up against my people Israel, as a cloud to cover the land. It shall come to pass in the latter days that I will bring thee against my land."

The Fate of the Northern Army.

Ezekiel xxxviii. 18, "And it shall come to pass in that day when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up into my nostrils. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking (will it be an earthquake?) in the land of Israel. So that the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground."

Further predictions are given to us. Ezekiel xxxix. 1 and 4 and 12, "And thou son of man prophesy against Gog and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against thee O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal. And I will turn thee about and will lead thee on, and will cause thee to come up from the uttermost parts of the north, and I will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel. . . . Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou and all thy hordes, and the people that are with thee, I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. V. 12, And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land."

What will be the ultimate outcome of Armageddon?

The coming of the Messiah as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, of the seed of Abraham, of the seed of the woman, David's Greater Son. Ezekiel xxxix. 21, 26, 29, "And I will set my glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed and my hand that I have laid upon them." V. 26, "And they shall bear their shame and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they shall dwell securely in the land and none shall make them afraid." V. 29, "Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel saith the Lord God."

All this is in beautiful accord with the prophecy of Zechariah xiv. 1-5, "Behold a day of the Lord cometh, when my spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations

against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward to east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." Thus we see Gentile thrones and dominations overthrown in the coming of the long-expected Messiah, who will be acknowledged by all Israel as the One whom they pierced, and the kingdoms of the earth shall be the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.

Have we any indication as to what year the "times of the Gentiles" come to an end, and when the Lord Jesus is likely to come again? Daniel gives us dates—do they mean anything to us? In Daniel xii. 10 he is informed that a day shall come when "the wise shall understand" the significance of these dates. When, then, are these figures likely to be understood? Surely these dates are to be understood in the closing days of this age just immediately preceding the Second Advent of Christ. Practically everybody will agree that the "times of the Gentiles" began about 587 B.C., when the Temple was burned and the last king, Zedekiah, was led away into exile. The length of the period of the "times of the Gentiles" is given to us in Leviticus xxvi. 18, 21, 24, 28, "I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will bring seven times more plagues upon you. . . . I will punish you yet seven times for your sins. . . . I will chastise you seven times for your sins." A "time" is equal to the Jewish calendar of 360 days. In Daniel vii. 25, we have the oft-repeated phrase, "a time and times and the dividing of time." This is equal to 1,260 days. Thus the "seven times" of Israel's punishment are 360 by 7; 2,520 prophetic days. Numbers xiii. 33-34, "And your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years and shall bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be consumed in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, *for every day a year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my alienation." These verses tell us that a "day" of Israel's punishment equals a year. The same year "day" is to be found in the sixty-nine weeks of Messiah, the Prince, in Daniel ix. 25. These 69 weeks multiplied by 7 equal 483 prophetic days, which was the exact number of years from Artaxerxes decree (Neh. ii. 5) to the Crucifixion; or 2,520 days of Israel's punishment equals 2,520 solar years. If we add 2,520 to 587 B.C. this conducts us to A.D. 1934. 587 B.C. was the year of

2 Kings xxv. 8, 9, " Now in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nabuzaradan, the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem. And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, even every great house burnt he with fire."

The late Bishop Moule of Durham, who could scarcely be called a rash man, declared in an address at Cannon Street Hotel just before he died that he believed that we were now near the closing days of this age, and that the Lord Jesus Christ was likely to come to this earth some time before 1934. He would not—neither would I—be dogmatic as to this date: yet we must all believe that Daniel's figures must have some significance.

Personally, I believe " the rapture of the saints " will take place some time before the Lord Jesus comes to this earth. Many people believe there will be a period of seven years between " the rapture of the saints " and the Second Coming of Christ, and if this is so we must now be on the very verge of " the rapture of the saints." The Lord Jesus may appear " in the air " for His saints before 1927. In presenting these conclusions with regard to the years 1927 and 1934 as being the dates for the Rapture of the Saints and the close of " the times of the Gentiles," I would be as cautious as possible. Our Lord definitely forewarned us " of that day and hour knoweth no man." I have, therefore, only brought this question to the fore that we may realise the solemnity of the days in which we live, and that we seem to be living in the very last days. Surely under these circumstances it behoves us to be waiting, watching, and working for the coming of the Lord Jesus, that we may be ready at any moment to appear before Him.

DISCUSSION.

Rev. J. J. B. Coles pointed out that the ordinary explanation of the " Times of the Gentiles " was not supported by a true rendering of the Greek of St. Luke xxi. 24. Moreover, a reference to Rev. xi. 2 showed that there would be a *future* treading down by Gentiles of the Holy City. How then could present events in the Near East be brought forward to prove that the " Times of the Gentiles " are now over?

The expression " the revival of the *Roman Empire* " is not found in Holy Scripture, and is a misleading assumption. Are not North and South America in the world to-day?

Mr. Theodore Roberts found himself in considerable disagreement with the Lecturer, but in agreement with the Rev. J. J. B. Coles, save as to the future world empire being Jewish, a suggestion

which he would like to consider. He had thought that the world-ruler, Anti-Christ, would be a Jew by birth but a Roman or Italian by nationality, just as the present Governor of Palestine was an Englishman yet of Jewish race. He did not think the "Gentile seasons" was as definite a period as the Lecturer made out, and he could not accept his year-day theory.

He did not expect literal fulfilment of the details of prophecy, because it was not intended to give information as to the future, but the language used must be such as would be understood by those to whom it was addressed, in order that it might have a present moral effect upon them, and so we had a prediction of "swords" being turned into ploughshares and "spears" into pruning-hooks, as the present instruments of warfare were then unknown.

He thought it was clear that the beasts of Daniel VII. could not include Babylon, as the interpretation of the dream stated they were kings which would in the future arise, and that interpretation was dated in the reign of the last king of Babylon. He believed the first three beasts represented Israel, Egypt (or the king of the south), and Assyria (or the king of the north), the three nations classed together in Isaiah xix. 23-24, and that the man's heart being given to the lion referred to the future national conversion of Israel.

He did not agree with the Lecturer that the clay in Daniel's image represented democracy, or that the *vox populi* could be spoken of as the most fickle form of government. He instanced the Swiss Republic and the United States as remarkably stable, although democratic, and added that France, the most volatile of peoples, had remained longer under the democratic form of government of a republic than under any of her previous monarchical experiments. He thought the clay represented the barbarians, who had overrun the Roman Empire and formed kingdoms, which had never been able to hold together as one empire, although Charlemagne and Napoleon had attempted it.

He called particular attention to the prophecy of Isaiah xviii., which the Lecturer had altogether overlooked, and suggested that the "land shadowing with wings beyond the rivers of Cush" that "sent her ambassadors by the sea" must be identified with the British Empire, and that Israel was undoubtedly the "nation dragged away and peeled, terrible from its beginning onward, but meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have despoiled." (This last expression referred to the way in which great popular movements such as the Crusades had been directed to Palestine.) The end of the prophecy (verse 7) speaks of this people being brought as a present to Jehovah to the place of His name, Mount Zion; which appears to contemplate the restoration

of the Jews by the agency of a power outside the prophetic earth, of which we see a small beginning in the Balfour declaration as to making a national home for the Jews in Palestine.

At the same time he thought we ought to put ourselves in the place of the Arabs, who having been in possession for many centuries, naturally resented the incoming of the Jews, who had previously inhabited the land, to displace them, just as we Anglo-Saxons would resent the countrymen of Mr. Lloyd George, as the old inhabitants of Britain, turning us out of England. However, he believed that the Jews must return in order that the prophecies of the last days might be fulfilled, and considered that we ought to regard the beginnings of this return now before our eyes as an indication that the Day of our Redemption was drawing near.

Lieut.-Col. Hope Biddulph said:—I am in practical agreement with this paper, but would like to point out that the historical theory, if taken alone, does not seem to stand firmly. Thus on page 168 the writer refers to the "beast" of Rev. xiii. as "a man," while the fourth beast of Daniel vii. is "an Empire." Presumably these two beasts are identical, and if this be so, the only way to reconcile the divergent interpretations is to allow that the prophecy may have a double fulfilment, one in which days are years, and the other a literal fulfilment at the end of the age.

Lord Bacon recognized this possibility when he wrote that "Divine prophecies being of the nature of their author, with whom 1,000 years are but as one day, and therefore are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishments throughout the many ages, though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age."

With reference to the "Times of the Gentiles," I have always considered that *Levi. xxvi.*, verses 18, 21, 24 and 28, is a very uncertain authority for the "seven times," or Gentile week. We have, however, so many indications of a half week, in $3\frac{1}{2}$ times, 42 months, 1,260 days, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ days mentioned in *David* and *Revelations*, that it is not unreasonable to assume that there is a definite week in prophecy of which these form an integral part. However that may be, it is at least remarkable that from the first siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, either B.C. 606 or 604, till the declaration of war with Turkey for the liberation of Jerusalem 1915, and the capture of the city by Lord Allenby 1917, is exactly 2,520 solar years; while the same period measured from the destruction of Jerusalem, B.C. 587, brings us to A.D. 1934, the point at which, according to Dr. Grattan Guinness and other expositors, the Times of the Gentiles are presumed to run out. If this be so, we may expect to see the Jews reinstated in Palestine as an independent sovereign state by 1934.

Mr. W. E. Leslie said:—For many years students of prophecy have been divided between the Historicist and the Futurist schools, while the unbeliever cared for none of these things. Now all is changed. The unbeliever is within the Church, and he is taking a keen interest in apokalyptics. He points out quite correctly that the canonical writings are part of a larger apokalyptic literature but he refuses to admit that they are anything more. This Modernist school is now dominant in our seats of learning.

It is to be regretted, therefore, that Mr. Langston has expounded one of the rival Evangelical views instead of meeting the Modernist attack by pointing out that Biblical apokalyptics form a coherent whole as opposed to the incoherent uncanonical speculations. A critical work like Orr's *Problem of the Old Testament* is urgently needed in this department.

When names are predicted in Scripture, are they not given explicitly as in the case of Cyrus, or symbolically as in the case of the number of the Beast? Are not the philological speculations on page 170 unwise?

There appears to be a curious oversight on page 172. The "seven times" of Leviticus means "sevenfold," not seven prophetic "times." The Hebrew word for "times" (Dan. 7) is not used here. The chronological calculations built upon this misapprehension are therefore baseless.

The Chairman, Lieut.-Col. F. A. Molony, thanked Mr. Langston for putting forward a definite theory of prophecy, and said:—I agree in thinking that the fourth great empire predicted in Dan. vii. refers to Rome, and not to Greece. (See the appendix to Godet's biblical studies.)

Mr. Langston says "our King claims to rule by Divine right." His Majesty is so modest about expressing his views that personally I never knew that he made this claim, though I was in his service.

Mr. Langston says "it may be that all the conferences held in connection with the League of Nations are under the powers of darkness." I am glad he put in that "may be," for I belong to a branch of the League, and believe that it tries to work under the Power of Light, even God Himself.

The part of Mr. Langston's paper which I regret, is his attempt to fix a definite date, though tentatively, for the end of this dispensation and the second coming of Christ. He reminds us of the seven times predicted in Leviticus, and argues that these were 360 year-days each. Then he puts the starting time at the destruction of the Temple in B.C. 587, which brings us to A.D. 1933. Now both the prophecy of Moses, and the events of B.C. 587, were known to Jesus Christ, and yet he said, speaking

of His second coming, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, and neither the Son." It seems to me that from Matt. xxiv. 14 and similar passages one may legitimately argue that the second coming of Christ is near, but if you argue from a prediction and a date, both given in the Old Testament, up to a date for the second coming of Christ, then you are claiming insight into a point of Old Testament interpretation where insight was expressly disclaimed by Christ. Probably this point of view did not occur to Mr. Langston. I will now ask him to reply to the criticisms on his very interesting paper.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

In dealing with such a subject as "The Times of the Gentiles in Relation to the End of the Age," of necessity there must be various interpretations and views. I have endeavoured as far as possible not to appear dogmatic in matters that are yet future.

The attitude I have taken up, is that of investigation rather than prognostication, and I am the last person on the face of the earth to fix a date for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and hope that my very indefinite language will be looked upon in that light.

At the same time, we cannot get away from the fact that the Bible gives dates, and surely it is not wrong for us to make a special endeavour to find out what they mean, and their full significance.

With regard to the League of Nations; as a human effort to restrain lawlessness and prevent war, I support it with all my heart: but again one cannot help feeling that it may be a preparation for the state of affairs that is depicted by the prophet Daniel in the last days of the "Times of the Gentiles."

The CHAIRMAN said: "It is the custom of the Victoria Institute always to allow the Lecturer the last argument. I will therefore again ask you to accord to the Rev. E. L. Langston a very hearty vote of thanks for his most instructive paper."