

ARMAGEDDON

*"And He gathered them together into a place called
in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 18: 16)*

A LECTURE

BY

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ARMAGEDDON

*(The Reader is requested to peruse the following passages of scripture
Psalm 83; Isaiah 9: 1-7; Revelation 16: 12-21)*

ARMAGEDDON is a term that is found but once in the scriptures, viz., in Rev. 16: 16: "He gathered them together into *a place* called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (R.V. Harmagedon). Although occurring thus but once, and that once in a highly symbolical writing, it is evident that it signifies a great battlefield, and hence, whatever misunderstandings may have arisen, it has always been associated with wars and rumours of wars in connection with the end of the age.

It is no infrequent thing to meet the word in the newspapers in connection with expressions of astonishment and fear at the armed state of the world, and threatenings of war on a scale hitherto quite unknown in human history. Thus, the following utterance, which is only typical, appeared in the *Daily News* (19th Dec., 1903).

"Armed Russia on the one side implies armed Japan on the other, and it requires a very slight spark to set this powder magazine in a blaze. It is but one case of a phenomenon visible in every part of the world, which presents a spectacle at the beginning of the twentieth century of a world divided into armed camps, only waiting for the signal to fly at one another's throats. So great is the burden on the nations of Europe, that some statesmen doubt whether it would not be cheaper to settle the matter once and for all in *one great* ARMAGEDDON." *

Then, again, with reference to locality, the British public had a slight advertisement in the direction of the truth, by the reported acquisition by the late Mrs. Rosamund Templeton, daughter of Robert Dale Owen, and second wife of the late Laurence Oliphant, of a square mile or two of the country in "the plain of Armageddon," as it is put in the *Daily News*, of November 13th, 1903. It will be remembered by many that Mr. Oliphant lived for some years at Haifa, under the shadow of Mount Carmel. He bought the land in question, which is situated "in the central and best part of the plain, about four hours from Haifa = about twelve miles. But Europeans were not allowed to hold land in their own names. So Mr. Oliphant had to hold it in the name of an Arab. But Mrs. Templeton, after fifteen years' negotiation, secured from the Turks a title in her own name, and for a little while rejoiced in the possession of a field in Armageddon! Now Armageddon and the field remain, but both the lady and the Turks have passed from the scene.

Armageddon, then, is before the public eye, both as to a coming crisis still involving war on a colossal scale, and also as a topographical term having to do with the plain of Esdraelon, in the Holy Land.

*Since then we have had a preliminary "great Armageddon" in the Great War of 1914-18, but still "the matter" is not "settled."

ARMAGEDDON IN THE APOCALYPTIC VISION.

But we turn to the scriptures for more light upon the subject—and first to the Revelation, in which the name occurs. In the sixteenth chapter of that book, the judgments of God upon the nations in the latter days are represented under the symbolism of seven angels pouring out upon the earth "the seven last plagues," symbolically represented by "seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God."

The sixth of this series of vials is seen to be "poured out upon the great river Euphrates," whose waters are thereby dried up, "that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared." The Euphrates is the symbol of the Turkish Empire, just as it was of the Assyrian power in the days of Isaiah (Isa. 8: 7). The drying-up of its waters (the converse of their flooding "Immanuel's Land" in Isaiah's time) represents the decline of the Turkish Empire, a matter of historical notoriety now and during the greater part of the nineteenth century. The Kings of the East, whose territory until recently was occupied by the Turk, are Immanuel himself as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," David, to whose throne he is "Heir," and all the associate princes of Christ's new and immortal order.

A crisis is preparing, in which the kings of the earth are to contend with one another, and with him, for the possession of this land, and ultimately for universal dominion over all the earth. It is said in this part of the prophecy that, by certain agencies which we cannot now consider, "the kings of the earth and of the whole habitable are to be gathered together to the war of that great day of God Almighty." In this connection, the following solemn parenthetical warning is inserted by the Lord Jesus.

["BEHOLD, I COME AS A THIEF! Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."]

Then the revelation is resumed, and says, "He gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon," or as the Revised Version has it, "Harmagedon."

The mention of "the Hebrew tongue" directs us to seek the "place" in the land of the Hebrews, and the meaning of the name must likewise be found in the Hebrew scriptures, and illustrated by the events connected therewith in the history of the Hebrews.

The slight difference between the spelling of the names in the Authorised and Revised Versions respectively is not without its bearing on the interpretation thereof. "Armageddon" means "City of Megiddo," while "Harmagedon" means "Mountain of Megiddo"; but, as a matter of fact, both ideas are connected in the highly symbolic prophecy in which the term is found. It speaks of the fall of a certain Great Rival City," and the prophets speak of the Mountains of Israel as the "place" of the great judgment of God upon the assembled hosts of the enemy, as it is written, "I will call for a sword against him, throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God."

MEANINGS OF TERMS.

MEGIDDO.—Upon enquiry at the various sources of information now accessible, we find that Megiddo was a famous place in ancient times. It is mentioned in the Egyptian inscriptions, the Tell Amarna tablets, and the Assyrian inscriptions; and was a well-known fortified city on the line of march from Assyria to Egypt through Palestine. It is called in the Egyptian inscriptions Maketau, in the Tell Amarna tablets Magidda, and in the Assyrian inscriptions Magidu.

Young says that Megiddo means "Place of God." It is first mentioned in the scriptures in Josh. 12: 21, about 1500 B.C. As to the god, or gods placed there by the superstitions of the inhabitants dispossessed by Joshua, the following extract from Conder's "Tell Amarna tablets" gives us some information.

"The chief deities (as among all the ancients) were Heaven, Earth, Ocean, Hell, the Sun, and the Moon. The sacred emblems were the fire, water, stones, and trees. In Heaven dwelt Anu and Anat; in Earth Baal and Baalath; in Ocean dwelt Ea; and in Hades, Death and the Bride of Hell. The Sun was the son of Ocean. The Moon was female. She visited Hades at times (during the dark quarter), as did also the Sun. To these Semitic deities may be added Rimmon, the god of 'storm'—otherwise Adu and Adonis"—page 254.

One of the tablets translated in the book (page 210) contains a request for "soldiers from the city Magid..."

HADAD RIMMON (Zech. 12: 11) must also be examined. It is a compound name of a place, each of the elements being the name of a different god—Hadad, Rimmon.

HADAD was the god of Damascus, and appears to be equivalent to the Adda or Adonis of the Tell Amarna tablets. The name means Mighty, and it is borne by several kings whose names are recorded in the Old Testament scriptures. It is first found in Gen. 36: 35, in a list of the kings of Edom. Later on, in David's time, a certain Hadadezer, King of Zobah, was smitten by him near the Euphrates (2 Sam. 8: 3). The name Hadadezer means, Hadad is help — compare Ebenezer, 1 Sam. 7: 12. The god Hadad was no help to the King of Zobah as against Israel's God and His servant David. Ben Hadad (son of Hadad) was a later King of Syria in Damascus (2 Kings 8).

RIMMON was "The Thunderer," another Aramean god, the same as the Assyrian Rammanu, god of air and weather. He is said to be "Another Aspect of Adonis." The name Rimmon is first found in Josh. 15 : 32. It is there the name of a city in the 1st of Judah; but it was a common name in the land. We read in Judges 20: 47 of a "rock Rimmon," to which a remnant of the Benjamites fled, after the dreadful civil war, which nearly exterminated the tribe. There was another Rimmon in Zebulun (1 Chron. 6: 77), the site of which has been identified three miles north-west of Cana in Galilee, but HadadRimmon was in Issachar, in the plain of Esdraelon, near the source of the Kishon. The present village Rummaneh marks the site of the ancient city.

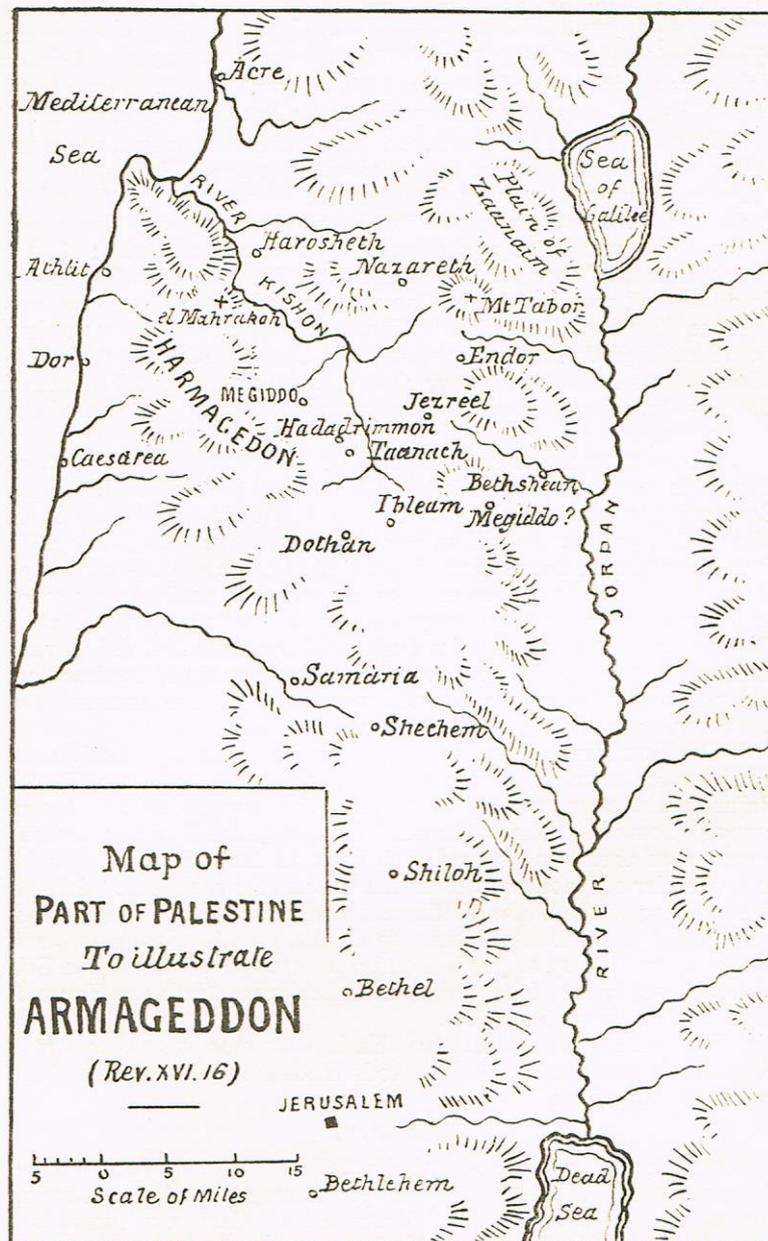
Rimmon means pomegranate. The pomegranate tree and fruit figured in perverted symbolism in the worship of Adonis and Venus. Compare the pomegranates on the high priest's garments (Exod. 28 and 29), and on the pillars before Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7). In the Septuagint translation of Zech. 12: 11, the name is translated thus: "In that day the lamentation in Jerusalem shall be very great, as the mourning for the *pomegranate grove* cut down in the plain." The pomegranate tree with its elegant foliage, beautiful red flowers, and gem-like fruit, was appropriated to the worship of the heathen, being accounted sacred to Venus, hence, probably, the translation of the Septuagint above quoted (compare Ezek. 8: 14).

The God Rimmon is frequently mentioned in the inscriptions. For instance, a stele of Shalmanezar II. (about B.C. 850), now in the British Museum, mentions his exploits against a confederacy of kings, among whom was "Ahab of Israel." It says, "Like Rimmon I rained storm upon them, and spread their carcasses far and wide." Again, in a cylinder of Nebuchadnezzar the Great, it says that he "decreed the building of the house of Rimmon and Merodach." These things are quoted from Ball's "Light from the East." Naaman, being healed of his leprosy at Jordan, and converted to a belief in the God of Israel, was loth to follow his master Benhadad "into the House of Rimmon" (2 Kings 5).

From all this it is evident that Hadad-Rimmon was an idolatrous Rival- City, a stronghold of the gods Hadad and Rimmon in "the valley of Meggiddon."

LOCALITY

And now as to the locality indicated in' the Apocalyptic phrase. "A place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon," or, inserting the aspirate with the R.V., "Harmagedon." It is evident at the outset that the Old Testament Megiddo must be found, that we may be sure of the topography. This we shall not find difficult.



It may be remarked here, although, perhaps, anticipating the argument fixing the site, that the Lord Jesus, who revealed the Apocalypse to John, was, as others have pointed out, himself very familiar with "the place" in question. From his native Nazareth hills, he must many a time have gazed upon the ancient battlefields spread out before him. The scenes of the exploits of Joshua, Barak, Gideon, and others; the slopes of Gilboa, where the first king of Israel perished so miserably; the shoulder of Carmel, where Elijah, whom he afterwards met on the Mount of Transfiguration, was answered by fire from heaven; Shunem, where Elisha raised the widow's son to life, and Nain on the other side of the hill, where he himself raised another widow's son. The whole scene was most familiar to him, many years before he thus spoke of it to John in Patmos. *

But our enquiry now is as to the locality of Megiddo. We must look for a mother-city, or metropolis, for so Megiddo is described in the book of Joshua. There must be "waters" near, for we read of "the waters of Megiddo." It must be situated in or near a valley, for we read of "the valley (*Biqah*) of Megiddo"; and it must be near Taanach and Hadad Rimmon, wherever those names may be found, And, of course, the valley implies the mountains adjoining as indicated in the name Har-Magedon or Mountain of Megiddo.

A reference to the map will explain the situation better than elaborate description. The names are indicated in their proper positions, and according to the identifications laid down on the excellent "Old and New Testament Map of Palestine," published by the Palestine Exploration Fund.

Harmagedon may be taken as representing broadly the Cannel range on the south of the Kishon River; but it must never be forgotten that the Apocalyptic term is not to be construed narrowly, for "the place" is very much more extensive than the corner of Palestine here described. As before pointed out, it is written, "I will call for a sword against him *throughout all my mountains*," saith the Lord God (Ezek. 38: 21). And again it is written, "The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth" (Jer. 25 : 33).

As to Megiddo, it has to be remarked that two identifications have been proposed, one at the foot of the Cannel Mountains, on a branch of the Kishon as indicated, and another about three miles south-west of Bethshean in the valley of Jezreel. This latter is preferred by Col. Conder. But the western site appears to us best to fit all the records of the scriptures. But, as a matter of fact, both sites, being less than twenty miles apart, are well within "the place" signified by the Apocalypse, and are both related to the great crisis of Israel's history, which we propose briefly to review. The name Mujedda is found with a ruin at the Eastern site; but this fact will not outweigh other considerations. The western Megiddo, as marked, stands on the site of the old Roman city, Legio, and the present village is Lejjun; while Hadad-Rinimon, as marked, is at present represented on the ground, by the village Rummaneh. Taanach, as marked, is represented by T'annuk, where some interesting discoveries have been made.

*The lecturer has himself travelled through the country described.

BIBLE REFERENCES TO LOCALITY.

A few references to the scriptures may now be made, to indicate the locality. In Josh. 12: 21, we read that Joshua conquered the king of Taanach and the king of Megiddo. In chapter 17: 11, we read that Manasseh had Megiddo *and her towns*, showing that Megiddo was a metropolis or mother-city. In Judges 1: 27, we are told that Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean, Taanach, Dor and Ibleam, "nor the inhabitants of Megiddo *and her towns*." Dor is on the coast, the site being now called Tantura. Ibleam is near the present town Jenin. The name still lingers in a neighbouring valley called the Wady Belameh. In Judges 5: 19, in Deborah's song, we read that the kings fought in Taanach by the *waters of Megiddo*. The "waters" in question are springs at the head of a small branch of the Kishon. The original word is used for "the well of Harod" (Judges 7), the spring to which Gideon brought down his fighting men to try them. In 1 Kings 4: 12, Baana, one of Solomon's officers, was appointed over Taanach and Megiddo, etc.; and in 1 Kings 4: 15, we read of Solomon raising revenue to build Megiddo and other cities. Megiddo was always a fortified city, an important place on one of the great highways of the ancient world. When Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was at Dothan, where the Midianite merchant men passed by, going into Egypt. This is about ten miles south of Megiddo and likewise on the road to Egypt. About nine miles north-west of Megiddo was the scene of Elijah's sacrifice, now called El Marakah; and about four miles south-east of Megiddo was Hadad-Rimmon, which Jerome says was called Maximianopolis. This emperor Maximian was as great an adversary of the truth, in his championizing of Hercules against "the God of the Christians," as any of the old worshippers of Hadad and Rimmon had been before him.

A remark may be made here concerning the expression "valley of Megiddo," found only twice in the scriptures—namely, in 2 Chron. 35: 22 and Zech. 12: 11. The word for valley in these places is *Biqah*, and not *gal* nor *ehmek*, the common words for valley. *Biqah* means "a low plain," especially between two mountain ranges. It is translated "plain" in Gen. 11: 2, Ezek. 87: 2 (margin); and Gesenius translates this expression, "plain of Megiddo." The Septuagint translators also used the term "plain." The original word survives in the Arabic answering to the Bible term "valley of Lebanon." The low plain between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, through which the writer and his companions have had the pleasure of riding, bears the name of *el-Bukeiah* to this day. These considerations go to strengthen the conviction that the plain of Esdraelon, between Cannel and the Nazareth hills, is "the plain of Megiddo," spoken of in the scriptures—the great battlefield of nations.

TYPICAL EVENTS IN BIBLE HISTORY.

This country has witnessed some of the greatest events in Israel's history, some of which are alluded to in the Psalms and the prophets as typical of the still greater judgments to come (of which the Lord Jesus himself speaks in Rev. 16), and of the great and final deliverance of Israel from all their enemies, that ushers in the Millennial reign of their King.

In the country shown in the map, the following notable events took place. There Barak defeated the Canaanites; there Gideon routed the host of the Midianites; there Saul was slain on Mount Gilboa; there Elijah slew the prophets of Baal, and God raised the drought in answer to his prayer; there Ahaziah was slain by Jehu; there Jezebel was eaten by dogs; and there JOSIAH was slain, and so sorely lamented.

What a succession of tragedies! and yet it is but a part of what that country has witnessed! Nevertheless, these sorrows and rejoicings—these alternate victories and mournings, are the illustrations of the tragedies of the future. Let us therefore, briefly pass them in review.

DEBORAH AND BARAK AND THE CANAANITES (Judges 4; 5).— After 80 years' rest and peace in the land, Israel departed from God, and He sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor (in upper Galilee), the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in "Harosheth of the Gentiles" (now represented by the village Harithiyeh, north of Kishon). Israel served Jabin 20 years, being terrorised by his "900 chariots of iron." Then they "cried unto the Lord," and He raised up Deborah and Barak to deliver them. Deborah, being a prophetess, called Barak from Kedesh Naphtali and directed him to muster 10,000 men of Naphtali and Zebulun. "And," she added by the Spirit, "I will draw unto thee to the River Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand."

Heber the Kenite had at this time pitched his tent in the Plain of Zaanaim by Kedesh, west of the Sea of Galilee, about twelve miles distant from the battlefield.

Barak mustered his forces at Tabor; and Sisera was "drawn." And God delivered him and his host into Barak's hand. There appears to have been a storm that flooded the Kishon and completed the disaster to the Canaanite forces. Barak followed up his victory right into Sisera's city; but Sisera had fled. Barak, getting tidings, pursued him, and found him at last nailed to the ground in the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. Thus "the Lord sold Sisera into the hand of a woman," as Deborah had foretold when Barak refused to go to war without her! Some of the "enemies of the Lord" wax very indignant over this matter of Jael and Sisera. This only shows where their sympathies are.

Deborah's song thus alludes to this ancient victory in Armageddon: "The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the *waters of Megiddo*; they took no gain of money. They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength" (900 chariots of iron). The conclusion is this: "*So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but them that love him be as the sun, when he goeth forth in his might.*"

"And the land had rest forty years."

The prayer of (or for) Asaph (Psa. 83), which is at the same time a prophecy, says, "Keep not silence, O God, hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. . . . Do unto them (thine enemies) as to Sisera, as to Jabin at the brook of Kison." And the history will certainly repeat itself in the "latter days."

GIDEON AND "THE DAY OF MIDIAN" (Judges 6; 7).—Here the circumstances are similar to those of Barak's day. Seven years' servitude to Midian for apostasy, followed by the usual "cry unto the Lord in trouble." Gideon, a man of faith, intelligently acquainted with the national history, though poor and obscure, is visited by an angel in Ophrah (now Ferata), about seven miles west of Shechem. He refers mournfully to God's signs in past times. The angel declares that this faith is really his strength, adding, "I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." The angel further gives him a sign, consuming by fire from the end of his staff the offering that Gideon had placed upon a rock by his direction. Then he vanished; and Gideon feared death because of the vision. But God proclaimed Peace (*Shalom*) to him: whereupon he built an altar and called it *Yahweh-Shalom*. That night in a vision he was commanded to take his father's bullock and throw down his father's altar of Baal, and cut down the *Asherah* or wooden abomination, and having built an altar to Yahweh, to offer the second bullock upon it with fire made with the wooden idol.

This he did by night, and in the morning came the reckoning. The men of the city were for slaying Gideon: but Joash suggested that they should "let Baal plead" if he were a god, and the name Jerubbaal was given to Gideon as a memorial. Then Gideon requested another sign, and God gave him the sign of the fleece.

Fully convinced, Gideon gathered the people to the number of 32,000 men: but God accounted them far too many, lest Israel should boast that *they* had saved themselves. They were therefore weeded out by a peculiar and most suggestive process. First a proclamation was made that the "fearful and afraid" were to return and depart. This disposed of 22,000 at once! Ten thousand were left. (On which side should we have been?) But the 10,000 were still far too many. So they were tried by water next. They were brought down to the water, and Gideon was told to divide them according to their methods of drinking. They drank in two ways: some, stooping down, lifted the water to their mouths with their hands, lapping with their tongues as a dog laps; others went down on hands and knees without using hand or tongue. Only 300 men used *hand and tongue together*. They were chosen, and the 9,700 were sent back. "By the three hundred," said God, "will I save you."

It will seem fanciful to some to suggest that "the water" is the word of the gospel, and that a man "taking of the water of life," must, besides "hearing the word," be "a doer of the word" and a preacher of the same, employing *hand and tongue* in the service of Christ, if he is to be one of his chosen invincibles.

The same night Gideon was sent down to the camp of Midian to hear a word of encouragement all unexpected. A soldier told a dream, and his fellow interpreted it, giving Gideon's name, *and repeating almost verbatim the declarations of the angel* that he should smite Midian. Gideon "worshipped" and returned to his three hundred. He made his dispositions with the pitchers and the torches and the trumpets, and at midnight, from three different points at once, came upon the Midianite camp "as a thief in the night." We imagine the panic, the crashing of pitchers, flaming of torches, sounding of trumpets, and the shouts on all sides: "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" The panic was absolute and complete: "the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow." Experienced generals know what panic means. They know that "the day of Midian" might well be reproduced in modern warfare.

When morning dawned there was nothing to do but pursue and spoil. The thousands of Israel joined in the pursuit. Oreb (Raven) was slain at the Raven's Rock, and Zeeb (Wolf) at the Wolf's Winepress. The Apocalypse has its references to "unclean and hateful birds" (18: 2), and the day of Christ will be notable for a great slaughter of "wolves in sheep's clothing." Gideon followed and destroyed Zeba and Zalmunna also, and took a great spoil, but alas, relapsed into idolatry.

Returning to Psalm 83, we read, "Do unto them (thine enemies, O Lord), *as unto the Midianites* . . . Make their nobles *like Oreb and like Zeeb*; yea, all their princes as Zeba and as Zalmunna, who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession. O, my God, make them like a wheel (thistle-down or whirling dust), as the stubble before the wind . . . that men may know that thou alone whose name is Yahweh art the Most High over all the Earth."

This is *not known yet*; but if there be any doubt as to a future application of the words, it is set at rest by the prophecy of Isaiah (ch. 9: 1-7). This unquestionably refers to Christ, and is so quoted in the New Testament (Matt. 4: 16). It tells of a time when he will multiply the nation and increase their joy, when they shall rejoice before him as men rejoice *in harvest, or when they divide the spoil*. "For," it says, "thou hast broken the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, *as in the day of Midian*. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but this shall be with burning and with fuel of fire. For unto us a Child is born." All Christendom admits that this child is Jesus. Does it admit that he will do this? Does it believe that "the throne of his father David" is to be set up again in the land by such sanguinary process, before he is acknowledged and manifested as "The Prince of Peace"? Whatever it believes, this is what will surely come to pass, for to that end he has been born (Lu. 1: 32; John 18 37).

THE DEATH OF SAUL AND ENTHRONEMENT OF DAVID must engage us only briefly. Saul was the people's king. His name (Asked) memorialises the fact. Though anointed and inspired and strengthened of God by signs, he "neglected the gift that was in him," and though he achieved some successes, he disobeyed in the matter of Ananias through fear of the people, sacrificed presumptuously, and was REJECTED, withdrawn from by Samuel, persecuted David, slew the Lord's priests, was spared twice by David, consulted the witch of Endor, and was slain by the Philistines with his three sons; his seven Sons being afterwards hanged in retribution for his slaughter of the Gibeonites.

David (Beloved) was God's "provided" King. He also was anointed, inspired, and helped, but he "stirred up the gift" enthusiastically, slaying Goliath, and defeating the Philistines again and again. "Through much tribulation" he came to the throne, while the wicked rival king *perished in Armageddon in disgrace*.

Saul's midnight journey is clearly traceable by modern identification of the sites, and it was a most adventurous one, for to get back to Endor he had to pass the camp of the Philistines at Shunem. By a beautiful providence David had been taken out of the country at the crisis (1 Sam. 29 and 30). The fate of Saul is one of the most terribly suggestive pictures in the Bible—suggestive, that is, of the fate of those who, having been honoured, and equipped of God, do not rise up to their responsibilities and privileges, but transgress from fear of the people, and finally become active Satans against the Lord and His servants. It may seem extravagant to suggest a comparison between Saul's career and that of the Pope-King of Christendom in his ages and generations and his persecution of outlawed heretics, but such a comparison truly exists all the same, as will be hereafter manifested when the Lord gathers Christendom's kings together into Armageddon, and, after their destruction there, exalts David and his associate kings to everlasting royalty under himself over the restored tribes of Israel.

ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.—And now across the plain to *El Marakah* (the place of burning). Here, after the desolating drought, Elijah proposed the crucial test that should decide the issue between Yahweh and Baal. Readers must study the history in 1 Kings 18. The gathering of the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of the grove that ate at Jezebel's table, against the one prophet of Yahweh—the expectation of Baal's prophets at noonday, when the sun was at its height—their frantic shoutings and cuttings during the whole afternoon—the evening calm and repair of the altar of Yahweh—the digging of the trench about the altar, and the saturating of the sacrifice with water—the brief but fervent prayer of Elijah—the vehement "fire of the Lord" that fell and consumed the sacrifice and the altar-stones as well—the terrified conviction of the people—the slaughter of the prophets of Baal at the brook Kishon, and the immediate break-up of the drought.

It is not only a history of a sublime manifestation of God, but is also typical of yet another such manifestation to come; when a false and abominable system shall be wiped from off the earth by judgments of a like character which shall begin at Armageddon. Christ himself in the Apocalypse uses "that Woman Jezebel" (Rev. 2: 20) as the symbolic representative of a class of unfaithful professors of righteousness who hold doctrines which he calls "the depths of Satan," and are resisted by the faithful, who shall "overcome" and receive of him at last "power over the nations."

THE DEATHS OF AHAZIAH AND JEZEBEL (2 Kings 8,9).—This also is another chapter in the history of Armageddon. Jezebel had hunted Elijah out of the country, and Ahab had been slain in the war against Ramoth Gilead, and Ahaziah of Judah had married into Ahab's family (2 Kings 8: 27). Through this fatal connection he met his death by joining Joram against Jehu, the Anointed Avenger whom God had raised up to cut off the house of Ahab. When Joram was killed, Ahaziah fled south, but was

overtaken at Ibleam, wounded and fled to *Megiddo* and died there, and was carried back with mourning to Jerusalem.

As to Jezebel, when Jehu entered Jezreel after the slaying of the two kings, she was thrown out of an upper window and eaten by dogs as God had said. Such was the end of the Queen-mother and Patroness of the State religion of Ahab that he imported from Sidon. As hinted above, there is a deep significance in it all; beyond what appears in the history itself. (See *Eureka*, an exposition of the Apocalypse, by Dr. Thomas.)

THE MUCH LAMENTED DEATH OF JOSIAH (2 Kings 23: 29-30).— Yet another catastrophe in Armageddon, and one which provides the imagery of the prophet Zechariah (12: 11). Josiah was a good king, from his youth up. He trembled at the Word of God, caused it to be proclaimed, and thoroughly reformed the people, extirpating the abominable idolatries of his fathers, and especially in the matter of the observance of a great passover, making such a mark that it became an epoch. He unhappily interfered with Pharaoh Necho, who was going, to war against Assyria, and was mortally wounded at *Megiddo*, whence he was carried back like Ahaziah to Jerusalem with great and bitter mourning, both at Hadadrimmon and at Jerusalem. He was cut off in the very prime of life.

The record of 2 Chron. 35 : 22-25, is as follows: "Josiah would not turn his face from him (Pharaoh Necho), but disguised himself that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho, from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo (*bigath Megiddo*). And' the archers shot at king Josiah: and the king said to his servants, Have me away, for I am sore wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel; and behold they are written in the Lamentations."

In Lamentations 4 : 22, Jeremiah refers pathetically to the untimely end of Josiah in these touching words: "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live long among the heathen."

But what if Josiah be resurrected? This is the crisis that is introduced in the prophecy of the Greater than he in Zech. 12-14. The mourning in Jerusalem at that time will be over One who was slain but has come back again, as it is written : "they shall look upon me whom they have pierced." He at last wrests Jerusalem out of the hands of the associated kings of the earth, and "under His shadow Israel will live long among the heathen."

But while we have concentrated attention so much upon "the valley of Megiddo" we must not forget (what has indeed already been emphasised), that the whole Land must be regarded as the theatre of judgment—and especially Jerusalem. Joel (ch. 3) thus speaks of "the valley of Jehoshaphat," which is on the east of Jerusalem. Jehoshaphat's great victory over the combined forces of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites (a deliverance only comparable with Gideon's victory over Midian), and his subsequent return with thanksgiving and praise to Jerusalem through "the valley of Berachah," is, like Gideon's victory, but a type of the final deliverance from the Northern and Southern Confederacies that is coming: but concerning which we shall not now be able to say much.

SOME CURRENT MILITARY ANTICIPATIONS.

If any have been tempted to think that much of the foregoing is very far-fetched, and considerably void of practical interest, the following extract from a lecture by Col. Conder many years ago may help to convince them to the contrary.

The position of Palestine in the very centre of the ancient civilised world, and the fact that the great highways of trade which united India, Persia, and Mesopotamia with the Mediterranean shores—with Greece, Italy, Carthage, and Egypt—led across its plains, has from the very earliest times made the Holy Land at once the gathering place of nations in peace, and the theatre of wars which decided the fate of the great surrounding powers. The Hebrews did not dwell in some remote corner, to which few other races had access: they looked down from their hills on the busy crowds of traders and soldiers who in all ages streamed along the coast-roads, and crossed the Galilean downs, either pressing southwards from the wilds of Armenia and Asia Minor, crossing the Euphrates from Nineveh and Babylon, sailing from Phenician ports to the Nile, or on the other hand coming up from Egypt, to conquer the countries which for so many early centuries were ruled by the Pharaohs, and meeting their enemies at the great battlegrounds of Megiddo and Carchemish. History repeats itself, more especially in such matters as are related to commerce and to war; because the roads of a country remain unchanged century after century; the natural features—mountains, springs, and rivers—unaltered; and the vantage grounds of combat identical, even though the weapons and tactics of armies may be very different. *Thus as early as 1,600 years B.C. a great battle of Armageddon was fought, where Megiddo guards the Bethabara ford over Jordan, and yet another battle on the same spot, a thousand years later, sealed the fate of the kingdom of Judah. In the twelfth century Christians and Moslems met again at Armageddon, and the Hebrew prophets fortold a still more terrible battle of Megiddo to come in the end of days. Of all the fierce tribes which swept age after age over Palestine, none were more terrible than the Scythian savages, who are called Gog and Magog in the Old Testament. It was through their outbreak from the Caucasus that the civilisation of Assyria and of Palestine itself was ruined in the years preceding the Captivity; and the same natural causes which drove these hordes of barbarians from Southern Russia—famine and inclement climate in their Northern home—continued to send down on the more favoured southern lands, in later times, equally relentless swarms of Mongols and Kurds, of Armenians and Turks.*

It is not then a matter for surprise that military authorities should hold that, if ever another such incursion from the Caucasus occurred, the battles of the future, in Syria and in Palestine, might be fought on the old battlefields—at Carchemish, by the Euphrates ferry, and at Megiddo; where the highways from Damascus, and from the valley of the Lebanon converge. It is not only the Christian student of prophecy who looks forward to such an event, for the common belief of the Moslems also points to the same theatre of a future conflict; and the educated opinion of European strategists also acknowledges the same deduction from a knowledge of the natural features of the Holy Land—the position of its harbours on the west, and the directions of its highways to the passage of its rivers.

Further, speaking of railway projects, Col. Conder says :-

There are several interesting points which occur in connection with the Damascus-Carmel railway. In the first place, its construction *would render yet more probable, in case of war, a conflict on the old battlefield of Megiddo or Armageddon*. The possession of the only railway in the country would become the inevitable and single objective of the strategist. Supposing Damascus to have fallen or to be besieged, and a relieving force to be landed under Carmel, the main contest would be for the passage of the Jordan, and on the Jordan passage Megiddo, and the Har-Megiddon, or "Mountain of Megiddo," look down. *The defence of Southern Palestine from a Scythian invasion* would be more easily accomplished along this line than by any other; and for military reasons alone, the Turks should be glad to, have this line made to the capital, and should discourage the making of any other further north—unless, indeed, they connected Aleppo with the sea, and defended the passage of the Euphrates on the old battlefield of Carchemish.—Col. Conder's Lecture, "*The Future of Palestine*" (1892). *

*The expulsion of the Turks and the British occupation of Palestine form a very inspiring commentary on these forecasts.

THE COMING CRISIS.

From the foregoing it will be seen that history has repeated itself, and that capable observers in the best-informed quarters still look for another repetition hereafter. The Hebrew prophets, as Col. Conder says, entirely justify this. Nevertheless, there is but little true knowledge current concerning the nature of the crisis that still lies ahead. With a brief indication of its most salient features this lecture must close.

What is about to happen is, the transfer of all government from "the kingdoms of men" to "the kingdom of God." God has given the earth to Christ, who, with the saints, "shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." So said the angel to Daniel (8 :18). The Kingdom is to be established centrally in the land of the Hebrews, where it anciently existed in its mortal constitution, and to which the Lord directs attention when, he speaks in Rev 16 of a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

This land as all the world knows has been a bone of contention between 'the great powers' from the remotest times, and, notwithstanding the recent settlement, is so still. The controversy concerning "the Holy Places" has originated a great war within the memory of the present generation. So it will be again but on an incomparably larger scale. *A Northern European coalition* is to overrun the land in the latter days (Ezek.38) and is to be withstood by a *Southern coalition* as in the days of Assyria and Egypt of old. But in the crisis of the victory of the Northern power, and the, spoiling of the Jewish colonies and taking of Jerusalem God in Christ, interferes, after the type of Joshua of old (Joel 3; Zech. 14). The assembled hosts are destroyed "as in the day of Midian" (Is. 9), and Christ takes possession of his city, where once he was crucified, but to which he promised most solemnly to return, saying, "Ye shall not see me henceforth *until the time come*, when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Luke 13:.35).

Enthroned in Jerusalem, he carries the "war of the great day of God Almighty" far and wide into the enemies countries; like David of old, until at length all the earth is subdued to his sceptre. Afterwards he is manifested, as the Greater than Solomon, and Prince of Peace, the stability of whose times shall be wisdom and knowledge, the strength of salvation and fear of the Lord, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.

In view of these things, and the terrible nature of the times still before the world, we may rightly appraise the wisdom and kindness of his interpolated warning and exhortation:-

"BEHOLD, I COME AS A THIEF; BLESSED IS HE THAT WATCHETH, AND KEEPETH HIS GARMENTS, LEST HE WALK NAKED, AND THEY SEE HIS SHAME" (Rev. 16: 15).

This, of course, is spoken to his people: but "whosoever will" may join their ranks, and become "clothed" with his, name, by putting on Christ in belief of the Gospel and baptism: This lecture, therefore, appeals to all so minded, indicating for their enlightenment some of the facts connected with the purpose of God and the current, situation, that they may be warned, and induced to "flee from the wrath to come."

(The interested reader is referred to "ELPIS ISRAEL" and other Christadelphian works for further information on the subject. The Christadelphian, a monthly magazine; illustrates "the signs of the times" regularly; See address on title page.)

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